POVERTY

Guide for Advocacy in Resilient Livelihoods Programming

christian aid

Contents

About this guide

The following is an advocacy guide for Christian Aid's resilient livelihood programme officers supporting local, district and national advocacy. As well as seeking to demystify advocacy – it is not rocket science! - it provides advice on:

Section 1: Advocacy principles and approaches
Section 2: Developing and implementing an advocacy strategy
Section 3: Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating advocacy

In order to keep it short the guide does not cover international or global advocacy, nor does it include 'tools' for developing an advocacy strategy (e.g. problem and solution trees or power analysis tools), but these can be found in both `*Monitoring Government Policies: A toolkit for civil society organisations in Africa' Cafod/Christian Aid/Trocaire* and '*Tax Justice Advocacy: A Toolkit for Civil Society' Christian Aid/SOMO*.

It is important to acknowledge the sensitivity and difficulties of doing advocacy in some contexts or around issues like mining, land rights and logging. Most of the guide assumes a functional governance system exists in a relatively stable context, but some advice on more challenging environments is provided.

What is Advocacy?

In essence, advocacy is all about *influencing* for positive change in people's lives. The term encompasses a range of activities that organisations, communities or individuals can carry out to exert pressure for change to a specific policy or in a behaviour of a government, institution, organisation (e.g. national government ministry, local government development committee) or possibly a single individual (business leader, local leader). Advocacy can also be aimed at influencing attitudes, social relationships and power-relations and opening up democratic spaces. In unstable environments or fragile states a greater emphasis might be placed on consensus-building and dialogue in order to put an issue on the agenda.

Ultimately advocacy seeks to address the underlying causes of a problem, remove the obstacles that prevent a solution being reached and successfully influence agendas to achieve the desired change. Advocacy for resilient livelihoods (RL) could be an important element in achieving wider changes related to poverty reduction, development and social justice.

Think of advocacy as a toolbox whose content, if effectively applied, will hopefully achieve change – but, as it is not a science, there are no guarantees! Advocacy tools can include: research and policy analysis, lobbying, engaging the media, communication, awareness-raising, popular mobilisation and campaigning. You and/or your partner/s will need to choose the right tool or combination of tools for your context in order to influence for the desired change.

Achieving a successful outcome via advocacy can take time – just think about how long it took to end apartheid in South Africa or is taking to promote more environmentally-sustainable models of agricultural production that can withstand climate change! So although ultimately you may want to see a specific and significant change in policy, practice or behaviour, achieving incremental progress towards that change is also extremely valuable. Equally sometimes you can successfully advocate for a change in policy only to discover that even when the policy is in place it is not successfully implemented. So advocating for effective implementation, or a change in practice, can often be as important as getting a policy change in the first place.

Why is advocacy an important part of resilience programming?[i]

Christian Aid does not strive just to reduce poverty or just assist communities to survive in the short term. Instead, we want to eradicate poverty. To achieve this, we aim to increase the ability of poor people to create and retain wealth and then reinvest it to improve the lives of their families and communities – paying for their children's education, keeping their families healthy and acquiring technology and infrastructure to improve their homes and services.

'Resilience is the power of individuals and communities to live with dignity, responding successfully to disasters and the opportunities and risks that they face[ii] *so* advocacy should respond not just to the existing context but the likely future change as forecast by economic assessments and climate science.

The root causes of people's vulnerability to disasters and other shocks is likely to be found in political, social and economic structures and trends. For example, weak planning and building codes, inadequate policy for civil protection or responding to disaster; inadequate international policy for carbon-emissions reduction and climate-change adaptation; inequalities exacerbated by regressive tax systems; lack of national welfare systems or safety nets; indebtedness to international financial institutions (IFIs) and aid dependency of nations; conflict.

Therefore, ensuring people's lives and livelihoods are resilient to disaster over the medium to long term must necessarily involve more than community-based work. For good initiatives to thrive, be sustained and be multiplied or scaled up, it requires the right political support, the right laws in place, and government departments resourced to apply them. It involves a multi-sector and multi-level approach, such as that laid out in the UN Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)[iii], and may need to involve the cooperation of local, national, regional and international actors, depending on the issue.

The sustainable scale up of community-centered resilience work depends on local, district/provincial and national governments taking a central coordination and facilitation role, as only they are likely to have the power, resources and capacity to undertake large-scale, cross-cutting initiatives, and create the policy and legislative framework within which national risk reduction, and ultimately resilient livelihoods, can be accomplished.

That is where advocacy comes in. Where existing structures, policies or policy implementation are not delivering the change needed, civil society needs to advocate for change that delivers for people and communities. In this case, that is change that contributes to the achievement of resilient livelihoods (RL).

SECTION 1: GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE FOR RESILIENCE ADVOCACY

In supporting partners and communities to undertake advocacy as part of their resilient livelihoods programming, programme staff need to be aware of some important principles and approaches. The 'you' referred to in the sections below will usually be Christian Aid partners, not programme staff themselves – the first principle below explains why.

Advocacy should be primarily partner and community led with Christian Aid playing an enabling and supporting role.

Christian Aid's policy states:
'*Christian Aid believes that the principal responsibility for promoting policy change in developing countries where we work lies with the people of those countries. Consequently, we see our partners as providing the leadership in policy influencing and Christian Aid's principal responsibility is to provide effective "capacity" support to our partners, engage in mature dialogue with them in terms of shared analysis and shared priorities, "accompany" them where necessary and stand by them in solidarity at all times. In general therefore, Christian Aid is committed to not **doing** advocacy or campaigning in its own name in the South.*'

However, there are exceptions to this general rule. In practice, there is a fine line between "accompaniment" and lobbying. In addition, how Christian Aid approaches advocacy also depends on the country situation and the issue. In situations of political and civil crisis, or conditions of severe human rights abuses as well as in countries with very weak traditions in civic activism, partners may well expect, and it is reasonable that, Christian Aid is seen to be active. A judgement call is therefore inevitable on a case-by-case basis. But in making these judgements, Christian Aid will keep in mind the need to work in ways that progressively put our partners in charge.' (*from Making Change Happen, Christian Aid internal policy, 2006*)

Since Christian Aid will not generally conduct advocacy in its name at a national level, a number of the approaches identified below are necessary building blocks for ensuring effective advocacy by communities, community based organisations (CBOs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and issue networks. For example, for the voices of local communities to be heard and influence government policy, it is important that strong linkages are established between local, district and national CSOs and networks.

It should be the right of people and communities to participate in policy processes and is an important element in legitimising decision-making processes.

Advocacy is integral to resilience work and not a stand-alone activity or an add-on.

- Advocacy is instrumental in raising awareness, and for creating acceptance and political will necessary to make changes at all levels (see above) to reduce risk and support resilient livelihoods.
- Resilience is often fundamentally affected by practices outside the control of the affected community e.g. a community at the mouth of a river may well be practicing sustainable, resilient livelihoods, but if the catchment is being deforested and the hydropower company opens the dam every time there is a tropical storm upriver, they will be inundated and their livelihoods swept away. These upstream-downstream impacts imply an explicit focus on advocating for the rights of more vulnerable communities and for local Governments operating horizontally across local government boundaries since catchments often include two or more districts/municipalities. This analogy extends beyond rivers to include greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, etc.

- The context of vulnerability and the priorities for building resilience at a community and local level should inform any advocacy undertaken i.e. there need to be clear links between the experience of local people and the solutions advocated at a local and national level.
- Advocacy planning and activities need to be integrated into programme structures, systems and plans. This is the responsibility of managers as well as programme officers.

Advocacy should be informed by the experiences of directly affected communities.

- Supporting communities to articulate their own needs and desires, giving them the confidence and capacities to influence decisions that affect their own future: this is part of our/our partners' investment in them, leaving them stronger and more resilient in the future and more able to look after themselves.
- Most NGOs actively stress that local communities should have a stronger voice in the issues that affect them, so NGOs themselves should involve local communities in their advocacy.
- Local advocacy will be greatly enhanced by strong local ownership and participation of communities; this is also an important criterion for the legitimacy of Christian Aid and partner advocacy.
- Communities can play an important role in identifying issues suitable for advocacy through community action planning*.
- Effective advocacy requires credible evidence, which includes community experiences.
- Real people's stories about how they are affected by a weak policy, a certain issue or an injustice make advocacy come alive for decision-makers and the public.

*Participatory approaches that CAID/partners employ in generating and analysing their situation, like the participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments (PVCA), enable communities and those most vulnerable within them to analyse their own problems and risks and to find solutions. The BDRC evaluation found that in many cases PVCAs and the resulting community action plans would identify a need to lobby and/or cooperate with local authorities, influence local government plans and make calls on local government budgets in order to build communities' resilience.

Local level advocacy leading to 'changes on the ground'[iv]
In the **Philippines** successful local-level advocacy resulted in a significant scaling up of programme activities and attainment of extra funds. One community decided to build a floodwall using rocks and wire mesh. They only had sufficient funds through BDRC to protect 150 dwellings but they felt that more dwellings needed protecting. By building one wall they proved they could do it. They then lobbied the local government to demonstrate that more communities needed to be protected. As a result, they managed to access an additional *8 million* pesos compared to the original 800,000 pesos they had invested themselves. The next time floods came, communities' assets were protected showing how the investment had made them more resilient.

Resilient livelihood advocacy projects should be gender and diversity sensitive

At all stages of developing and implementing your advocacy initiative you need to consider gender and diversity sensitivities, how an issue impacts differently on different groups such as women, the elderly, people with disabilities or the marginalised. For example, looking at gender:
- How do the experiences of men and women differ in communities and families?
- What are the implications of their different experiences when identifying the problem and considering an appropriate solution?
- How will you ensure that women and men are given the opportunity to inform the advocacy priorities, for example during scoping/assessment work in local communities?
- How will you ensure that women's voices and different challenges and aspirations are heard at a local decision-making level?
- How will you seek to ensure that any authorities you engage with take account of the unique experience of women and men?

Integrating gender into a Malawian advocacy strategy

When the ECRP and DISCOVER consortia in Malawi decided to develop an advocacy strategy on climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in 2012 they wanted to ensure the gender dimension of the issues were not lost. It was their assessment that in Malawi women are disproportionately affected by climate change and related disaster, for example, due to their responsibility for most of the household chores such as fetching food, water, firewood and caring for the sick. With increased incidences of the effects of climate change, these resources are now scarce making women travel long distances to retrieve them. They concluded that it was very important that climate change adaptation and DRR plans and interventions at district and community level were gender sensitive.

For this reason they developed indicators for each section of their advocacy strategy that measure progress on gender sensitive criteria. In addition, they committed to ensuring that advocacy messages to key targets at both district and national level reflected the unique experience of women so that subsequent policy and its implementation took the gender dimension in to consideration.

Resilience advocacy needs to take account of power, inequality and vulnerability

Resilience advocacy needs to understand the dynamics of vulnerability in terms of power and inequity. Vulnerability and poverty are not the same thing but in studies, 90% of the poorest are also the most vulnerable so there are dynamics within a community (e.g. different wealth ranks), at local government administration and at national level (both public and private sector interests) and international levels that need to be taken into account. In our resilience framework (WIP), we make a strong link between resilience and both environmental sustainability and equity. More unequal societies are less resilient, as are less environmentally sustainable ones. This has profound implications for the type of resilience advocacy we would support nationally and get involved in internationally.

Resilient livelihood programmes need to scale up and link up for maximum impact

Advocacy is one way of scaling up impact. In order to maximize impact, the goals and objectives of resilient livelihoods (RL) work should include advocacy objectives (e.g. changes in the policies and practices of duty-bearers) to achieve local and national results, rather than simple and singular project objectives which may only have an impact in the project area (for more detail on the thinking behind this approach see Christian Aid's paper No Small Change). The advocacy dimension of RL programmes should[v]:

- Raise the profile of RL, with the aim of creating a favourable environment for sustainable RL;
- Aim to increase the scale of resources and the range of actors working together for the common goal of risk reduction and increased resilience;
- Aim to restructure processes, reform institutions and legislation in order to promote joined up and sustainable solutions to disasters.

Scaling up community-based RL, including DRR where relevant, requires:
- Developing stronger links between community and government-led RL initiatives.
- Bridging the gaps between micro-, meso- and macro-level RL activities in terms of transfer of information, assigning responsibility, funding and allocating resources
- Promoting greater interaction and participation between community members and governing authorities to ensure effective policies that:
  - reflect the needs of citizens
  - fit local realities and support positive change that will impact at local level
  - link to the bigger picture;
  - are resourced appropriately;
  - are implemented effectively.

> **Scaling up DRR work in Honduras[vi]**
> In Honduras, Christian Aid supports a partner network, the Association of NGOs (ASONOG), which in turn supports 22 local organisations (11 partners and 11 local committees) with practical DRR projects:
> - at local and municipal level ASONOG works with communities and government DRR bodies (including disaster management committees and development committees)
> - supporting communities with livelihoods, mitigation and adaptation activities
> - participating in regional round tables to influence DRR, development planning and policy monitoring
> - at national level ASONOG is participating in national round tables and advocacy, and lobbying the disaster management committees and the private sector on DRR issues for better DRR policies and procedures
> - at international level ASONOG is participating in the Regional Advocacy Group on DRR (GRIGR), and taking part in advocacy work with the Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC).
> - A combination of the above activities made a significant contribution to the passing and quality of a law (known as SINAGER) relating to disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

Christian Aid programmes should support advocacy capacity development where appropriate.

To ensure that communities, CSOs and networks have the skills to be effective advocates Christian Aid may need to invest in advocacy capacity development and skills sharing. In order to establish what those needs are, programme staff will first need to map partners' advocacy strengths, weaknesses and the issues they focus on. Partners may in turn need to assess the levels of support communities need to enable them to be active and effective advocates.

Remember:
- People and communities have existing knowledge, ways of working together and their own capacity that must be recognised and supported.
- Be flexible enough to respond to local needs and agendas. The capacity building that you can provide must correspond to what local communities and organisations want from you.
- Stay engaged under difficult circumstances. The weaker the capacity, the greater the need.
- Different partners will complement each other in advocacy and can share skills. For example, some partners will be strong on advocacy at national or provincial level, while those that work at community level might be able to learn from them for local level advocacy, and might also have the capacity to gather the evidence from communities.

Capacity development for advocacy can take many forms and you will need to decide what approach, or combination of approaches, is most appropriate for your context. It could include: training, workshops, mentoring, identifying lead advocacy partners to skills share, accompaniment, exchanges between partners and/or programmes, or providing platforms for communities to share their concerns with local decision-makers.

Potential capacity development areas to cover might include:
- Advocacy skills e.g. how to develop an advocacy strategy, how to get your message across
- Media, public outreach
- Research, policy analysis, generating and sharing information
- Budget analysis
- Lobbying skills
- Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating advocacy
- Improving structures: including mechanisms for coordination, networking and strengthening organisations

Community-based capacity strengthening in Orissa, India[vii]

To prepare for future natural disasters in Orissa, Christian Aid partner Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) set up a Disaster Mitigation Training Centre at Banamalipur in Khurda district. It provides a seven-phase training programme, spread over a year, for its members, which includes disaster awareness, Disaster Mitigation Task Force formation, capacity building, income-generation programmes, measures for disaster mitigation, advocacy, lobbying, creation and upkeep of data banks.

After completing the training, the members set up Disaster Mitigation Task Forces in their villages, which in turn run training programmes on disaster warning, rescue and evacuation. Villagers also learn about contingency planning, first aid, medical help, sanitation and relief operations. CASA's efforts to coordinate with many government bodies and other organisations at village, *gram panchayat*, block, district and state levels, helped avoid duplication, competition and conflict.

Information and knowledge sharing is an important part of shared advocacy endeavours

Information and knowledge sharing serves more than one purpose. It is a means of:

- coordinating advocacy efforts between partners, networks and communities;
- sharing information with communities about the processes that enable their involvement, and that exist so that their voices can be heard.
- linking with and learning from other programme staff in a Christian Aid office or region – this is particularly important given the breadth of issues resilient livelihoods cover*;
- learning from best practice e.g. learning circles, exchanges, partner forums;
- stimulating public debate;
- presenting a case to citizens and decision-makers;
- harnessing allies and engaging opponents;
- solidarity-building – in some contexts coming together to share information builds trust;
- sharing and collecting evidence to enable reviewing and evaluation of the advocacy initiative.

*NB. When advocacy strategies are developed there is sometimes a lack of information sharing and feedback among the implementers, including other Christian Aid staff in a country office or region who may not be directly involved in the project but are likely to provide helpful insights, skills and learning from their programme areas.

Some of these mechanisms for sharing information and knowledge include:

- Christian Aid staff meetings
- 3 monthly/regular partner coordination meetings
- Links to external websites e.g. DFID, agencies
- Network websites
- Reports
- Quarterly bulletins
- Annual or bi-annual internal stakeholder lesson learning forums
- Mid-term external stakeholder forums
- District review meetings
- Community meetings and local forums
- Programme review and impact assessment exercises
- Websites/blogs such as Christian Aid's Learning Exchange
- CA intranet blogs
- Other networks or national forums

Information sharing forums provide an opportunity to share information on the actual strategy itself, its progress, to welcome comments from both internal and external partners and to adjust the strategy to reflect learning, new alliances or opportunities. They can also be opportunities to share lessons learnt, best practice and opportunities to influence policy and practice, as well as to tackle obstacles and challenges. It can be really helpful if information sharing with your allies includes a

slot in which people report on the advocacy indicators or 'signposts' e.g. media articles they've seen, instances of the issue being raised at important meetings, statements from decision-makers etc. Documenting this as you go along is essential as you'll never remember or be able to gather together all the evidence afterwards [see Section 3: Planning to Monitor, Review and Evaluate].

Advocacy initiatives often benefit from partners working in networks or coalitions and engaging with unusual allies

Coalitions and networks can greatly enhance the effectiveness of advocacy. They can increase legitimacy, strength, resources and safety. They can help coordinate and focus pressure on an important target(s). Coalitions are also attractive to donors that prefer to fund a coalition rather than many individual civil society organisations (CSOs). Supporting coalitions and coalition-building, might be an important part of an advocacy assistance programme.

Equally your programme may want to widen the net to engage with research institutions, think tanks, universities, scientific research centres and other entities that gather and/or analyse information. And your programme might encourage collaboration between advocates (e.g. CSOs, climate scientists, academics) and entities that gather and analyse information, through grants, workshops, or joint advocacy projects.

Similarly, your advocacy programme can encourage coalition and network building through interventions that facilitate networking and information sharing, and provide training for CSO staff in consensus building, conflict management, network leadership, and similar skills.

Network advocating for new DRR laws

The DRR Network of the Philippines (DRRNet) – a network of more than 300 institutions and individuals – was convened in 2008 to advocate for more national and local commitment to DRR and for law reforms. Christian Aid partners were instrumental in convening DRRNet, which includes members from international and local NGOs, communities, practitioners, academics and government agencies. The Ateneo School of Government provided key support by acting as the secretariat and providing a legal adviser to the network. World Vision in the Philippines and Buklod Tao later took on the role as lead conveners of DRRNet.

The network reached a shared position on reform and identified key non-negotiables such as:
- the mandatory participation of CSOs in national and local DRR policy making
- civil society being recognised as key actors in supporting the implementation of the law
- a focus on people and community-centred DRR
- decentralisation of DRR so that local government, communities and CSOs could have more responsibility and resources for DRR in their areas.

DRRNet targeted key DRR champions in congress to advocate for these non-negotiables to be incorporated into the drafts of the new law. At the same time, the network generated public support by providing clear information and educational materials that campaigned for good DRR to be taken on by congress. This was done through media briefings, news articles, films and documentaries that drove home the urgency of the new law.

SECTION 2: ADVOCACY STRATEGY AND ACTIVITIES[viii]

In keeping with Christian Aid's approach of supporting others to do advocacy it will be up to CSOs, networks and alliances, with the support of programme staff, to determine the types of activities that will best deliver the impact they seek on a particular issue. As outlined above this should involve the active participation of communities directly affected.

> *"One of the most common mistakes campaigners make is to fall into the activity trap. One goes straight from good intentions into full activity mode – with or without activity plans. The result is often misused resources, frustration and, ultimately, failure ... by pausing a little and doing some homework on strategy, campaigners can have a much better chance of channelling their resources towards the outcomes they are after."*
>
> *From "Campaigning for freedom of expression, a handbook for advocates."*
> *International Freedom of Expression Exchange.*

Advocacy is likely to have more impact if you have a well thought through *strategy* on a specific issue. It will act as a 'road map' towards achieving your objectives - and ensure that members of an organisation, network or coalition are following the same map and don't get lost!

So before partners start planning and implementing specific advocacy activities they need to put the thinking in. This is then captured in an advocacy strategy rather than a plan for one off activities.

Developing such a strategy involves:
- Investigating the root causes of the problem and the possible solutions
- Researching the issues and developing policy
- Analysing the political context, sometimes referred to as a power analysis - what are the political forces at work, what are the vested interests, how does change happen in your context?
- In a conflict or fragile context it would be critical to include power and conflict analysis
- Establishing clear goals, objectives and indicators
- Identifying stakeholders: targets, opponents, allies, supporters
- Developing key messages partners and communities want to get across
- Developing a time-line identifying key 'moments' for influencing opportunities
- Developing and implementing engaging and impactful activities, ideally linked to the 'time-line', that will act as vehicles for partner and communities' concerns and create pressure for change on decision-makers
- Planning your monitoring, reviewing and evaluating.

These steps are often referred to as an advocacy cycle (see Fig.1 below). This section will take you step by step through the development of an advocacy strategy. We talk you through 7 steps (Step 8 is monitoring, reviewing and evaluating and is mainly covered in Section 3), but of course the sequencing of these steps is not fixed. You may want to change the order – think through what works for you/your partners and your context.

Figure 1: An advocacy cycle
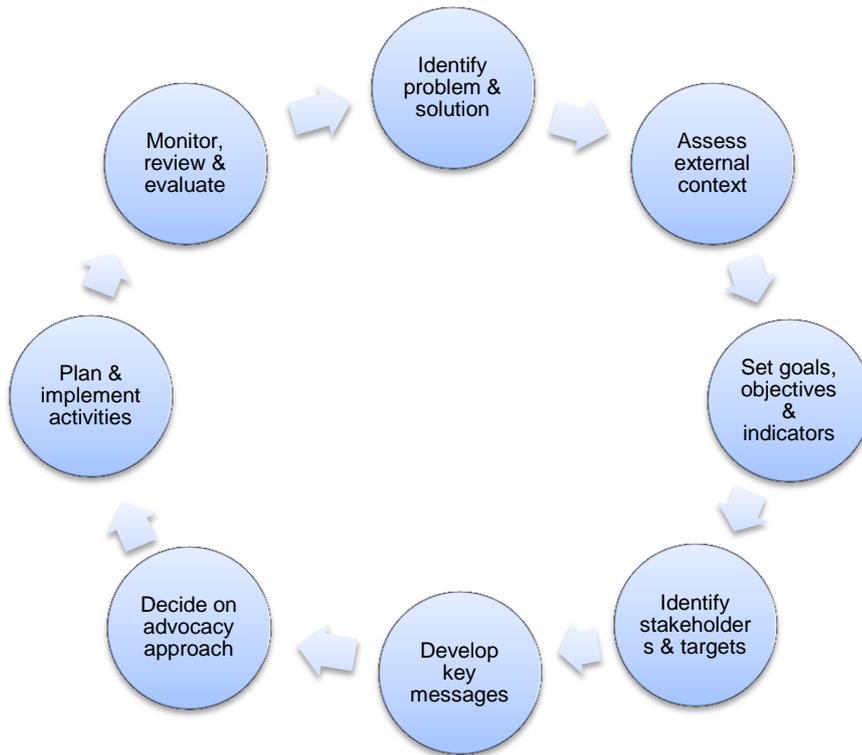
It helps to bring together all partners contributing to a programme for the purpose of developing a joint advocacy strategy as an integral part of the programme strategy development. So for example some partners might lead on national advocacy whilst others lead on community-based advocacy whilst ensuring that both inter-act and inform each other.

Finally, advocacy plans must remain flexible to respond to an ever-changing political environment, new learning, and new political opportunities or threats. An advocacy strategy should never be set in stone! Different steps will need to be revisited at different times.

[See Annex 1 for a useful advocacy strategy template].

1. Think about the problem and its causes

The first step before any strategy development or advocacy intervention is to identify the problem and its underlying causes. Only by thinking through the causes of the problem will Christian Aid and partners be able to see which interventions or advocacy strategies will be most appropriate to tackling it. Taking action without identifying what factors contribute to the problem can result in misdirected efforts - a waste of time, energy and resources!

The underlying issue (or cause) may not be obvious and you may need several approaches to understand the problem, including participatory exercises involving affected community members – such as PVCAs - desk-based research or interviews.

Identifying genuine solutions to a problem means knowing what the real causes of the problem are.

> **From problem to solution in Nicaragua**
> In Nicaragua, a coalition of CSOs led by Coordinadora Civil and IEEPP has long worked to improve
> education in the country. They conducted an analysis of the problem and possible solutions. It became clear
> that local communities suffered as a result of a lack of spending on education: children simply weren't getting
> the quality of education they needed. When they dug deeper they realised that tax policies – specifically the
> level of tax collection and the inequity within the tax system – were fundamental obstacles to increasing
> spending on education. So in 2010 coalition partners decided to address tax policy issues and include tax
> reform as a specific part of their advocacy.

Many causes and solutions may apply to your problem – resilient livelihood programmes cover a
lot of issues - so it is up to you and partners to find the ones that seem most important and that the
partner(s) has the capacity to work with. Partners will also need to factor in the capacity of
communities to raise issues at a local level and how the issues they raise could be reflected in
advocacy at a district and national level. Although you can't ever be sure of a successful outcome,
consideration should be given to the chances of success at the outset. It can be really difficult to
know where to put your energy when doing advocacy unless some analysis of this is made.

Here's a useful list of questions to help identify which issue to prioritise.[ix]

Will working on the issue:
- result in real improvement in people's lives?
- give people a sense of their own power?
- be winnable? Does it have a clear target, timeframe and policy solution?
- be widely and deeply felt?
- link local concerns with larger-scale, even global, issues?
- build lasting organisations and alliances?
- provide opportunities for women and others to learn about and be involved in politics?
- develop new leaders?
- promote awareness of, and respect for, rights?
- provide potential for raising funds?
- enable the organisation to further its vision and mission?

2. Do some further research and analysis

Robust *evidence-based* arguments, grounded in data collection and research, should not only
inform partners' advocacy strategy but serve to strengthen it. At the same time, research should be
practice-driven: the topics you research should arise from problems you have identified in your
problem and solution analysis.

> *What is policy?* There are many different kinds of policies. This guide is mainly concerned with
> government policy, also called public policy. In this context policy is understood as a course of
> action, authorised by national or local government, to achieve certain goals. Such a course of
> action may take many forms. For example, a law, a strategy or a programme. Even a speech
> made by a president or minister could outline a government's planned course of action. Policies
> can have intended and unintended outcomes – so even if intentions are good there may be
> negative outcomes of a policy.

So after your problem and solution analysis, further research will be needed to**:**
- Assess your external political and policy context.
    - What is the political context that you're operating in and how will this influence the
      approach you to take to your advocacy?
    - What are the upcoming opportunities that you should take in to account?
    - What relevant policies already exist to tackle the problem? Are they being effectively
      implemented?

- What changes to the policy would help tackle the problem you've identified, or do you need a new policy?
- Which are the institutions or organisations with the power to effect the change you seek?

- Provide **credible evidence** for your arguments. Policymakers are unlikely to be convinced by your analysis of the problem and the solutions unless you have well-researched evidence to support your case.
- Justify a particular course of action to your organisation, partners and communities.
- Provide a **baseline** at the beginning of your advocacy project so you can compare progress against it.
- **Find facts and stories to illustrate your issue.** These are important to explain and persuade both policymakers and the potential supporters of your case.
- **Assess the potential risks of undertaking advocacy on the issue.** These can be risks to partners, risks of failure, reputational risk. It will be a judgement call as to whether the benefits outweigh the risks and how the risks might be managed.

In order to be able to use research in Christian Aid or partners' advocacy work, it is important to plan ahead and make sure you have the resources required to carry out your research – it can be quite time consuming.

Community-based policy analysis in Ghana[x]

In 2003, a project in Ghana investigated trade policy from the perspective of those who experience its impact most acutely: low-income producers, traders and consumers of agricultural products. The project drew on the strengths of different stakeholders at different levels. At the national level, two CSOs played a critical role – namely the SEND Foundation of West Africa and the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC). In order to bring low-income producers, traders and consumers into the monitoring process, the next step was to identify community-based partner NGOs in all three of Ghana's ecological zones. These NGOs worked closely with the project's research officer to mobilise and involve local stakeholders. In this way, two communities were selected in each zone to participate in the research process. The findings from the research at all six sites were then channeled back to stakeholders at community, national and international levels – all in the name of representative, informed, credible advocacy.

Bear in mind that sometimes Christian Aid, a partner or network may not have the necessary skills to do the necessary research and policy analysis. If this is the case consider the option of capacity development training or using an outside expert, researcher or organisation to help undertake this work. Choose your research partners with the consideration of both experience, and their affiliation. If the researcher is affiliated to a reputable institute, they may bring some of the experience and credibility of that institute into your advocacy. Research and analysis is an important foundation for your future advocacy efforts so it is worth spending the time and resources to get it right!

Research and analysis needs to be done at different times when developing your strategy so you'll see we return to it later too.

3. Developing your goal, objectives and indicators

Once you and/or partners have identified the problems and solutions (ideally with the active participation of affected communities) and done an initial analysis of the policy and political context and opportunities, it is time to build this into a wider advocacy strategy.

The next step is usually to develop goals and objectives and set indicators for measuring progress. Once partners have done that it usually makes sense to re-visit the political and policy analysis and develop it further in order to establish a clear idea of the relevant stakeholders and targets for each objective (see below).

The **goal** is the overall purpose of the project, the **big picture,** the vision of what you/partners are ultimately trying to achieve. It is long-term and gives direction, helping you and your partner,

network or coalition focus, generally over several years. But remember, your partner(s) will need to devise the advocacy strategy, or road map, to work out how to get there. Your advocacy initiative will contribute to the fulfilment of your goal but not necessarily achieve it on its own.

The GOAL refers to the benefit that will be felt by those affected by an issue, whereas OBJECTIVES often refer to the desired changes in specific policy and practices that will contribute to the goal.

Example of a goal:
'Reduce the impact of natural disasters on people's lives in Bangladesh and enable communities to better adapt to climate change.'

An **objective** is the SPECIFIC change you want to see, the change that will help you make progress towards the ultimate goal. Good objectives can make all the difference to the success or failure of your advocacy efforts.

Objectives can be long-term or short-term, and phased accordingly. Short-term objectives can give you encouragement early on. They can focus on changing attitudes, raising awareness, getting an issue on the agenda, building support or a movement for change etc. Long-term objectives usually focus on changing the policy or practice of institutions or organisations. It may be necessary to achieve some of the short-term objectives before you can achieve the longer term ones.[xi]

An idea for developing good objectives is to make them **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound) – this makes it possible to measure and monitor progress, to celebrate successes and justify activities. Partners will need to ask themselves what is achievable or realistic in their context – it is a judgement call. And objectives may of course change over time depending on progress.

Here are some examples of SMART resilience advocacy objectives. The left-hand column explains the problem and identified solution and the right-hand column shows the related SMART objective:

Problem	*SMART Objective*
Disaster risk reduction activities at district level are seriously under-resourced, including the preparation and review of annual contingency plans. An important contributory factor is the small budget held at the national ministry for distribution to districts. The proportion of the national budget compared to other sectors has been on the decline and this trend is projected to continue in the next two years.	Government to increase budgetary allocations for climate change and disaster risk reduction from 0.9% of the budget to at least 2% by 2015
Currently the climate/forecast information needs of communities and small scale farmers are not being fully addressed either in terms of adequate geographical coverage of forecasts or support to interpret the forecast information provided. Without this it is difficult to plan their farming activities and make informed decisions about what to plant to accommodate fluctuating weather patterns or provide early warning in flood prone areas, so reducing the disaster resilience of communities.	An enhanced climate forecasting service providing timely and geographic specific forecasts to support resilience-building by 2014
National government is highly dysfunctional and local government is non-existent so it is mainly local and international NGOs that are responding to climate related disasters in local communities.	INGO/NGOs in X district(s) to shift the emphasis of their work from providing short-term relief to investing in risk reduction by 2014.

However, the focus of their activities is primarily on relief rather than investing in reducing the risks faced by communities and supporting their long-term resilience.	

It is usually a good idea to develop solution-based objectives i.e. provide some answers to the problem! NGOs are often criticised for campaigning against a policy or practice without providing possible alternatives. Being the source of credible, realistic solutions will lend weight to your advocacy. This requires a strong link between research, impact assessment and advocacy, ensuring that the identified problem and proposed solution is backed with the strongest possible evidence i.e. that the 'answer(s)' your advocacy initiative promotes will either solve the problem or are clearly superior to the existing policy or practice. It is also the case that people/supporters tend to respond better to campaigns that offer a way forward rather than a more negative 'just say no' approach.

For each objective partners need to identify the **targets** – that is the decision-making institutions or bodies (and ideally the individuals within them) that are able to bring about the changes they want to see. More on that in Step 4 (see p.14).

Having established goals and objectives it is important to develop 'signposts' or **indicators** that will 'indicate' whether or not you are on the path to meeting your objectives. It can be a policy statement from a senior politician, a declaration from a meeting, a new or revised law or policy paper, and so on.

Good indicators should measure the **impact** and **outcomes** of partner activities, whether they have contributed to achieving programme advocacy objectives, NOT just the **inputs** such as the number of activities, leaflets, letters written etc. If you are **outcome focused** you are much more likely to avoid the trap of only looking at whether you did the things you said you'd do, rather than whether they had the desired impact.

For example, indicators that relate to the objectives identified above might be:
- A 0.25% increase in national budgetary resources towards all climate change and DRR sectors each year until a 2% increase is reached by 2015; - X% increase in the proportion of resources allocated to district councils for DRR activities [X% in year 1, X% in year 2, X% in year 3 etc.] - Number of automatic and/or manual weather stations increase from X to Y - X weather stations support community-based organisations to interpret information and ensure there is a proactive strategy for engaging with women in the community

Remember, if partners don't set indicators right from the start – when they first develop their advocacy strategy – they may not collect the evidence they need to demonstrate progress when they come to monitor and evaluate their advocacy strategy. For more advice see Section 3: Planning To Monitor, Review And Evaluate.

Topping up your analysis of the context and relevant policies
Once goal and objectives are set, effectively the 'guiding lights' of an advocacy initiative, partners may need to revisit and revise what policies and decision-making processes they need to influence in order to bring about the changes they are seeking.

For example, national policymakers (like government ministers, government advisors or external experts involved in decision-making) cannot operate in a vacuum. Even if you manage to persuade them of the need for change on a given issue, they can only bring about that change through established policy or law-making channels and processes. *If partners do not relate their proposals for change to specific political opportunities or policy processes available to policymakers in your country, they are likely to be ignored.*

Key questions for partners to address in an analysis of the policy context:

- What are the different policies which impact on the problem or situation you are trying to address?
- Which are the policies that have the *most* impact on the problem and could most help solve the problem if they were changed? (This will help you prioritise where to focus advocacy work).
- What is the current status of the policy we will seek to change? Is it enshrined in law? Or is it simply the adopted policy or position of the current government?
- What are the mechanisms for bringing about a change in the policy? (They could be local, national, regional or international – or a combination).
- How have changes to this policy been brought about in the past in your country?
- Are there *opportunities* for changing the policy in the near future (e.g. a parliamentary bill on the extractive sector; a general election; etc.).
- How and where can you access further information about a policy?
- What are the barriers to implementing existing policy?

Partners might discover when investigating what relevant policies exist that ***the problem is not with the policy but a failure to implement it.*** For example, a law exists at a national level but is not being applied at a local level. If this is the case they will need to find out where the problem lies, what the blockages are, i.e. why the policy is not being properly implemented. Are there budget restraints? Are local decision-makers unaware of the policy? Is there disagreement over who is responsible for implementing the policy? Again, identifying where the problem lies will help you work out the best way of tackling it and who has the power to ensure that change happens at a local or national level.

Analysing the implementation of water and education policies in Zanzibar[xii]
In 2004 a survey was conducted in Zanzibar to monitor the implementation of water and education policies. The project involved stakeholders from the government statistical office, government departments, the Public Affairs Centre of India, as well as CSOs based in Zanzibar. Two districts were selected for the survey: one urban and one rural. A sample group of 1,015 households was interviewed. The survey questionnaire recorded feedback from the respondent on the accessibility, use, quality, cost and reliability of services. The survey revealed some stark differences between the delivery of services in the rural and urban districts. They also revealed that a larger share of women-headed than man-headed households found cost was an obstacle to accessing services. These survey findings helped form policy recommendations which groups advocated for government to adopt.

Analysis of the policy context for your advocacy is not something you do just when you are first developing your advocacy strategy. It has to be *on-going* throughout the course of your advocacy strategy, as politics and policies are always changing – regardless of your advocacy! For example, a general election and a change of government can change the policy context for advocacy overnight.

For further advice and support on analysing the policy context for your advocacy, and some helpful tools for doing so, see:
- Monitoring Government Policies: A toolkit for civil society organisations in Africa' Cafod/Christian Aid/Trocaire
- Community Led Policy Monitoring for DRR, Christian Aid

4. Identifying stakeholders and targets

In order to fulfil the goals and objectives of an advocacy initiative, partners need to identify **'who'** they and/or communities should be speaking to and who they need to work with in order to achieve the change they have identified. These people are usually referred to as stakeholders because they have an interest or 'stake' in the issue.

Partners may have a sense of who they are from their initial scoping of the political and policy context. This is their chance to pin down specific **targets,** and **stakeholders** more broadly, for each objective. This is often referred to as 'power mapping' or 'power analysis' i.e. identifying those

who have the power to deliver the change you want to see and, in turn, those who have influence on them.

Types of stakeholders usually break down into the following categories:

Targets – they are decision makers, people who have the power to make the desired changes, or people with influence over decision-makers. Some decision makers can turn out to be allies so don't automatically think of them as opponents. Targets can be broken down into:
- Primary targets (those with the most direct influence) e.g. the government Minister responsible, Executive Director of private sector company
- Secondary targets (those with influence over the primary targets or, those with some influence on the issue but not as much as the primary targets). These secondary targets can be found in a variety of places, and not just among those officially part of a decision-makers immediate circle. They include the media, members of parliament, donors, faith leaders, other government departments and trade unions.[xiii]

In some contexts, where for example government structures are non-existent or highly dysfunctional, such as during conflict or in fragile states, non-traditional decision-makers such as faith leaders or NGOs may become an important target for partner and community advocacy. It is often the case that in these scenarios there will be a greater emphasis on 'dialogue' than for example popular mobilisation or media work.

Constituents – the people partners work with and for, who are directly affected by the situation and can be expected to benefit from partner advocacy. Constituents can make very effective advocates themselves so ideally a partner's strategy would include supporting local communities to raise their voices and influence local decision-makers such as district officials, local councillors, chiefs or clan leaders.

Allies – those who share Christian Aid, partners' and communities' aims and can help to influence or put pressure on the decision-makers. Allies could be CSOs, churches, media, scientists, academics, NGOs, business, donors etc. They may even turn out to be decision-makers if you are lucky! It can be useful to develop 'champions', those who have influence who are prepared to 'champion' your cause in the media or corridors of power.

Opponents – those who are opposed to what you want to achieve and will try to block the changes you want to see

Remember that partner analysis of an institution needs to be sub-divided as there may be allies, opponents or targets within one institution. It is also important to be as specific as possible - put a name to your target rather than just the institution. For example, don't just think of your target as the 'Ministry of Development' but work out who within that Ministry has the power to bring about the change. Analysing stakeholder motivations, strengths and weaknesses can also help to identify entry-points/ ways to influence them.

When partners come to identifying which stakeholders are relevant to the resilience issue they have chosen to work on it is helpful to ask the following questions[xiv]:

- **Which** are the relevant groups, professions or organisations?
- **Who** is the relevant contact person within the organisation?
- **What** is their specific interest or stake in the issue?
- **What** is their position with respect to the issue?

5. Developing key messages

By now you know:
- What you want to say and why you want to say it i.e. Christian Aid and/or partners have identified the problem and solution and done some research
- The audience to whom partners want to communicate the issue i.e. they have identified and analysed the relevant stakeholders and done a power analysis

Now you need to think about *how*?! This is where developing **'key messages'** comes in.

A message is a concise and persuasive statement about your advocacy that captures:
- What you want to achieve, the change you want to see
- Why you want to achieve it – positive or negative consequences of no action
- How you propose to achieve it
- What action you want taken by the audience

There are many different ways to communicate a given advocacy message. It is *critical to tailor the message to the audience.* As advocates, words are the weapons we use to make our case. So choosing the right words for the relevant audience and directing them at our targets in a way that they will understand, and hopefully respond positively to, is very important.

Your message should be memorable. You want it to stick in the mind of your target long after you have left the meeting or the article has been read or the radio carrying it has been turned off.

So, a good basic message:
- Can be tailored to fit specific audiences. Partners need to think about what way of presenting the message will most resonate with the target audience and encourage them to listen and take the message on board. Understanding what perspective your audience comes from is key to being effective: What motivates them? What are their interests in the issue? Why should they care? What might make them care more? What message is most likely to catch their eye or ear?
- Uses clear, brief arguments that will persuade the audience.
- Uses simple and unambiguous language that can be easily understood. For example, avoid using technical words like 'resilient livelihoods' when you are talking to the media or the general public. They are unlikely to understand you.

Target	Key message
Primary targets: Prime Minister & Finance Minister Secondary target: Minister for Development	[X country's] ability to prevent and respond to disasters is seriously undermined by the continuous decline in national budget allocation towards climate change. Reducing the risk of disasters is a lot less costly than responding to them. Please help communities adapt by increasing the budget for climate change to 2% by 2015.
Director of Planning and Development (district/local level)	You have a chance to save lives in this district by allocating financial resources towards an annual review of contingency plans. Be prepared!
INGO or NGO in local district	You supported us when the floods came, you helped save lives when the droughts threatened starvation – we want to be better prepared in future. Work with us to reduce the risks we face before they happen!

Consider what the targets' likely defence will be and how to counter their arguments effectively. It can be helpful to produce a checklist of likely arguments and how to counter them.

Partners and/or communities key messages may change over time to reflect changed attitudes or circumstances. For example, as public understanding of the problem develops so the complexity of the message to the public can reflect this change.

6. Deciding on an advocacy approach

Your partners' analysis of the policy and political context in the country, plus their analysis of who has the power to bring about change and who has a stake in it will all help determine what overall *approach* to take and therefore what advocacy activities they undertake. The key question they need to address is:

What approach is most likely to bring about the change we are seeking in our country – given the political context and the nature and behaviour of the institutions we are targeting?

The following alternative approaches may help you/partners decide what overall approach to take – depending on your context:

- **Adversarial approach**
  Campaign intended to shame and put pressure on your advocacy targets. Usually involves an `outsider strategy' i.e. partners do not expect to be consulted during the policy-making process, or gain access to ministers and civil servants. Rather, they work primarily outside the governmental decision making process with an emphasis on public campaigning and media work.

  Advantages: the targets of partner advocacy may react in a hostile way but may still bend to public pressure or public exposure of their wrongs. Just because they react in a hostile way doesn't mean they won't change and move in the right direction!

  Disadvantages/risks: May alienate partner targets. They may not be invited to the negotiating table. In some countries, partners may also experience a backlash from their targets, including harassment or attempts to silence them or close down their organisation.

- **Private approach/insider strategy**
  Lobbying behind closed doors, constructive dialogue, and emphasis on policy analysis. Usually involves an `insider', collaborative approach.

  Advantages: can increase influence with policymakers because of the constructive relations partners have built with them. Partners may become a trusted source of advice. A 'softer' alternative in hostile or fragile environments where partners or communities may come under direct threat if they adopt a more adversarial approach.

  Disadvantages/risks: possibility of co-option by policymakers, they may give the appearance of listening but string partners along with no change at the end of it; or without outside pressure from the public or media partners may end up with a weak compromise.

Subtle evidence based approach to advocacy in Zimbabwe
In a country like Zimbabwe, where there is a challenging political environment in which more popular advocacy/campaigning is restricted, the country team was successful in transforming the way farming is practiced through evidence based advocacy on Conservation Agriculture (C Ag). In communal farming areas, changing climate and weather patterns and deteriorating soils had contributed significantly to food insecurity faced by rural communities; food aid became the major food source over a 15 year period.

In order to improve understanding and acceptance for C Ag techniques, CA funded the production and distribution of a technical handbook to identified stakeholders including parliamentarians, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and its departments (Research, Extension, Mechanisation and Agricultural education), Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, FAO, and the donor community. This was accompanied by supporting trials by specialist research organisations and by CA and partners promoting, training and trailing C Ag with communal farmers and agricultural extension staff. This served to build a body of supporters at the local and national levels. Post-harvest surveys carried out by CA and other organisations showed that maize yields improved from 200kg to 4 tonnes per hectare and though processing raised the national average to 0.8t/ha and that soil structure, water holding capacity and fertility improved significantly.

The evidence base enabled supporters of C Ag from within the MoA to: introduce C Ag as a discipline in primary and secondary schools, agricultural colleges and universities - agricultural students are allotted a plot on which they practice C Ag as a condition to pass the course; promote the re-training of extension officers in the field; and launch an up-scaling framework that includes mechanizing C Ag through introducing animal-drawn equipment. Currently, the government of Zimbabwe has a national target of 500, 000 households practicing C Ag on 250, 000ha and yielding 1.5t/ha by 2015. At the end of 2011, 350, 000 households were practicing on 150, 000ha and yielding 0.8t/ha.

It may be possible to use a *combination* of the above approaches – with different organisations in your network or group of partners taking different roles. Alternatively partners could start with the private/insider approach and then switch to a more public/adversarial approach if the insider approach isn't working.

A collaborative approach between CSOs, academics and government in Tanzania[xv]
The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) has been working since the early 1990s to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. In 1997, it launched a gender budget initiative (GBI) to influence and transform government's policy planning and budgeting. The aim was to make these processes more responsive to the needs of marginalised communities, particularly women, poor men and youth.

The GBI's research activities have typically been undertaken by teams of three: including a gender activist or CSO-based researcher, an academic and a government staff member, such as a planner or budget officer. The academic partners bring sound research methods and specialist knowledge to the table. The CSO-based members make sure that a gender perspective and participatory methods are integrated into the process. The government officials, in turn, provide access to data that would otherwise have been out of the reach of CSOs. Great emphasis is placed on creating government ownership of the research findings, to increase the likelihood of government acting on those findings.

The GBI has benefited a great deal from this approach. It has contributed to open and constructive relationships with officials in various ministries. It has also meant that the findings of their work could more readily be taken up and fed back into government decision-making.

Once partners have decided on their overall advocacy approach, they can start to plan the specific advocacy activities they and communities will undertake.

7. Activities

In order to be strategic it is important for partners to always consider **how** the activities they plan to use will help achieve their objectives – it may be a great idea for an event but unless it is relevant to fulfilling their objectives, steer clear. Too often CSO's focus on what activities to do rather than putting the strategic thinking in first!

The idea is to combine activities in a winning mix. Partners can use different activities at different moments but ideally they should be mutually reinforcing. Activities also need to be **appropriate to**

the target audience – again, different situations will call for different tactics – and **timed** to take advantage of external opportunities to influence the targets or relevant processes identified as key to delivering the change you seek. For this reason partners should develop an **advocacy timeline** that shows significant external opportunities or 'hooks' and the planned activities – this may of course need to be adapted to reflect changes in external circumstances such as new opportunities or delays in processes.

Examples of the types of advocacy (or communication) activity that Christian Aid could support are:

METHOD	EXPLANATION	COMMON USE	EXAMPLES
Raising awareness	Informing people of the situation so that they are aware of the issues, often the first step in an advocacy process, so that people are empowered to engage in the issue/campaign and take action. It is essential to remember that **awareness raising is a means to an end, not an end in itself!** Because advocacy is about achieving change it is not enough to stop at awareness raising, you must build from there and encourage people to act. Rather than simply telling the audiences that you're going on a journey, you need to tell them *why*, ask them to *join you*, share ideas for different *directions* and the delights of the *final destination*.	When information is hidden; When issues are complex; To build confidence of communities that partners hope will take action in the future.	Training; Posters and leaflets; Videos; Community meetings; Road Shows; Music, drama, songs, jingles; Media: local or community radio, newspapers etc.
Networking	Building alliances with as many people and organisations as possible. Creating a movement for change.	To make long-term advocacy sustainable; When additional strength in numbers and skills are needed.	Women's Solidarity and Support Group (Sierra Leone); DRR Network of the Philippines (DRRNet); Civil Society Network on Climate Change (Malawi);
Lobbying	Speaking directly to the target, explaining the detail of the problem and the proposed solution. In sensitive situations such as during conflict or in fragile states a 'softer' form of engaging with targets is sometimes referred to as 'dialogue'.	When the target is open and will listen to facts and careful argument.	Meetings; Community and district meetings with council and/or local representatives; Phone calls; Briefing document; Public meetings/fora; Invite Ministers to make presentations and chair sessions at key events; Invite decision-maker e.g. MP, Minister, to visit local community.
Media	Using the media is one of the most effective ways to raise public awareness and spread campaign messages. Community, local, national and church radio, television and newspapers.	When you cannot get direct access to policy makers (or in addition to it); To raise awareness; To expose corporate behaviour;	Radio phone-in or at the studio; Press release; Briefing a journalist; Writing opinion editorials.
Mobilising/ Popular campaigning	Closely connected with awareness raising and media; Involves harnessing public pressure so that as many people as possible engage in the campaign and contact decision makers to call for change.	When policy-makers can be swayed by public opinion and/or by their constituents; To show strength of feeling;	Marches and rallies; Petitions; Road Shows; SMSs; Letter writing, postcards, email actions (though these

		To use strength in numbers and organisation.	are likely to be limited in some countries due to high illiteracy rates and limited access to the internet).

Local advocacy example: Association of the Disabled Women and Association of Young Economists, Georgia[xvi]

In eight villages in Zugdidi district, the Association is helping local people to increase the **transparency of government budget processes**. They are enabling people to claim and use the funding and resources that exist, and to which they are entitled. In Inguri village, the group discovered that their village budget was not receiving its proper share of taxes, paid into the district budget by local businesses [*identifying a problem*]. The group alerted local business [*information sharing*] and is now *monitoring* the tax payments.

As group member, Rubin Karchava, explains: 'The group examines the local budget, and if figures don't match up, they query them with the village governor [*lobbying*]. We also hold village meetings to hear about people's *problems*. We act as an *information source* for the village governor. It hasn't always been this simple though. Before, we tried to look at the budget, but the door was closed to us. Now we are a strong force. We did *radio shows* and produced *leaflets about people's rights* to examine the budget, and then our relationship with the local governor began to improve…The group has received *training* in economics and budget processes, how to interact with local government officials [*lobbying*], and how to conduct questionnaires [*research*] in the community. Some of our community groups know more about the budget process than local government officials do! So we also work with local governors and offer them training. The result of this is that when they are asked to approve the district budget – they are more likely to speak up on behalf of their village.'

SECTION 3: PLANNING TO MONITOR, REVIEW AND EVALUATE

Why should you monitor, review and evaluate advocacy?

Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating advocacy is essentially about assessing (periodically but regularly) whether you and partners are seeing any changes in the 'big picture' that you are trying to influence, what role you, your partners or communities have played in these changes, and reassessing targets and approaches in order to strengthen your contribution. Good monitoring and evaluation will allow you to build on past successes, and to identify risks early on to tackle them before they become obstacles.

There are several reasons why an advocacy strategy should be regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated:

- **Track and take account of the changing context**, especially the arguments and positions of decision-makers and major opponents, and respond adequately by **seizing opportunities** and adapting strategies and action plans.

- **Reflect,** learn from your/partner/community experiences and **keep revising the strategy** to ensure it is still appropriate for the circumstances

- Checking whether the **objectives** have been achieved or if they need to be adapted

- Assess whether your **style of working** is the best way of achieving the stated objectives – and change it if it is not!

- **Keep focused on the broader picture** and long-term goals to ensure you are working towards these, rather than just focusing on activities.

- **Justify** your activities – are they still the right ones to deliver change?

- **Ensure resources are used effectively** making the most effective use of time, effort and money.

- It can also help **keep an eye on the funding space** where you source your project resources. E.g. is there a window of opportunity for a funding bid to support your/partners' work.

- **Enhance accountability** to various stakeholders including any who have been involved in the advocacy efforts, partners, communities, supporters, donors, and other parts of the organisation.

The following table gives examples of the types of change you may wish to monitor[xvii]:

Types of change	Rationale	Possible aspects to monitor
1. Policy change in local or national government (or multilateral institutions)	The process where a group or groups work to influence public decision-making. It refers not only to laws, but also to the creation of programmes, allocation of resources and implementation. This may require a close monitoring of individual targets.	• Changes in language • Changes in public statements by your targets • Changes in wording of policies or conventions • Ratification of conventions • Changes in legislation • Changes in budget allocations • Extent to which policies are implemented (and how these have changed) i.e. practice change • Extent to which implemented policies achieve the desired effect; what impact (or lack of impact) the change has had on the people, public services and communities expected to

		• benefit
		• Arguments of major opponents – any shifts – so you are prepared
		• Environmental and social impacts of implemented policies
2. Policy change in private sector	The focus here is on the policies and institutional behaviour of the private sector. It may involve work to change particular bad practice, to encourage the introduction of new ways of working or rewards for good practice.	• Changes in particular company practices or policies • Changes in sector wide consensus and codes of practice • Environmental and social impacts of above
3. Strengthening networks, coalitions and international development movement	The focus here is on increasing the capacity of the national development networks to influence the policy process, to monitor government enforcement of existing laws and policies and to keep the public and policy makers informed of shortcomings and demand accountability. It also includes increasing capacity to work together effectively in networks at the local, national and international level.	• Increase in NGO advocacy and policy skills, capacity, knowledge and effectiveness • Formation of national, regional and international networks that can effectively engage and influence institutions on resilience issues • Inviting advisers to your network who can advise you on technical issues, and create a board of senior advisers to carry you through an advocacy cycle • Greater synergy of aims and activities in development networks/ movements • Strong relationships built between groups in the global South and North that erode traditional inequalities and dependencies and form the basis for long term cooperative action • Increase in collaboration, trust, unity & sustainability • Increased movement effectiveness in influencing and monitoring decision-makers
4. Consensus building	Building consensus in society favourable to resilience related development issues. Working towards greater acceptance and recognition of poverty and inequality issues, the role resilient development can play in challenging them and the action that needs to be taken. Institutionalisation of new social norms in media and education systems via civic education.	• Extent to which resilience seen as relevant topic for debate • Shifts in the way the debate is framed (positive or negative) • Extent of support from media, opinion leaders, education system • Changes in public opinion (positive/negative)
5. Governance	This dimension looks at whether the effort has increased the access and influence of local or national groups in debates and decision-making, or strengthened the accountability of powerful institutions.	• Level of acceptance, recognition & legitimacy of community experiences, CSOs, NGOs, social movements and policy think-tanks • Existence and influence of fora for NGOs/CSOs to input into resilience issues • Change in accountability and transparency of public institutions
6. Changes at community level	This focus is on increasing specific communities' awareness of resilience issues and the implications for their lives. It includes developing individual and group motivation to change relevant local behaviour and negotiate local resilience issues.	• Awareness of resilience issues and positive models of change • Community more aware of their rights and of the opportunities to call on local government to allocate budget to resilience measures • Changes in people's behaviour & attitude • Changes in local skills & capacity to manage & monitor changes in their environment • Improved systems to monitor local environment, track improved resilience and allow greater participation of citizens in the process
7. Implementing/ testing and	In many cases, policies and practices are already in place but have not yet been tested or fully implemented. In these	• Learning on practicality of existing policies • Decision-makers awareness of pros and cons

supporting the adaptation of existing policies and practices	situations, your organisation or network can support the testing and implementation of the policies or support government capacity to implement.	of existing policies and practices • Increased capacity of government officials to implement policies
8. Organisation/ network reputation	Your reputation is key to your success in advocacy so you need to keep abreast of how you are perceived by the public, decision-makers and the media	• Changes in reputation (positive or negative) • Level of engagement with your campaign by supporters (increased, decreased, same?) • Government/decision makers engagement with pressure groups: whose requests are heard, whose interests represented • Who else is involved directly or indirectly in advocacy on same or similar issue – do their strategies complement or contradict yours?

How to monitor, review and evaluate

Your advocacy strategy is the first place to start as it provides the basic framework for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating your advocacy initiative. Step 3 already stressed the importance of developing indicators alongside objectives – and gave tips for doing so. Once you have got good indicators and a clear strategy that explains why specific targets and actions have been chosen, you are already half way towards being able to monitor, review and evaluate your resilient livelihoods advocacy work.

The next step is to agree a process for how partners will monitor and evaluate their progress against the indicators and the changing context, and how you in turn will share this information. One suggestion is to once every **three months**, hold a discussion with the core members of their advocacy initiative to:

- Recall and **record the key activities** carried out that quarter. This should be informed by the on-going monitoring partners are conducting as part of their community programme work. This will allow them, and you, to build up a record of what they have actually done over time. Leave it any longer some key factors and details are likely to be forgotten! This is also an excellent opportunity to **review, reflect and learn.**

- **Record any evidence** ('indicators') of progress or results achieved as well. This could include press cuttings or other media on relevant issues and specifically on your partner or network, feedback / responses from targets or other stakeholders, or any other reasons you have for believing that partners are making progress in terms of policy change or engagement with targets. It could be as simple as keeping a log book or folder handy to store them in. Especially where signs of progress seem to be linked to partner activities, consider how they could build on these or learn lessons for areas where there is less progress.

- **Reflect** on key questions such as:

  - How have partner relationships with targets, allies and other actors developed – what seems promising?

  - What has been particularly challenging?

  - Have you or partners seen any impact on the target audience(s)?

  - Where do you or partners need to invest more effort or change the approach?

- Consider including **conversations with constituents**, asking them what they think has changed. This can provide greater accountability and important indicators of progress, even if changes in the policy or practices have not yet been brought about. For example "people in my community are now much more aware of their rights and of the opportunities to call on local government to allocate budget to DRR measures".

The following table provides some further suggestions about the kinds of questions you might want to ask yourself/partners when monitoring progress against the strategy's policy and practice change indicators.

Possible indicators and key questions[xviii]

Objective	Possible indicators (depending on stage of advocacy)	Key monitoring questions
Specific policy change	❑ Changes in rhetoric of key decision-makers ❑ Changes in wording of policies or conventions ❑ Ratification of conventions ❑ Changes in legislation ❑ Changes in budget allocations ❑ Extent to which policies are implemented ❑ Extent to which implemented policies achieve the desired effect ❑ Environmental, fiscal and social impacts of implemented policies	<u>What has changed and why:</u> • What has changed (positive, negative and unexpected)? • Why do we think these changes have happened? • What have we achieved? (refer to indicators) How do we know? <u>Are our strategies correct:</u> • Are we targeting the right person/organisation or body? Is our timing right? • Is our political analysis robust? • How are we trying to influence: do we need to change our tactics, approaches? • Are we taking advantage of opportunities as they arise? • Are we working with the right allies? • Has the external environment changed? Are there new opportunities we can seize? Old ones disappeared? • What have we learnt? Are our objectives still possible? Are they still the most appropriate objectives? • What are the next steps: - What should we continue to do? - What should we change or do differently?

Remember:
- Managing and monitoring financial performance is an essential part of all monitoring activities. Thinking about the cost effectiveness of Christian Aid's and partner work and sharing information about how much particular activities cost is a key part of learning and accountability.
- *DON'T FORGET TO SHARE!* Earlier in this section we looked at some of the reasons for monitoring and evaluating advocacy. **Accountability** was a very important one. Sharing the analysis, findings, insights and lessons from partners advocacy work supports not only the on-going improvement and effectiveness of their advocacy work but is also key to being **accountable** to communities and other stakeholders.

External evaluation

For some advocacy work, you may also want to undertake a more in-depth external evaluation, for example mid-way through an advocacy strategy, after a campaign action or at the end of a long resource-intensive advocacy initiative. An evaluation helps you, partners and communities to take stock and learn lessons to make the next major effort more effective. Using someone outside the team, organisation or network brings in fresh perspectives and can help challenge assumptions. It

is important to find someone with experience in the particular type of work to do this. This can be challenging to fund, especially for smaller organisations, so if possible ensure you include it in your funding framework.

Advocacy work is of course hard to objectively evaluate and it can be hard to differentiate the impact of your/partner work from that of other organisations. However an evaluation will help you probe more deeply into your assumptions about change, give stakeholders a say, help you assess the level of partner contribution towards any impact, and help you and partners to be more accountable. It should also be an opportunity to explore changes in the context and ask questions about direction and strategy. The insights and findings from these evaluations should inform learning throughout the organisation or network and help you to improve the quality of the advocacy work.

And finally…..

Advocacy is an exciting and challenging activity with plenty of twists and turns along the way. As some of the examples in this guide demonstrate, staff, partners and communities around the world have shown again and again just how much can be achieved when we work together to challenge the systems and structures that keep people poor. Advocacy has literally changed people's lives, so it is a challenge worth embracing – good luck!

Written and compiled for Christian Aid by:
Sally Golding (Advocacy Consultant) – May 2012

Christian Aid support for your and/or partners' advocacy work:

In addition to this guide, it is worth exploring the resources available on the intranet in the Resources Index on the Programme Resources Hub. You can find out who to approach for support on the Support&Connections forum. You can share experiences, learning, resources and ideas with staff and partners on the Learning Exchange. Or you can go directly to any of the following staff members to find out if they have the capacity to provide advice and support for your country programmes' advocacy:

Simone Field – Resilient Livelihoods Advisor
Jose Luis Penya – Resilient Livelihoods Advisor
Richard Ewbank - Climate Change Adviser
Katherine Nightingale – Senior Advocacy and Policy Officer (Humanitarian)
Gaby Drinkwater - Advocacy & Policy Officer for Accountable Governance & Climate Change (LAC)
Nadia Saracini – Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer (AME)
Sophie Powell - Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer (Africa)
Kato Lambrechts - Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer (Africa)

APPENDIX – Advocacy Strategy template

Goal of advocacy project: XXX

Objectives	Indicators	Targets	Allies	Key messages	Activities	Time-Scale	Responsibility
What are your objectives for the advocacy project?	What are your indicators that will help you measure the success of your advocacy project?	Who will you target and seek to persuade of the need for the change you propose?	Who are your allies, those who will support your advocacy work?	What are the key messages for this objective – are they tailored to the target audience?	What are the proposed activities – do they fit with the objectives?	When will the activities be undertaken?	Lead individual, partner or network

[i] This section draws on *'Partnership for Resilience: Reducing Disaster Risks through Effective Partnerships'* Christian Aid April 2011; and *Community led policy monitoring for DRR* – Christian Aid guidance http://www.christianaid.org.uk/images/DRR_case_studies_2011.pdf

[ii] *'Partnerships for Change'* Christian Aid 2012 http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/2012_strategy.pdf

[iii] Details of the UN Hyogo Framework for Development (HFA) can be found in *'Community led policy monitoring for DRR', Christian Aid or* http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa

[iv] *'Building Disaster Resilient Communities Project, 2005-2010: Review of global research, policy and advocacy functions'* Helen Collinson for Christian Aid (Dec 2010)

[v] *Community led policy monitoring for DRR* – Christian Aid guidance www.christianaid.org.uk/images/clpm-drr.pdf

[vi] For more detail see *'Partnership for Resilience: Reducing Disaster Risks through Effective Partnerships'* Christian Aid April 2011

[vii] *Facing up to the Storm. How local communities can cope with disaster: lessons from Orissa and Gujarat,* Christian Aid, 2003

[viii] This section draws heavily on *'Tax Justice Advocacy: A Toolkit for Civil Society'* Christian Aid and SOMO January 2011 www.christianaid.org.uk/images/clpm-drr.pdf

[ix] *A New Kind of Power, People and Politics – The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation,* Veneklasen and Miller, 2002

[x] Source: *Talking Trade: Communities Making Trade Policy in Ghana,* Christian Aid and SEND Foundation (London, 2003). www.christianaid.org/indepth/311talkingtrade/index.htm

[xi] *Practical Action in Advocacy*, Graham Gordon, Tearfund 2002

[xii] Source: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/1143141-1116501474243/20507530/Zanzibar[1].ppt

[xiii] *Effective Advocacy training course materials*, Ian Chandler, The Pressure Group, 2006

[xiv] *Practical Action for Advocacy*, Tearfund 2002

[xv] Find out more about the TGNP and its gender budget initiative from www.tgnp.org.

[xvi] From Oxfam website www.oxfamhaiti.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/georgia/budget.htm

[xvii] Adapted from *'Monitoring Advocacy Work'* WWF, Sept 2008

[xviii] Ibid