



E-Advocacy Training for Women and Youth

A guide to communicate with impact

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers' (Network) skills-building training on e-advocacy. The Network builds bridges between grassroots peacemakers and global players in order to strengthen the work done for sustainable peace. The Network strengthens peacemaking through collaboratively supporting the positive role of religious and traditional actors in peace and peacebuilding processes. This include working to mainstream inclusivity within our work and advancing the leadership of women and youth within peacemaking and broader peacebuilding processes.

The Network engages women, youth, and other marginalized populations through: supporting and amplifying their research and analysis; magnifying their voices in policy reforms; offering to join our Network as a Member or Supporter; participating in our regional and thematic working groups; and participating in our joint consortium programmes.

If you are interested in participating or learning more about the Network, please visit our website at peacemakersnetwork.org.

What is E-Advocacy?

Broadly speaking, advocacy is the process of building support for a specific issue or cause and influencing others to take action in order to achieve a desired change. Advocacy can take place on many levels, including locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. E-Advocacy is instrumentalizing the advocacy process online, or in other words, online organizing.



A Good E-Advocacy Issue Should

- ▶ Be based in evidence to show that your issue is a problem.
- ▶ Show how a change in policy, law, approach, etc. or implementation thereof should help to improve the problem.
- ▶ Should be reasonably attainable in three to five years.
- ▶ Should be specific and clear.

Set SMART Goals For Your E-Advocacy Issue

S – Specific

Is what you want to achieve well-defined and clearly understood?

M – Measurable

Can progress be tracked? Can you measure the result of your objective and know when it has been accomplished?

A – Attainable

Is there a political will to address the issue? Can the goal be reasonably achieved in three to five years?

R – Realistic

Does evidence exist to prove the achievement of the goal will help to address the issue?

T – Time

Is there a clear time frame for reaching the goal?

Example

The health education committee will update the guidelines on COVID-19 child vaccinations by 24 September, in time for the vaccination campaign, and will include information on the recent changes to vaccine schedules and costs.



Write Your SMART Advocacy Goal Here:

WHO will

HOW to ensure

WHAT

by WHEN



Who Are Your Stakeholders and Target Audience?

An essential step of the advocacy process is understanding which players are already on the field. After having gathered evidence on your advocacy topic, this research can help you identify those who can best help you reach your goal. Stakeholders are people who have explicit interest in your issue.

Stakeholders can

- be implemented by your advocacy,
- can lend a hand in influencing decision-makers,
- be decision-makers themselves.

Learning about which stakeholders are already involved in advocating for your issue, understanding who needs to be involved in your cause, and mapping out their ability to influence and/or be influenced is essential to increase alignment, prevent overlap, and be most effective.

Stakeholders could include

- Government (local, national, regional, international)
- Civil society organizations
- Community organizations and groups (formal and informal)
- Religious communities and leaders
- Private sector and corporations
- Media
- Academia or research institutions

Map Out Your Stakeholders Here

Private Sector	
Individuals	Organizations

Civil Society	
Individuals	Organizations

Government (all levels)	
Individuals	Organizations

Faith and Community	
Individuals	Organizations

Global Actors (in and out of country)	
Individuals	Organizations

In thinking about stakeholders, it is important to ask yourself

- What organizations or which individuals are already advocating for my advocacy issue within my community, country, or region?

- Who has decision-making power within my community, country, or region?

- Who is best-placed to influence decision-makers within my community, country, or region?

- Who is best-placed to be part of my advocacy to achieve its ultimate goals and objectives?

Defining Your Target Audiences

Once you have identified stakeholders, you can start to identify and map your target audiences – those you want to reach and influence through your e-advocacy.

Decision-makers are your *primary target audience* for advocacy messages. They have the authority to invest, create policies, and implement programs, making their buy-in and engagement key to achieving your advocacy goal. Depending on the context, decision-makers could be faith actors or community leaders, private sector leaders, parliaments, ministers, or government civil servants, to name a few.

Primary target audiences

Before you can decide on a strategy for influencing your primary target audience or secondary influencers, you must first understand who has the power to make that change. This person, or small group of people, are your decision-makers.

Influencers or secondary target audiences

Decision-makers are not your only audience. Other actors can advance your knowledge, awareness, and opinions of the primary target audience or decision-makers. These individuals, groups, or organizations are considered your *influencers* or your *secondary target audience*. Influencers may be individuals close to your decision-makers (primary target audience) or a group of people with the power to pressure decision-makers to take the action that you want. This can include the media, faith leaders, women and young people, politicians, businesses, and donor organizations, among others. In identifying your influencers, remember that a wide variety of people can influence the actions of policy and other decision-makers.



Fill in Your Power Map Here to Discover Your Primary Audience and Influencers

High-Level of Decision-Making Power

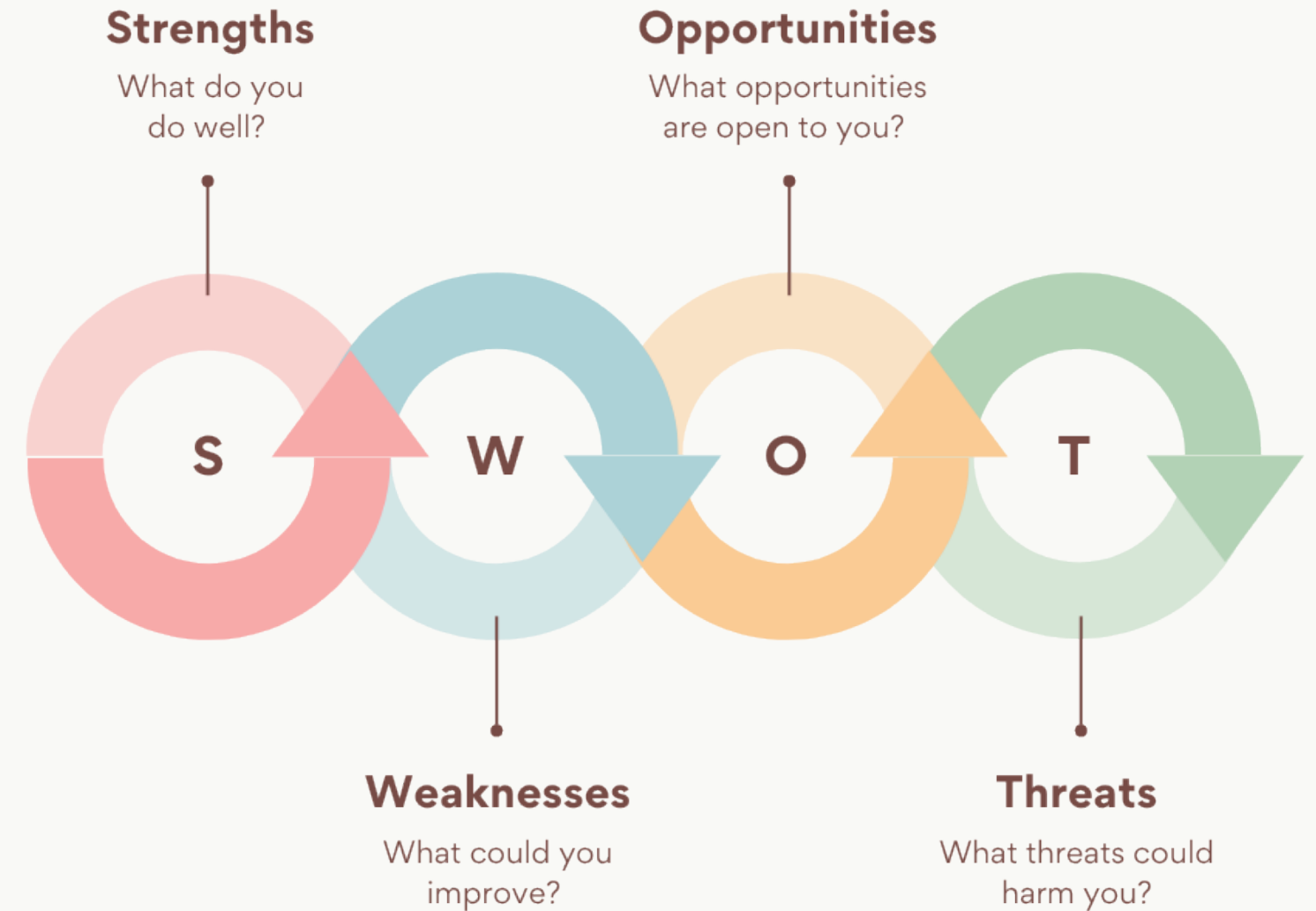
Against Your Case	<u>Main Opposition</u>	<u>Champions</u>
	<u>Minor Undecided or Minor Opponents</u>	<u>Allies</u>

Low-Level of Decision-Making Power

In Favor of Your Case

What Is Your E-Advocacy Power?

First, assess your power and role. To determine the best role for you, your organization, or coalition to generate positive action around your issue, think through your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).



Let's do a SWOT analysis

What online platform(s) am I currently best and worst at? Am I able to efficiently use these platforms?

Where are the presence of my decision-makers and are they reachable?

Where are my allies' strengths in helping me?

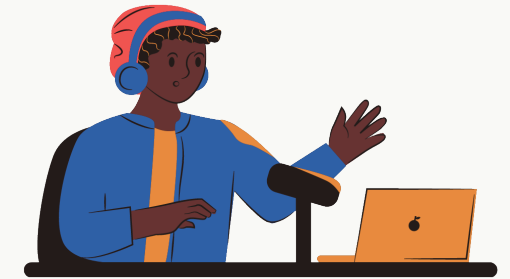
What are the strengths of my opponents when pushing back?

Your responses to these questions will help you choose your tactics.

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>

Examples include

- ▶ Photo campaign via Instagram
- ▶ Video campaign via TikTok
- ▶ Online event for influencers via Facebook
- ▶ Social media takeover via Twitter
- ▶ Radio campaigns
- ▶ Online podcasts
- ▶ News media articles
- ▶ Academic or policy journal entry
- ▶ Blog posts



When thinking through specific tactics,, make sure they meet the needs of the population you are trying to reach and benefit, as well as effectively influence your primary and secondary target audiences. No single tactic is better than another. Often, e-advocacy campaigns will employ a mixture of both types of tactics to garner a greater change of success. Be ready to be flexible in your plan as your opponent's actions may make you change your approach.

Once you have decided your e-advocacy tactic, do your research and find your decision-makers, allies, and opponents. A spreadsheet works great for organizational purposes!



How To Create An Online Message With Impact

A strong message is made of three parts:

Target Audience: “We want _____”

Action: “to do _____”

Issue: “because it will improve _____.”



Example

We want the Ministry of Education to abolish school fees for primary and secondary public schools because doing so will remove a financial barrier and help to increase school enrollment and retention rates.

Clear messages

- Are concise
- Document benefits
- Make a specific request

Create and practice your key online message

How to create an online message with impact

Anyone can create a post on social media, but what generates attention and impact?

- Tag your key stakeholders according to your target audience of your post, notably your identified decision-makers and allies.
- Always have a visual accompanying your message to grab your audience’s attention, such as a photo, video, or screenshot.
- Highlight key points and takeaways or actionable steps to encourage your followers to action and support knowledge exchange.
- Create an emotional appeal to garner attention for your attention for your cause, such as amplifying testimonies of those impacted by your issue area.
- Create opportunities for direct engagement with your audience. For example, use online polls or responding openly and directly to comments.
- Allow for partner organizations or individuals to ‘takeover’ your media to generate new outreach potential.

How to create an online video message with impact:

A strong online media message should build upon and further explain your key message. This should include highlighting one of your research and advocacy points and again, making a specific request to your audience.

The following recommendations are intended to improve the performance of a video message:

- The video should ideally be 30-45 seconds or less. Ensure a strong and engaging opening, as 47% of value in a video is delivered in the first 3 seconds. Videos up to 2 minutes long get the most engagement.
- As important as your message is, 85% of video views happen with the sound off; therefore, it is vital to visually engage your audience to maintain viewer retention.
- To optimize your reach and viewership, try to include keywords in the title and description, keep the titles short and informative, include a link to your website, use hashtags and optimize videos for viewing on mobile devices.
- If possible, edit your video to include closed captions or subtitles to ensure your video is accessible for a wide range of audiences.
- Be authentic!



Strong online video message example

Youth are powerful agents of change and their leadership and inclusion is essential to creating lasting peace. More than half of the world's population is under the age of 30; yet, their formal participation therein remains extremely low. Research has shown that only 43% of persons 25 years of age and under had reported voting in national elections, which is 20 percentage points lower than 26 years of age. Without meaningfully engaging youth's leadership in political and peace processes will contribute to longer term instability and overall inequality. Please talk to your lawmakers and ask him or her to push for a Youth Committee within Congress.

Create your own media pitch message

Remember! Watch Out For Your Opponents

Also important in this process is to consider your potential opposition and their tactics. Will they be reaching out to your same target audiences? Are there ways to counteract their tactics? Failing to consider your opposition when developing your strategy leaves you vulnerable to attacks and efforts to block your campaign. It is critical to plan ahead and be prepared.

5 tips to deal with opposition

- 1 Be active in your campaign.**
Provide information and the framework for the discussion so that sound evidence and real facts are made to public and all have a chance to get involved. Set the tone for the debate by taking the lead.
- 2 Be prepared.**
Anticipate opposition positions, know what they will say, and keep an eye out for them. If you can, read their materials and sign up for their email bulletins to learn more about their plans and what they are saying.
- 3 Create a broad-based coalition of supporters to further your reach and influence.**
Building support is key to advancing advocacy goals and benefiting from the expertise of others. Building a coalition of vocal supporters from diverse movements and groups, such as women and youth, community members and politicians, will signal support for your cause and allow you to support one another. Faith actors and organizations can be key allies when dealing with opposition, so it is important to reach out to religious allies.
- 4 Anticipate misinformation. Be prepared to explain and defend your cause.**
Misinformation is often a tactic used by opponents. Be prepared to use anecdotes, personal narratives, science, and statistics to reinforce the importance and facts of your cause. Additionally, include credible messengers, such as experts, to work in conjunction with you. Defend against erroneous claims of opposition by verifying their statements and pointing out misconceptions and untruths.
- 5 Protect yourself.**
Hate speech and online violence are on the rise. If opponents are hostile, it is important to contact your platform's administrator to review the comments or messages. Be mindful of your online presence; make deliberate decisions about what information about you, your organizations, and your strategies is publically accessible.