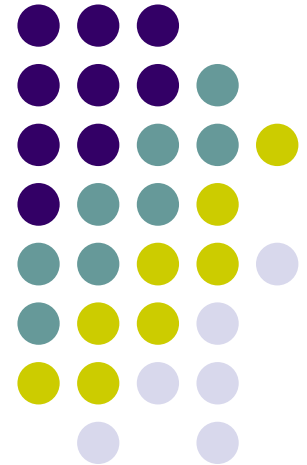
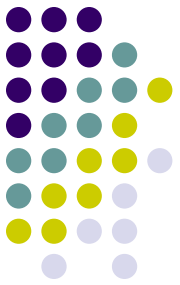


More Tips (and Tools) for Strategic Advocacy Planning

*Family Planning Conference
Kampala, Uganda
November, 2009*



Tip #3: Mobilize a Team (Advocacy Committee)



- FP researchers/data analysts
- Members of professional associations or RH technical committees
- Communication specialists
- Representatives of partner orgs dedicated to strengthening family planning

Tip #4: Keep It Simple



“The last time we did an policy advocacy strategy and action plan, it was 40 pages and took six months.”

*Communications Specialist
- CERPOD, Bamako, Mali*

Tip # 5: Follow a Strategic Advocacy Plan (Roadmap)



Advocacy Strategy

Developing An Advocacy Strategy

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is an organised process of mobilising support for a cause to bring about change favourable to that cause. Applied to family planning, this means forming partnerships with like-minded groups and individuals to persuade national and local leaders that family planning needs high-level attention and improvements in quality and access.

This brief is a guide on how to develop an advocacy strategy for influential leaders and policy-makers at national and local levels. While advocacy activities must communicate clear and consistent messages, the strategy must be tailored to the context of the profamily planning activities. It must be culturally sensitive and flexible, recognising that people are unlikely to respond to dogmatic or heavy-handed approaches.

How to develop a strategy

Although family planning advocates may be eager to see family planning services started without delay, and may have many good ideas, it is essential to plan carefully whether at the national or local level. The following planning steps are recommended based on a wide range of advocacy experiences and lessons from the field.

Step 1. Establish an advocacy committee

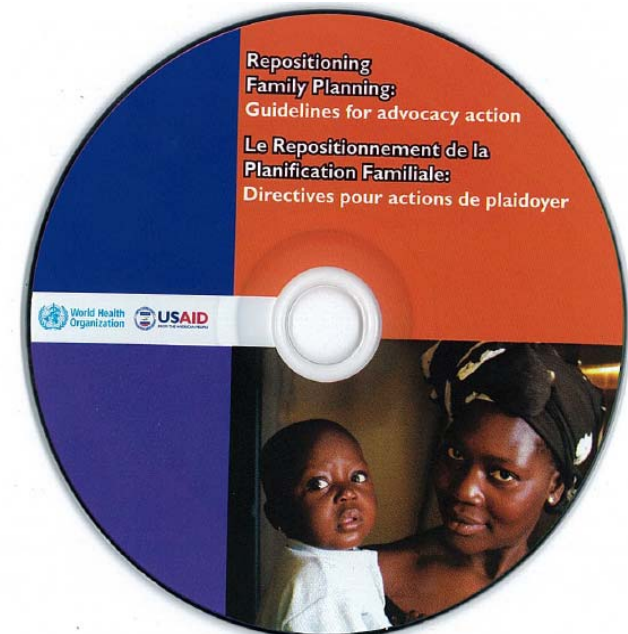
It helps to have a group of committed individuals who are willing to work on advocacy activities. This group can take charge of planning, identifying partners, and coordinating the activities of the advocacy campaign. Committee members could include staff from the main implementing institution as well as family planning researchers, members of relevant professional associations or reproductive health

technical committees, and representatives of partner organisations dedicated to strengthening family planning services. Ideally, committee membership should also include members of the audiences to be reached. A committee member who is, for example, a political or religious leader, professional staff of a nongovernmental organisation (NGO), or a journalist can often offer insight on and access to other members of that audience that otherwise would be missing. Sometimes highly respected, unaffiliated individuals such as retired national leaders are willing to use their influence for a cause they support.

Step 2. Carefully analyse the situation

The family planning situation varies among and within countries. Thus, it is essential to find out what is happening in the setting for the advocacy activities, to focus the activities on specific problems, and to build on existing strengths (see Box 1; SWOCT analysis). Obtaining information on the following factors is useful in developing an advocacy strategy and designing advocacy messages because the factors provide the rationale for the need to increase attention to family planning.

- **Demographic and family planning information**
 - Fertility and population growth rates; contraception rates; and levels of unmet need for family planning, unwanted pregnancies, and abortion (where data are available);
 - The proportion of youth in the population;
 - Family planning indicators by wealth quintile (lowest, middle, and highest 20% of the population, where data are available);



The Roadmap



Analyze the situation

Objectives

Audiences

Audience Research

Messages

Network; Partnerships

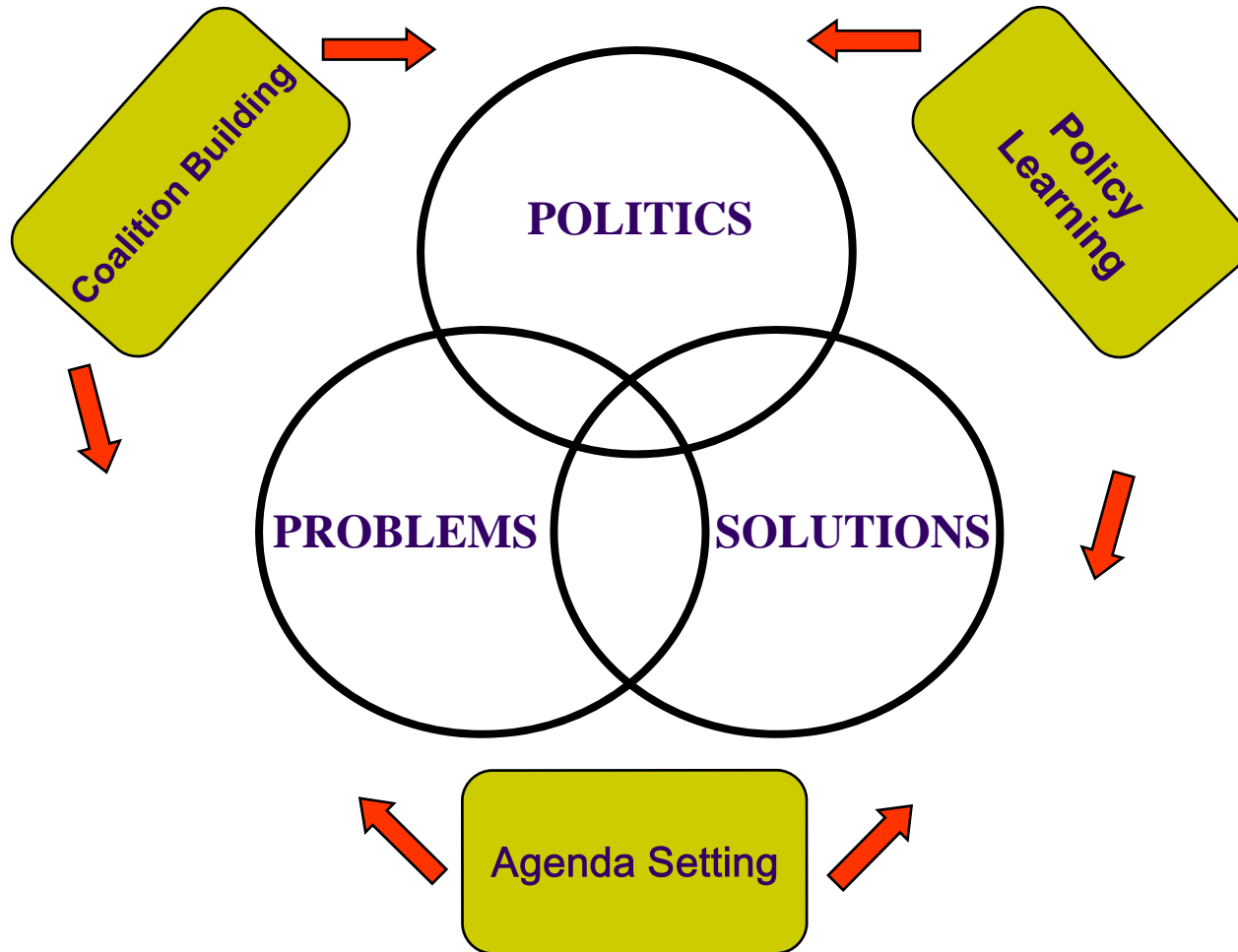
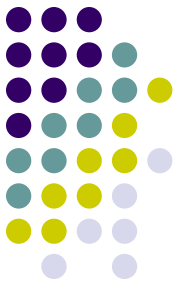
Channels, formats, activities

Upcoming opportunities

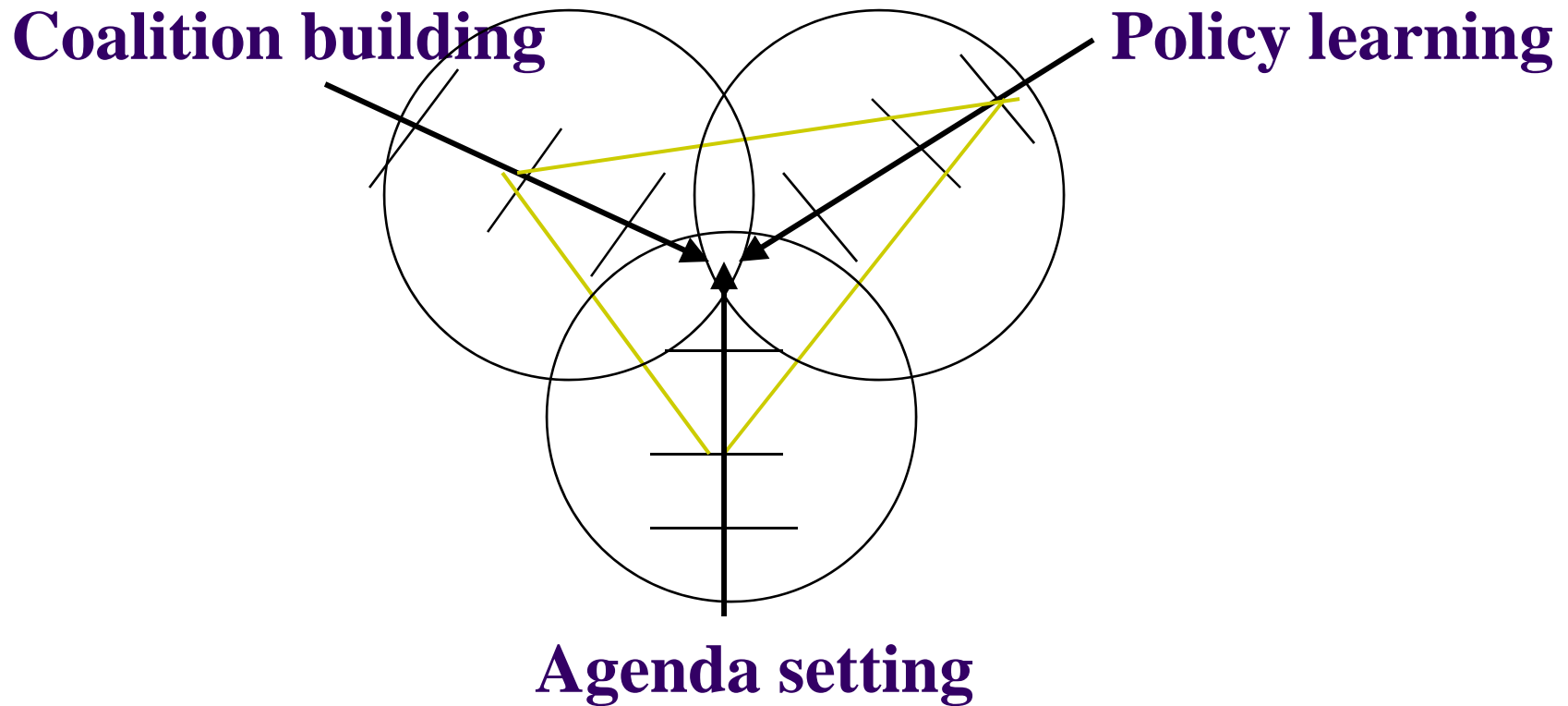
Develop an action plan

Implement, evaluate

The Goal: Move the Spheres Together



Developing objectives



Developing Messages



Engaging Policy-makers

Why engage policy-makers?

Of all the groups that can help promote family planning, high-level policy-makers are among the most influential. They can either change policies and programmes directly or influence those who can. Some policy-makers also reach the general public through their public speeches and statements. Policy-makers' support for family planning is key to ensuring political commitment, adequate resources, and, ultimately, quality family planning services.

Goal of this brief

This brief is meant to help family planning advocates in their efforts to convince policy-makers to use their influence to push for relevant policies and to marshal resources to strengthen family planning services.

Identifying policy-makers

Policy-makers include top political leaders, high-level officials in various ministries and directorates (e.g., health, finance, planning, education, and youth), parliamentarians and other legislators, national religious leaders, and heads of national nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and media institutions.

Why should policy-makers care about family planning?

By promoting improved access to and quality of family planning services, policy-makers will help individuals and couples determine their family size, reduce unnecessary illness and maternal and child deaths, reduce HIV transmission, and reduce household poverty. The following are the specific reasons that policy-makers should care about family planning, and what they could achieve if they took action:

- **Family planning contributes to the overall health, economic growth, and social development of the nation.** High fertility in poor families disadvantages individual children and contributes to high rates of household poverty, illness, and maternal and child mortality at the national level. High fertility also adversely affects national educational attainment because many families cannot afford to send their children to school. Consequently, the nation suffers a loss of human potential. Having few but healthy children can reduce the economic burden on poor families, allowing them to invest more in each child's care and schooling, and thus help break the cycle of poverty.¹
- **Family planning saves lives.** Although pregnancy and childbirth are natural phenomena, many pregnancies pose serious health risks for mothers and their children, specifically pregnancies characterized as:
 - **Too early**—girls under 18 face a higher than normal risk of death or disability from pregnancy, and their babies have more health risks;
 - **Too many**—women who have many births are more likely to have problems with their later pregnancies, and face increased risk of death or disability, as do their newborns;
 - **Too late**—mothers over the age of 35 have a higher risk of death or disability associated with pregnancy, and their babies have more problems;
 - **Too soon**—children spaced too closely have a higher risk of illness and death. Women should wait at least two years after giving birth before trying to become pregnant again. This birth interval increases infant and child survival and protects the health of the mother.

Family planning can help infants and women avoid these risks.

Engaging Policy-makers

- Toolkit resources for shaping messages:
 - Policymakers
 - Health Sector Leaders
 - Community Leaders
 - Private Sector
 - Media

Exercise:

Developing compelling messages



- Why should (specific audience) care about family planning?
 - Health sector leaders
 - High-level policymakers (Ministry of Planning and Finance)
 - Youth group leaders
 - Religious leaders
 - Business leaders (corporate)

Exercise Example:



- Why should health sector leaders care about family planning?

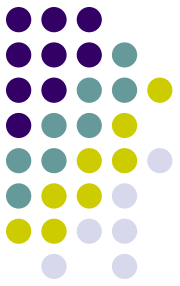
➔ Because family planning helps reduce the number of unsafely performed abortions, thus reducing health care costs for treating complications.

Communication channels and activities



- Face-to-face (Interpersonal):
 - Workshops, seminars, one-on-one meetings
 - Reports or policy memoranda
 - Letters, e-mail
 - Study tours
- Mass media
 - Press
 - Broadcast (Radio and TV)
 - Internet websites

Determine the formats



- Select formats that are the most appropriate for your audiences
 - Print materials: fact sheets, wallcharts, booklets, policy memoranda
 - Presentations: PowerPoint, videos
 - TV and radio spots, news releases
 - Electronic channels (Internet)

Policy Briefs (Memoranda) Top Advocacy Tool!



- Evidence:
 - Persuasive argument right up front
 - Credible authority (in eyes of policymaker)
- Policy context:
 - Audience specific policies, practices
 - Actionable recommendations (pros and cons)
- Engagement:
 - Authors own viewpoint; sources of data
 - Clear language/writing style
 - Visually engaging; charts, graphs, photos

Brainstorm on opportunities



Focus-generating events:

- Global or national conferences
- Legislation for laws/regulations
- Annual budgeting process
- Periodic program reviews/evaluations
- Local celebrations

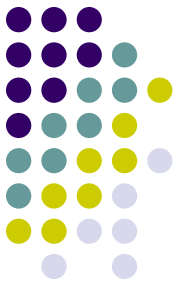
Tip # 6: Mobilize the News for Policy change



“I wrote a report to the Minister and also sent it to the English-language dailies. He read my report in the newspaper.”

-- S. Ramasundaram, Former Head
Health and Family Welfare Department
Tamil Nadu, India

An Effective Advocacy Plan Relies on:



- Strategic planning
- Audience-centered approach
- Ongoing advocacy activities; disseminating information at the right time, for the right length of time



If well designed ----

- **Policy advocacy activities and materials create demand**



More requests for information



More influence over policy and practices

Additional Tools in your folder:



- CD-Rom: Connecting People to Useful Information
- Presentation Dos and Don'ts: Tips for preparing great slides
- Additional FP Resources List: materials, advocacy manuals, training and reference guides, informational websites