



Save the Children



FROM WORDS TO ACTION

A decade fighting child trafficking in Mozambique

INTEGRATED ADVOCACY IN PROGRAMMES

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There is no prescribed set of steps that can be applied in a standardized formula to an advocacy process. The complexity of the issue, as well as the political, social, economic context, will hugely impact the organization advocacy approach.

The capacity, structure, function, and reputation of the civil society actor must also be considered in our advocacy approach. Thus, learning from successful projects can be helpful to become wiser and better prepared for how to plan and execute advocacy projects. The learning, elements, and steps contributing to successful advocacy results in the anti-trafficking project are summarized below.

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

To develop an understanding of the problem is the first step, which in this case study was trafficking of children. The planning and preparation tend to be carried out too quickly in many advocacy projects. A weak understanding of the problem at hand increases the risk of the advocacy efforts to be off target, fail to gain attraction and quickly fade away. Save the Children spent the time to consult with other stakeholders and conduct field studies to gain an in-depth understanding of the triggers, movement trends, and legal protection mechanisms. Based on a rigorous, in-depth analysis and collaboration with other civil society organizations as well as the Norwegian embassy, the project goals emerged.

Clear goals and measurable objectives emerged from a rationale developed through a participatory process with relevant stakeholders. Without such a process the organisations can waste time, effort and money on advocacy that will not contribute to achieving the overall goal. Elegant plans and aspirations will not be able to guide the effort unless its rooted in the realities on the ground.

Framing the narrative of the specific problem, communicate this to the target groups and initiate a dialogue will be important to build a consensus on what a possible solution can look like. The civil society communities in Mozambique managed to develop a shared line of arguments and proposed solutions that were presented by the media to reach the public and behind the scenes to the decision-makers.

An initial power analysis to examine the political, economic or social terrain with an open mind will help to map out the power relations and determine who are the targets and allies (whom to work with). To be an effective advocate, one must understand the pressure points, and identify how, why and where change is likely to happen – and where it might be blocked. The hurdles that are blocking the process can be public apathy or hostility to change local customs or norms, or it might be individuals in powerful positions with competing agendas. By understanding where the challenges will be, these can be addressed from the onset of the project.

SHORT PROJECT OUTLINE

The project successfully contributed policies at national and regional level, strengthened protection structures, built capacity, and provided protection measures for the most marginalised children.



The Anti Trafficking Act 06/2008 has been a landmark in this process. Much of the success of the project rests upon its ability to contribute to the implementation of the Anti-Trafficking Act, including the establishment and continued work of the protection system, which consists of case referral groups at district, provincial and national level.

The main task of the referral groups is to ensure that trafficked children receive a holistic assistance to meet their needs, and that the perpetrators are held responsible for their crimes per the Anti-Trafficking Act.

Advocacy strategies were modified through the different stages of this project and adapted to the policy environments with its various opportunities and threats. The planning for each project cycle defined the goals. This helped to guide the effort, including seizing the opportunities to amplify the message. Seizing the right opportunities and not end up event jumping can be challenging. To select the right opportunities requires analysis of how the civil society actors' involvement will serve the end goal- and if it will be worthwhile the investments. This project combined multiple strategies that gradually gathered attention and built commitment from relevant stakeholders. Targets changed during the process, where some gradually became partners. The strategies changed depending on the stage in the policy cycle. In the beginning, it was important to gain momentum and work with the public, while for implementation of the law, diplomacy and lobby efforts were more effective. The tools used included research reports, media (press kits, press releases, news reports, documentaries on national TV), public debates, workshops, diplomacy and convening meetings for policy makers and other key actors.

Partnerships have been the key element in this project to raise the profile of the messages. The different civil society actors managed to demonstrate unity and cohesion in its arguments when advocating towards the government– which can be a demanding task. The coalition that Save the Children took part in further managed to plan strategically for the long term at the same time as they managed to respond to an evolving political context. Governments struggle with accommodating inputs from the multiple civil society organizations. A unified approach strengthens the possibilities to achieve change and hold the government to account.

To reach the non-experts, it is needed to transform complex issues into understandable **messages**. The learning from this project emphasises that a few concrete messages serve this purpose the best. Being a good advocate means knowing the facts and ensure that you know some statistics by heart. Multiple messages are confusing to decision makers. Formulate messages that are concise and easy for legislators and decision makers to remember. The message package should be tailored specifically for

the target audience while the core substance should be consistent. To be as effective as possible, messages need to be disseminated and reach the targets through different channels.

Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) can provide important information about what has been achieved, needed adjustments, opportunities and power dynamics. Advocates should be accountable towards their

organization's management and donors, but also towards partners and beneficiaries, in this case children affected by trafficking. The learning component is often undervalued as it can contribute to improving effectiveness by taking stock of what has worked and not. This provides a fundament for sharpening the arguments and expand the support base for the proposed actions. To document and communicate the results are important for attracting new partners and donors.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DONORS:

- Donors need to recognise that policy development takes time and will not fit into shorter funding cycles. Predictable and continued funding is the key element. A period of three to five years is recommended. After three years, donors can take stock to assess the intermediate results and the value in continuation of supporting the process.
- Donors need to recognise that it is important for policies to go through a process of negotiation and consultation to build ownership among the stakeholders.
- To ensure sustainability, donors should demand that Ingo's demonstrate their ability to build partnerships with local actors and the government from the start of a project. Advocacy should be an integral part of a project, not an add-on.
- Policy development does not take place in a controlled context. Donors must therefore be willing to take some risks with their investments and recognise the cost-effectiveness of successful advocacy approaches.
- Quantifying attributions will be difficult. Tracking contributions will be more appropriate. Results reporting needs to consider alternatives to log-frames to demonstrate and communicate how the organisation has contributed to policy and system change.

Every child has the right to a future.

Save the Children works around the world to give children a healthy start in life, and the chance to learn and to be safe.

We do whatever it takes to get children the things they need – every day and in times of crisis.

Cover photo: Tom Pilston

An evening game of football at the Boys shelter, Musina, South Africa.

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Published by
Save the Children Norway (Redd Barna)
Storgata 38
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Norway

www.reddbarna.no

First published 2018

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