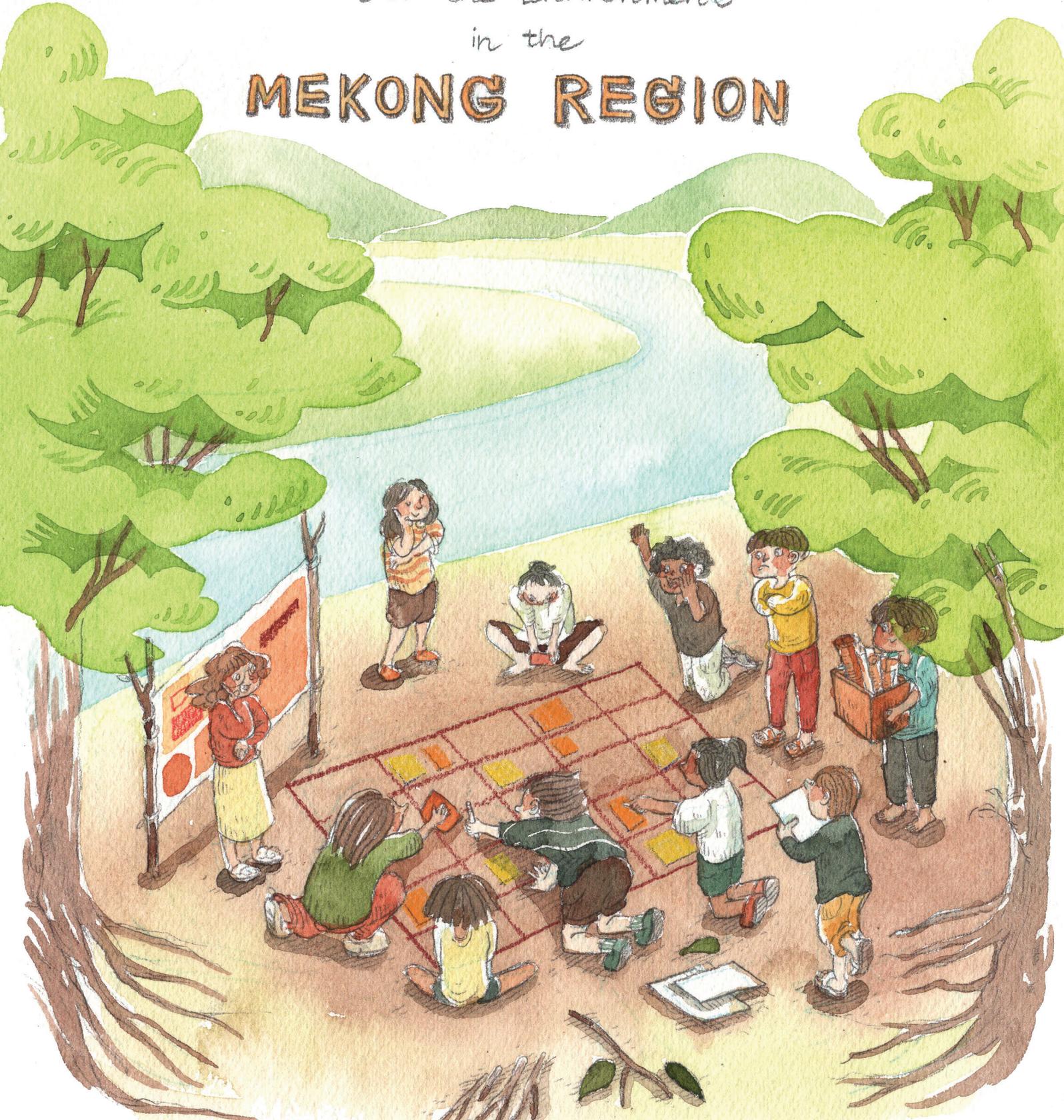


The Curriculum on Youth Advocacy
for the Environment
in the
MEKONG REGION



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Content

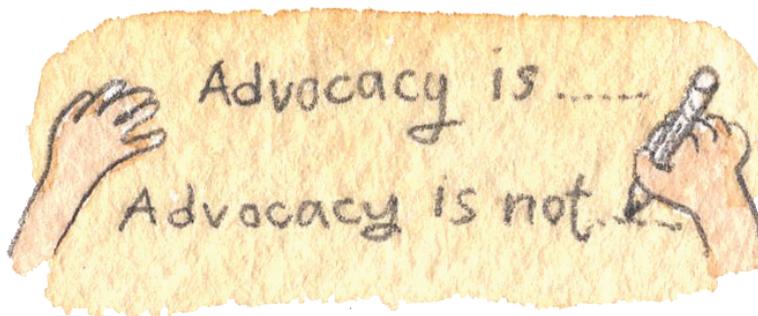
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What is advocacy?



Are you familiar with a word “advocacy”? What is your experience with advocacy? Do you have the same or different understanding about advocacy amongst your friends, your team, and your community members? We are going to explore different meanings and experiences of advocacy.

Activity: What is Advocacy?



To reflect on individual and collective experience of advocacy and to assess level of understanding among your team.

60-90 minutes

- 1.** In flipchart papers, on the ground or on shared screen, write a prompt “*Advocacy is...., Advocacy is not....*”
- 2.** Ask participants to answer to the prompt question. Each participant writes down or draw anything that come to their mind. There is no wrong answer.

3. Invite everyone to review all the answers, open the circle for a reflection and discussion by asking

- What do we see from these answers?
- What are common ideas?
- What are different?
- What might be missing?

4. After the discussion you can invite participants to watch suggested videos together



Introduction to Advocacy (3 minutes)

by AdvocacyLab

<https://youtu.be/cBBkkVUlfhM>



The Power of Advocacy (5 minutes)

by Plan International

https://youtu.be/_dzaM0fCqsg

People may have different ideas and understanding of advocacy especially when they come from different social and political background. Advocacy could happen in many different forms. In some places, the ideas of advocacy have been developed and evolved for many years and in other places especially in the Mekong countries advocacy is relatively new and unfamiliar to the decision makers and public and can be seen as provocative by those in power.

Advocacy is a course of action to influence changes in decision-making that affected our lives and ultimately to transform our society at local, national and global level. Advocacy aims to shape systemic changes in behavior, investment, law, policy.

You need to make your voice heard especially by people who have power to make decisions. Your voices will powerful and convincing when it comes from direct experience and well-documented evidence. Advocacy is a collective process that require allies and coordinated actions to raise public awareness and wide support to achieve an advocacy goal. These efforts can be built from broader campaigns.

You may have done or tried all or some of the above mentioned. Don't worry, there is no single right way of doing advocacy. Advocacy is as diverse as the lived experiences of the people who want to make changes.

Activity: Seeds of Advocacy



60-90 minutes

To reflect on individual and/or collective experience and understanding of advocacy

1. Invite participants to close their eyes and make themselves comfortable. Ask them to think about the current and past experiences of doing any activities that they would consider an advocacy. "Have you accomplished any changes (big or small)? What are they?"
2. Show a pre-drawn picture of seed, sprouted seed, young plant, and tree with fruits. Explain that each picture represent stage of growth of plant life which represent our experience in advocacy.

Seed: you are very new and fresh in doing advocacy

Sprouted Seed: you have basic knowledge and some understanding of advocacy but may not have done anything concrete yet

Young plant: you have been part of advocacy and still learning how to improve your advocacy

Tree with fruits: you have advanced knowledge and direct experience in advocacy and seek to sustain your advocacy

3. Ask each participant to draw in a paper one of the four picture that represent their personal experience with advocacy and write a short note on the other side of paper why they think they are at that stage. Tell everyone that they will be asked to share briefly about their story with the group.

4. Place each picture that you showed earlier on the floor, invite each participant to share their experience with advocacy and explain why they are choosing the stage of growth that they choose. After saying something each participant places their drawing on the floor.
5. Invite everyone to look at different pictures representing level of knowledge and understanding of the group. Ask the group a few questions: which stage is the biggest group? What opportunities do we see based on our group experience? Then give space for anyone who would like to share some reflection about what they see from these pictures.
6. Remind everyone to pick up their drawing and keep it with them.

Advocacy is about influencing change. Change that people define by themselves based on their rights. Change may not happen in a straight line often come in cycle or even wave of cycles because in real life small changes connect to one another and lead to bigger changes. One-time activity may not be sufficient to advocate or bring systemic change but it can be a starting point or to sustain the energy and power among the people who wish to make change.

The cycle of advocacy required you to educate and inform people about their rights, law and policy that affect them and how to seek fulfillment of their rights. You may need to repeat and accelerate your efforts.

Advocacy = Organizing + Message x Mobilization + Partnership

To advocate is to:

- challenge and change opinions and mind-sets about specific issues
- include children and youth voices for them to speak out and be heard
- seek a political commitment and willingness for change, justice, human rights issues
- recommend ecological child rights-based solutions
- change policy and practice
- build healthier democratic society

This curriculum will focus on the ecological child rights and how to mobilize public supports, and engage individuals within powerful institutions to shape systemic change.

You are the best person to say Yes or No to decisions that will affect your life.

- Listening
- Self-advocacy
- Practical support like attending meetings
- Challenging decisions
- Accessing information
- Understanding information
- Accessing services
- Participating in communities
- Challenging discrimination
- Making and communicating choices
- Protecting human rights
- Supported decision making

Resource Box

- Advocacy in the 21st Century by Abbey Perl

See how Abbey Perl, Founder of Diverse Gaming Coalition, uses her own advocacy project to describe how and why advocacy must be modernized. <https://youtu.be/OKhYVDf6H0o>

- Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation (Adolescent Kit)'s Facilitator Guide
- https://adolescentkit.org/kit_docs/4.2_Facilitators_Guide.pdf

1. Identify Problems and Changes that You Want to See

It is important to build a collective understanding of the problems that you, your friends, your community members are facing. People may have different views of the same situation. Let's find out what they are.

Activity: What I dream about my community?



To discuss and build collective understanding of the problems faced by participants and create a vision for future of their community and the environment

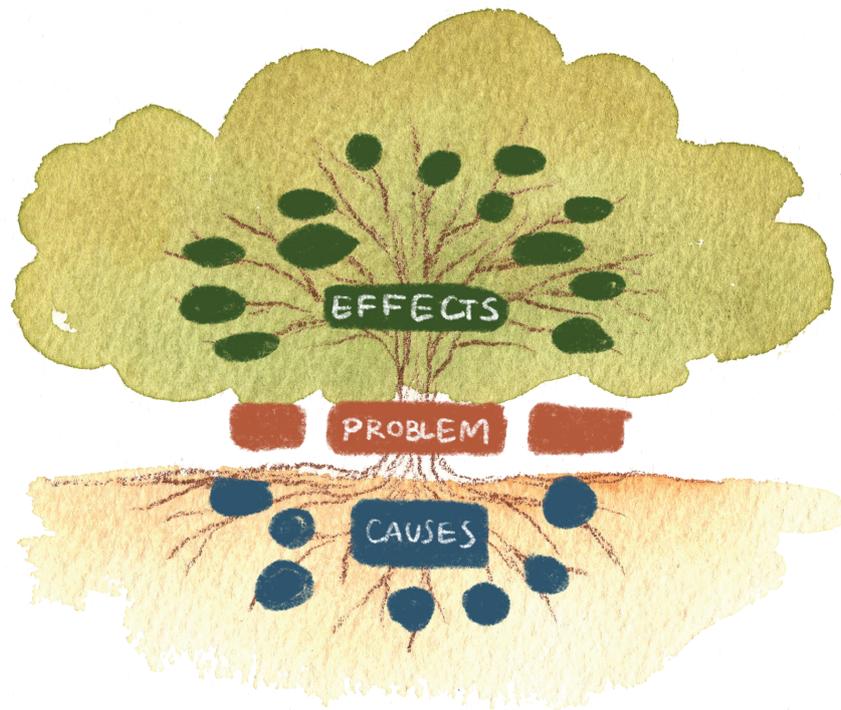
60 minutes

Reused materials to use as prompts, sticky notes or pieces of paper for the brainstorming discussion

1. Have everyone stand in a circle. Ask each person to answer to this question "How am I feeling at the moment?" by acting one action of a still image and hold to the action for 2 seconds, go around the circle.
2. Break into small groups of about 5 persons per group. Take about 10-15 minutes to talk about problems or issues that affects each group member. Think about what are happening around us. It could be something happening locally in our village, school, country or globally.
3. After exchange some ideas. Select one problem or one situation. Each group is going to create an image using their bodies and gestures without making any movement or sound. Give each group about 5 minutes to build an image that show the problem that concerned the group. "What is the current situation of my community/environment?" "What are the problems?"
4. Every group will take turn in showing the image, the other groups make guesses of what that group is trying to say. What is going on in that image? What situation the image represents?
5. Ask each group to create a second image of "What would our community/environment be like if the xxx project was built?" Depends on what the group discuss. The group can choose any harmful "development" project or what is threatening their community and the environment. It could be big infrastructure project such as hydropower dam, mine, big construction. This step may take 10-15 minutes.
6. Repeat step 4 to show second images of each group. This round the facilitator may ask other groups members if they want to hear words or short sentence from any character/member of the group that formed an image.
7. With the same characters from the previous two images. Create the third image of "what I dream about my community" Think about what are positive things that can help improve your life and your community.
8. Repeat step 4 to show the third image. The facilitator may ask other groups members if they want to hear words or short sentence from any character/member of the group that formed an image

You may also use an additional activity to explore the problems and situation or use the next activity to deep dive to unpack complicated problems or situation and dreams about your community and the environment.

Activity: Problems Tree



1.5 hour

To build deeper understanding about key problems, identify causes and interconnections of cause, problem and effect.

- 1.** Draw a sketch of an indigenous tree that is well known to the group. The tree should have its key components of roots, trunk, branches and leaves. Label "Causes" at the at the root, label "Problems" at the trunk, and "Effects" at the branches.
- 2.** List main problems you see happening in your communities. Try to pick the problem that are critical to your rights, your community, that you are passionate to deal with. Reflect on the problems presented in the images in What I dream about my community? activity. Add them onto the trunk of the Problem Tree you have drawn. [If there are different type problems you want to tackle, you could create a separate tree to analyze them]
- 3.** Then think about what cause or influence the problems. What situation directly support or contribute to the problems. Suppose you are an ant walking down from the trunk (problem) to the root of the tree(cause); what would you see? List all the causes of that problems.

4. Next, moving up to the branches of the tree, what are the effects of the identified problem(s)? Think about what happens as a result of the problems. Think about different effects to different groups of people especially different group of children and youth base on their age, their location, their ethnicity.

5. Review your problem tree started from the root—what are the main cause of the problems?, the trunk—what the problems look like?, and the branches—what effects the problems have created or contributed to? Try to find interlinkages and pattern among them and discuss with you group.

Now that you have better ideas about what your group see as current pressing problems, their causes and what kind of effect they create. So, what can be done about it? The causes and effects will help guide you in finding solutions building on visions for the future that you desire and that your rights will be respected and fulfilled. It's time to deep dive into what are possible ways to create the future you want.

Imagine yourself reading a Facebook post or newspaper about what will happen in the next 12 months or 3 years. Write a news headline in the near future or write a Facebook status do you want to see in the next 12 months or 3 years. For example, "We did it! Finally, the dam is canceled. Let's the Mekong river flow freely."

Your news headline or Facebook status: _____



Activity: What are possible solutions?



1.5 hour

To create vision for ideal future and identify solutions

1. Review problems discussed in the “Problems Tree” activity and what was presented and discussed as the third image during the “What I dream about my community” activity
2. Ask the group to imagine ideal future that they want to live in. The future doesn’t need to be very far it could be next months or years. What would make the situation better? What will help fulfill the rights of children and youth in the community or on specific issue? In small group or individually, draw the future that they envisioned. Maximum 10 minutes for drawing exercise.
3. Hang all drawings or put them on the ground so everyone can go around and take a closer look.
4. Invite everyone to have conversation about their visions. Discuss some of the following questions and make sure to take notes of the conversation:
 - What need to change? What changes do you want to see?
 - Whose voices do you want to emphasized? Think about different groups of young people who may not have enough opportunity to participate.
 - What do you need to do in order to make these visions happen? What are the first few steps?

Facilitator Tips: If you do this exercise in a big group (more than 10 people), you may consider breaking up in to small groups to increase time and opportunity for each participant to share their views and discuss specific questions.

The changes you want to achieve are your goals. Goals are your vision for the future and are always concrete improvements in human and the environment. Changes doesn't happen easily overnight so you may want to break it down from small steps to bigger steps.

Think carefully about what do you want to achieve in different stages starting with small easier to achieve goal also known as Short-Term Goal that will pave ways to bigger goal called Intermediate Goal and then the ultimate changes that you really want. It's called Long-Term Goal.

Let's try to think and complete these goals by yourself or with your group. If you are working with large group, you could break into several small groups and ask each group to come up with these goals and then collectively try to categorize and consolidate your collective goals.

	<i>Example of Goals:</i>	<i>Your Goals:</i>
Long-Term <i>What you really want?</i>	Clean air and healthy environment for children and staff of the local school and communities next to the powerplant site	
Intermediate <i>What you are trying to win now?</i>	Ms.Mingla, the Minister of Energy to cancel the powerplant projects that are too close to schools	
Short-Term <i>What is a step to the Intermediate Goal?</i>	Get Mr.Kham, the head of local administration to disapprove the construction permit of proposed biomass powerplant	

Reference: Midwest Academy

It is important that you identify your goals as specific as possible. It is okay if you do not have enough information or understanding about how things work or who have the power to do what you want to see especially if it involved complex government procedure. You can leave what is unknown and note that you need to find more information, perhaps find someone who know and help you get the answers. You can find more useful tips in the next steps of this curriculum.

Now that you have identified concrete changes or possible solutions that you are going to pursue. Let's find ways to make them happen in real life!

Resource Box

- Community Action Guide on Community-led Research by International Accountability Project
<https://bit.ly/WhatTodayDevelopmentNeeds>
- The Curriculum on Ecological Child Rights in Mekong Development: A Guidebook for Young Trainers by Mekong Youth Assembly (available in 6 Mekong languages)
<http://www.mekongyouth.org/resources/>

2. Understand Power and Engage Decision-makers

We live in the society that often controlled by a few people. Understanding how the system work in your communities, in your district or in your country and be aware of issues you are dealing with by asking who are involved and why is key to advocacy.

If you want to stop a mining license and its operation in your community or if you want to cancel the planned hydropower dam that will flood your land and destroy the river that your community depends, you will want to find out where and how these decisions are made and who hold power in making that decision?

In some situations, you might want to build or create something positive for your communities and the healthy environment. You may want to build a fish conservation zone or community-led protected forest. Would you be able to do these by yourself or your community alone? Who make the decision within the community? Who do you think need to be involved?

On the other aspects, if you want to make sure children and youth in your communities will be able to participate meaningfully in “public consultation” on proposed large-scale plantation in your community, who have the power to make that happen? Is it the government? What level of the government, local, national? Which departments? Or is it a private company? Specify the positions and individual that drive those decisions.

Policy get updated or new policy being developed all the time. It is crucial to be aware of any policy related to your issue and seek information whether it is being reviewed or created. Find out who is in charge of the process.

Try to identify what specific policy or law that are the source or part of the problems that you are concerned about.

Policy is a commitment or guidance how the government or corporate actors make decisions to work on or achieve some certain topic. Changing policy will help you achieve and sustain your goal.

There are some ways you can influence the policy that effect or will affect you, your community and the environment.

- Participate in policy consultation
- Join force with other groups influencing the policy • Meet with policy-makers
- Comment on draft
- Propose alternative approach that is rights-based

Here are some tips on how to review related policy:

<p>Begin by reading the table of contents to get a sense of what is contained in the document.</p>  <p>01</p>	<p>Read the introduction and executive summary – this will give you a good overview of what the document is about.</p>  <p>02</p>	<p>When you come across new or difficult words, use a dictionary or web search to improve your understanding. You will be surprised at how much simpler the document becomes once you understand key concepts and terms.</p>  <p>03</p>
<p>Doing a 'keyword search' on the document can be useful to investigate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) how often 'youth' is mentioned; 2) how often the subject issue is mentioned, e.g. education, health, gender-based violence; 3) the context in which these are mentioned. <p>04</p>	<p>Pay special attention to the language used, particularly in the action items. Is the language committal or non-committal, for example:</p> <p><i>"We will eradicate poverty by 2030"</i> or <i>"We encourage the eradication of poverty by 2030."</i></p> <p>We can hold leaders accountable based on what they have committed to do and not what they encourage or motivate.</p> <p>05</p>	<p>Analyse the sources of the information used in the policy document.</p>  <p>06</p>
<p>Google key words from the policy document to see if there are any credible news reports, summaries, or additional sources of information on the topic.</p>  <p>07</p>	<p>Get help. Reach out to other young people, or others from your network to discuss and interrogate the document. If the policy document is new it might be good to gather a group and discuss it together.</p>  <p>08</p>	<p>Once you have understood a policy, you may also want to conduct further research regarding an issue. A policy may have good statistics, provide information about the history of the subject matter, and which stakeholders are involved. Make notes and investigate further.</p> <p>09</p>

Reference: Reading and Understanding a Policy, Page 26, UNICEF Youth Advocacy Guide (2019)

Ask yourself if you want the situation to shift by tomorrow, who might be able to do that?

Often you will find that the government is in charge of these decisions. Government is a complex organization and vary in different countries. In the Mekong countries, decisions are usually made by the central government in the capital city. Some decisions are made jointly and separately by the local government. Find out who in charged or involved in making decision. They may be elected official (politician) or appointed official (public employee). They often hold power to create, use, and change law and policy that affect our lives.

Corporate Actor is private company small or large scale. These actors often playing different roles in many aspects of projects or plan that affect the environment and human rights. Their investment can cause impacts to human and the environment. They can also manipulate and undermine how the government and public organizations make decision and also how public resources being used or exploited. This is sometime called "Corporate Capture".

If the problems you have identified involved corporate actors, carefully look into them to see what relationship do they have among different actors. Try to find what ways you can approach and leverage with them in your advocacy.

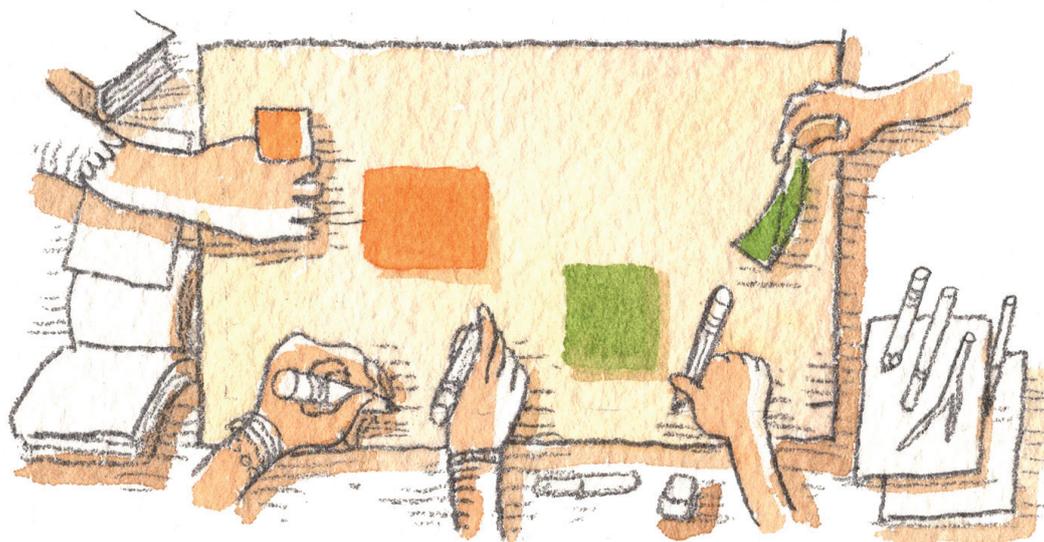


Reference: followingthemoney.org

Identifying and understanding the power relations and who are in these relationship will help you build a strong and effective advocacy plan. It allows you to see different pressure points and more aspects in your engagement. Initially find out more about them by asking:

- Are the decision makers involved in the problems elected or appointed or corporate actor?
- Do I have electoral or consumer power? How can I approach those influencing them (voters, shareholders)?

Activity: Identify Your Target



2 hours

To analyze and identify relevant decision makers who could be possible target for an advocacy

- 1.** Write your goal and put it where everyone can see. Ask someone to read out loud the goal that your group came up together.
- 2.** Ask everyone to think about where (what organization or institution?) and who make the decision(s) that directly related to your goal. For example, if you are planning to influence the proposed powerplant that will affect the health and environment of the school children in your community. You may look at the first step could be the local administration in your sub-district then think about who in the local administration hold the power to do that.
- 3.** Invite everyone to grab a pen or marker and write, in a flipchart paper or on the ground, names of the persons who make decisions related to your advocacy goal, who has the duty to do what you want to see. Assure everyone that it's okay if they are unsure or unclear about specific persons or organization. Just write down anything that come to mind.
- 4.** After everyone have a chance to write, invite everyone to look closely at all names that the group have put together. Explain that we will try to assess how much power or relevance these people can influence the goal. Ask each group member to select three names and make a check-mark ✓ underneath each name that they think have the most power and most

5. Invite anyone who would like to share some thoughts or ideas about the list of names the group come up with especially the name that have the most check-mark whom are likely be your targets.

- Who is the main decision-makers I need to engage with and what is the best way of engaging with them?
- Who influences the decision-makers, such as media or different groups, and how should I engage with them?
- Who could influence the outcome of my cause, either positively or negatively, and how should I engage with them?

6. Be sure to keep this paper and record all these names. You will need to look at them again in the further steps.

After you have an initial list of the decision makers you may wonder how do I know if they are our target? There might be many people that you want to influence but you have to strategically select small number of people who really key to shift the power and can actually help you achieve your goals.

Template for identifying your targeted decision-makers. Pick five names from your list of decision makers and find out more details about them by using this table.

	Organization/Institution	Decision Makers/Influencers	Why they are the target
1.	Ministry of Energy	Name: Ms.Mingla, Position: Minister of Energy Contact info: m.energy@gmail.com	Have power to cancel powerplant projects
2.	_____	Name: _____ Position: _____ Contact info: _____	
3.	_____	Name: _____ Position: _____ Contact info: _____	
4.	_____	Name: _____ Position: _____ Contact info: _____	
5.	_____	Name: _____ Position: _____ Contact info: _____	

It is great that you have identified your targets and get to know them a bit more about their power and responsibility related to the issues you are concerned about. What exactly are you going to ask them to do? In order to make the changes, the real action is your target's reaction!

Activity: The Real Action is Your Target's Reaction



1 hours

To identify specific requests and actions for each target

1. Look at your goals, specific changes you want to see. Now that you have identified who has the power and responsibility. What do you need them to do?
2. Make a list of this prompt for all your targets. Be as specific as possible.
We need "...A....." to do "....B..."

For example:

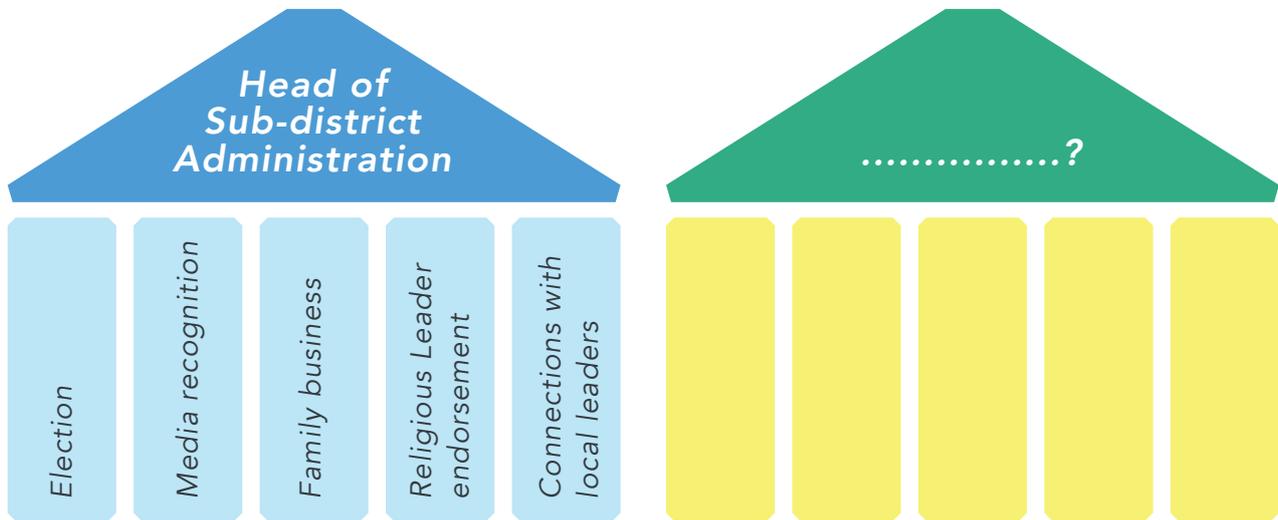
- We need **commune leaders** to **submit a letter** to the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Forestry requesting an official acknowledgement of the community's protected forest.
- We need the **president of xxx company** to **withdraw the financial support** to the proposed dam in our village.
- We need the **Ministry of Energy** to **suspend the coal fired powerplant**.

How do you get your targets to react the way you wanted? You need to build more power and pressure to show them. You could build more public support to your call. You could engage with them or build relationship with them. Depends on who are you targeting and the political space you live in. Analyze **Pillar of Power** of your target can be helpful.

The building is as strong as its pillar. The same go for the people in power. They need something to sustain their power, it could be resources or people or institutions or professions. Think about what support your target's power? What influence them? Take a look at an example below and fill out one of your targets' pillar of power.

Pillar of Power

Example:



Analyze your targets to see what potential power over them very concretely so that you can use it strategically to support your advocacy. To inform your advocacy plan, consider asking some more questions to better understand your target:

- Is it easy or difficult to persuade them?
- What is their ability to implement or resist change?
- What are their incentives?
- How can they benefit or be hurt by the change you seek?

Resource Box

- An Advocacy Tool Kit by Plan International <https://plan-international.org/publications/advocacy-toolkit>
- Youth Advocacy Guide by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tools-resources/youth-advocacy-guide>
- Pillars of Power by Reflection-Action https://www.reflectionaction.org/tools_and_methods/93/?from=tb_13
- Engaging Political Decision Maker <https://www.unicef.org.uk/working-with-young-people/youth-advocacy-toolkit/>
- Following the Money: An Advocates Guide to Securing Accountability in Agricultural Investments <https://www.followingthemoney.org/>

3. Develop Message

Have you heard or read anything that is so powerful that inspire you to do something?

Message is the heart of all communication especially in an advocacy. It is what motivate people to make the right action.

Imagine you are accidentally riding in the same elevator with a decision maker that you want to target. This is a great and rare opportunity for you to persuade your target to do what you want them to do. You probably have about 2-3 minutes before she and he get off the elevator. Remember that the person does not yet know you. What would you say to this person within the limited time of an elevator ride?

Draft your elevator speech ...



This is called an "Elevator Speech", one of techniques that is helpful to craft your key message and deliver them. Keep it brief and memorable. Emphasize your goal with a concrete request what you are asking the person to do. Your speech should be compelling to spark the listener to be interested in who you are and what you are saying. You could also use an engaging question to build an interaction. Be careful not to speak too fast and don't spend too much time on unnecessary details. You can practice this method with a friend or record yourself on a phone.

Q	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they care about? What is important to this target? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their current position on the issues and in your advocacy goal? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do they need to hear or see to recognize the importance of your request? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sensitivities should I be aware of when engaging with them? What might prevent them from believing your message or get involved? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of language and approach would be suitable for this target? 	

*If you want to get A to do B, they need to believe C.
 A is your target, B is your objective and C is your message.
 Design your action toward getting A to believe C.*



In 2007, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held its annual meeting in Kyoto, Japan. The ADB planned an opening ceremony and reception on the first day where the bank president and Japanese government officials would give opening remarks. After their welcome speech, there would be a performance of traditional Japanese dance with many reporters and photographers present.

A group of activists from the organization Greenpeace Southeast Asia had an idea: they would use the event to bring attention to ADB-financed coal mines and coal-fired power plants that were creating terrible environmental and human rights impacts.

Greenpeace contacted a student group called Solar Generation that promotes renewable energy and asked them to help plan a creative action. Six young women would come to the ADB reception and make themselves part of the ceremony in a way that would surprise everyone. They prepared by bringing kimonos (the traditional dress of Japan) and Japanese fans containing special messages that would show when the fans were opened. They also made a safety plan in case the young women were arrested and contacted legal support to ensure the women's safety.

When they got inside the meeting building, the women secretly put on their kimonos and make-up and walked to the opening ceremony. When the ADB president stepped to the microphone to begin his welcome speech, the young women quietly approached and stood in a line behind him. No one stopped them, because they looked like part of the ceremony.



As the president began to speak, the women stepped forward and opened their fans at the same moment. Across the fans was written in big letters: **"ADB QUIT COAL! CLEAN ENERGY NOW!"**

Suddenly all the media started taking pictures, and the reporters started reporting what happened. The women left the stage and began handing out bookmarks featuring a list of demands to the ADB. The bookmarks also showed a cherry blossom, Japan's national flower, to symbolize the impacts of climate change; everyone knew that the blossom was a lot earlier than usual that year due to the warmer climate.

Even though the women disrupted the ceremony, they did it so artfully that all the officials smiled and wanted to have their photograph taken with them.

The next day, newspapers all over Asia carried the story and a photo on their front page. The photo carried the message to everyone in Asia and around the world: ADB quit coal! Clean energy now!

Reference: [Community Action Guide on the Asian Development Bank by International Accountability Project](#)

What did you learn from this story?

Q: Who are the targets of this advocacy?

A: _____

Q: What is the message? What did the young women want their target to do?

A: _____

Q: How did they deliver the message?

A: _____

Q: How did the group manage their risks?

A: _____

Q: Was their plan successful? How do you know it was successful?

A: _____

Q: Does this story inspire you to create your own action, how?

A: _____

Activity:

30 minutes

To practice how to persuade targets and motivate them to act

1. Get your group members to stand in two lines. Each person should have one partner who stands opposite of them from the other line. Keep about 1-meter distance between a partner and mark a visible line in between.

2. Explain that they are going to do a role play. Assign Line A for a role which has power-over on the issue that is relevant to your group. Then assign Line B a role of the people who are affected by the power and try to change their situation. For example:

Line A	Line B
forest authorities	villagers
dam builders	downstream community
immigration officer	migrant children
teacher	students

3. Ask the group to discuss and agree on what their roles will be based on their real-life situation. For example: Forest authorities want villagers to move out of the forest area to allow the mining operation. Villagers want to stay in their village to protect their ancestor land.



4. Members of Line B will spend the next 5 minutes trying to convince their partner who is now playing the assigned role. And Line A should respond to Line B. The rule is no physical touch while playing the roles. If Line A is convinced by Line B, they should let their partner walk across the line. For example, Line B as a villager will try to talk to their partner who is now the forest authorities and persuade them to allow their village to live in the forest area as their ancestor.

5. After 5 minutes, ask everyone to stop and switch the roles to the opposite side. Now Line B will become the role with power-over, Line A will have to try to convince their partner. [You could also change to different roles for one or both Lines if you like but the two roles should have unequal relations]

6. Invite everyone to sit down and make themselves comfortable. Ask anyone who would like to share how they feel about this activity. Here are some guiding questions to ask your group:

- Did anyone succeed in convincing your partners to let you cross the line?
- What convinced the other line?
- How did you feel being Role A and how does that differ from Role B?
- Did it remind you about any situations in real life?

Now that you have had some practices. Let's brainstorm and come up with your messages. Remember that you will need different approaches for different target audiences.

Your goal:	
Your target audience:	Your message:
Your target audience:	Your message:

What make a good message:

- Informative and motivate audience to act
- Simple and clear
- Focus on solution
- Practical and reasonable in what is being asked
- Supported by evidence, data, facts, number
- Real life stories,
- Language and content are appropriate for the audience
- Personal-show why you care

Non-verbal Message is also important. Most of the time people will remember how they feel more than what text is being communicated to them. Gesture, body language and anything visual or sensational will affect how you deliver your message. Be mindful and intent about what you want your target to received verbally and non-verbally.

Resource Box

- Consider Your Audience by Beautiful Trouble <https://beautifultrouble.org/principle/consider-your-audience/>
- Community Action Guide on the Asian Development Bank by International Accountability Project <https://accountabilityproject.org/work/community-organizing/community-action-guides/>
- Youth Advocacy Toolkit by UNICEF United Kingdom <https://www.unicef.org.uk/working-with-young-people/youth-advocacy-toolkit/>

4. Find Allies and Mobilize Supports

Social movements seldom win by overpowering their opposition; they win by shifting support out from under them.”

To sustain your advocacy and to achieve your goals you will need all the supports you can get. You will need to find allies and include them in your advocacy steps. Allies are friends who is on your side, who share the same visions and believe in and ready to join forces to create the change that you want to see. Experienced allies can help you think through your plans and tactics and help you find answers to many questions that you may have about your advocacy. Allies could be other youth groups who are doing advocacy in environment or other issues. They could also be adults who believe and support youth-led activities.

When you have allies, you are not alone. Your voices will be louder and stronger. You will gain more knowledge and resource. You can start finding your allies by thinking through these questions:

- Who are directly and indirectly affected by the issue you are advocating?
- Who can you work with at particular steps?
- What do they gain if they join you and win?
- Who else will be an ally on this issue?
- What power do they have over the decision makers?
- Where can you find them?
- What risks are they taking?

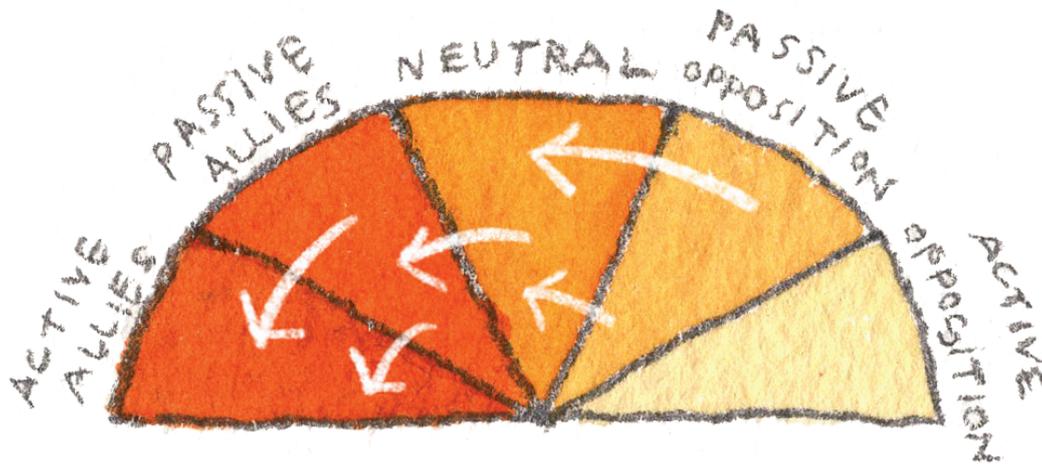
Finding answers for these questions will help you navigate allies and be able to mobilize some supports. You need to look deeper in to them to see what kind of allies they are and how they organized and how you can mobilize different kind of supports from your allies.

What is the best way of gaining support for my cause and how should I engage with them?

Activity: Allies Pie

1.5 hours

To analyze and identify types of allies and opponents to your advocacy



1. Put up a drawing of spectrum of allies that look like five slices of a half pie (see image). Put your group on the most left side, and your opposition on the far-right side.
2. Ask your group members to add name of person, group, organization, movements that would fall into each pie-slice on the spectrum. Add as many as you can in all parts.
 - Active Allies are people who agree with your goal and would fight alongside you
 - Passive Allies are people who agree with your goal but are not yet doing anything to support you;
 - Neutrals are people who have not yet engaged or do not yet know about your advocacy
 - Passive Opposition are people who disagree with what you are doing or against who you are but have not done anything yet to stop you
 - Active Opposition are people who disagree with your advocacy and are actively organizing against you.

3. You may start with those who you know very well or live close to you. Think about different groups and individuals in different areas. Be as specific as possible. If you say teacher, who exactly are you talking about. May be a teacher in a local school. In reality, you may mean teacher who teach science or mathematics to help you with some data

4. You might need to do further research to answer any unknown group or people who are influential to your advocacy goal but you are not yet sure about their position, in which spectrum they belong. Gather more information and consider asking your known active allies to help figure them out.

5. Now pay attention to the Neutrals and Passive Allies. Brainstorm in the group about what are ways to motivate them to be more supportive and more active so they will move closer to your Active Allies.

Name	What to do	Who can help

Building public support and increasing number of allies will increase your chance in achieving your advocacy goal and can also help manage the risks you might be facing. Try to think about different people, group, organization, company, institutions or government agencies that has an interest in your issue. They could be your peers, parents, family members, religious groups, academics, community-based organizations or civil society groups.

Reach out to allies that you have identified. Ask for a meeting or phone call and let them know about what you are thinking and planning. Request for advices and resources if needed. Remember to thank and stay in touch with your allies and supporters.

Resource Box

- Check out more tools and tactics from Beautiful Rising <https://beautifulrising.org/about/whats-inside>
- Community Action Guide on Community-led Research by International Accountability Project (available in some Mekong languages) <https://accountabilityproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/IAP-Comm-Act-Guide-web.pdf>

5. Crowdsource Tools and Tactics

It's time to take actions! Now that you have developed messages for the decision makers targets you identified. How can you influence them? Tactics are tools will help you find ways to reach your targets. They should be in line with your message. Choose and design your tactics wisely to fit specific target and goal.

If you don't have much prior experience with advocacy, start with small scale and practical tactic, something that you enjoy doing and creative. Let's find the best ways to reach your targets and achieve your goals.

Activity: Speak Truth to Power under the Sand!

1 hours

To review an example of advocacy tool and tactic



1. In group or individually, watch a video produced by youth activists from Mother Nature Cambodia who buried themselves in sand to speak about the natural resource exploitation issue in Cambodia [Watch 2:16 minutes video <https://youtu.be/5T-NXaCBAjpo>]

2. Organize a discussion about what you and your group observe from the video. A group facilitator or collectively can ask the group these questions to spark the discussion:

- What topic they are talking about? Did they deliver a clear message?
- Who are they communicating or calling to take an action?
- What make this a powerful tool in advocacy?
- Should there be any other activities to follow up or accompanying this video? What could that be?
- What are possible risks that this group may face retaliation because of their advocacy?

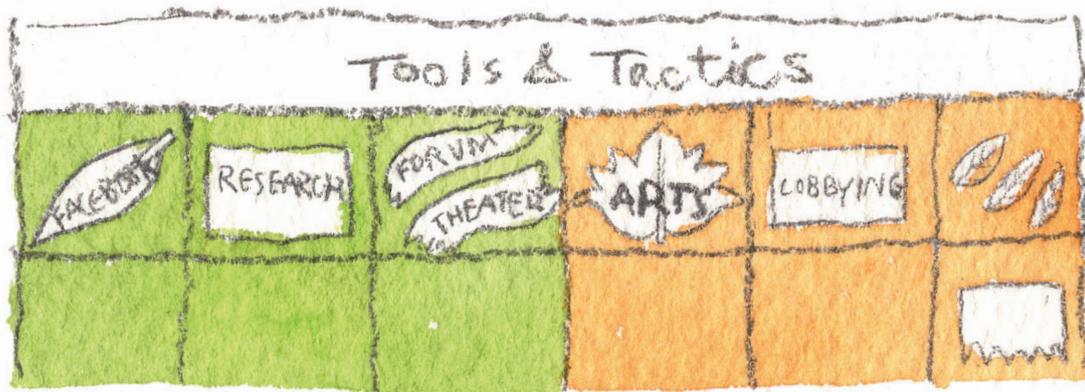
If you are working with groups that have some experiences with advocacy, you may want to ask your group members to share their insights on what tools and tactics have they used before. You may pose question such as What have been helpful in achieving goals and what are challenges that they faced in doing advocacy?

You can ask each group member to think individually and then start to write down in this grid. You can do this together in-person on big piece of paper or on the ground—whatever works for your situation. You could also do this online as a group through a team collaboration tool such as Google Docs, shared slides. Make sure to record them manually or digitally so you can use them in the future.

Activity: Crowdsourcing Grid

1-2 hour

To share and collect tools and tactics that people have used in advocacy and determine what tools would be suitable for your advocacy



1. Show the grid of empty slots on a big piece of paper or on the ground and explain that because everyone has something to share, we are going to do a crowdsourcing exercise.
2. Ask everyone in the group to write down tools and tactics that they have used previously in advocacy activities in sticky note or small piece of paper or plant leaves. The tools and tactics could be anything such as writing an open letter (tactic), sharing a letter through Change.org (tool), awareness raising speech at the fish market (tactic) etc., targeted social media post to head of local administrative (tool &tactic)
3. Invite whoever is ready to start putting the tools and tactics that they want to share into the grid. Emphasize that each slot/empty box can is for one tool/tactic. Don't worry about distinguishing whether what you are thinking is a tool or tactic. Just write anything that come to your mind.

Suggested prompt:

Write down tools and tactics that you have used. One tool/tactic per one slot. You can write as many slots as you want.

4. Ask for some volunteers to help count how many tools and tactics your group have collectively. Then encourage the group to reflect on what they see from the grid. You may pose some questions:

- What does this list of tools and tactics bring up for you?
- How many of these tools have you used?
- What are your experiences with them? Please share any success or challenges using them.

Facilitator Tips:

- If you are doing this activity on big piece of paper, you may prepare multiple copies of the empty grid in case your group have many things to share. If you do this on the ground or other natural surfaces, feel free to add more slots to the grid.
- If you start to see some duplicates of people using the same tools or tactics, you could ask people to look around the grid before they write and ask them to add to the existing slots.
- Before open the discussion, you may want to try to separate the tools and tactics or categorize them if you have many things on the grid.

Tactics are about how you show collective power to decision makers and those who you want to be on your side to start listen and eventually take action that will help you achieve your goals. Tools will help you to easily use those tactics. Use different tactics to build engagement with your targets.

Don't worry if you and your team are new to this and might not have a lot to share from previous experience. Here are some suggested tools and tactics that you may consider.

Tools & Tactics					
Change.org	Facebook livestreaming	Social Media	Letter Writing	Petitions	Phone Calling
Newspaper	Research	Forum Theatre	Rallies/Protest	Media Events	Arts
			Public Forum	Group Visits to Office	Twitter Storm
			Consumer Advocacy	Lobbying	Online Campaigning

Remember, tools and tactics are supposed to help you bring your message across to your targets. You may have to use many different tools to help raise your voices and show your power. Find out what has worked before with your targets. Maybe the persons you are trying to reach or convince had engaged in another advocacy. Where possible, reach out to groups that had been in contact before with specific targets and ask them for any tips and advice. Quickly research on your target to see if that person ever respond to any advocacy activities perhaps a reply letter, speech at events, agreed to meet in-person. Keep in mind when choosing your tactics.

- What they care about?
- Where do they get information on your issues?
- Who and what influence them?

Fill out this grid to take a closer look at a tactic you choose or that are interested to learn more about. If you are considering a few tactics, you can narrow it down by rating them. You can put stars/leaf/rocks to rate which tactic is the most appropriate for your goal and target.

Tactic :		★ ★
Target:		
Pros: what is good about this tactic?	Cons: what are the limitations and risk?	
Anticipated Response: how would the targets react?	Resources needed: what do I need? who can help?	
Action Plan: what do I do step-by-step		

Resource Box

- Check out more tools and tactics and how they have been used in real life from Beautiful Rising <https://beautifulrising.org/about/whats-inside>
- Learn about practical steps on some great advocacy and campaign tactics An Advocacy Toolkit 4: The Education We Want <https://plan-international.org/publications/advocacy-toolkit#download-options>
- Digital Advocacy <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/act/how-do-digital-advocacy>

6. *Assess Risk*

Social activism especially environmental advocacy is about taking risks. Those who are trying to bring positive changes to society especially young people can be labelled as “trouble makers” by those holding political powers or those who do not yet agree with your goals. Freedom of expression is limited in the Mekong countries. There have been reports of crackdown on active citizens and particularly youth activists because of their efforts in speaking their truthful mind and taking actions to bring positive changes to society.

This perception driven by political power could lead to negative actions against individuals and groups who organize or advocate for better future. What are some of the difficulties and constraints that activists near you face in their attempts to challenge power that you have heard or are aware of?

Youth-led advocacy and activism often disrupt broken systems and that will make some people unhappy because they may be afraid that they will lose control or power or benefits. Advocacy can be a long journey. It is important to make sure you are safe and healthy physically and mentally to be able to continue putting and increasing the pressure, making public more aware and support your advocacy works.

Risk assessment will help you understand what scenarios could possibly happen that might affect your safety, security and well-being. Risk assessment is about asking critical questions individually and collectively. Who would obstruct your efforts or may cause you harm personally or to your efforts?

The first step is to understand the space that you will operate. Are you able to speak or express freely about anything? What issues might be considered sensitive for the society that you live in. What would upset your targets? There are useful tools created by civil society organizations and movements available for you to learn and apply to on assessing risk and mitigation for your situation.

Start with imagining what could happen to you and your group as you start your advocacy activities along the way.

Activity:

30 minutes

To assess risk that the group and its members may face while conducting advocacy



1. Draw a three-column table. Add three type of emoji expressing different feelings in the three columns: happy face in green section, neutral face in yellow section and angry face in red section. (See an example below)
2. Ask group members to imagine themselves carrying out advocacy activities and think about what scenarios or situation that could happen to them, as a member of advocacy group. Encourage everyone to think about both positive and negative scenarios. Each member writes or draw in sticky notes or small piece of paper, each scenario per each sticky note.
3. Invite everyone to review the three-column sections and explain what each section means.
 - In the **green section** with a happy face, put the happy scenarios that make you feel good about. For example: My community send me a thank you note.
 - In the **red section** with an angry face, put the scenarios that might make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. For example: Someone follows me to school. Someone put harsh comments or threat me on social media.
 - In the **yellow section** with a neutral face, put the scenarios that is unsure or something that could escalate to better or worse. For example: I get noticed by a lot more people in public space.
4. Then place them into the section that they think a specific situation belong to. Invite anyone who want to explain a bit more about what they wrote and why it belongs to that sections.

5. Take a look at all the scenarios being placed in the table together. Group any similar situations together. Ask the group to rate and select 5 scenarios that are most likely to happen to them. Discuss a few points as a group:

- What make us happy and what scare us? Who are behind these?
- What are the most unsafe or uncomfortable situations that you see in this table? Do you think why does that happen to us?
- What can we do to prevent or limit the bad situation? Who in the allies that we have identified can help us deal with these situations?

6. While it's critical to pay close look at the red section. Acknowledge the situation in green section and emphasize that although there may be some risk involving in this advocacy but there are also positive and supportive feelings that would also happen because of our actions. Take note and record the results of this activity. Revisit the list of your allies. You may consider reaching out to trusted allies especially adults and seek their advice on dealing with the situations your group have identified.

You may now have better sense of what could happen or might happen to you that would affect your security. Let's take even deeper look to understand your situation better by using a tool from Frontline Defenders [Work Book on Security](#) called the Risk Formula which will help you to understand and deal with risk and security issues:

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Threats} \times \text{Vulnerability}}{\text{Capacities}}$$

<p>Risk: the possibility of events that result in harm</p>	<p>Threat: declaration or indication of an intention to inflict damage, punish or hurt</p>	<p>Vulnerability: any factor which makes it more likely for harm to materialize or result in greater damage</p>
<p>Capacity: any resource (including abilities and contacts) which improve security</p>		

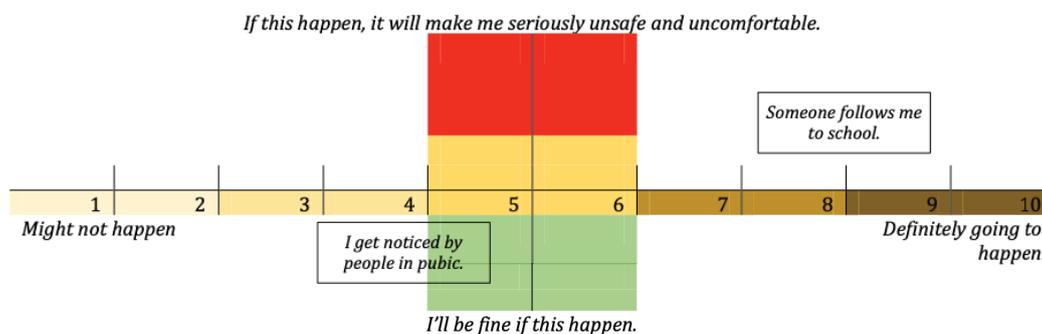
To be able to understand the risk you are at or might be taking, you need to analyze threats and vulnerabilities. Threats and your vulnerability are key factors in determining your risk. Revisit what your groups discussed in the previous activity and try to break them down into the Risk Formula by adding what you had identified into this chart.

Risk:	Threat:	Vulnerability:
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	Capacity:	
	-	
	-	

You can reduce risk by if possible reduce threats and minimize vulnerability and increase or strengthen your capacity. Remember your active allies whom you trust can help you.

What can I/we do to reduce threats and vulnerability	What can I/we do to increase my capacity
-	-
-	-
-	-

When you understand all your risk, then you could assess impact and likelihood of each specific risk. Is it likely to happen? If it happens, what impact it would make on you? This will help you decide if and how you should go forward with your plan and what kind of support you need. It could also make you feel more confident to start or continue your plan.



There are many things that out of your control and situation can change in different way. It's recommended that you assess your risk regularly and revisit what you have assessed to see if you need to adjust anything or consider any new development related to your plan.

Resource Box

- Workbook on Security: Practical Steps for Human Rights Defenders at Risk by Frontline Defenders <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/workbook-security-practical-steps-human-rights-defenders-risk>
- Advocacy in Restricted Spaces: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organizations by Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund <http://www.csolifeline.org/advocacy-toolkit>

By when?					
Tactics: What? Where? How?					
By Who?					



You can create your advocacy canvas in large piece of paper or on computer. Plan to review your advocacy canvas to update it regularly. Take note of what you learned, what remains unclear and what you should pay attention or mobilize your time and resource to.

Resource Box

- MobLab <https://mobilisationlab.org/resources/>
- Youth Advocacy Guide by United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) <https://www.voicesofyouth.org/tools-resources/youth-advocacy-guide>

8. Reflect and Learn

Planning and doing advocacy can be intense. You are likely going to deal with many people, many situations and running around for different activities. Don't forget to give yourself and together with your team some time to breath and rest. You can take this opportunity to also do a reflection.

To reflect is to carefully think about a particular topic. Reflection is very important in advocacy learning process because it led you to connect your feeling, knowledge with what you experience. Reflect on your individual experience and collectively with your team will help improve your advocacy skills.

“Which Greta Thunberg are you at the end of _____ activity?”



Reference: Online Training Monster Manual by 350.org

You can start by asking yourself these questions: How do I know what I am doing is working and whether my intended change is really happening? How do I know if I have achieved my goals? How do I feel about what happened/is happening? What can I learn along the process? Learn about what worked and what did not work will help evaluate and improve your advocacy plan.

Regularly and intentionally collect information by observing, taking notes, group discussion, survey etc. on both positive and negative impacts that your advocacy is creating are helpful to inform your reflection and learning.

BEFORE:

When planning advocacy....

- How will I know my goal has been achieved?
- What changes look like?
- What are anticipated reactions?

AFTER:

- Did the actions get a reaction? What kind of reaction?
- What worked and what didn't? Why?
- What inspired us?
- What were the challenges?
- Were there any unexpected results?
- Did the reaction lead to any changes? What does it look like?
- What can I do to improve?

If your advocacy activities run more than 3 months, you might consider conducting a review of activities you have done with your team before having a reflection to refresh your memory. You can make picture collage of the previous activities so everyone can visual them. Reviewing activities will help you gather information of key moments and gauge perspective on what's happening.

Prepare your prompts questions before hand and create a nice relaxing activity for everyone to feel free to speak and express. You could do the reflection among your team and could also invite a few trusted allies who could give you helpful insights of your activities to your reflection meetings.

How do you feel about _____ activity?



Add your name / a star next to the feeling that best represents you.

After review, consider organizing a reflection circle by asking everyone to take a moment to reflect about their engagement with the targets.

Take a moment to individually reflect about your engagement with your targets. Think about how the activities went. If your team is quite big, you may want to break into smaller groups to have a group sharing and discussion. You can start by some positive notes. Here are examples of prompt question:

- What is worth celebrating? What are our wins?
- What inspired us?
- How did your target respond to your message and tactics?
- What did you learn from it?
- What were the challenges?
- What can you do to better communicate or engage with them?
- What feelings and emotions you and your groups have from the work you do?
- What would you like to do differently or better next time?
- Are there any questions or concerns arise from this activity? What do you want to know or learn more?

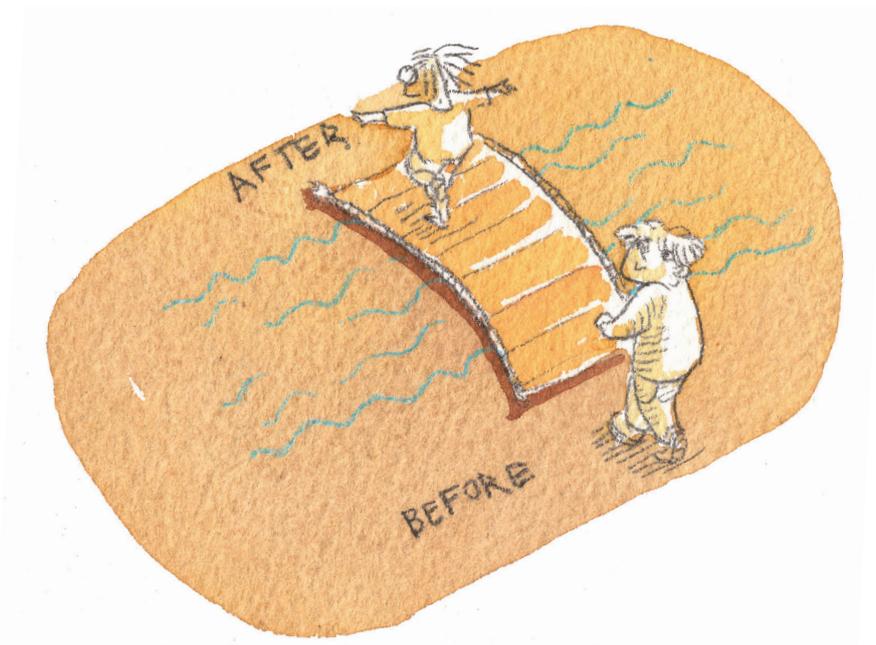


It is common that things don't work out as expected. Don't worry, very few strategies work exactly as planned. Review and reflection will inform you on what and how to adjust your plans or find more effective tactics. It might be helpful to share the results or key take-aways with allies who have supported you in different ways and if safe, share with those working on the similar issues.

Activity: Crossing an Advocacy Bridge

60 minutes

To reflect on individual and collective experience of the overall advocacy efforts.



- 1.** Draw a bridge over a river on a large paper or use tape or string to create a bridge layout on the floor. Label 'before' in one side of the river bank and 'after' in the other side of the river. The bridge represents the 'advocacy plan' or all activities conducted in advocacy.
- 2.** Everyone stands on one side of the river that labelled 'before'. Ask participants to think about the first days that they joined the advocacy activities and make one movement using their body to express their overall feeling at that time or one word or short sentence that best describe their feeling at that time.
- 3.** Invite participant to walk across the bridge one-by-one to the 'after' side of the river. Ask everyone to think as they enter the other side about their personal experience and what situation they notice have changed after the actions and all advocacy activities are taken.
- 4.** Give a few minutes for each to reflect, write journal, or draw.
- 5.** In a circle, ask each and every one to share their personal story and/or drawing one-by-one. Emphasize that this is a safe space for everyone to express freely.

Resource Box

- An Advocacy Tool Kit (Part 3) by Plan International <https://plan-international.org/publications/advocacy-toolkit>
- The Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation by UNICEF <https://adolescentkit.org/activity-box.html>
- Reflection Action by ActionAid https://www.reflectionaction.org/tools_and_methods/