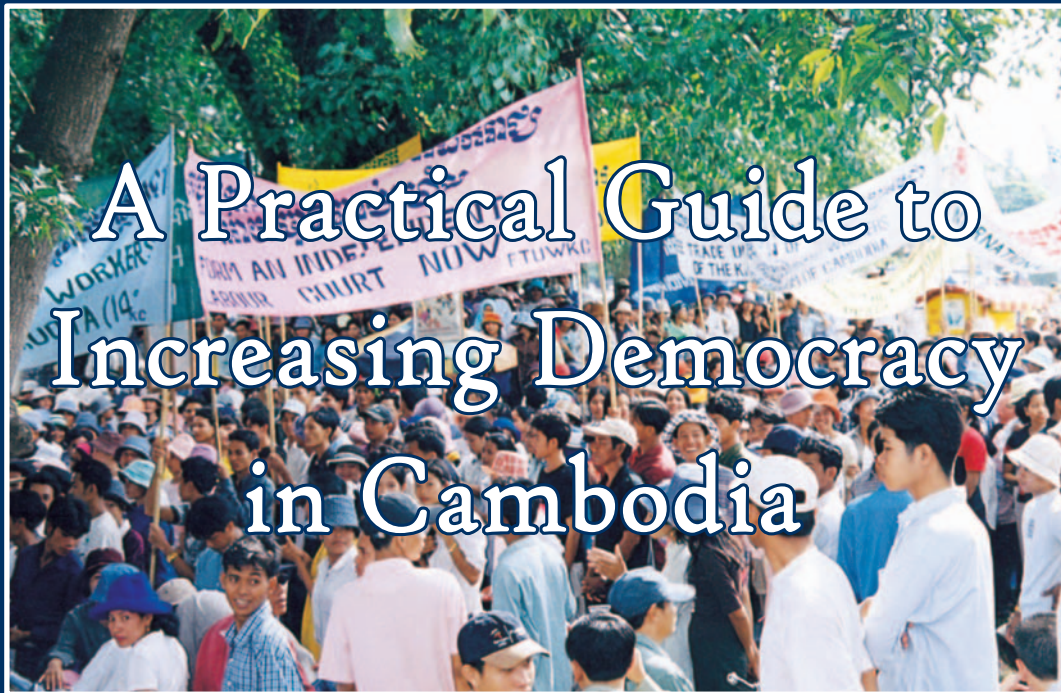


Advocacy



Handbook



A Practical Guide to Increasing Democracy in Cambodia



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Asian Development Bank
Community Development Management Council
Community Sanitation and Recycling Team
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Fisheries Action Coalition Team
Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, and Fisheries
Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs
Oxfam Great Britain
Partnership for Development in Kampuchea
People Living with HIV/AIDS
Solidarity and Urban Poor Federation
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Human Settlement Programme
Urban Poor Development Fund
Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy
Urban Poor Women Development
Urban Resource Center
Urban Sector Group

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AUTHORS:

Christina Mansfield, Kurt MacLeod, Maron Greenleaf, and Poppy Alexander

EDITORS /DESIGNERS:

Annie Bickford, Ly Monirith, Phan Barmey, Seng Sophal, Ros Sotha and Yeang Virakbot

Advocacy Handbook: A Practical Guide to Increasing Democracy in Cambodia

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this guide is to provide practical information on strategies and techniques for current and future advocates. It also can be used to educate those interested in advocacy. It is the companion to the publication *Advocacy in Cambodia*¹, which analyzes Cambodia's advocacy campaigns, lessons learned and best practices based on eight sectors.

Advocacy is important for promoting policies that protect universal human rights. Advocates help marginalized groups speak out against unjust regulations or laws and empower these groups to implement their own sustainable advocacy campaigns. A properly planned advocacy campaign will involve both the affected community, the government and other key actors by encouraging cooperation between different groups of stakeholders when appropriate and ultimately achieving a mutually beneficial solution. An advocate's goal is to ascertain how civil society organizations, the relevant communities of interest, elected officials and the stakeholders can effectively improve the overall quality of life for all citizens with a focus on those who are marginalized.

This practical guide is a tool that advocates can refer to when implementing a campaign. Though advocates should not be limited to following the strategies contained in this guide and are encouraged to create your own strategies, this guide attempts to compile some of the best practices for implementing your strategy. The handbook provides guidance to advocates that are useful in checking advocacy strategies before, during and after a campaign. The first section examines the meaning of advocacy, with particular attention to the local context. From there, the guide moves into a step-by-step action plan for a campaign. Each part of the process is outlined and best practices are explained. There is also a how-to section on involving government and media. An evaluation of advocacy efforts in Cambodia describes lessons learned from past campaigns, and two case studies examine urban and rural advocacy to provide a more in-depth analysis of what has and has not worked. Finally, there are appendices designed to help with media campaigns, the legislative process and lobbying efforts.

¹ *Advocacy in Cambodia: Increasing Democratic Space*, Mansfield, Cristina and MacLeod, Kurt. Pact May 2002. Also see publication on Pact website: www.pactworld.org

INTRODUCTION TO ADVOCACY

1. DEFINITIONS OF ADVOCACY— WHAT DOES THE TERM MEAN? AND SOME BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

This is a general definition of the term used by the Advocacy Institute:

ADVOCACY IS A SERIES OF ACTIONS DESIGNED TO PERSUADE AND INFLUENCE THOSE WHO HOLD GOVERNMENTAL, POLITICAL, OR ECONOMIC POWER SO THAT THEY WILL ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT PUBLIC POLICIES IN WAYS THAT BENEFIT THOSE WITH LESS POLITICAL POWER AND FEWER ECONOMIC RESOURCES.

There are three ways to change the behavior of individuals, groups or institutions that use their power to the disadvantage of others:

1. **Work directly** with those in power to pressure or convince them to adopt public policies and practices that will benefit disadvantaged people.
2. **Influence those in power** by working directly with the people who are disadvantaged and providing them with the skills to influence those with power to adopt better practices and policies.
3. **Disseminate information** through the media and other sources to create public awareness about a problem, which will in turn put public pressure on decision-makers.

Most successful advocacy campaigns involve some combination of the three. If the individual, group or institution is not aware of the harm they are causing, they can be educated in the hope that they will change their behavior or policies appropriately. If the individual, group or institution *is* aware of the problem but not taking action to change, additional pressure may need to be applied.

Advocates work to raise awareness about the issue among a larger group of people, such as the general public, to get their support. This technique is called using **public pressure**. Changing policies and practice by one stakeholder is often more effective when combined with public pressure. Public pressure and advocacy campaigns try to make the individual, group or institution that is causing the problem feel there is a greater risk in continuing actions that negatively affect society than to change practices.

Advocacy that targets public policy assumes that exerting pressure on policy makers is an effective way to change or create new laws. This type of advocacy works best when public policy is created through a consultative process, and there are mechanisms in place that allow access to law makers to present your case for policy formulation or changes.

Once public policy passes through the legislative process it is imperative that there is a sound

ANYONE WHO HAS A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME OF A SITUATION IS A *STAKEHOLDER*. *STAKEHOLDERS* GENERALLY INCLUDE THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY/INDIVIDUAL, NGOs, CBOS, THE GOVERNMENT, AND POSSIBLY BUSINESS INTERESTS.

government administrative and judicial system that moves the policy from paper to practice through enforcement and prevention activities.

All advocates will recognize the challenges that the local political environment presents. In particular, the lack of accountability and the inadequacy of law enforcement mechanisms pose significant challenges to advocacy efforts. You should keep these challenges in mind when planning and conducting your advocacy campaign.

2. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN?

First, **advocacy seeks to change public policy and practices to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.** An advocate is an individual or organization (like an NGO or government department) that organizes and speaks on the behalf of groups who do not have the power to do so themselves. It should be emphasized that as an advocate, your ultimate aim should always be to empower groups to act on their own behalf. Your efforts should therefore include affected groups to the greatest possible extent. The goal should be to provide capacity or resources so that affected communities can organize or speak on their own behalf.

Second, **advocacy requires reliable and objective information.** An advocacy campaign must persuade people with convincing arguments backed by factual information. You will need to fully understand the complexities of the problem in order to convince people unsympathetic to your cause. Compiling research and making it available to target audiences — such as lawmakers, journalists and the general public — is an essential component of advocacy. People who create or change policy and practices want solutions and not more problems. All information should be available in both the local language and a consideration for English to reach a wide international audience if needed.

Third, **advocacy is a series of activities** or actions. One or two isolated activities do not represent an advocacy campaign. You should not expect to bring about real sustainable change unless you engage in a number of strategically planned actions that build on each other over a long period of time. For this reason, advocacy should be thought of in terms of *strategies* and *campaigns* rather than individual activities.

TOO OFTEN, ONLY A SHORT-TERM SOLUTION IS APPLIED TO A PROBLEM.

INSTEAD, SOLUTIONS MUST BE FOUND THAT WILL CORRECT THE PROBLEM IN THE LONG-TERM. SUCH SOLUTIONS ARE **SUSTAINABLE.**

Finally, **advocacy seeks to change the balance of power so that vulnerable groups are given more control over their lives.** Powerful people and institutions do not, however, generally relinquish power willingly. Attempts to change the imbalance of power inevitably make those who hold power feel threatened or uneasy. Because of this, advocates need to anticipate uncomfortable situations and be prepared to deal with them effectively. At the same time, the solutions that you propose should be tolerable to all those who will be affected by it. You do not want to alienate groups you need to work with by making demands that are unrealistic or initiating activities that will limit the number of participating groups in a campaign. If your goals are too ambitious, you risk not changing anything. Sometimes this means starting with smaller advocacy objectives and moving to larger objectives as small victories are accomplished.

3. WHAT DOES AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN TRY TO ACHIEVE?

Advocacy campaigns can be organized for many reasons. Advocacy campaigns are often started when a group realizes that a situation will not improve without changes in the policy or practices either locally, nationally or internationally. For example, in Cambodia, groups working for local fishing rights recognized that the government's policy had to change if communities were to gain more access to fisheries (see the case study on fisheries for further discussion).

Advocacy can also concentrate on policies or practices of non-government institutions such as companies, multinational banks or universities. Because of the number of outdated or inadequate laws and policies in some countries, lawmakers and local authorities are the primary focus of advocacy efforts. An advocacy campaign that focuses on public policy corrects an unsatisfactory policy (e.g. old land law) or establishes a new policy that has not been developed (e.g. domestic violence).

ANY EXERCISE OF CIVIL RIGHTS SUCH AS FREE SPEECH, VOTING, FREEDOM OF PRESS, FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, AND ACCESS TO ELECTED OFFICIALS-TAKES PLACE IN A “DEMOCRATIC SPACE”. THIS SPACE IS ANY PUBLIC PLACE WHERE SOMEONE CAN FEEL FREE TO PRACTICE THE LIBERTIES GUARANTEED BY THE CONSTITUTION.

It is imperative for an advocate to concentrate not only on the creation and enforcement of laws, but prevention activities as well. For instance, Domestic Violence (DV) organizations are working with the Ministry of Women’s and Veteran’s Affairs (MOWA) trying to ensure that the future DV law protects abused women from further acts of violence. However, educating and raising awareness about domestic violence as a preventative activity and women’s rights reaches the ultimate goal of empowering women and is also an effective strategy. It is important to link legal practices and education programs for a more effective movement.

You can organize advocacy campaigns that aim to achieve changes in social, political or economic sectors. For example:

- **Social issues** include health, education, culture, the arts, human trafficking, the environment, gender, and the marginalization of groups such as the disabled, the elderly, and the young. All social issues also have economic and political aspects. In countries like Cambodia, there has generally been more support for advocacy around social issues than around economic or political issues both because donor agencies are often concerned about helping marginalized groups and because social issues tend to be seen as less threatening to those in power. Change therefore seems more achievable.

- **Political issues** include the rights of people to express themselves, associate freely, elect leaders, provide input into policies and require government accountability. Advocacy on political issues aims to enlarge the democratic space and the dialogue between the government and non-governmental institutions and groups. The Commune Council Election Law in Cambodia is an example of advocacy organized around a political issue.

- **Economic issues** relate to the livelihood of populations, including access to assets or resources, market competition factors and free market trade policies. In Cambodia, land law, fisheries’ rights and garment factory labor are examples of economic issues around which advocacy campaigns have been organized. On a smaller scale, micro enterprise

vendors in specific markets can organize advocacy campaigns when, for example, they feel that fees for stalls are too high. In general, however, economic issues have received less attention from advocates in Cambodia.

As an advocate examines these three fields, it becomes possible to help marginalized groups have a voice. In turn, a move towards universal human rights is taken.

4. DEFINING OUR CAMPAIGN WHAT TYPE OF ADVOCACY STRATEGY SHOULD WE USE?

Before beginning to plan an advocacy campaign, you should think about the issue you want to address and the community you want to advocate with. Thinking about the following issues will help you create an effective advocacy strategy:

CAMPAIGN BENEFICIARIES:

QUESTION :
WHOM WILL YOUR CAMPAIGN BENEFIT?

Advocacy can be organized on behalf of and with individuals or larger populations. An example of advocacy on behalf of an individual would be a campaign to obtain the release of a political prisoner. An example of advocacy with affected populations includes People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA’s) lobbying government to provide better access to care and medicine. Advocacy can also target a group of people with a similar problem or characteristic, known as an **interest group**. For example, advocacy for an interest group might support disabled workers or farmers.

CAMPAIGN ORGANIZERS:

QUESTIONS:
WHO INITIATED THE CAMPAIGN? WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE CAMPAIGN AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?
HOW WILL THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY BE INCLUDED IN AND EMPOWERED BY THE CAMPAIGN?

Advocacy can be organized by those affected by a problem or by individuals or agencies that are particularly concerned with a situation. If empowered, the marginalized or vulnerable individual or community will be more likely to organize by themselves. Villagers protesting unresolved land disputes or garment workers who go on strike are examples of advocacy organized by the people most affected. Low levels of community

empowerment can often lead to outside concerned individuals and agencies initiating advocacy activities. However if campaigns are to be sustainable, affected groups need strong advocacy skills and should be included in the advocacy efforts of NGOs and CBOs from the beginning. A good example is that of the case of HIV+ individuals. Although health organizations can initiate advocacy on their behalf, a more effective campaign will be one that involves people with HIV who also fight against discrimination and advocate for medication.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION:

QUESTIONS:

WHERE IS THE AFFECTED GROUP LOCATED?
IF INDIVIDUALS FROM THE GROUP ARE DISPERSED,
DO THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THEY HAVE A
COMMON PROBLEM?

Affected communities may be located in a concentrated geographic area, such as a village, commune, province, etc., or they may be spread among the general population. For example, garment factory workers live in a relatively concentrated urban area while those affected by land disputes live throughout the country. Advocates for these two groups would use different strategies because of the geographic concentration or dispersion of affected communities. Advocacy that targets geographically concentrated populations is easier to organize, whereas advocacy that aims to reach or gain support from individuals from around the country requires more resources and is more complicated to organize.

LEVEL OF RESPONSE:

QUESTIONS:

SHOULD I TRY TO START A NEW CAMPAIGN OR
WORK THROUGH AN EXISTING ONE ?

Depending on the nature and geographical distribution of the problem, the advocacy campaign may target the local, national or international level. If only one village is involved in a land dispute, a response that targets the village, commune, district or provincial government may be sufficient. If the problem is throughout the country, the response may need to be at the national level. If the problem crosses borders, such as sex trafficking, the spread of HIV, or trade issues, the response may need to be at the international level. If your organization lacks the

resources to work at the national or international level, you can link with other advocacy campaigns working at these levels while you target the local level. For example, efforts to stop the trafficking of women and children need to be initiated on the local, national and international levels in order to be effective.

The type of problem and necessary level of response will often determine what types of advocates get involved and what strategies they will use: local problems will usually be resolved by local actors, such as the commune council and community leaders. International and multinational organizations such as the World Bank or the United Nations are more likely to address global problems, such as trade imbalances and the international spread of HIV/AIDS. To be most effective, these organizations will want to work in partnership with interested national and international NGOs.

METHOD OF RESPONSE:

QUESTION:

WHAT LEVEL OF INTENSITY SHOULD MY
CAMPAIGN USE?

When a situation is not threatening or urgent, less direct action will not be as appropriate as a long-term strategy. These campaigns can often include a long-term strategy to formulate or change policy and involve high level negotiations. You should try to create the necessary democratic space to discuss and negotiate advocacy issues with powerful stakeholders. The intensity and type of advocacy strategy depends on how threatening the situation is to the affected group.

Conflict arises when a group can no longer tolerate a situation and therefore decides to take action. Conflict can be violent or nonviolent, uncontrolled or controlled, destructive or productive. Conflict is not necessarily harmful and can, if properly managed and used in tandem with other advocacy techniques, be very helpful in an advocacy campaign. For example, some fishing communities have confiscated illegal draining pumps and brought them to the local Department of Fisheries in order to demand enforcement. Advocates should not try to repress calls for direct action from communities but rather should try to channel and/or facilitate it to fit within the larger advocacy campaign.

PREPARING YOUR ADVOCACY STRATEGY

IDENTIFY ISSUES

SET OBJECTIVES

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO PREPARING AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

IDENTIFY TARGET AUDIENCE

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

PLANNING

STEP 1 — IDENTIFY THE ISSUES: The first step in designing and implementing an advocacy campaign is to **analyze the problem** you want to target. Having a clear understanding of the cause of the problem is essential to designing an effective advocacy campaign that will be seen as serious by decision makers. Problems created by policies cannot usually be solved at the individual level and need to be addressed in an organized way that eventually leads to better practices and policies.

If it is a problem with a specific geographical area, you and other advocates should visit surrounding areas and communities to see if they are experiencing the same problem. If the problem is experienced by many communities, it will be necessary to collect accurate information to document the extent of the problem. The process of understanding the problem should include affected communities. Villagers and at risk communities are a fundamental resource and partner for NGOs in identifying current and future issues.

Some key questions to answer before starting your campaign:

- *What is the history of the problem? When did it start? Is it still occurring?*
- *Who is affected by it?*
- *Who has the power to control or change it?*
- *Have there been other advocacy campaigns to change the situation?*
- *Which of other groups (NGOs, donor agencies, private sector, governmental departments or other civil society organizations) are interested in working with you?*
- *At what level is the problem occurring? Is it just in one village or is it part of a larger policy issue?*
- *What else do you need to know to understand fully the problem?*
- *Are there research statistics that provide additional proof of the problem?*

Remember that this is only a guideline. Ask yourself what else you might need to know about the specific problems.

STEP 2 — SET OBJECTIVES: After you have determined the nature of the problem, you should decide on **specific goals and objectives for your advocacy project.** Often an advocacy campaign can make the mistake of setting the objectives too high and proposing policies that will not be acceptable to policy makers or that have limited space for compromise. If so, there is little chance for a positive outcome. It is better to start with achievable goals and expand based on successes. Objectives should be both attainable and plausible. If they are too ambitious, your campaign may run out of resources and motivation before your objectives have been achieved.

The goal for any outside advocate should be to create a strategy that will eventually empower the affected communities. Empowerment should be one of your advocacy goals. These communities should lead the initiative in order to ensure the sustainability of the campaign. Although outsiders can play a strong catalyst role in a campaign, it is important NGOs see the communities they work with as agents of change that have the ability to formulate advocacy agendas.

Setting objectives has in the past been a weak point in most Cambodian advocacy strategies. The two case studies presented in this guide demonstrate that they could have benefited from having clearly identified set of goals, objectives and strategies.

Some activities may seem effective on paper but when implemented do not have any significant impact and represent an inefficient use of resources. For example, advocates sometimes decide that it is necessary to organize a demonstration to express dissatisfaction on an issue. While demonstrations

can be an effective mechanism, they require a lot of time and effort to organize. If turnout is low, the media do not report on the demonstration and key policy makers will not be interested. Supporters need to analyze the usefulness of advocacy activities and make sure there are follow up activities.

Some goals you need to determine before starting an advocacy campaign:

- **Short term goals:** what you want to accomplish in the immediate future?
- **Long term goals:** what you want to accomplish in an extended period of time?
- **Content goals:** what concrete changes you want to occur (e.g. policy change)?
- **Process goals:** what you want your organization to gain from this campaign (e.g. capacity building within your organization)?
- **Empowerment goals:** what changes you want to see in the affected community that enable them to control their own livelihoods?

STEP 3 — IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE

TARGET AUDIENCE: Who do you want to take your campaign seriously enough to work on changes? When laying out an advocacy strategy, **you should be sure that the people you are targeting are the ones who have the power to change the policy and practices.** This means having a clear understanding of power relations and hierarchies within an institution. To gain this understanding, you may need assistance from experts who are familiar with the institution. For example, advocates may neglect to lobby an important decision-maker or begin to lobby the wrong government department or ministry before properly establishing who in the government is responsible for a particular policy or changing a practice.

It is equally important to identify those individuals or groups who have the capacity to influence authorities. These groups include the media and key constituencies, such as donor agencies, embassies, private sector, governmental departments or lobbying groups. Human rights organizations have traditionally been the best at lobbying government in Cambodia. If you are working on a problem related to human rights, you should think about

A COMMON MISTAKE MADE IS LIMITING ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO LOW-LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS WHILE FORGETTING TO PREPARE A STRATEGY TO LOBBY THE HIGHER-LEVEL OFFICIALS WHO ARE THE FINAL DECISION-MAKERS.

contacting them. When possible, link with organizations that have strong connections to decision makers so that you can access their established relationships.

There is a general consensus that donor support is shifting away from community development and towards advocacy and governance. Donors and international organizations can give you financial support and help pressure the government to change its policies. Make sure that part of your campaign also incorporates them to gain their financial and political support.

Questions to help identify target audiences:

- Who are the people and institutions you will need to affect?
- What level of government should you be targeting and will they be receptive to your message?
- What other actors will be able to influence them (e.g. UN agencies, donor agencies, lobbying NGOs)?

STEP 4 — RESOURCE ASSESSMENT:

Once the appropriate decision-makers have been identified, **it is important to assess all the resources that are available to the advocacy campaign.** It is necessary to understand what is needed to manage a campaign and have adequate resources to reach objectives. Without a clear understanding of your resources, you risk that the campaign lacks appropriate resources and will have to stop before you achieve your objectives.

If your campaign needs to be sustained over a long period of time, it is good to link with staff from supporting or partner organizations and even to incorporate the support of volunteers because of limited financial or human resources.

Assessing Your Main Resources:

- **Human** — What are the strengths and weaknesses of your organization's staff? How many people within your organization can work on the campaign? What are their skills (technical, social, etc.)? What is their experience level with advocacy? What additional capacity building of human resources are needed for the campaign activities?
- **Network** — Who will help you? What are their strengths and weaknesses? How is your relationship with government? Are there established networks that have working groups that deal with the issue you are considering?

How can you link these organizations to make the campaign stronger and more broad based?

• **Financial** — What money is available? Where will it come from? Will the donor source compromise the campaign's objectives?

STEP 5 - PLANNING: Once you have a good idea of the capacity of your organization, the objectives you want to accomplish, networks that exist or need to be created and the financial resources are available **you need to create an action plan. This should identify specific strategies/activities linked with a timeline.** Know what you want to do and when you want it to be done. Though you will have to modify your plan as unforeseen events happen, without a plan agreed to between collaborating partners, an advocacy campaign will lack efficiency. The general rule for planning a campaign is to be as specific as possible yet recognize that plans need a certain amount of flexibility to respond to new circumstances and opportunity.

CAMPAIGN PLANS SHOULD INCLUDE :

- **CLEAR GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**
- **INDICATORS FOR MEASURING ACTIVITIES**
- **A TIMELINE DESCRIBING WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO ACCOMPLISH AND WHEN**
- **AN IDENTIFICATION OF KEY STAKE HOLDERS AND HOW THEY ARE GOING TO BE INCORPORATED INTO YOUR STRATEGY**
- **A CLEAR DIVISION OF LABOR LETTING ALL INVOLVED KNOW WHAT THEIR JOB IS**
- **A SPECIFIC METHOD OF GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING CONVINCING INFORMATION TO REACH TARGET AUDIENCES**
- **A METHOD FOR MONITORING AND MODIFYING THE CAMPAIGN**
- **A MECHANISM FOR EVALUATING YOUR PROGRESS**
- **A CONTINGENCY PLAN IF YOUR MAIN STRATEGIES ARE NOT EFFECTIVE**

A seminar “Women and Good Governance” in Pursat Province, advocates for greater female participation in the political process and promotes a dialogue between female and male candidates.



DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING YOUR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Once you identified the advocacy issues, objectives, appropriate target audiences, resources and have a short and long-term plans, you should be able to develop the specifics of the campaign. While there is no specific formula for a successful advocacy campaign, there are three pointers you should keep in mind. First, successful advocacy campaigns should concentrate on directly solving the problem rather than what the advocates would like to see done on related issues. For example, differentiate between what will actually achieve your objectives and what actions are satisfying personal or organizational priorities. Second, successful advocacy will probably require some new approaches and techniques. Learn from past advocacy campaigns and be creative by using new techniques or methods. Third, successful advocacy campaigns use a wide range of actions that build logically on each other rather than just one action or a set of unrelated actions. With these pointers in mind, you should move on to thinking about what types of actions advocates use.

STEP 1 - GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING RELEVANT INFORMATION: Collecting and distributing information strengthens your campaign and informs decision-makers, providing them with evidence that shows why reform or change is necessary. There are three main types of information you should collect and distribute: information about problems, information about prevailing public opinion and information on possible solutions to the problems.

DOCUMENTING PROBLEMS: It is important to have clear and accurate information. For example, the fisheries advocacy campaign benefited from its collection of information. The NGO Forum's Fisheries Working Group produced a series of case

studies to document incidences of fisheries violations. It gave descriptions and provided specific information on which articles of the law were being violated. This evidence revealed the extent of the problem and gave strong support to their argument when addressing authorities. You should anticipate what information is going to be necessary to advocate effectively. Think ahead about what decision-makers need to hear to be convinced, even though it is a special problem, an economic argument may be very effective as so used with the HIV/AIDS issues. All public information should be made as public as possible: it should be available in the local languages and copies made in English, if needed, to reach a wider global audience.

ASSESSING PUBLIC OPINION: Broad based public support legitimizes a campaign in the eyes of lawmakers and donors. It will be helpful in approaching decision-makers and will deepen your own understanding of the problem. You should therefore conduct studies to determine what people in affected communities and the general public think about an issue. If politicians see a majority of citizens thinking a particular way, they are more likely to listen to possible solutions.

PROVIDING POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS: Decision-makers and authorities are always looking for solutions to problems. Many have identified the problem themselves but do not know what they can do to solve the problem. Decision-makers need you to recommend courses of action and solutions for them. They do not have the time to understand the details of every issue. It is important to collect

COLLECTING AND DISTRIBUTING ACCURATE
INFORMATION STRENGTHENS YOUR
CAMPAIGN AND INFORMS DECISION-MAKERS

information to learn how similar problems have been solved in other countries. This can include regulation, policy or conflict resolution options that have led to successful solutions to particular problems in other areas. Decision-makers are more likely to listen to you if you present some viable actions that will resolve the problem.

Once you have collected information, assessed public opinion and have identified possible solutions, make sure you let authorities know about public displeasure and your willingness to assist them in addressing the problem.

STEP 2 — RAISING AWARENESS AND CONCERN:

Advocacy campaigns usually need to have the support or interest of the general public or specific outside groups. You should therefore engage in activities that raise awareness and concern about the issue. Techniques include education campaigns, workshops, and media strategies.

ENGAGE IN
ACTIVITIES THAT
RAISE AWARENESS
AND CONCERN
ABOUT THE ISSUE



After a demonstration, protesters read information about labor-related issues

- **Education** activities such as workshops and outreach programs help to inform vulnerable groups of their rights, how their rights are being violated and what remedies and recourses are available. For example, education has been effective in teaching forest communities that, according to a 1988 law, no one has the right to fell resin trees that are being tapped by local villagers.

- **Petitions** and **letters** addressed to key authorities and signed by many people are two methods for demonstrating public support or displeasure. Both are often good ways to start a campaign because they bring issues to the attention of leaders and document the attempt to gain broad based support.

- **Celebrations** of special events like International Women's Day also increase public awareness. If you decide to host a celebration, make sure to include high ranking officials, community or NGO leaders and members of the public in speeches, marches, and other consciousness raising activities. Activities can be held for days before and after the event to gain more energy and publicity. Celebrations of this sort are, however, only really useful when the

general public is not aware of an issue or if it is followed by a developed advocacy campaign. Also be careful about your timing: if held at the wrong time it can weaken your campaign. For example, if no one attends the event, your campaign will lose legitimacy. Do some research: Has an event like this been held in your area before? Are people already aware of an issue? Will they attend an event? These are essential questions to ask of all public events.

- **Media** is an essential tool for raising public awareness and pressuring decision-makers. Press releases, radio and television spots are ways to get your message to the public. Other possible techniques that involve the media include:

1. *Invite journalists on field trips to learn about an issue;*
2. *Record speeches by high officials to inform villagers about promises made thus holding officials more accountable; and,*
3. *Make anonymous phone calls to the media about a known law violation that you think the media would be interested in reporting on through their own investigation.*

STEP 3 — ORGANIZED ACTION: Organized actions, if well planned and followed up, can provide a great boost to an advocacy campaign. They can also effectively pressure decision-makers or groups into changing a policy, or more likely, entering into a negotiation process. The following is a brief description of some organized actions:

- **Boycott:** Groups and communities that are victims of unfair practices and policies from the private sector and governments can join together and **boycott** a company or country. A boycott is when a group withdraws social, financially or political support, refuses to buy or take part in any activity that benefits the company or country and encourages others to do so as well. A strong boycott economically and publicly calls attention to unjust practices, thus generating popular pressure. Outreach and education for the affected and concerned group must occur to successfully mobilize participants. Media events, distributing information and marches are examples of activities that inform people about the unjust policies. Sometimes warning a company or nation that a network plans to coordinate a boycott creates enough pressure to convince the wrongdoers to engage in negotiations to resolve the conflict.



March held on October 1, 2002, coordinated by Cambodian people with the HIV/AIDS Network. The march was particularly successful because it was well organized, executed by the interest group and led to stronger ties with government.

- **Demonstrations and marches:** These are large groups of people gathered to rally for issue. They are good media events, providing visual images of your support base, and can effectively raise energy levels and pressure lawmakers. **Demonstrations** are stationary protests held at strategic or symbolic locations, like in front of the National Assembly, Independence Monument, or at provincial landmarks. **Marches** are moving protests that walk through strategic areas and often end in demonstrations. They serve as symbolic protests to express the opinion and solidarity of a group or network about an issue or specific event. They can be very powerful if done properly. You should be aware, however, that they consume an enormous amount of energy and resources. Moreover, if only a few people attend it can harm your advocacy campaign. Some good ways to prepare for a successful demonstration or march may be:

1. **Inform people you want to attend far in advance.** This should be done in an organized way. You could go door to door or hold pre-events to make signs and educate people about the issue.

2. **Network properly with other organizations** so that many interested groups know about the event, and can help with preparations and attendance.
3. **Pick a proper day**, like the weekend or a holiday, so that more people are able to come.
4. **Let media know about the event far in advance and follow up to make sure they come.** Ideally, you should contact them at least three times over the span of a month. Try to use different methods of contact to make sure your message gets across. For instance, you could send an email one month in advance, follow it with a phone call one week before the event and then personally go to their offices the day before the event. The event will be much more effective if images of it are published in the paper or discussed on the radio, so make sure the media are there.

5. **Pick a good target.** The event should be organized around a concrete issue, not necessarily the entire target problem. Current draft legislation, a recent highly publicized government action, or a court case could be possible targets around which your demonstration can center itself. People will get more excited about a specific issue, and your audience will better relate what you are talking about and what they can do about it.
6. **Make the event exciting with banners,** things to hand out, speeches, chants and petitions.
7. **Follow up.** You need to channel the energy you created at the event and use it to further the campaign. Follow up with a press conference or organize new supporters into further campaigns.

• **Strikes:** A strike is when a group of workers refuse to work. **Strikes** have been effectively used by the garment workers of Phnom Penh as a tool to gain concessions in collective bargaining. Strikes can include marches, demonstrations, and work stoppages (in which workers enter a factory, punch in on the time clock but refuse to work) and slow downs.

• **Direct Action:** To use a **direct action** strategy means to engage with a problem head-on and not try to lobby the government or another actor to solve the situation. Instead of waiting for bureaucratic approval or for a company to officially change a policy, communities and/or NGOs work in the field to find a solution. When appropriately used, direct action can successfully convey dissatisfaction or the necessity of change. There is always the worry that such action can become violent, but when it is controlled enough and kept non-violent, it is a strong statement of discontent and often will attract media, public and government attention. The fisheries case study is perhaps the best example of direct action in

the Cambodian context: communities took it upon themselves to guarantee the rule of law and to stop the illegal fishing that was hurting their livelihood. Such action became necessary when the government was slow to respond to requests for help.

STEP 4 — FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT:

Education and public consciousness are important but they are usually not enough to change policy. Once the public and influential organizations are aware of a problem and have identified possible solutions, policy makers may be more willing to begin to discuss the issue. The following are some techniques to engage decision-makers in useful dialogue.

• **Open Forums/Debates:** Open forums and debates bring together various actors involved in an issue along with members of the public. They allow various stakeholders to express their views and hear arguments they would not normally encounter. Local leaders should always be invited and lobbied to attend such events and to publicly give their point of view. Forums and debates are good ways to hold policy makers accountable for their actions and to make villagers aware that they have power to influence their elected leaders. Forums and debates thereby create dialogue.

• **External Exposure Visits:** Exposure Visits are traditionally done on a national level by sending policy makers and community leaders to other countries to show examples of best practices. Exposure visits can also be done on a local level. You could arrange for community leaders and local politicians to visit another commune or province where a problem has been solved or stakeholders are engaged in a productive consultative process. These visits both give you the time to talk to the policy makers and give the stakeholders the opportunity to

Include Authorities from the Start: You should include policy makers in your campaign from its inception. If they are informed of the goals of the campaign and educated about the reasons behind your objectives they can become your best advocates. Activities should be designed to put pressure on them to include you or other civil society organizations in discussions about the problem and possible solutions. You should always have a clear idea of what you want authorities to do next. For example, the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights' child labor campaign in Siem Reap started with workshops at various levels for provincial and district authorities, departments, parents and children. Government officials were invited to attend a series of three or four workshops and then asked to send two representatives from the workshops to attend a monthly meeting. Participants in the monthly meetings (including department officials) have initiated action when cases of child labor abuse have been brought to their attention. Part of this success was due to pressure from community members before workshops.

open dialogue with each other, perhaps for the first time. Your job as an advocate should always include encouraging the direct engagement between policy makers and the affected community, who will most likely be better able to tell their story than any outside agent.

- **Consultative Process:** A consultative process is a deeper form of communication with policy makers. Community representatives, NGOs and other members from civil society might be invited by the government to provide input on draft legislation and policies. For example, communities provided input for proposed legislation to the Department of Fisheries in a national workshop. Consultative processes usually happen because of stipulations in bilateral or multilateral assistance agreements with donors or because of insistence and pressure from NGOs or associations. However, some ministries are now understanding the importance of a successful consultative process themselves.

GENERALLY, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS ARE AGREEABLE TO BY ALL ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS, ARE EFFICIENT IN THEIR RESOURCE USE, AND DO NOT RELY ON SINGLE ACTIONS TO SOLVE THE WHOLE PROBLEM.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS ARE EITHER CONTROLLED BY

- **Lobbying:** Lobbying is the act of having direct contact with government officials in order to convince them to represent your concerns within the government. Lobbyists must have some status or legitimacy in order to be able to gain access to lawmakers. Lobbying may therefore be appropriate at later stages in a campaign, after energy and awareness have been generated and networks formed. An official's private commitment does not necessarily translate into his/her public support. Fear about reprisal from more powerful politicians in government often limits what officials are willing to do openly. It can also be effective to lobby with foreign embassies, bilateral and multilateral agencies, network NGOs, regional organizations or even powerful people within your network.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY: The most important group to involve in your campaign is the affected community. They need to know your objectives and support them. In some cases, they will need to be convinced of the necessity of an advocacy campaign: opponents of domestic violence understood this challenge with the women who follow cultural norms that let their husbands abuse them and do not comprehend the importance of the Anti-Domestic Violence law. It is imperative that you involve them in the process and educate them about the broader issues so they can eventually advocate for themselves.

- **Create Connections with the Community:** Before starting an advocacy campaign, you need to evaluate what the community actually needs. Do interviews, meet people, attend local meetings, and listen to the concerns expressed. Does your campaign accurately reflect the needs of the people?

- **Engage the Community from the Beginning of Your Campaign:** Once you have determined what the key issues are, make sure the community is involved in your strategizing. Keep them informed of your objectives and ask for feedback. Community forums or meetings with local leaders are good ways to determine their response. It is important to set goals that meet the specific needs of the people. A good example of this can be found in the urban poor case study where local communities told urban organizations that squatter communities wanted relocation sites close to the city. This resulted in the organizations advocating with local government to demand relocation sites that allowed squatter communities access to their precious income generating sites, such as vendor areas where they had established clients.

- **Put Community Members in Key Leadership Positions:** A separate — but perhaps more important — goal of any advocacy campaign is to empower the people you are trying to help. In a country like Cambodia where most people do not have access to education or skills that your staff probably has, your involvement with them will be perhaps the best chance for community exposure to technical knowledge. Make sure you use this opportunity to teach them to advocate for themselves; the easiest way to do this is to have community members or leaders on your staff and leading certain parts of your campaign. Hands-on or “learning by doing” organizing and leadership will be the best educational opportunity you can provide.

- **Keep Open Lines of Communication:** Community members should have your contact information at all times, so you can be informed if a problem occurs. People should feel comfortable contacting your staff and have a professional relationship with some or all of them. Directly engaging in the community will help give you the legitimacy you need to effectively run the campaign.

- **Involve the Community in Implementation:** Once the objectives and the plan of action have been laid out, the community involvement is not over, but only just beginning. Keep them active by inviting them to demonstrations, lobbying activities, and meetings. Bringing legislators on internal exposure visits to see the community is also another strategy: the community will be able to directly engage in the advocacy process and legislators will be able to gain some first hand knowledge of the problems that you are trying to solve.

STEP 5 - NETWORKING: Networks create broad-based support for an issue and help strengthen an advocacy campaign. By working together through networks, NGOs gain greater credibility with their target audience. The advantages of cooperation led to the formation of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, the NGO Forum on Cambodia, and MediCam. The existence and coordination of networks within a sector is a good indication of its strength. You should see if a network already exists in your sector and think about including it or its members in your campaign. The fisheries campaign reveals the importance of good networking. Advocates created the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT), which allowed for effective coordination at both the local and national levels with particular emphasis on the involvement of local communities. Much of the fisheries' campaign's success in pressuring the government was due to the quality of networking that it employed.

An awareness workshop in Watt Voryeav to increase the community's education about forestry and the improper use of land by the private sector. An excellent example of networking that created links with the provincial government. January 7 and 8, 2000.



REVIEWING AND MODIFYING THE CAMPAIGN

EXAMINE THE STRENGTHS
AND WEAKNESSES OF YOUR
CAMPAIGN

Although evaluating the impact of advocacy activities may be difficult, it is possible to review a campaign at regular intervals to evaluate how well resources were used, what was accomplished and extract lessons learned for the future. You should make a schedule for reviewing your campaign systematically. These reviews should include assessments from as many stakeholders as possible, including affected communities, to create the most honest and accurate picture of the campaign. This is an integral part of a successful advocacy campaign because it allows you to think critically about the progress and mistakes you have made in your methodology and presents possible options for the future. You should think about what your organization needs to know about the campaign in order to make it more effective. Remember, a negative review can often be more helpful than a positive review in improving your campaign. The following is a list of considerations you might want to think about when reviewing your campaign. Each campaign will have other, more specific questions that advocates should ask.

Reviewing your campaign should help you understand its strengths and weaknesses. You should use lessons learned from these reviews to modify your tactics and strategies in order to advocate more effectively. For example, if your campaign review revealed that your tactics have been successful at starting a dialogue with local officials but have failed to include affected communities, you should create a new strategy to include local participation.

Important issues to consider to assess your campaign

Check your progress in achieving each of your pre-set goals;

Assess the impacts, both positive and negative, of each advocacy strategy or activity you have employed;

Check to see if your tactics have successfully reached their target audiences;

Analyze the responses, both positive and negative, of your target audiences;

Assess your effectiveness at using the media; and,

Analyze your networking techniques to see if you have worked effectively with potential partners.

REACHING KEY PLAYERS—GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA

INFLUENCING THE LEGISLATIVE

PROCESS: The absence of laws and the existence of outdated or poorly written laws creates arbitrary systems of justice and causes social, economic, and political problems. Advocating at the legislative level is therefore an important component of successful campaigns — one that is, unfortunately, often overlooked. A full description of how the Cambodian legislative process works is included at the end of this guide. The following briefly explains how civil society organizations can work with the legislature.

- **The legislative process:** All members of the Senate, members of the National Assembly and the Prime Minister have the right to initiate legislation, as per Article 91 of the Cambodian Constitution. Ministry officials can also present draft laws to the Council of Ministers, which in turn can use the Prime Minister to present the legislation to the National Assembly. A proposed law must be written, divided into articles, and accompanied by a statement of cause that explains why the law is needed. The proposed law is forwarded to one of the

- **Transparency:** With very few exceptions, lawmaking is a process that is supposed to be carried out in public. Article 88 of the Constitution guarantees that all National Assembly sessions are open to the public, except when specially requested by the President, King, Prime Minister or one-tenth of the membership. In practice, most Cambodian legislative sessions are closed. The lack of participation allowed at this stage means that you must start advocacy before a law is debated if you want to affect its final shape.

- **Advocacy Strategies:** Here are some specific methods to influence the legislative process.

1. **Research and Documentation:** Information collected through research and documentation provides critical arguments for both advocates and lawmakers. While in some cases legislators may not be aware of a problem, often they simply do not have the resources to conduct studies to understand it fully.

2. **Establishing personal contacts** with decision-makers and including them in a campaign is also important. Engaging decision-makers means helping them to understand issues, imparting them with the belief that it is within their mandate and power to write or influence legislation, and providing them with necessary information to support their arguments. Advocates need to provide them with opportunities to see issues first hand through site visits or contact with affected communities.

3. **Draft Legislation:** It is possible to draft legislation, to be submitted to the ministry.

INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE REFERS TO PRECEDENT SETTING ACTIONS OR LEGISLATION. THESE ARE THE STRATEGIES OR LAWS THAT OTHER NATIONS TRY TO COPY BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN SO EFFECTIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE 1998 PHILIPPINES HIV/AIDS LAW CONTAINS COMPONENTS OF A BEST PRACTICE LAW AND IS THE BASIS FOR CAMBODIA'S EQUIVALENT LEGISLATION.

commissions for review. Commissions include the Commission on Home Affairs, Investigation, and the National Anti-Corruption Board. After consideration, the Commission may forward the bill to the full Assembly with the recommendation to consider the bill, request that the full Assembly decide not to consider it, or recommend that it be considered on an “emergency basis.”

Legislation needs to be based on research into international best practices, include inputs from other involved NGOs, placed into the Cambodian context, reviewed by legal experts, and given to other stakeholders to critique. Though it takes more effort and planning than lobbying for existing legislation, drafting legislation will often be the only way to get the process started with the goal to introduce new laws into the national assembly.

4. Lobbying: Another effective strategy is lobbying the ministry managing a particular legislation. Being able to give inputs to a draft law at the ministerial level is critical to ensure that the final version reflects the concerns of the public. Providing the ministry with necessary technical information and letting it take credit for the work may increase the chance that the best form of the legislation will become law. Helping the ministries draft legislation will also help your organization network with the government. Be careful, however, that your role stays one of a consultant, and does not compromise the independence of your organization.

continue to apply pressure even after a law is passed and follow the passage of any additional directives.

Factors Contributing to Satisfactory Outcomes:

Factors include a good relationship with the ministry, informal contacts, and good coordination and understanding between NGOs, donors and International Organizations. Popular action, such as demonstrations to protest land disputes, or direct action, such as community seizure of illegal draining pumps, lends weight and legitimacy to advocacy efforts. Often, legislative lobbying does not lead to the creation of new legislation but can help in making proposed legislation more equitable and based on

best practices. Efforts can also be successful in other respects: they make stakeholders more aware of their rights and the responsibility of elected officials in government to be more aware of the problems that they must address. NGOs and government officials need to develop their capacity to influence lawmakers during the legislative process and apply pressure on the government to make the process of passing legislation and regulations transparent and participatory.



Prime Minister Hun Sen speaking at the Second National AIDS Conference in Cambodia. An HIV/AIDS Network presented a statement to the Prime Minister advocating for better access to medicine and care.

COURTING THE MEDIA:

One of the main strategies of advocacy is to draw the attention of policymakers and the general public to a cause to generate sympathy and support. The **media campaign**—the development of a media message, its presentation, and the identification and targeting of specific audiences – plays an important role in generating support for or against a cause. Although the Cambodian media is still testing the parameters of independent and accurate reporting, radio, newspapers and, to a lesser extent, television are essential to influencing public opinion. The resource section of this publication includes contact information of some newspapers, radio and television stations.

5. Campaigning: Campaigning after submission of draft legislation is essential. Legislation usually does not include details about how the law will be implemented. The Royal Government enacts legislation through:

- sub-decrees
- proclamations
- decisions
- circulars

These documents often have more effect on the lives of normal Cambodians than the law itself because they determine the details of how it will actually be enforced. It is therefore essential that advocates

The following is a list of strategies for working with the media:

PRESS RELEASES AND PRESS CONFERENCES

Press releases are one-page summaries with a few important pieces of information that organizations distribute to newspapers and broadcast stations to publicize an event or situation. The objective is to get the media to print or broadcast the information so that it can spread to a wider audience. Press releases are often used as a way to get journalists to attend an event, such as a conference or demonstration. A sample press release is included in this guide.

Press conferences are similar to press releases in that journalists are invited to receive information about an event or situation. They also have the added benefit of allowing interaction with whoever is representing your campaign. Press conferences are useful for generating short-term attention, but they are ineffective if not accompanied by other activities. For example, urban development organizations held a successful press conference to protest the Municipality's policy of relocating victims of the Tonle Bassac fires. However, because of lack of organizational unity they were unable to change the policy.

ESTABLISHING WORKING RELATIONS WITH JOURNALISTS

The media's presence at an event has a direct effect on government behavior: when officials know that their words or actions are being recorded, they will be more restrained. Advocates of the urban poor have used this to their advantage: when a local community failed to obtain authorization to build a childcare center in a squatter area, community leaders decided to build the center one night and invite journalists to the opening the following day. Given the public attention, local authorities were reluctant to tear the structure down. Keeping a list of journalists with whom you have had previous positive experience is a good way to prepare for such opportunities.

DISSEMINATING RELIABLE INFORMATION

Advocacy campaigns depend to a great extent on credible sources and the distribution of reliable information in order to change existing public perceptions about a problem. Information, therefore, needs to be collected and compiled in an accurate and organized manner for use in media and other campaigns. When presenting your information to the media, make sure that your organization (and any of your partner organizations) agrees beforehand on what will be released to journalists. If there is no agreement about the details and facts, it both reflects badly on your campaign and defies the purpose of utilizing the press. Be very careful about giving journalists conflicting or confusing information if there is more than one spokesperson for a campaign. Moreover, the media are not free from political bias: if you give them one or two wrong facts, your entire campaign could be misconstrued. Every person in your campaign should be giving out the same facts and know what should not be discussed with the press. If separate organizations within the campaign want to present the facts differently, make sure that the individual spokespeople are clearly not speaking on behalf of the entire network but only their group.

When there has been serious engagement between civil society organizations and government policy makers, the process has not been smooth but the outcomes have usually been satisfying to all.

ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

ACHIEVEMENTS OF ADVOCACY IN CAMBODIA:

- A number of legislative agendas, including the 1997 Labor Code, and the Domestic Violence Law currently under debate, were initiated through advocacy campaigns. Other more politically sensitive legislative bills, such as the new land law, the community fisheries law, HIV/AIDS law and the forestry law were initiated by donors with leverage.
- Some multilaterals, like the World Bank, have begun placing conditions on loans to the government that require the policy makers to engage in consultative process with NGOs and other civil society organizations. For example, conditions on loans to the government allowed NGOs to be included in discussions about fisheries policies.
- NGOs have been included in consultations about some executive and ministerial directives (proclamations, sub-decrees, circulars, etc.) including the land law sub-decree. These are as, or more, important than the actual law because they determine how policies will be implemented.
- Advocacy strategies like seminars, incorporating international agencies and governance bodies, holding press conferences, and having follow-up meetings with the ministries and national assembly members have succeeded in getting the government to sign on to a number of international covenants. These include \ contentious issues, such as the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- Civil society has pressed for and often succeeded in being included in decisions about policy information. When there has been serious engagement between civil society organizations and government policy makers, the process has not been smooth, but the outcomes have usually been satisfying to all sides.
- Public consciousness about key rights and responsibilities has been raised. For example, corruption is now referred to openly whereas it was once a taboo topic. The government is debating an anti-corruption law.
- The number of advocacy capacity building organizations and activities has increased. The NGO Forum on Cambodia and Star Kampuchea continue to conduct various training courses to improve advocacy skills. Star Kampuchea created four provincial advocacy networks.
- The Government has shown commitment to incorporating antipoverty or pro-poor goals in their long-term plans. High government officials openly talk about the need to get rid of corruption and help the poor. Doing advocacy in a country with even a theoretical commitment to helping the poor and enforcing the rule of law is very different than doing it in an openly repressive one. Advocates in Cambodia can work with some support and protection of the government, tell affected communities that, at least in theory, their government supports them, and remind officials of past commitments to change.
- Civil society has been included in some important meetings between government and donors. NGO's now have a seat at the table of the Consultative Group (CG) meeting where donors and government discuss last year's performance and developing priorities for the next year.

CHALLENGES TO ADVOCACY IN CAMBODIA:

- Some national and provincial officials are appointed by their party rather than elected as individuals. For example, provincial governors are appointed by the party that has the majority of parliamentary seats from their province. Even in direct elections, like the commune council elections, you vote for a party rather than for an individual. This lack of direct election means that officials are less likely to be affected by the criticism of their constituents. The threat of being voted out of office is not personal or direct under party voting methods. Most Government officials do not fully understand that they first represent a constituency of citizens and second a party. This poses a challenge to those who want to lobby for a cause and hold politicians accountable to their promises and platforms.
- The mechanisms of law enforcement are very arbitrary in Cambodia. Laws are not enforced in a systematic way and high levels of corruption mean that money, rather than the law, often determines how the justice system functions. This means that changes in public policy will not necessarily be reflected in changes in people's lives.
- Cambodia's advocacy sector is still nascent. Most NGOs do not have experience in conducting campaigns nor do they have the capacity to run successful ones. Capacity is particularly weak in areas relating to the government. There is a lack of understanding of where civil society and government intersect making it difficult to know at what level of government should civil society interact with government to address a given problem. NGOs need to make a concerted effort to educate themselves about the Cambodian legal system if they are to achieve their development goals.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Advocates have learned numerous lessons from their experiences over the last few years. Some important lessons that stand out include:

- **Make sure the campaign has some degree of popular support.** Without popular support and clear documentation of support, politicians will not take issues seriously because they know that their political futures will not be affected by it.

- **Start lobbying early.** The earlier NGOs and government officials can get input into a new or modified law, the better the chances that their comments will be incorporated. Advocates who start lobbying when a draft is sent to the Council of Ministers are bound to be unsuccessful in their efforts because they are entering the process too late.
- **Identify advocates within the government.** When an official is not well disposed towards an issue and discussions come to a standstill, advocates should identify other key people who are willing to listen to their arguments. These people can then put additional pressure on policymakers.
- **Be prepared to deflect common delay tactics used by lawmakers.** These include:
 1. Placing blame on a supervisor or declaring not to have the power to take action. *Best practice: Use a multi-level approach, try to predict the official's position before a meeting, get the support from a broad range of officials and make that support known, consider working or targeting a different government department;*
 2. Asking plaintiffs to collect more information regarding a complaint or making them responsible for accomplishing the next step. *Best Practice: Make sure that you have completed your research before the meeting so that you have answers to all questions;*
 3. Causing tension in affected communities. *Best practice: Understand the desires and needs of the affected community, the kinds of pressures that might be placed on its members, and ways you can help them respond to tension; maintain strong vision and good communication with community members; and,*
 4. Promising to take action and then failing to do so. *Best practice: If an official agrees to take action, identify the next steps that need to be taken to make sure s/he takes action. Track progress closely so that you immediately know when delays occur; make politician's promises public and hold them to these promises.*

- **Keep extra copies of legal documents available for distribution.** Private sector actors also use delay tactics. For example, it is not uncommon for owners of private fishing concessions to claim that they have not been informed of a sub-decree or other regulation. Have extra copies available to give to them.
- **Be aware that all decisions are made prior to big meetings.** Therefore, lobbying needs to take place well in advance of important decision-making meetings.
- **Maintain good coordination among advocates.** It is important to build a common vision and identify constraints that may affect the long-term dedication of coalition members in order to avoid weakening a coalition's solidarity and potentially undermining a campaign.

Election monitoring organizations distribute voter information to rural areas.



CASE STUDY ONE

COMMUNITY FISHERIES: RURAL LOCAL COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY FISHERIES AND RESULTING ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

Cambodia currently has the world's fourth largest freshwater fisheries industry providing employment to over two million people and supplying over 75% of the country's animal protein needs. Government fisheries' policy, set by the 1988 Fiat Law, is out of date and in its implemented form, threatens the sustainability of Cambodia's fisheries. In particular, communities that depend on fisheries for their livelihood are seriously threatened by the industry's increasing commercialization. They are losing control over fisheries, threatening both the communities' and the fisheries' long-term survival. Disputes involving fishing lots and local communities have increased, resulting in a sustained advocacy campaign.

- **NGO Environmental Network Focuses on the Issue**

At a 1999 meeting of the NGO Forum's environmental working group, the NGO Aphiwat Strey presented the case of a fisheries dispute in Battambang, which ended in a shooting, and the Mekong River Commission made a presentation on the overall situation of fisheries in Cambodia, revealing the magnitude of the problem. The group decided that fisheries disputes needed further consideration and formed a fisheries working group to discuss cases. A public forum, organized in Battambang in February 2000, was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Undersecretary of State of Agriculture, local authorities, and members of affected communities. At the conclusion of the forum, the government promised to address the issue and allocate fishing areas to the community concerned. However, government officials indicated it would be necessary to conduct a study on fisheries' conflicts before reform could happen.

- **Fishery Problems Documented in Case Studies**

The fisheries working group prepared a case study

of the Battambang dispute and distributed it to NGOs, government staff and donors. The purpose of the report was to disseminate information while encouraging network members to report back on any other similar disputes in their own areas. As they learned about more problems, the members of the working group began documenting the other cases and disseminating this new information.

- **NGOs Organize Provincial and National Fisheries Workshops**

The NGO Forum organized provincial fisheries workshops starting in October 2000 in response to the reports of more disputes. The workshops were very successful in initiating dialogue about fisheries at the community level, ensuring that discussion was not limited to NGO meetings.

Representatives of fishing communities and NGOs were invited by the Department of Fisheries (DoF) to attend a national workshop on fisheries management that took place in Phnom Penh in December 2000, which was organized by Wetlands International for the DoF and funded by Oxfam America. Oxfam's support made it possible for the NGOs to request that civil society and community members be included in the workshop. Although the discussion was productive, the workshop did not result in an action plan. This was a disappointing conclusion for the national level; however, the workshops can be considered somewhat successful because they initiated dialogue at the local level and engendered a sense of community ownership.

- **Affected Communities Take Direct Action**

Before the NGOs began studying the fisheries problem, affected fishing communities were already using their own methods to apply pressure on the Government. The Prime Minister's office was the target of angry community letters, demonstrations in front of the National Assembly and pressure from intermediaries within the Prime Minister's office.



Communities are becoming increasingly frustrated by the combination of escalating disputes and lack of resolution. Consequently, some communities are opting to take matters into their own hands. In the case of fisheries, this can take the form of seizing illegal fishing nets like the one shown above in Takeo province.

Although such advocacy techniques did represent a genuine attempt to pressure the government, it is very difficult to measure their effect. Some people doubt that these techniques were very useful in affecting a government with such limited level of accountability.

The positive effect of direct action at the community level, on the other hand, is clearer. Even when NGOs and government officials were busy discussing future changes to the law, some communities were enforcing existing policy. For example, it is currently illegal to drain ponds, electrocute fish populations, and trawl in fresh water using a motor. Those with connections in the Department of Fisheries continued these practices threatening the sustainability of local communities' fishing supply. Community members began to enforce the law, confiscating pumps and motors as evidence and arresting perpetrators when necessary. Faced with mounting evidence, the local DoF had to admit the wrongdoing and enforce the community's rights. Such local direct action went farther towards immediately improving the livelihoods of fishing communities than discussions at higher levels. Direct action unified the community, revealed its ability to challenge those who limited access to fishing grounds, and immediately increased communities' access to fisheries. Direct action at the community level can show law makers that access to fisheries is a community, not an NGO, issue and proves that communities are capable of managing fishing resources themselves. In this case, direct action created positive change even when laws remained unchanged.

• Prime Minister Reduces Lot Concessions

On October 24, 2000, the Prime Minister announced a reduction in the size of fishing lot concessions in favor of family fishing through a series of provincial sub-decrees. Any fishing lot worth less than 30 million riels was to be abolished and returned to community use. This statement gave communities more leverage in taking control of local fisheries. Yet problems persisted: although the concession areas were reduced, the lengths of the boundaries of the lots were often increased, causing more conflicts between fishing families and concession owners.

• NGOs Pilot Community Fisheries Project

In May 2001, Oxfam/GB began a pilot project on community fisheries to assess the level of ownership of community fisheries and build NGO and DoF capacity to organize community fisheries. The pilot project has encountered a number of challenges as cooperation between the Provincial Fisheries Departments and NGOs is difficult and there is a lack of clarity regarding the responsibility of the various organizations and other stakeholders. Communities have experienced difficulties in obtaining approval for the boundaries and those who have succeeded still do not have demarcation lines.

• Consultations About Fisheries Policy

NGOs were able to participate in the drafting of a Community Fisheries Sub-decree, which aims to preserve fishing resources by involving communities in their co-management, and in more limited consultations about a new fishing law. Initially, the DoF was reluctant to enter into a consultation process with NGOs and communities and requested that NGOs submit comments in writing. However, the NGOs were persistent in their lobbying of donors and other concerned agencies who, in turn, successfully advocated for NGO inclusion in the consultation process.

Consultations were held in various communities to get feedback on the sub-decree in the spring of 2001. The DoF, Oxfam/GB, Oxfam/America and Wetlands International organized a workshop to get people at all levels to come to a common understanding of community fisheries. During the workshop, the Director of the DoF presented a draft of the community fisheries sub-decree and indicated that comments were welcome. Noticing that many of

their recommendations had been included, participants wrote a letter commending the Department on its work. The DoF did pass the sub-decree onto the MAFF; however, it has not yet been signed and newer versions of it do not include any of the recommendations made by communities or NGOs. The sub-decree has disappeared in government bureaucracy with no positive outcome in sight.

Consultations with government about the law have been similarly unsuccessful: the government only agreed to consultations under considerable pressure from donors and has been unwilling to relinquish any control of the process. Consultations have been held in a few provinces and apparently have just begun at the national level. Yet they have only involved a limited number of well-established NGOs to the exclusion of communities themselves. This exclusion may be due to tension at earlier consultations with community members. Even those groups that were invited to attend were not kept well informed about when the consultations would take place, further limiting participation. No changes in fisheries policy, with or without consultations, seem imminent.

- **Advocates Form a Coalition**

In response to the frustrations and deteriorating relations with the DoF, advocates formed a network called the Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) that holds monthly meetings in Phnom Penh and acts as an alternative negotiation channel to the NGO Forum. Such networking will allow better coordination between interested groups allowing them to engage in a more effective advocacy campaign.

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

- **Networking**

The creation of FACT and the earlier organization of the NGO Forum's Fishery interest group both prove the necessity of effective networking between local community, civil society, and the government. At the beginning of the advocacy process, too many uncoordinated public workshops and campaigns were organized without involving all the actors; these campaigns failed to jumpstart any real advocacy. For action plans to be created and then carried out, all three actors must be engaged in the process and willing participants. If any one of these stakeholders do not have the opportunity to give input into

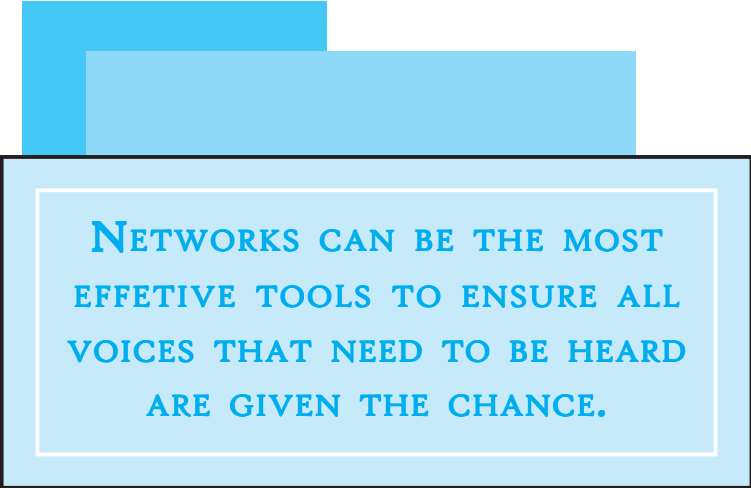
objective setting or planning, chances are they're going to disagree with the resultant campaign. Networks can be the most effective tools to ensure all voices that need to be heard are given the chance. The process of networking is not always easy. Creating an effective division of labor between organizations is imperative. Without coordination between groups, the result would be disparate and unsuccessful.

- **Direct Community Action**

In defiance of assumptions about direct action, the fisheries case shows the community supporting the rule of law instead of disobeying it. Most of the time, direct action is assumed to be some sort of disobedience to law, while looking at this case counters that presumption. Organized demonstrations and letter writing campaigns were probably less effective than the communities' decision to enforce the laws they needed by themselves, which sent a clear message to the government about the need for maintaining the rule of law. The fisheries case was one of the first times that Cambodian NGOs worked directly with communities as partners; the organizations recognized the value of the community action and did not try to change the communities' existing campaign.

- **Media**

The NGOs used the time traveling from cities out to fishing sites to build relationships with journalists that they invited along on exposure visits. They made sure to maintain these connections by distributing reports to the media who had gone on the fieldtrips.



NETWORKS CAN BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOLS TO ENSURE ALL VOICES THAT NEED TO BE HEARD ARE GIVEN THE CHANCE.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

• Direct Community Action Can Be Very Effective

Advocacy does not just have to target upper-level policy makers. In fact, action at the community level so far has a much more positive effect on the lives of those who depend on fisheries than on lobbying or consultations. In confiscating illegal pumps, electrocuting devices and motors and bringing them to the DoF, some local communities have succeeded in enforcing the rule of law, unifying and empowering their community, and increasing their access to fisheries. Organized communities have been much more effective at controlling fisheries the government has given them than those that are not organized. This is not to say that lobbying and consultations are unimportant — an appropriately reformed fisheries law could dramatically increase local communities' rights. Rather, the fisheries case shows that because legislative reform is slow, it should be done in tandem with community based direct action. Often, a legislative response is easier to achieve if the situation on the ground has already changed. It is easier to write a law to reflect reality than to write a law that will affect a dramatic shift. Lawmakers will be much more willing to pass a contentious policy if the change has already occurred.

• Networking is an Effective Strategy

Fisheries disputes are not a new problem yet advocacy for community fishing rights is relatively new. Networking and coordination between different interested groups was essential in beginning the campaign and has substantially contributed to its successes. Working through the NGO Forum and the eventual formation of FACT allowed advocates to combine and coordinate their activities and to delegate responsibility to create the most efficient strategy.

• Consultations Can Have a Limited Effect

Since fisheries advocacy activities began in 1999, NGOs and communities have had considerable input into the policies developed by the government. Unfortunately, the most recent draft of the Community Fisheries sub-decree does not include the suggestions of communities and NGOs. This suggests two problems: first, fisheries lobbyists thought that the lobbying process ended when the DoF submitted the draft law to the Ministry.

They were unaware of the existence of a Ministry of Agriculture legal working group and never tried to make contact with the members of the group. This experience highlights the need for campaigners to understand the legislative process and follow the campaign through to the implementation stage. Second, even if consultations are held, resulting policies may not reflect suggestions made. Working with the legislative process can be frustratingly slow and the benefits to the community may be late in coming. The NGOs also learned that it is important to keep putting a positive spin on government action to not alienate the ministries. Government departments do not want to be told about everything they're doing wrong, rather tell them about the positive changes in the future that will benefit all involved parties.

• Change in Policy Does Not Ensure Change in Practice

NGOs have learned that the community fisheries problem is a difficult issue because no amount of legislation or directives from higher officials can force provincial authorities to solve fisheries disputes. Even when the political will exists, the DoF does not have the means to implement policies, including the community fisheries program. Most disputes are not being solved and despite the passing of the sub-decrees releasing the concession lots, communities are not much closer to regaining access to fishing resources. NGO staff and community activists are often afraid and the risks that they run regarding their well being and lives are very real.

CASE STUDY TWO

URBAN POOR: URBAN COMMUNITIES ORGANIZE FOR THEIR RIGHTS

URBAN POVERTY AND RESULTING ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

Phnom Penh's urban poor, totaling more than 200,000, comprise about one-fifth of the city's residents. Most of them live in 'squatter' conditions, in unsafe, illegal housing made of wood often located well below the flood lines. The Municipality frequently judges these people to be in the way of urban development and evicts them to poorly planned relocation sites well outside the city. Not only are these new sites too far from people's work, they are also on undesirable land lacking basic infrastructure and protection from flooding. Given these conditions, most of the dislocated communities return to squatting within city limits less than a year and a half after evictions.

- **The First Response: The 1999 Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy (UPRS)**

The Urban Poverty Reduction Strategy (UPRS) marked a shift away from the confrontations between NGOs and the Municipality and moved towards a partnership between NGOs, civil society, the Municipality and the affected communities. Officials began to see NGOs as potentially useful organizations working to solve problems they were not able to solve themselves. With the government's new approval, NGOs found it much easier to work towards their goals of providing services to urban poor communities.

- **The Failure of Community Development Management Councils (CDMCs)**

One component of the UPRS was the formation of Community Development Management Councils (CDMCs). These groups were supposed to serve as "bridges" between communities, NGOs and local government through the District or Khan offices. However, the slow start of the second phase of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Phnom Penh Urban Poverty Reduction Project left the CDMCs without guidance for over a year. They met infrequently and had no clear mandate for action. The chief of

each district — who, on the orders of the Municipality, is directly responsible for issuing most eviction notices in his/her district — is also the CDMC chairperson for his/her district, creating a conflict of interest that has yet to be adequately resolved.

- **NGOs and Community Organizing**

There are numerous community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs working with Cambodia's urban poor — among these are SUPF, URC, USG, UPWD, Khemara, CSARO, PAKEK, UPDF, and ANS. The strategies employed by these organizations are fairly similar. They all concentrate on empowering community leaders to solve common problems. NGOs have also advocated for local improvements in infrastructure. With or without official approval, different organizations have helped the community build the schools or sanitation services needed. The constant NGO pressure throughout the 1990s has made the officials relax their restrictions on building, and in at least one instance the district leaders even aided the project.

The NGOs also encourage the new community leaders to take a proactive stance on relocation. By identifying possible resettlement sites, the community becomes prepared to deal with the offers made by the Municipality when the government's proposed relocation sites are inadequate. Despite the NGO effort to get the best possible relocation site, most communities choose to return to squatting. The distance from the new locations to the city is generally too great for people to commute to the city for work.

Some specific organizations and their strategies are:

- **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

UN-Habitat has been in Cambodia since 1995. Their strategy has been to fund and organize the development activities of local NGOs and communities, helping them build the infrastructure that squatting communities need. Recently, their focus has shifted to resettlement guidelines. However, they have plans to turn this work over to the government by July 2003.

- **Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)**

The ACHR network is comprised of CBOs and NGOs, who can use the international ACHR umbrella to advocate change in government policy. Their work in other Asian countries also provides useful comparative examples for local NGOs. ACHR encourages the 'savings group' approach, arguing that if strong community savings groups take root, the community becomes intricately tied together and is more likely to work as a cohesive structure.

- **Urban Poor Development Fund (UPDF)**

The UPDF was created by ACHR, the Solidarity Urban Poor Federation (SUPF), and the Phnom Penh Municipality. UPDF has been working since 1998 to make affordable loans to urban poor who are forced to relocate. Working with donors, city officials, local community members and NGOs, UPDF attempts to represent all concerned parties. The loans given for income generation have been largely successful. However, the UPDF still faces problems recovering housing loans given to families forced to relocate. Communities feel that they should not have to repay loans since they do not agree with the relocation.

THE TONLE BASSAC FIRES

Two fires in May and December 2001 brought attention to the problems of squatter's living conditions. As most of the houses were built dangerously close together and made of wood, the fires spread rapidly, leaving 20,000 people homeless. Immediately after the first fire the Urban Sector Group (USG) and others distributed supplies at the site. The Municipality responded by withdrawing permission for the NGOs to give aid anywhere but at the official relocation site. NGOs complied with these restrictions, feeling it was the only way to guarantee aid to the fire victims. This presented a problem after the second fire in December. The NGOs had previously complied with the government's resettlement efforts and felt they had no choice but to again comply. The UN-Habitat also helped prepare the first resettlement site for the victims, which further entrenched the government's policy. NGOs did try to use the fires to draw media attention to the problem of urban poverty, but the press conferences were unsuccessful in maintaining focus on the issue.

NGO COLLABORATION AND THE WIDENING OF ROUTE 1

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) undertook the project to widen Route 1 with a stipulation that the relocated residents would be compensated. ADB called for an independent monitor of the project. The NGO Forum also put together a team of monitoring NGOs. Initially, the NGOs were unfamiliar with working together and had trouble adjusting to the structure of a networked campaign. They had to rework their strategies so that each organization played a part within the whole campaign instead of each creating a small individual program. As a collaborative group, the NGOs formed a demand for a consistent relocation policy. The Municipality participated in their August 2001 conference on the issue but has yet to respond to the NGO and ADB demands for a National Resettlement Policy.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS AFTER THE BLOCK TANPA FIRES

On March 26, 2002 a well-established rooftop community in Block Tanpa was engulfed in fire displacing around 300 families. The Municipality immediately tried to implement their former policy of forced relocation. Fortunately, the UNDP was in the process of reviewing their funding for UPRS organizations. The NGOs were able to use that leverage to encourage the government to wait. Organizations used media attention and repeated phone calls to the Municipality to supplement the donor pressure. Emergency shelters were erected until a suitable site approved by the squatter community could be found. This waiting period lessened tensions between the community and the government and allowed the NGOs to create an appropriate site plan that provided necessary infrastructure. The NGOs and CBOs now can use this positive experience as a precedent when dealing with government evictions in the future.



Left: Destruction of Block Tanpa during March 26, 2002 fire

A community committee negotiating with authorities to assure that a relocation site was chosen based on community criteria



shelters) drew sufficient journalistic attention to rouse public interest. After this positive experience, the NGOs started paying attention to the potential strength of media coverage. Now, NGO staff carry journalists' phone numbers and makes sure to alert them about any crisis. There are also some independent NGO newsletters that are distributed to the community and the Municipality. However,

they are small publications that do not represent the collaborative efforts of multiple groups and carry little weight.

ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

- **Community Organizing**

Community organizing has been the main strategy employed by the multitude of NGOs involved in urban poverty issues. The goal is to bring local community leaders and authorities together to create mutually agreeable solutions. Advocates have primarily used two techniques: organizing the community around a particular concern or issue and creating savings groups to encourage community cohesion. Both have proved to be effective in involving the community in every step of the process so that they feel the outcome is their choice rather than that of an outside institution.

- **Lobbying**

Most NGOs have decided that it is more effective to focus on local officials rather than the higher-level ones. They have therefore concentrated their efforts on local civil servants and district authorities. The NGOs use the UN-Habitat weekly meeting with the Phnom Penh Municipality's Urban Poverty Reduction Unit to lobby for various issues and conduct direct advocacy activities with khan and Municipality officials. The end goal is to empower community leaders to continue the lobbying work without the NGO presence.

- **Media**

NGOs were slow to utilize the media properly. The situation in Bondoh Vichea (when communities were prohibited from rebuilding their destroyed

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

- **Policy and Program Changes**

Although there has been improvement in individual community relationships with district authorities, as a larger movement advocacy for the urban poor has struggled. The relationship between advocates and government officials is generally tense. Since 1999, the Municipality has taken an increasingly tougher stance against NGO efforts. Situations like the resettlements after the 2001 fires reveal an implicit unwillingness to compromise. There has been no success with the formulation of a long-term policy, forcing the issue to be addressed on such an individualized basis that communities have no opportunity to bind together for increased advocacy strength.

- **Building Capacity of Community Organizations and NGOs**

Local groups have benefited from interaction with each other, using the networks to learn alternative solutions to common problems. Community members are also being taught that collaborative efforts are more effective than fragmented campaigns. However, most NGOs still see geographical area as

the defining characteristic of a community and therefore do not advocate for an issue that different resident communities may share. Programs such as USG's Women's and Legal Rights program have experienced enough success with their micro-vendors programs to suggest that issue-based advocacy is more effective than geography-based advocacy. Advocates for the urban poor should therefore begin coordinating their strategies to include the large number of urban poor affected.

- **Networking**

Although the NGO Forum's work on the expansion of National Route 1 was seen as successful due to its involvement of multiple NGOs, in general, little coordination exists. Within the networking groups, there have been few advocacy objectives laid out. The few that exist are generally unclear. Meetings of the working groups are seen as useless; no action results from the discussion. The individual NGOs should use the similarity of their advocacy campaigns to combine and consolidate their efforts. Unfortunately, NGOs often stick to small areas, remaining unaware of the successes and failures of a neighboring community. NGOs and CBOs should recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses, and concentrate on certain strategies that best correspond to what they do well. For instance, groups with large numbers of technically skilled employees could help set up infrastructure and train community members whereas groups with strong advocacy skills could work on the political side. Such division of labor would also help groups secure donors without competing against each other for similar grants.

Appendix A—Press Releases

and Press Sources

The purpose of a press release is to inform the press about an event or problem in as few essential words as possible. For Cambodia, it's important that you send copies to both the English and Khmer press in their respective languages. Every good press release should:

- Be under one page;
- Give all relevant information about the event/problem — who, what, when (both time and date), where, and why it's important;
- Have a title that quickly details the reasons that the press should be interested (“There are Poor People in Phnom Penh” will not interest the media as much as something more descriptive like “Urban Poverty is Raising HIV/AIDS Rates”);
- Highlight key points by making them bold or offsetting them from the rest of the text; and,
- Give detailed contact information for someone who knows the issue very well, including your contact's hand phone number and language ability.

Some other suggestions you might want to keep in mind are:

- Don't send too many press releases to the same person. If you start sending four or five a week, no one's going to look at them. Only send releases when there's good reason to inform people; that is, wait for an event that the media can focus their attention on.
- Send the release well in advance (at least 4-5 days) but not so far ahead that the media will forget about it. A reminder on the day before or the day of an event might be helpful as well. Remember that papers don't always come out every day, sometimes you will have to send a release well in advance to make it into an issue that comes out before your event. You can schedule your event around the press dates of major Cambodian papers.
- Don't restrict your press releases to Cambodian papers. Send it to wire services as well, many of them have offices here.
- You can ask a paper to wait to release news in order to coordinate the media attention in several sources and your press event.

This is called asking for a news embargo. For instance, in Cambodia, you might want to ask the Cambodia Daily to wait for Friday so there can be a story in both the Daily and the Phnom Penh Post on the same day.

- You can quote experts in your release that shows both the relevancy of an issue and give the journalist a suggestion for people to interview. A good reporter will not just take the quote from your release without checking the source. The release will direct journalists towards the people you want them to talk to.

Three sample press releases follow. The first two are real examples of good releases that follow the suggestions listed above. The last is meant to illustrate what a bad press release looks like.



Sok Samoeun answers questions from the media after a press conference.

Sample press release announcing event

Logo of your organization
Location of your organization
Tel: Fax:
website

PRESS RELEASE

[Name of Organization]

TITLE OF EVENT

Date

Subject of Press Release

More detailed account of event
[Succinct, not longer than 4 lines
Include such information as areas affected by event and specific
accomplishments being celebrated]

[Month Day, Year]

[Location]

(Editors are invited to report and photo coverage)

The first paragraph should list the important individuals attending your event. For instance, **list names and titles for Ministry officials** and **the high-ranking people and title** from your organization, and others from the network, which will attend.

Give a detailed account of who supported the activity. If possible, include not only the name of donors but the amount of money contributed. Give many specific examples of what that money was able to accomplish. If applicable, mention others that helped with the project.

A brief description of your organization; include mission statement, key players, date of inception and a brief description of other projects you are engaged in that support your mission statement. Keep this paragraph brief, but it is a good chance to inform a wide audience about your work.

Sample press release announcing rally and lobbying of officials

Logo of your organization or names of organizations that constitute the network

Location of your organization(s)

Tel: Fax:

website

PRESS RELEASE

[Name of Organizations involved]

Date

Subject of Press Release

An HIV/AIDS network is marching to protest the lack of accessibility to life saving medication and presenting a list of demands to the Ministry of Health.

[Month Day, Year]

[Location of where the march will begin and end]

After the march, the group of activists will gather at [location] to present a list of demands to H.E. [] and other key government officials. The Director of [name] of [organization] along with [name] of [organization] and [name] of [organization] will appeal to the high level officials and inform them of their plight.

The [list the names of all the organizations that helped organize and support the march and lobbying of officials] are spearheading a movement to bring HIV/AIDS issues to the forefront of Government policies. The press is invited to attend the meeting between the NGOs and the Ministry at [location, date, time] for a photo opportunity and a question and answer period.

A brief description of your organization; include mission statement, key players, date of inception and a brief description of other projects you are engaged in that support your mission statement. Keep this paragraph brief, but it is a good chance to inform a wide audience about your work and the strength of your network.

An example of what NOT TO DO

For Immediate Release
Urban Poverty Remains a Problem in Phnom Penh

August 10th, 2002

At a recent conference, experts from five local NGOs presented research to suggest that urban poverty remains a problem in Phnom Penh. They then presented what their organizations were going to do about the problem and asked for increased donor support for these activities. They felt donor support would be easy to find because recent events have made urban poverty more visible to the public.

In the next few days, NGOs will be meeting with local officials to discuss the conference and its findings. After these discussions, the organizations hope to develop an action plan that incorporates local support. "Community involvement is essential," said [name], program director from one NGO. [name] organization is spearheading the commitment to community development in solving urban poverty. They believe that communities should have the right to pick their own relocation sites.

Since these programs need public support, we really want you to put something in your paper. Thank you for all of your past support.

[name]

Note: This is an example of an ineffectual press release for several reasons. First, it lacks relevant information about a specific event or activity. Furthermore, it is too general and will not interest the press or donors.

Media Contacts for Cambodia

Service	Name	Phone/Fax	EMAIL
AFP	Luke Hunt	426-227 / 426-226	afpcambodia@bigpond.com.kh
AP	Chris Decherd	219-107 / 219-107 016-918-385	ap@bigpond.com.kh
Business News	Bala Chandran	012-827-857,722-332	biznews@itc.indochinanet.com
Cambodge Soir	Pierre Gillette,Ed.	352-654,362-654	cambodgesoirpnh@bigpond.com.kh
Cambodia Daily	Matthew Reed, Editor-in-Chief Seth Meixner, Managing Editor	426-602, 426-573 011-855-403	aafe@forum.org.kh www.cambodiadaily.com reed@daily.forum.org.kh meixner@daily.forum.org.kh
DPA,BBC,etc.	Eric Unmacht	012-898-204	unmacht@bigpond.com.kh
Kyodo	Puy Kea	015-911-376,424-033	puykea@hotmail.com
Phnom Penh Post	Micheal Hayer, Pub. & Ed. Rob Carmichael, Managing Ed.,	426-568,210-309 011-855-007 011-845-677	PhnomPenhPost@bigpond.com.kh www.phnompenhpost.com Michael.pppost@bigpond.com.kh rob@bigpond.com.kh
Reuters	Ed Cropley	215-193,215-194	reuterspnh@yahoo.com
Xinhua		426-613,426-613 015-912-512	
Yomiuri Shimbun	Sok Pov	426-288,426-223	yomiuri@bigpond.com.kh
<b style="color: #00AEEF;">Selected Khmer Media			
Samleang Yuvachon Khmer	Ou Sovan, Pub.	015-917-153,801-418	
Koh Santepheap	Tong Uy Pang, Pub.	801-149,364-515	
Rasmei Kampu- chea	Pen Samithi, Ed.	362-881, 362-472 012-938-333	Rasmei.kampuchea@bigpond.com.kh
Monaksekar Khmer			Monaksekar-Khmer@camnet.com.kh
Evening News	Ouk Kimseng	983-423,369-982	e-news98@camnet.com.kh

Appendix B—Legislative Process

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS CHART

I. Drafting or Proposing a Law

a. Draft Law Prepared by the Executive Branch

1. Concerned ministry (its legislative working group, relevant department) of the RGC initiates drafting of a particular piece of legislation. (**Note:** different versions of the draft may be sent back and forth between the relevant department and the ministry (legislative working group.) When the draft is ready, the ministry submits the draft legislation to Council of Jurists of the Council of Ministers.

2. The Council of Jurists examines the draft legislation submitted by the concerned ministry. (**Note:** the draft may be sent back and forth between the Council of Jurists and the concerned ministry).

3. The Inter-Ministerial Committee discusses the draft legislation where the head of concerned ministry (usually the Minister or Secretary of State) is invited to report the draft.

4. The Council of Ministers reviews and approves the draft law, then submits it and a statement of cause to the Permanent Standing Committee of the National Assembly and all representatives.

b. Proposed Law by the Legislative Branch (MPs and Senators):

5. NA Members can propose legislation. According to Chapter six of the Internal Rules of the National Assembly, any member of the National Assembly may propose a law, called “Proposed Law.” A proposed law must be written, divided into articles, and accompanied by a statement of cause explaining why the proposed law is needed. The proposed law is forwarded to the appropriate commission for review. The parliamentarian(s) who proposes legislation has the right to report to the concerned commission.

6. According to Chapter six of the Internal Rules of the Senate, Senators can propose legislation. After the relevant technical commission makes recommendations/inputs, the Permanent Standing Commission of the Senate sends the proposed law to the National Assembly.

II. Passage of Legislation

7. The National Assembly debates and adopts the draft/proposed legislation.

7.1. The Commission of Permanent Standing Committee reviews the draft law or proposed law and forwards it to the appropriate commission.

7.2. Once a proposed law or draft law reaches a Commission of the National Assembly, the remaining steps are the same regardless of who drafted or

proposed the law. After the Commission receives a proposal or a draft, Chapter six of the Internal Rules of the National Assembly provides three options. The Commission may:

- Recommend that the full Assembly not consider the legislation.
- Request that the full Assembly decide whether to consider the legislation.
- Request that the full Assembly consider the legislation on an “emergency” basis.

7.3. The NA adopts the draft/proposed legislation and submits it to the Senate for a review.

8. The Senate reviews the adopted law by the NA.

8.1. The Commission of Permanent Standing Committee reviews the draft/proposed law and forwards it to the appropriate commission.

8.2. Once a proposed law or draft law reaches a Commission of the Senate, the remaining steps are the same regardless of who drafted or proposed the law. After the Commission receives a proposal or a draft, Chapter six of the Internal Rules of the Senate provides three options, the Commission may:

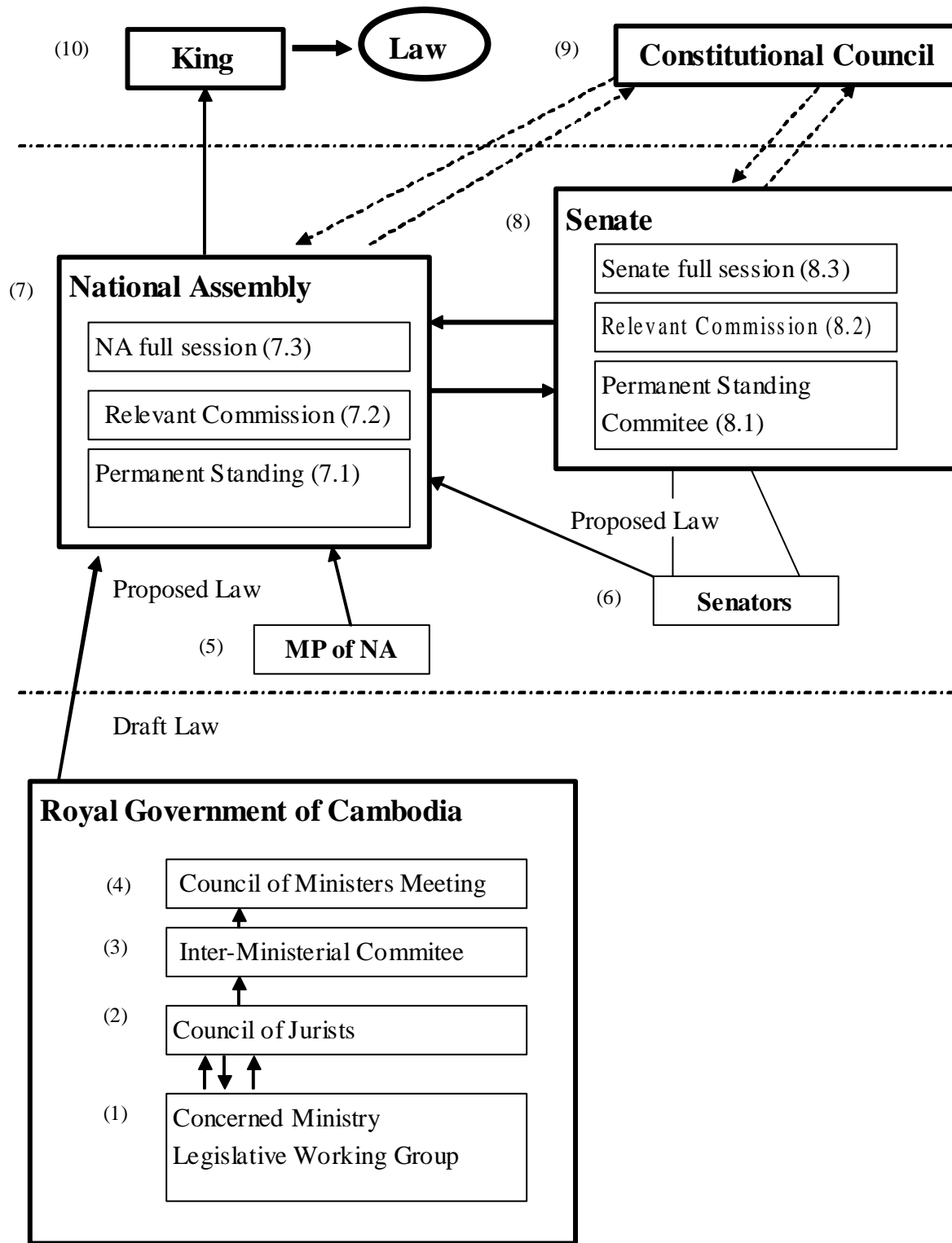
- Recommend that the full Assembly not consider the legislation.
- Request that the full Assembly decide whether to consider the legislation
- Request that the full Assembly consider the legislation on an “emergency” basis

8.3. The Senate reviews and adopts the draft/proposed law. (**Note:** The Senate may send its recommendations to the National Assembly and ask it to reconsider the draft/proposed law. The NA can still adopt it again and submit it to the King for promulgation.)

9. The Constitutional Council has the power to exercise its constitutionally mandated authority to interpret whether a law passed by the National Assembly and fully reviewed by the Senate is constitutional. Proposed or draft laws are unacceptable if they aim to reduce public assets or increase the burden on citizens. (**Note:** Before adopting a law, the National Assembly and the Senate may request the Constitutional Council to review the draft. However, in cases of organic laws and Internal rules of the National Assembly and the Senate, the National Assembly and the Senate shall request the Constitutional Council to review constitutionality of the proposed or draft organic law before passing it).

10. The National Assembly submits the adopted law to the King for promulgation and the King signs a Royal Decree to promulgate the adopted law. The adopted law becomes law subject to enforcement.

CHART OF LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



Appendix C—Petition

and Letter of Support

A Petition to the Municipality of Phnom Penh

We, the undersigned, feel that poor communities in Phnom Penh have been ignored for too long. We wish to express our support for a policy that would help so-called “squatter communities” by building needed infrastructures such as sanitation services and schools and by protecting the community’s right to choose relocation sites if relocation becomes necessary. We wish to thank you for your work in the past and hope that you continue to work with local community leaders and non-governmental organizations in the future.

Thank you.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>SIGNATURE</u>
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Sample letter to government official

Kingdom Of Cambodia
Nation Religion King

[name of organization]
[name of project]

Respect to

H.E. [name] [title]

“High Respect”

I am [name] [title] [organization] [address].

Subject: “**Subject of letter**”

Reason: I am writing to respectfully requesting that you support the [insert law number and title]. Community activists in [name of province] have been working to stop illegal fishing that is in violation of above law. The Cambodian people need the government to take an active role in the enforcement of fishery laws that protect their rights. I wish to see the suffering of hard working fishery families to end.

Therefore: [Organization] is calling upon the Ministry of Agriculture to enforce [insert law number and title] in the [insert name of province]. I hope that the Government can take a stand against the illegal activity and punish those who are becoming wealthy by breaking the law. Specifically, the use of illegal pumps and electrocuting devices must halt.

I would like to wish you happiness and health.

With high respect,

[place:].....[title][date:].....

[Signature]

[Printed name].....

Appendix D—Internet Resources

The ‘A’ Frame for Advocacy

<http://www.jhuccp.org/pr/advocacy/index.stm>

Web-based Activism Strategies

<http://www.netaction.org/training/>

Strategic Thinking in Different Advocacy Campaigns

<http://www.comminit.com/strategic.html>

Development Aids and Materials

<http://www.comminit.com/materials.html>

Center for Community Change, Advocacy 101

<http://www.communitychange.org/advocacy.htm>

MassAgenda’s Advocacy Suggestions

<http://www.massagenda.com/prodshow/>

How to Get Started in Community Organizing

<http://comm-org.utoledo.edu/papers97/startco.htm>

ACT-UP suggestions for non-violent direct action

<http://www.actupny.org/documents/CDdocuments/CDindex.html>

The Citizen’s Handbook, a guide to community organizing

<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/>

The Advocacy Institute’s instructions for writing advocacy case studies

<http://www.advocacy.org/publications/pdf/tellingyourstory.pdf>

Oxfam America’s advocacy strategies

<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/publications/art1106.html>

The World Bank’s guide to mobilizing funding sources

[http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/essd/essd.nsf/GlobalView/cs-mobilizefunding.pdf/\\$File/cs-mobilizefunding.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/essd/essd.nsf/GlobalView/cs-mobilizefunding.pdf/$File/cs-mobilizefunding.pdf)

Guide for Education Advocates—Aimed at American NGOs, but useful to advocates in other Countries

<http://www.ascd.org/advocacykit/>

Guide for HIV/AIDS Advocates

<http://www.ippf.org/hivaids/advocacyguide/index.htm>

Guide for Reproductive Health Advocates

<http://www.ippf.org/pubs/advocacyguide.htm>



Additional copies of this document are available at:

Pact Cambodia

Phnom Penh Center, 3rd Floor (Fourth Level)

Corner Sihanouk (274) & Sothearos (3) Blvd.

Phnom Penh, (P.O. Box 149)

Kingdom of Cambodia

Tel/Fax: (855-23) 217-820, 217-855, 217-856

E-mail: pact@pactcam.org