

ADVOCACY

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has

Margaret Mead

Outline

- Advocacy
 - What it is?
 - Why do it?
 - What works?

What is Advocacy?

What Is Advocacy?

- It is organised
- Targeted around specific issues
- Seeks to shape
 - ▣ Public Awareness
 - ▣ Public Will
 - ▣ Political Will
- It is about affecting change

What is the Difference?

- Advocacy
- Campaigning
- Lobbying
- Community Mobilisation
- Influencing

Quiet Advocacy

- Lobbying
- Awareness raising
- Creating networks of like minded
- Alliance/coalition building
- Influencing

Loud Advocacy

- Campaigning
- Media
- Demonstrations
- Litigation
- Sketches & dramas

Spectrum



One off ←————→ Ongoing

Private ←————→ Public

Why Advocate?

When they came for the communists,
I remained silent; I was not a communist.

When they locked up the social democrats,
I remained silent; I was not a social democrat.

When they came for the trade unionists,
I did not speak out; I was not a trade unionist.

When they came for the Jews,
I remained silent; I was not a Jew.

When they came for me,
there was no one left to speak out

Pastor Niemoller

Why NGOs Advocate?

Through advocacy NGOs

- ▣ help produce an active and vibrant democracy
- ▣ represent marginalised and stigmatised groups
- ▣ provide information and opinions that would otherwise not be heard
- ▣ counterbalance the influence of corporate organisations

Role of NGOs

The value of voluntary organisations is beyond service delivery:

- ▣ opportunities for enhancing knowledge, skills & confidence
- ▣ social support for isolated individuals
- ▣ channel for people to direct their desire to help others
- ▣ integrating marginalised people
- ▣ stimulating activities
- ▣ providing safety nets not met by government
- ▣ building social capital and civic communities
- ▣ mobilising resources and private philanthropy
- ▣ identifying and advocating community concerns and needs

Silencing Dissent

- Mechanisms to silence dissenting
 - the public denigration of NGOs
 - the inclusion of gag-clauses in contracts
 - the de-funding of organisations
 - disinterest
 - pressures to amalgamate
 - leaking information

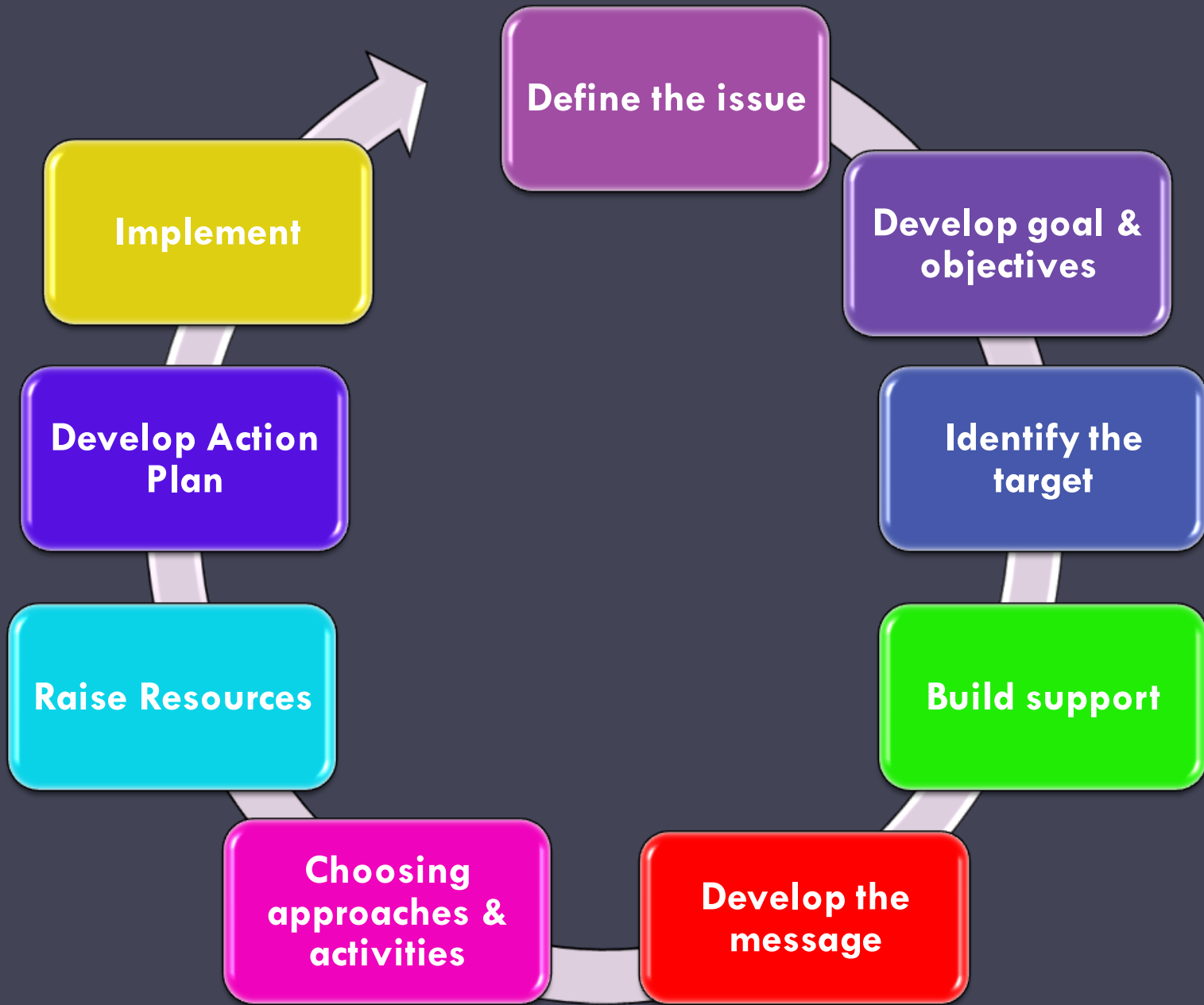
Self censorship

- *We would be unwise to bite the hand that feeds us.*
- *The perception is that you toe the line or you risk getting defunded.*
- *It does have a chilling effect, however, wondering whether critical comment may ultimately affect our funding security.*

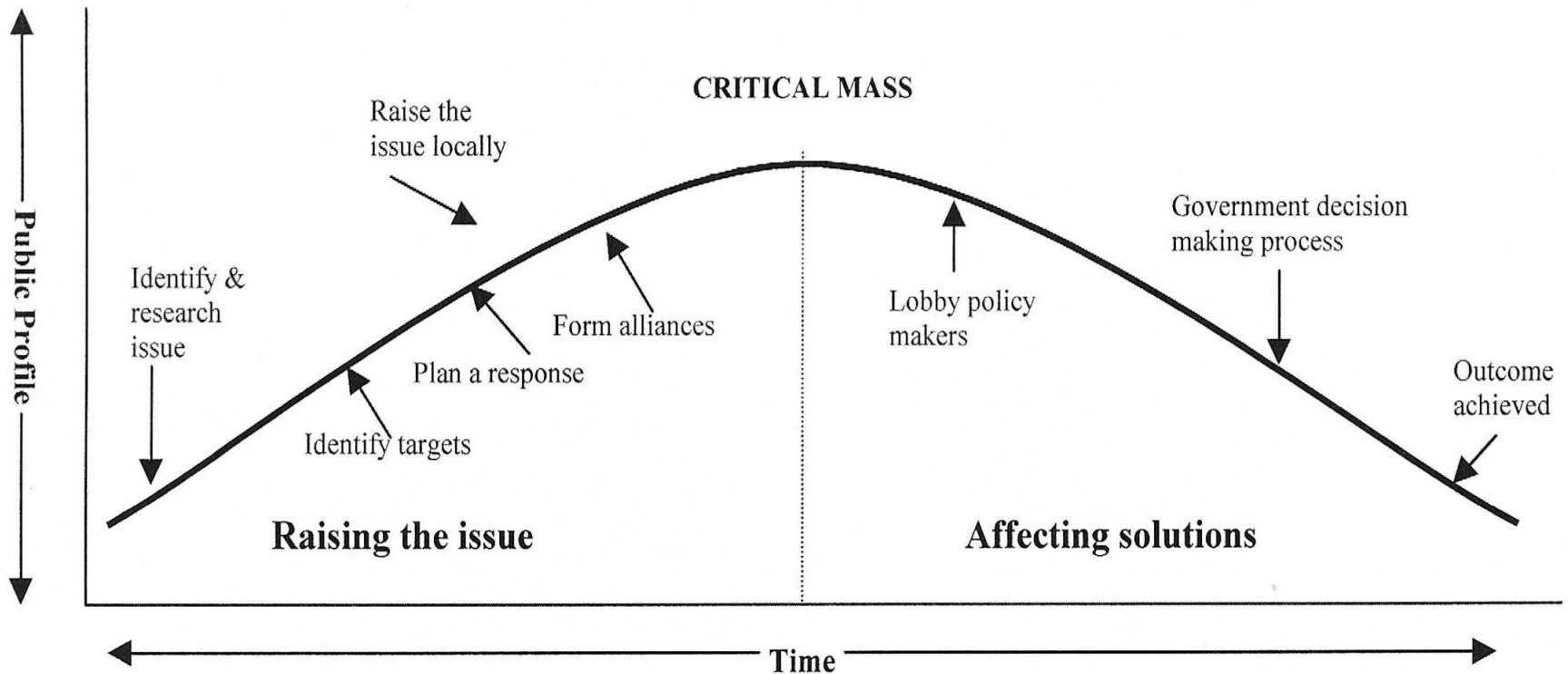
Advocacy Process

First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you and then you win.

Mahatma Gandhi



A typical campaign



What is the issue?

"Information is the currency of democracy" (Thomas Jefferson)

- Be clear about what the problem is, who is affected and what it means to them
- Every argument has to be supported by evidence to be convincing.

What do you want?

- Define victory
 - what we want to create, in place of what we have

- Narrow focus

- Develop SMART goals and objectives

Decision-makers?

- Where are the decisions made?
 - eg, there is no point in directing advocacy activity at local government if the decisions are made nationally
- How are those decisions made?
 - eg, organisations may find the most important decision making steps happen informally
- Who are the influencers?
 - eg, officials, friends or family, the public
- Who makes the decision/s?
 - Who they are, What they believe about the issue

Adversaries

- It's important to know
 - ▣ Who' is opposing you, and to understand why
 - ▣ What are their interests -- financial, political?
 - ▣ What will they lose if you achieve your objectives?
 - ▣ What are their weak points?
- Sometimes your opponents are visible and public
other times they are less visible

Effectively expose and counter opposition tactics

Allies

- Need People / Groups with
 - Credibility
 - Universal Appeal
 - Personal Experience
 - Professional knowledge

- Draw the links

- Conscious effort to collaborate

Advocacy vs. Collaboration

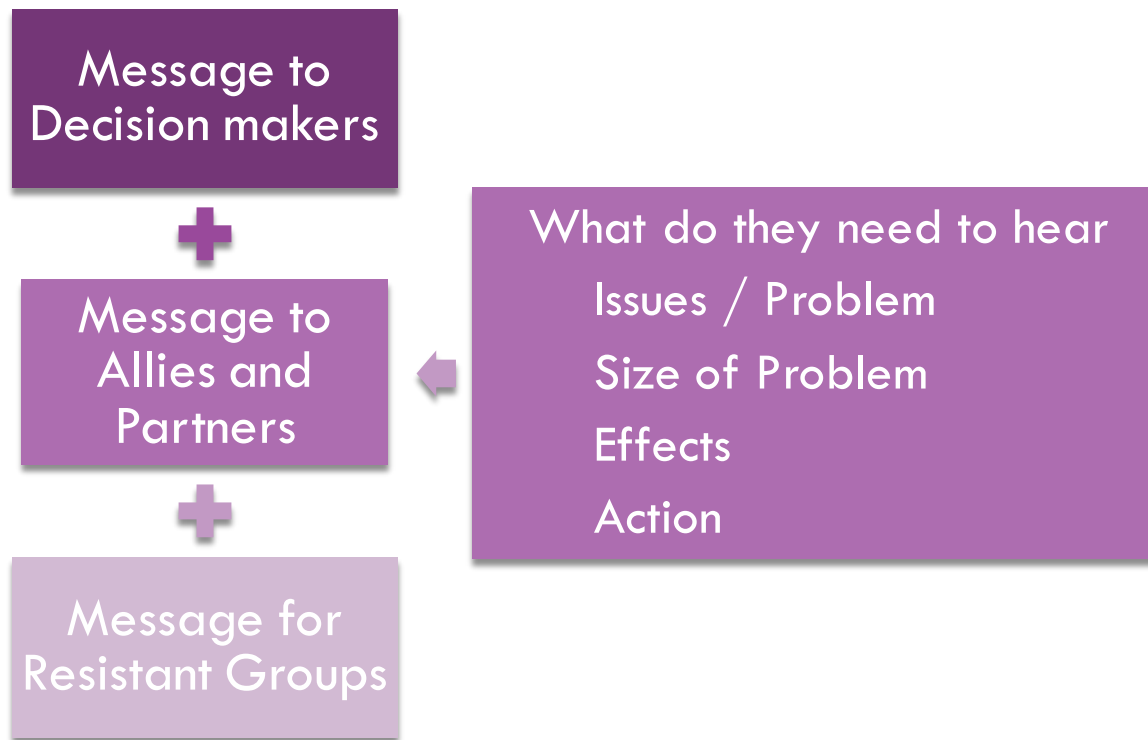
Advocacy

- Work on behalf of an established ideology
- Unyielding on fundamental values and beliefs
- Cautious awareness not be undermined
- Desire for “more” for the populations we serve
- Need to maintain strength in position power
- Visibility has to be maintained

Collaboration

- Benefit to the whole > than that of the parts
- Open to various ideologies
- Open to varied values and beliefs
- Awareness of the need to trust and be trusted
- Our needs will be met within the process
- Power comes from the collaborative
- More important to recognise than to be recognised

Develop the Message



Multi-layered involving different message in different ways to different people

“Framing”

“Effectively challenging dominant ideas is virtually impossible when others have defined—and thus control—the language of that debate.” (Pask and Dobbin 2005).

Framing the debate

- Do not
 - ▣ accept the existing framing of the issues
 - ▣ simply negate the opponents framing – it reinforces it.
- Frames trump facts
 - ▣ Reframe before the facts can become meaningful and powerful

Message for Decision-makers

- Know How They like to Communicate
 - React Quickly
 - Be Concise, Be focused, Be Specific
 - Base on Facts
 - Be Persistent and Follow Up

- **Support them when they needs it**

Advocacy is Not a One Time Thing - Build a Relationship

Science / Policy v Advocacy (WHO)

Science / Policy

- Build case gradually before presenting conclusions
- Several points can be made in same paper
- Technical language used
- Detailed explanations
- Hastily prepared materials can be discredited
- Need to be unbiased and objective

Advocacy

- State conclusions first, then support them
- Limit number of messages
- Avoid technical jargon
- Simplification is preferred
- Quick but accurate preparation and action are needed to take advantage of opportunities
- Present a compassionate argument based on fact

Messengers

Messengers should know.....

- ▣ The issues/appropriate actions
- ▣ The problems / salient solutions
- ▣ The questions / adequate answers

Messengers must be credible

Advocacy Style

How can we get them to hear it?

- ▣ Quiet - Gentle & persuasive, based on research & reason ?
- ▣ Noisy - "In your face,"?
- ▣ Something in between ?

Be Honourable

- Don't lie
- Never break a promise
- Keep off the record comments confidential
- Never use blackmail or bribery, or even gifts and favours, to persuade someone.

That is corruption, not advocacy!

Be the change you want to see in the world (Ghandi)

Questions

- Is a role/duty of NGOs to advocate?
- If Yes, who should do it?
- If no, who else should do it?
- What is the scope?
- How is it best done?