

Build or Join a Campaign



Campaigns are extremely important to advocacy and require a combination of many different strategies and players in order to be effective. The **most effective campaigns are grounded in existing advocacy efforts and use well thought out strategies for specific end goals.** Starting or joining a national or global campaign can be a very strategic and direct way to influence the inequalities PLWHIV/AIDS face throughout the world, especially if the campaign is directly challenging a specific law or policy.

Campaigns are most strategic when a particular issue is at the forefront of concern and a strategy is needed in order to make specific gains. Campaigns can fulfill numerous purposes within broader advocacy goals of policy change.

Here are some examples of what advocacy campaigns can do:

- **raise awareness** for mobilization on an issue
- **attract media attention** to an issue
- **pressure the government** during negotiations
- **ensure that a policy is being implemented** correctly and in a timely manner.

To ensure that you make strategic decisions when designing or joining a campaign, ask yourself:

- Why am I joining/creating this campaign? What outcomes am I hoping to achieve?
- Who/what is this campaign supporting?
- Who is supporting the campaign and why?
- Is this campaign supported at different levels and grounded in daily struggles which could be improved by successfully achieving the campaign's goal?
- Is this campaign harnessing a strategic moment or a particular political venue that is appropriate to the issue?
- Will the campaign raise awareness of people and encourage citizen participation in decision-making?
- Will the campaign contribute to the transformation of power relations?

Identify your Target Audience

In building a campaign, it is important to **identify your target audiences**. For example, if you are targeting a broad audience of the general public with your communication and alliance building strategies, it is important to frame your messages in a way that is meaningful to those without specific knowledge of the issue. This is in contrast to targeting policy-makers who support your endeavour or those who are opposed to the changes that you are advocating for.

Create your Message

Messages should be distilled from your statement of position. These are the ideas that you want to leave with the group or individuals you have met or contacted. For maximum effect, your organization's messages should be:

- **Brief.** Three (or fewer) simple messages are all people can retain. You should be able to state your case on an elevator ride. And, it should be brief enough to fit into a 15-second television clip or newspaper headline.
- **Clear.** Use straightforward language and the active voice.
- **Memorable**
- **Appealing to Hearts and Minds.** If possible, illustrate or use analogy.

One of the biggest challenges that organizations face when creating a message is balancing the different voices at the table, with the need to make one or two key statements. It is important to work together to prioritize what you want to communicate, and make sure that you stick with it. It may mean that some issues might get left out, especially when addressing a complex issue such as income and poverty. But don't forget about them! Brainstorm on other ways that you can get these issues addressed down the road, or integrate them in other components of the advocacy strategy.

Advocacy Allies! Making Your Voice Count! A guide to collaborative health policy development

VOICE: Voluntary Organizations Involved in Collaborative Engagement – This site provides tools and resources designed to assist you in your ability to influence health policy. Use these tools to build relationships, identify opportunities, and find practical ways to influence health policy.

Visit www.projectvoice.ca for more information.