

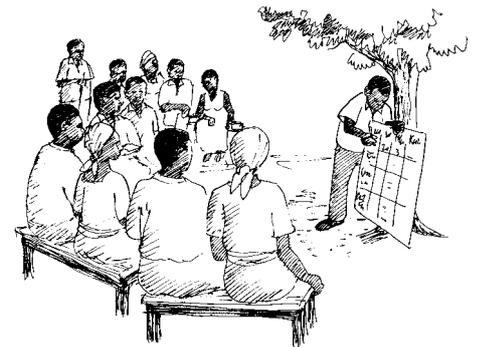
I will speak out... for those who have no voices

Preparation time is over. You have worked through the advocacy cycle, made decisions, shared ideas and plans with others involved. Now it is time to speak out. How can you present a good case? How can you make sure your letters or articles are read? How can you make sure people will respond to radio items or talks? On these pages you will find some practical tips.

We will take as our example here the Tobacco Free Initiative developed by WHO – but the points raised will be similar for any advocacy concern. The tobacco industry is actively targeting Third World countries as a new and rapidly growing market. By 2030 it is predicted that there will be a horrifying seven million deaths per year from smoking in the poorer countries of the world.

Include everybody

Don't assume only educated people can take action. Enable everyone to participate. Use simple language or familiar proverbs or examples to make the message clear enough for everyone to respond with action. Letters or action by children, or the victims of disasters can have a great impact.



Keep writing

Letters and petitions are very powerful. Keep letters short and to the point. Be passionate – but remain polite. Ask for a reply. Try to write one letter a week. Encourage people to set aside time during or after a regular group or church meeting and write together (have enough paper, pens, stamps and envelopes ready).



Catch people's attention

Use a striking photograph or shocking fact to immediately make people pay attention. Back this up with some clear facts and finish with a definite request that you want readers to carry out. However, be careful to present people with dignity – and not as victims.

Reduce your arguments to a few simple points

If you can turn some of them into easy to remember slogans, this will really help people to remember the points. Never think that your particular campaign is too complicated for people to understand. Edit and re-edit your points until you can get over your message in a sentence with a few bullet points.

For example:

- One in every two long-term smokers will die early because of smoking.
- Four million people die each year as a result of smoking.
- Smoking damages the heart and lungs and can result in cancer.
- Smoking damages the health of non-smokers exposed to cigarette smoke.
- Nicotine is an addictive drug just like heroin or cocaine.

Bring people together

There is great power in a group of people working together to achieve the same purpose, whether the group is small or large. Encourage people with success stories.

Peter wanted to tell others at his school about the dangers of smoking. On his own he was afraid to speak up. Then he became friendly with Mwangi and Moses. Together they formed an anti-smoking club and arranged activities.

Will anyone suffer?

Make sure you are aware of people who may suffer from your actions – such as small-scale tobacco farmers. Could the impact on them be reduced?



Use all kinds of methods

Role play, songs, children's stories, radio interviews, newspaper articles, letters, poems, posters, petitions, drama, demonstrations, public meetings, prayer chains, vigils, lobbying, visits to officials, school assemblies, strikes, discussions with friends – the list of possible action is almost endless. Vary your approach but remain within the laws of your country.



Fit the message to the situation

Select just one or two appropriate points for each contact. Don't try to get over every point at every opportunity. For example:

- If you plan to target people visiting a clinic with a poster, talk or teaching session – highlight the dangers of passive smoking for babies and young children.
- If you plan to target young people – highlight the danger of the image that 'smoking is cool and makes you more attractive'.
- If you plan to target business people – highlight their legal responsibilities to care for their workers.

However, do keep to the main messages you have chosen.

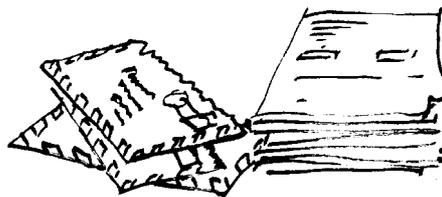
Use individual stories

People struggle to take in a lot of facts. It is much easier to respond to what has happened to one person.

At the age of 45 Alexis was very sick with lung cancer. He was told that he only had a few months to live. When he learned that smoking was the likely cause of his illness he wanted to prevent others from suffering. He offered his help to a small NGO in Managua working to educate people about the risks. Though he was not a good speaker and was often very unwell, his testimony and courage persuaded many to give up smoking.

Prepare good information material

Make sure you have further information available to back up your argument for anyone who wants to know more. But don't waste scarce resources distributing them to people who won't read them.



Request clear, practical responses

Make it easy for people to respond immediately. If addresses will be needed, then provide them; if posters or leaflets are required, make sure you have them available; if signatures for a petition are needed, provide enough copies and make sure each page states what people are signing – don't use blank pages.



Keep your focus

If your campaign begins to have some results, other people will often ask for related issues to be added. However, stay focused. Don't widen your campaign to include other issues until you have achieved the original aims.

Choose appropriate target groups

For example, the tobacco industry is keen to attract young smokers. Many young people begin smoking between 12 and 14. Target schools, youth groups and sports teams with the message. Challenge the use of smoking advertisements for sporting events, films or TV.

The Tobacco Free Initiative

The Tobacco Free Initiative is a World Health Organisation project created to focus international attention and resources on the burden of disease caused by tobacco. Its key messages are that:

- tobacco kills users
- tobacco kills and harms non-users including unborn children and partners
- promoting the use of tobacco makes poor economics (given the resulting burden of health care)
- information is already available to reverse the increase in smoking uptake
- global strategies will support national action.

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