

## G1

## Advocacy Cycle Stage 4

## Taking action – Lobbying

Sections G1–G5 introduce Stage 4 of the Advocacy Cycle, which is about implementing the advocacy plan on the identified advocacy issue and taking action. Sections G1–G5 explore the main range of options available, including lobbying, mobilising and using the media. It also has a special section on advocacy in difficult political contexts.

Section G1 focuses on lobbying. It explains what it is, why it is important and how to do it well.



## Facilitator's notes

This section explores a series of questions and answers. A training workshop facilitator must be familiar with this material.

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## Tools

This section introduces tools that can help us apply our learning in a practical way. In a training workshop, they can be used as handouts.

- TOOL 37: Making the most of a lobby meeting 157
- TOOL 38: Lobbying skills 159



## Training exercise

This section outlines an interactive training exercise that can be used with groups, in order to deepen understanding of the issues that have been raised and to practise application of the tools that have been introduced. It is ideal for use in a training workshop.

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## SECTION G1 Facilitator's notes



### What is lobbying?

Lobbying can be understood as 'direct contact with decision-makers'. It is about dialogue and ongoing conversation. Its origin comes from the name given to the meeting area (the lobby) in the UK Houses of Parliament, which is the place where members of the public can enter and seek an audience with their elected officials.

The main aim of lobbying is to influence decision-makers to bring about changes in laws, policies and practices. In different contexts, these decision-makers might include national or local government officials, civil servants, business leaders, Members of Parliament, international organisations and village elders or chiefs. The thing they have in common is that they are people who have power to bring about the changes we are seeking.

There are a number of different activities that can be part of lobbying, including:

- Writing a letter
- Sending a position paper
- Making a phone call
- Arranging a visit or a meeting
- Conducting a visit or a meeting
- Enabling a decision-maker to go and meet with a community affected by the issue.

### CASE STUDY

#### MALAWI

Over several years, one of Tearfund's partners in Malawi, Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM), established good relationships with the national government, and particularly with ministers in departments responsible for issues that directly impact poor communities.

As a result of its rapport with the government, EAM was invited to join a national consultation process set up by the government to help it set the national budget. EAM was consistently invited to these consultation meetings and invited to speak on behalf of poor communities and to represent their needs, which it was able to do because of its connections to churches across the whole of the country. EAM's role included significant work in bringing together national church leaders to mediate between the government and the opposition, and in ensuring that the voices of poor communities were heard.

As a result of EAM's involvement in the process, the Malawi government strengthened its policies to deal with issues of food security and poverty reduction and, when the national budget was passed, it was drafted in such a way as to support the implementation of programmes that favoured poor people.



### Why bother with lobby meetings?

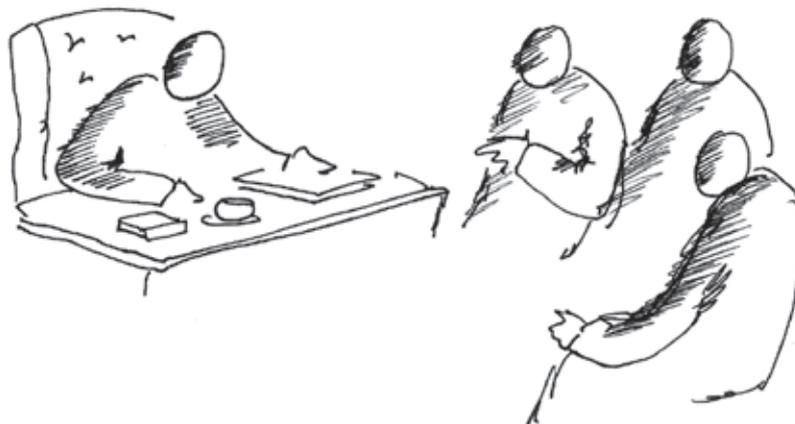
Much lobbying involves face-to-face meetings. Usually, these meetings are private meetings, behind closed doors, involving small numbers of people, in which detailed proposals for any changes in law, policy or practice can be presented and discussed.

Meetings are important as they allow us to:

- Build relationships of trust and confidence with decision-makers
- Listen and collect information, including about different policy processes and proposals

- Present our position clearly and answer any misunderstandings
- Persuade decision-makers to change policy or practice and gain specific commitments to action
- Plan further activities together.

While policy papers, phone calls and other actions are important in order to try to secure a meeting, or to follow up with additional information, there is much greater chance of change if we are able to build relationships with decision-makers over a period of time, and explain our proposals personally. Lobbying is relational.



Whatever the reasons for the meeting, we need to prepare well and be clear about what we hope to achieve from it, what we would like the decision-maker to do and what help we can offer them. We should also bear in mind that, even though the lobbyist may be the one to bring a suggestion to the table, he or she should be prepared to allow the decision-maker to take the credit and adopt the idea or initiative as his or her own. This can be a small price to pay for achieving our aims.

## CASE STUDY

**PERU**

Tearfund partner Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope), in coalition with other NGOs and indigenous organisations, wanted the Peruvian congress to pass a law so that indigenous communities would be consulted before any mining activity was approved in their territories. This was important to them because of the potentially negative impact of mining activity on the land and environment.

Over a period of two years they met a variety of organisations, including members of the Congressional Committee on Indigenous Issues, who were responsible for drafting the law, government representatives responsible for amending and voting on the law, a quasi-governmental body responsible for overseeing the government's policies, the International Labour Organization that advises the government on implementing its international obligations, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, who has a monitoring brief and can write reports and give recommendations.

Lobbying these organisations continued over several years, then a law was passed. Unfortunately, it did not contain all the provisions requested by Paz y Esperanza, so they had to continue their lobbying longer than originally envisaged.

We also need to consider who else may need to attend a lobby meeting with us (see Section E2 on working with stakeholders). Usually, these people will be from organisations and groups

that we know already. Occasionally, however, it can be helpful to get an unusual and broader combination of delegates to attend a meeting, depending on the advocacy issue. For example, NGOs, trade unions and faith groups could come together to attend a meeting, and bring different perspectives on the issue.

For more information, see **TOOL 37: Making the most of a lobby meeting.**



### Whom should we have lobby meetings with?

Much time can be wasted meeting with the wrong people or those who do not have decision-making power, such as those who agree with our requests but who have no power to change the situation. To avoid this, it is a good idea to find out as much as possible, before arranging the meeting, about the authority of the person or people with whom we want to meet.

We may want to meet with the person who is ultimately responsible but may never be available, such as the president, a government minister or the CEO of a business. However, it may be more effective to invest time in meeting civil servants or ministerial advisers because they will have more time to hear us, and we will have more time to explain our position, build alliances and even develop strategy together. Such influence may be *indirect* but it can still be strategic because these people have direct access to the person with ultimate responsibility. It may even be *direct* influence if they have sufficient decision-making powers delegated to them.

Whom we should meet with depends on various things, such as:

- Who has responsibility and power to change the law, policy, or practice
- What we are trying to achieve
- Who can influence the situation
- Who we have access to, including existing relationships.

It is likely that we will want to meet with different people in local and national government, as well as potentially with representatives of international organisations.

### CASE STUDY

#### INDIA

The work of Tearfund partner Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief (EFICOR) focuses on disaster risk reduction across a number of Indian states. The state of Bihar is one of the most populous in India and prone to disasters, particularly large-scale flooding, which destroys land and livelihoods.

When flooding first occurred, EFICOR was involved in the emergency response in Madhubani district, part of which involved disaster risk reduction work. Later, when flooding happened again, the communities that EFICOR had worked with were prepared because mitigation structures were in place. As a result, the damage and loss were minimal, compared to other parts of Bihar.

In light of the floods in Bihar, the National Disaster Management Authority of India decided to prepare flood guidelines for humanitarian agencies, focusing on emergency responses, preparedness, mitigation and risk reduction. Because of its experience and expertise, EFICOR was invited to be part of the task force team responsible for drafting the guidelines, alongside other NGOs. As a result, they shared their learning and helped influence the way the guidelines were worded.

At the same time, EFICOR, along with Sphere India, worked with the Madhubani district officials and the Bihar State Disaster Management Authority to develop a plan for disaster management for the whole of Madhubani, which is now being outworked.

For more information, see **TOOL 38: Lobbying skills**



### What changes should we lobby for?

It can be useful to view lobbying as trying to influence the three broad areas of laws, policies and practices. It is important to consider which approach is most likely to produce the changes we want. Each one has advantages and disadvantages and will be more appropriate in different circumstances.

#### ■ Influencing laws

This focuses on the legislative branch of government, which deals with passing and amending legislation. This may happen in the national parliament or assembly, or a regional or local decision-making body. Lobbying to influence changes in laws can involve:

- suggesting specific amendments to existing laws
- making suggestions of ideas and content for new laws, or
- arguing to maintain laws that others are seeking to abolish.

Advantages are that changes in laws can be more permanent and can influence a wide range of policies and practices. Disadvantages are that it can be very time-consuming, there is often significant ideological resistance from political parties, and there is no guarantee of changes in law being translated into policies and programmes that make a difference on the ground.

#### CASE STUDY

#### MOZAMBIQUE

Many people in Mozambique are living below the poverty line and do not have guaranteed food security. Natural hazards, such as widespread flooding, compound the problem, particularly among people living with HIV. This was an issue that concerned Rede Cristã, a network of Christian NGOs and churches in Mozambique and one of Tearfund's partners.

Over several years, members of Rede Cristã developed relationships with officials in all the departments of the Mozambique government that were concerned about HIV. Together, they lobbied and helped draft a law setting out the rights of people living with HIV to adequate food supplies and levels of nutrition. After the law was passed, they worked closely with their church members to ensure the law was implemented – by raising awareness of its existence with people living with HIV, by encouraging local churches to take more responsibility in caring for people affected by HIV, and by facilitating connections between local authority officials and members of churches and communities affected by HIV.

#### ■ Influencing policies

Often adequate laws exist but the problem is that they are not being implemented. Sometimes, this is because there is no framework policy in place to outwork the law, or the policy in place is inadequate. Lobbying to influence changes in policies is mainly aimed at the executive branch of government (ie ministers and their departments). It seeks to change the strategic and day-to-day frameworks in which they work, and in which the laws are outworked and implemented. It can also be aimed at businesses that would benefit from a framework policy. An example of lobbying to influence a change in policy would be asking for a framework policy that outlawed discrimination, which could then be used by people living with disabilities to increase access to jobs and by companies to provide appropriate jobs.

## CASE STUDY

**NEPAL**

Nepal used to have no comprehensive support policy concerning community home-based care for people living with HIV. Instead, government and NGOs implemented their own systems as they saw need. Tearfund partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN) took the initiative to form a technical working team to draft and approve a suitable policy, together with involvement of officials from the government, NGOs, UN bilateral agencies and groups representing people living with HIV.

UMN had responsibility for editing the draft policy to ensure relevant technical good practice components were included. At the same time, they developed relationships with the government ministries concerned about HIV and began to lobby officials in those ministries. They asked for the policy to be created and explained why it was needed and what benefits it would bring to people living with HIV.

After the new policy was approved by the government, the guidelines in it were then implemented by UMN and other NGOs who, together, ensured there was a comprehensive approach to prevention, care and support for people living with HIV. At the same time, the Nepali government committed to ensure the policy would be reflected in its National Strategic Plan on HIV.

**■ Influencing practices**

The executive branch of government, at both national and local level, may have good policies that are clear and well written but are not being implemented. In these situations, lobbying involves trying to gain concrete commitments from those responsible for implementing the policies in terms of programmes, projects, funding, personnel and timing. It may also involve persuading government representatives or business leaders to stop a particular practice that may be causing harm. For example, in the case of a framework policy on discrimination, it may involve producing guidelines, monitoring local businesses, helping with the implementation of access ramps and educating the public.

**■ Using the courts**

A further option is using the judicial branch of government to try to show that a particular law, policy or practice is illegal and therefore needs to be changed, or to try to force its implementation if the government is refusing. Again, this can be time-consuming and costly, is a long-term process and will usually rely on professional lawyers, but it can be effective in providing an accepted interpretation of a given law. For example, it can clarify what rights people have to their land and make it public knowledge.



## TOOL 37

**Making the most of a lobby meeting**

The following guidelines are for when we are arranging a meeting with a decision-maker and we know there will be specific time for lobbying and raising concerns.

**BEFORE Background research**

- Who will you be meeting with and what is their role? What power do they have to make decisions? Make sure you are meeting with the right person.
- What previous contact have you had? Was anything promised and has it been delivered?
- What are other groups saying on the same issues, whether different government departments, international organisations or civil society groups?
- How do you think the policymakers view you? Why have they agreed to see you? What power, influence or expertise do they recognise that you have?
- What arguments do you think they will find persuasive?
- What questions do you anticipate might be asked? Make sure you have responses to possible questions.
- With whom will you be attending the meeting? Are the correct people going to represent each organisation, business, etc?

**Logistics**

- Allow plenty of time to get to the meeting so that you will not be late.
- Prepare materials to bring to the meeting (policy brief, reports, summary position statements, etc), making sure your main points are presented clearly.
- Check how much time you are likely to have.
- If there is more than one of you, agree who is going to say what (eg who will start, chair, share the main messages) and who will take notes.
- If more than one of you is going to be involved in the meeting, arrange for all involved to have a pre-meeting.

**Aim of the meeting**

- What do you hope to achieve from the meeting? What will you ask the policymakers to do (eg review the situation, pass on your proposals to others)?
- Consider what they may want to gain from the meeting and how you can provide it, such as information, commitment to work together to solve the problem, etc.
- Make sure your proposals are realistic and that you are not asking for something that is not in their power to deliver.
- Know which issues you are willing to compromise on and which you are not.
- If appropriate, view the meeting as one in a sequence of meetings, which you are undertaking to reach the person with whom you really want to meet.

TOOL 37 continues on next page

**DURING Introductions**

- Make sure that everyone in the room is introduced. Summarise what happened in previous meetings if appropriate.
- Clarify why you are meeting and agree how to proceed.
- Agree for someone to take notes.

**Keeping on track**

- Have a clear achievable goal. Know your main points well and state your case precisely. Ask for clarity if necessary.
- Focus on your most important concerns first and leave smaller issues until the end.
- Summarise progress at various points and clarify what has been agreed at the end.
- Use approaches that will build confidence and trust, as opposed to those which accuse and polarise opinion (see **TOOL 38: Lobbying skills**).
- Always be respectful and truthful.

**AFTER Follow-up**

- Write a quick report of the meeting.
- Send a brief letter thanking the decision-maker for seeing you, summarising the main points and reminding them both of their promises and what you have promised.
- After a while, contact them again to see if they have done what they promised.
- If appropriate, amplify key messages through social media.

**TOOL 38 Lobbying skills**

Good lobbying skills enable us to ensure that others understand the point we are making and help us to persuade others to take our suggested course of action. Bad habits in lobbying can quickly alienate those we are speaking to and undermine our message.

**Helpful**

- ✓ **FOCUS**  
Stick to your main points so that you do not get side-tracked with less important matters. Try to limit the points you want to raise in any particular meeting.
- ✓ **WIN-WIN**  
Seek solutions that will be beneficial to both parties. Be willing to compromise on some areas, but be very clear about what you will not negotiate. Try to think of what you can offer so that the other party is satisfied.
- ✓ **ASK QUESTIONS**  
Try to identify areas where you may both benefit and help clarify positions where there may be misunderstanding or lack of information. This is a way of opening up the conversation.
- ✓ **STEP INTO THEIR SHOES**  
Think about how your proposals could benefit the decision-makers and explain this during your conversations.
- ✓ **LISTEN AND ENGAGE**  
Listen to concerns and try to respond to them. Let them speak first if necessary.
- ✓ **SEEK PERMISSION**  
This puts you in control without having to battle to speak. 'I would like to suggest that....' or 'Could I ask...?'
- ✓ **TEST AND SUMMARISE**  
Ensure that everyone has understood and interpreted things in the same way and agrees on action points. This helps build trust and avoids confusion and relationship breakdown later on.
- ✓ **EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS**  
Ensure the other parties are clear why you are proposing a particular course of action. Show evidence to back up your proposals. Do not leave them guessing about hidden agendas.
- ✓ **BE SENSITIVE**  
Be aware of a change in mood, caused by eg unexpected revelations or reactions, defensive responses, boredom or lack of interest – and change your approach accordingly. Humour can be appropriate sometimes to get your point across.
- ✓ **KNOW WHEN TO STOP**  
Be aware of how far you can push a particular line of questioning, and be prepared to meet again later on if necessary.

**Unhelpful**

- ✗ **PRESENTING WISH LISTS**  
Avoid a focus on demands or problems that could detract from the most pressing concerns.
- ✗ **EMOTIVE APPROACH**  
Do not use subjective or emotive words that add nothing to your case but simply accuse the other side of being unfair or unreasonable.
- ✗ **INFLEXIBILITY**  
If you do not listen to the other point of view and simply defend your own position, this may lead to entrenched positions and frustrate the chance of progress.
- ✗ **MAKING IT PERSONAL**  
This can lead to people being offended and insulted and does not necessarily address the problem.
- ✗ **CARICATURE/DISTORTING**  
This can show a lack of respect for the other person's position and lead to relationship breakdown.
- ✗ **COUNTER-PROPOSALS**  
If you counter every suggestion by the other party with one of your own, it will become harder to persuade them.
- ✗ **ANGER**  
Shouting at someone could discredit your message and suggest that you have weak arguments.
- ✗ **RIDICULE/DISRESPECT**  
This will cause the other person to close up and they may even close the meeting early.
- ✗ **INTERRUPTIONS**  
This can annoy the person speaking and others, who will think you are not listening, and they may do the same to you.

## SECTION G1 Training exercise



### EXERCISE 44 Lobby meeting role play

**Aim** To practise preparing and participating in a lobbying meeting with decision-makers

**TYPE** Group exercise

**TIPS** For Version 2, it can be wise to brief the role play volunteers before a break, so they can practise or talk it through before performing to everyone after the break

**METHOD** Role play

**HANDOUTS** **TOOL 37:** Making the most of a lobby meeting  
**TOOL 38:** Lobbying skills

**STEPS (VERSION 1)**

1. Divide into small groups of about five to eight, and give each group a problem to address (see suggestion below) or ask them to think of a problem that they or their organisation is facing. Explain that they will be taking part in a role play.

2. Give the groups copies of **TOOL 37: Making the most of a lobby meeting** and **TOOL 38: Lobbying skills**.

3. Allow about 30–40 minutes for them to prepare.

4. Invite the groups to perform their role play (maximum ten minutes per group).

5. Lead a plenary discussion around best practice.

**STEPS (VERSION 2)**

1. Prepare a role play where two to three people are in a meeting lobbying a decision-maker (see example below).

2. Ask for two to three volunteers and give them the role play information to prepare. This should take them about five to ten minutes. The important point is that, in the role play, they should go against all good practice guidelines and make the meeting ineffective.

3. Lead a discussion where participants identify the bad practice and develop ideas for good practice (in preparation, participation and follow-up to meeting).

4. Give out **TOOL 37: Making the most of a lobby meeting** and **TOOL 38: Lobbying skills**.

**EXAMPLE  
ROLE PLAY**

You are part of a community that is concerned about the operations of a chemical factory 1km upstream. This factory has been operating for four years and during the past three months the community has been experiencing problems. Large areas of land have been fenced off, blocking the main route to take cattle to other pastures further up the valley. When clothes are washed in the river, they get stained and there is more illness in the village, probably due to water pollution. You have discussed the issues as a community and decided that the situation needs to be addressed with the factory owners. This will be your first meeting with the factory owner, although you had minimal contact with factory staff five years previously when two members came to speak briefly to the village committee about the plans to build the factory. How do you approach the meeting? What are you trying to achieve?

See also **TOOL 5: Good practice principles checklist** in Section A.