



ADVOCACY

Advocacy can be defined as active promotion of a cause or principle that helps people become more involved in decisions affecting their lives, in particular with regard to advocating for regulatory changes in the field of human rights.

Advocacy involves taking actions that are aimed at achieving an identified goal. These actions may be used as part of a community initiative that helps people to express their views and concerns, access information and representation, and support their choices and options when they are vulnerable or in need of help.

The goal of advocating efforts is to protect and promote human rights, and also to ensure that people are able to have their voice heard on issues important for a society, and have that voice considered when decisions are being made about their lives, in particular when it comes to vulnerable groups such as minors, women, refugees and migrants.

Generally, advocacy involves liaising with government, public entities or businesses to change an unfair or harmful situation that affects the lives of people in a community. Trafficking in human beings is most certainly one of phenomena that deeply affect the lives of people entrapped. Such situations may be resolved through persuasion and negotiation or seeking to achieve compromise with identified stakeholders, or by taking political or legal actions on a broader scale within a society.

An effective advocacy involves several prerequisites, such as: the rightness of the cause, the power and massive response of the advocates, the knowledge about an issue, the opposition to the cause, and a general opinion about the issue in a community.

If you strive to be successful in pursuing advocacy, you need to think strategically. When planning an advocacy campaign, you need to think whether your previous experience or research carried out on a subject indicate that your goals cannot be achieved otherwise, and whether you have the capacity and resources to engage in the advocacy campaign on a long run.

For pursuing an advocacy campaign think of the following:

- Do a thorough research, to understand and know the issue you wish others to comprehend, and always have in mind a broader societal framework and in particular all aspects of current legislation that you aim to change.
- Analyse who are decision-makers and your opponents that you need to confront or influence, and understand their network of power and cause for resistance, be it a lack of knowledge, hidden interests or lucrative motives.

- Recognise your allies, i.e., people who could join you to obtain a mass appearance, make your voice louder and help you identify different ways of taking actions, in particular by gathering experts to help you fight for your cause within the legal system.
- Develop a strategic approach to your actions, as you need to identify your goals, your target groups and the tactics how to approach each of them, either through community-driven activities, public appearances etc.
- Set up a plan of actions to fight for your cause, broaden a network of allies and confront your opponents, or overcome obstacles within a community such as open threats of organised crime and gangs, religious dogma, patriarchal prejudices, bureaucracy, lack of funds etc.

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