



## ADVOCACY IN DEVELOPING PROJECTS

*Adopted by the Board of the Danish Project Advisory and Training Centre, PACT Dec. 2008  
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### **PATC WILL PROMOTE:**

- The practical use of advocacy as a method used to achieve permanent improvements which influence the structural causes of poverty and thus benefitting more people than the individual project is capable of.
- A conception of advocacy which acknowledges the value of activities at the local and intimate level and which acknowledges that advocacy often unfolds due to legitimacy in the specific activities (including delivery of services) and the example set by these specific activities.
- That advocacy is as much as possible based on strengthening poor and marginalized people in promoting their cause to the incumbents and influencing own and others conditions of life in a positive direction.
- An understanding of how systematic and strategic work with advocacy is a time-consuming process which requires time to develop within the partnerships and projects.

### **ADVOCACY - WHY?**

Advocacy stands as one of the central objectives in the updated civic society strategy. There is a clear focus is on promoting human rights and international conventions and declarations; among others, for women's rights, children, the disabled and indigenous people. A strong independent and diverse civic society is crucial in securing these rights.

Many of the member organisations of PATC work with partners who are very close to the target group or directly represent poor and marginalized people. Because of that, it is important to maintain that advocacy is not just about international or national campaigns and direct influence on legislation. Advocacy is also about getting influence on and influencing political and social processes on a local and regional level.

Some of the basic prerequisites which will make advocacy possible on a larger scale are:

- ⊙ That the actors have knowledge concerning the specific problem, its basic causes and possibilities for action.
- ⊙ That changes happen due to specific individual and organizational behaviour.
- ⊙ That a strategy for common action and mobilization has been formulated.





- ⊙ That the actors have the sufficient competences and capacities to work strategically/politically with the concerned issues.

In relation to the above, it is imperative that poor target groups get experiences with mobilization through specific activities and that these experiences lead to greater self-esteem/self-confidence and a belief that it is possible to influence one's own and others' conditions of life in a positive direction.

A foundation for advocacy is also a strengthening of the capacity by the local partner organisations including the capacity to be able to implement the necessary analysis of the local context as well as the possibilities to be able to influence different actors and network with the intention to exchange experiences and greater thrust.

## DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF

### ADVOCACY - DEFINITION

Like many of the other central concepts in developing aid, advocacy also has many different definitions (see some chosen examples in the back). PATC has chosen Danida's definition as the basis of our courses, advisory services and the administration of the Project Fund:

"Advocacy is to be understood as targeted activities which – by influencing decision makers and citizens locally, regionally and internationally - seek to shape and influence political, economic, cultural and social processes and decisions in order to improve the conditions of life for a considerable amount of people". (*General principles for supporting development activities through Danish civic society organizations" page 10*)

#### **This implies:**

- That advocacy can happen at all levels: Locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- With targeted activities an analysis has been made and a strategy and objective for advocacy has been formulated.

- Influencing the incumbents and citizens imply that work is done with a broad limitation of what instances advocacy could be relevant to.
- In continuation, political, economic, cultural and social processes and decisions imply that advocacy - apart from the formal legislators and incumbents - also can address, for example. Traditional leaders, company executives and other persons who exert authority.
- A considerable amount implies that the activity is not only aimed at a narrow project-target group (for example, the students in the schools which are involved in a project) but towards improvements to the target group in general (for example, all the students in the district).
- As advocacy is about influencing authorities and duty bearers at all levels, there is a risk that the activities release opposition and conflict. This risk must be considered in the strategy.

## ADVOCACY

As a diversity of civic society organizations exists, there will be a diversity of possible approaches to advocacy. Advocacy can be many things - from a village organisation's opportunity to be part of a local development committee thus getting influence on the priorities to testing a model for a different pedagogic method providing students with greater self esteem and knowledge about own possibilities to get influence.

Another area for advocacy is to contribute the implementation of and adherence to already existing conventions, legislation and political decisions at national, regional and local level.

Working with advocacy will often happen at two levels which has a gliding mutual transition:

- Strengthening and consciousness as part of capacity building of organisations and groups of people with the intention to actively promote advocacy
- Specific advocacy aimed at influencing structures, institutions and authorities at all levels.

As an inspiration to working with the formulation of objectives and strategies for advocacy we refer to the pamphlet "The right to influence - Advocacy: Experiences challenges ideas" (see [www.prngo.dk](http://www.prngo.dk)) which has been developed by a group at the professional network Thematic Forum and which PATC has contributed to.

Particularly chapter three "Objectives and strategies" provides good inspiration and entails specific analysis tools and cases and examples illustrating the different possibilities and approaches to a more systematic work with advocacy.

It is stated here, among others, that: *Before an organisation commits itself to working with advocacy, it is important to clarify exactly what one wishes to achieve. Does one want to support the poor and marginalized in getting greater influence on decisions concerning their immediate everyday*

*life? Is it about controlling local politicians and their decisions in relation to resources? Is focus on a more superior political level; for example, a particular legislation which is to be formulated or revised? Or is advocacy primarily about strengthening the opportunities of others and their capacities to implement their own advocacy."*

## ADVOCACY IN RELATION TO THE PROJECT FUND

In assessing the applications for the Project Fund, the demands for advocacy will be carefully adjusted to the project's character and size. Larger projects will, as a starting point, result in greater demands requiring advocacy as an integral part of the activity

Thus PATC acknowledges that actual partnerships, which later can lead to advocacy activities, often starts with the cooperation surrounding specific activities. These activities partly result, on the one hand, in progress to a limited target group but also, on the other hand, to a necessary capacity building of the local partner organisation as well as the opportunity to look at the wider perspective and engage with other actors. Because of that, no demands concerning specific advocacy are made in smaller projects and in the first phase of the phase divided projects.

For larger projects, it is required that objectives and strategy for advocacy are worked with in a more systematic and explicit way.

## DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF ADVOCACY:

Fortalervirksomhed er et komplekst begreb, som der findes mange afgrænsninger af. Her følger nogle eksempler på andre organisationers definitioner:

### **Red Barnet - Save The Children Denmark:**

"Advocacy is a strategically planned set of activities aimed at producing concrete and measurable changes in the policies, positions or programmes of an institution. The activities specifically target organised decision-makers and practitioners at any level who are of relevance to the concrete case". (*Red Barnet: A Tool Kit on Child Rights Programming, juni 2002*) Se [www.redbarnet.dk](http://www.redbarnet.dk)

### **MS/Action Aid**

"Advocacy is a strategy targeted to promote a given cause through achieving specific policy changes. It entails organized actions with the intention to obtain influence on decision processes, to build support or to create a favourable climate for implementing, changing or abolishing a law, a policy or a budget area".

"Many definitions to advocacy exist which match different relations or causes. The advantages to this definition is that it emphasizes that:

- Advocacy is a process.
- Advocacy is about politics and change.
- Advocacy is not a target but a strategy in achieving change.
- As a strategy, advocacy contains many different tactics and tools, including lobbying and change.
- Advocacy is, in itself, a neutral concept – it is a strategy which can be used for working with a desired change." . Se [www.ms.dk](http://www.ms.dk)

## THE PATC POSITION PAPERS

The Steering Committee of the Project Advisory and Training centre, PATC, has adopted a number of position papers that describe our view of how various key concepts in the development work must be understood and interpreted in practice.

The position papers are prepared on the basis of our practices and experiences from member organizations, development projects and

activities, our consultancy and training activities as well as our administration of the Project Fundl.

The papers are not static documents but will at appropriate intervals be revised in the light of experience gained. Simultaneously, several position papers being prepared on other topics.

See the latest version and other position papers on [www.prngo.dk](http://www.prngo.dk)



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