Driving Change Through Collective Action:

A Critical Look at Advocacy, Movement Building, Influencing and Policy Actions (for Environmental Action).

RIGHTS + RESOURCES

DECOLONIS

Aim of the Toolkit

There are many organizations in Kenya involved in advocacy for environmental and climate justice, communal land rights, among many other collective rights. These organizations are keen on creating awareness on these issues and mobilizing public attention and opinion on these issues with the aim of ultimately changing policies and laws and positions of governments/authorities to be more inclusive, equitable and just.
This toolkit aims to provide Climate Justice Activists, Human Rights Defenders, Environmental Action Practitioners, CSOs, Community Based Organizations and Community Action groups with the skills and resources to conduct sustainable advocacy through collective action.

The toolkit will have 4 modules as outlined below;

Module 1 - What are Collective Action Rights? defines and explains in simple terms what collective action and collective action rights are, in the context of advocacy.

Module 2 – Tools of Trade: Developing Smart and Strategic Advocacy focuses on how to develop and deploy smart and strategic advocacy, using simple, effective methods and available resources.

Module 3 – Advocacy in Action: The Power of Storytelling/Messaging provides an insight into how to frame narratives and compelling stories to break down complex and abstract concepts and engage deeper and more impactfully with your target audience.

Module 4 – Beyond Collective Action: Engaging Other Change Mechanisms is a roadmap on how to utilize other avenues like the UN system and the Justice system to leverage collective rights.

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Disclaimer - The views presented here are those of the authors and are not necessarily shared by the agencies that have generously supported this work through the Rights and Resources Initiative, nor all of the Partners or Collaborators of the Coalition.

Module 1 - What are Collective Action Rights?

A. What Is Collective Action?

Simply put, collective action is about individuals joining forces to address shared challenges and concerns; or recognizing and taking mutual opportunities. Collective action happens in various forms, and goes beyond cultures, sectors, and scales/size - from informal community projects to organized political campaigns.
Collective action is defined by the following key elements;

i. Shared Interests: It is driven by a unifying goal or concern. Whether it's advocating for climate justice or protesting a punitive bill, participants' shared interests provide the foundation for collaboration, which provides the groups with energy and agency to sustain their efforts over a long period of time. Longevity of advocacy efforts is a big factor which contributes to success or failure of campaigns.
ii. Coordination: For collective action to be successful and impactful, there has to be a very good level of planning and synchronization among members. If there is poor coordination of activities, this can dilute those efforts and cause low morale amongst members. With proper coordination, resources are used efficiently and all participants feel valued, appreciated, with all aligned in their objectives and methods of execution.
iii. Voluntary Participation: Collective action is mostly driven by organizations or members volunteering - their time, experience, expertise, energy and passion. Most of the time, participants engage because they believe in the cause or foresee personal and communal benefits. This leads to higher commitment and creativity.
iv. Collective Outcomes: When collective action leads to a positive outcome, the entire group benefits and in more times, this benefit extends to others who are not in the immediate group. Public interest outcomes like political reforms, public policy wins are examples of this. These outcomes have ripple effects and can inspire further action thus creating even more levels of synergy and cooperation.

B. Types of Collective Action

There are different types of collective action, and these depend on the objectives, structures of the different organizations and the scope of action. When you understand these different types, it becomes easier to adapt how and when to apply them, while fully understanding the challenges you are likely to encounter. There are 4 main types of collective collection as described below;

a. Public Services Provision

Public services benefit everyone, regardless of individual contributions, and are normally provided by the government, through tax and levies collected from the public. The main focus of collective action is creating and/or maintaining these services.

Examples:

· Efforts to clean up polluted rivers, which benefit the entire community by improving health and aesthetics.

· Street lighting projects in informal settlements to improve local safety, fostering a sense of security and community cohesion.

Challenges:

· This type of collective action usually has many free-riders, where individuals benefit without contributing. Addressing this requires innovation, such as giving incentives for participation or creating a system where everyone is accountable to everyone.

b. Social Movements

Social movements aim to bring about changes in the society or in the culture of a people, by addressing injustices that are prevalent in those societies and cultures. These movements are usually long-term and involve many different strategies, from protests in the streets to policy advocacy.

Examples:

· The #MyDressMyChoice Movement in Kenya of 2015, advocating for an end to sexual harassment and violence against women based on their clothing choices. It led to legal reforms, including a law against forcible “stripping” and efforts to address the issue of public transport safety.

· The global Women’s March advocating for gender equality, uniting millions in a shared vision of social justice.

Characteristics:

· They are highly organized with clear leadership, but are often decentralized to encourage broad participation, allowing for both strategic direction and grassroots energy.

· Utilize symbolism and storytelling to stimulate support and maintain momentum.

c. Economic Collaboration

Economic-focused collective action pools resources to achieve financial or material objectives. Cooperatives, crowdfunding campaigns, and microfinance groups fall under this category.

Examples:

· Farmers forming co-ops to negotiate better prices, enabling them to compete in larger markets while reducing individual risks.

· Crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter to fund innovative projects, democratizing access to capital and enabling creative ventures.

Significance:

· These initiatives demonstrate the power of shared resources and mutual support in achieving economic resilience and innovation.

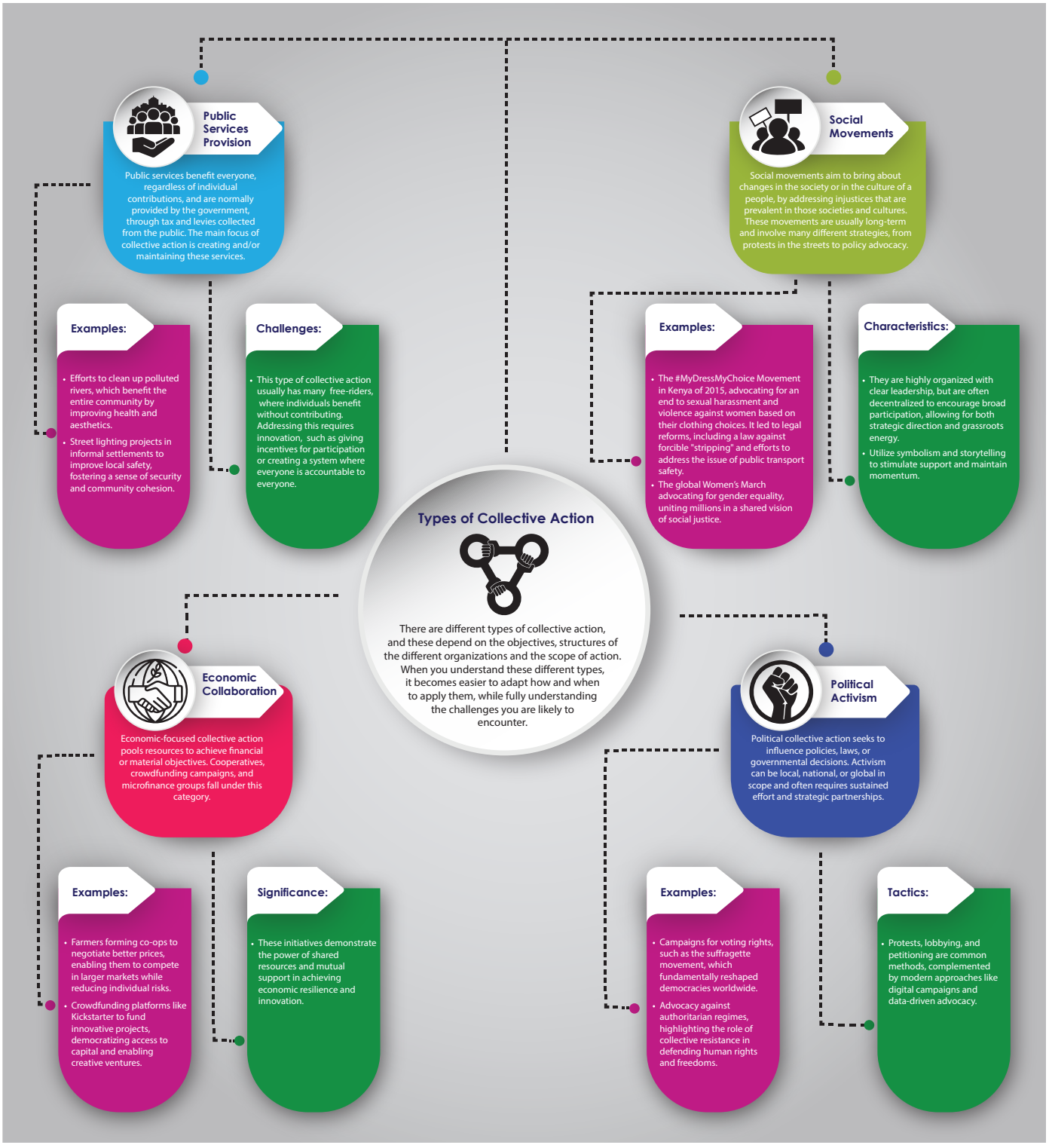
d. Political Activism

Political collective action seeks to influence policies, laws, or governmental decisions. Activism can be local, national, or global in scope and often requires sustained effort and strategic partnerships.
Examples:

- Campaigns for voting rights, such as the suffragette movement, which fundamentally reshaped democracies worldwide.
- Advocacy against authoritarian regimes, highlighting the role of collective resistance in defending human rights and freedoms.

Tactics:

- Protests, Influencing, and petitioning are common methods, complemented by modern approaches like digital campaigns and data-driven advocacy.



C. Why Is Collective Action Important?

1. Amplifying Impact
Individual actions often lack the scale to effect significant change. Collective action multiplies resources, voices, and influence, making large-scale impacts achievable. This amplification is particularly crucial in addressing systemic issues that require widespread engagement.

· Example: A single protester might go unnoticed, but a million-person march demands attention and action. The cumulative effect of mass participation cannot be ignored by policymakers or the public.

2. Building Social Cohesion
Participating in collective action fosters a sense of community and solidarity. Shared struggles and victories strengthen bonds among participants, creating networks that endure beyond the immediate cause. These networks often lead to ongoing collaboration and innovation.

3. Addressing Global Challenges
Problems like climate change, pandemics, and economic inequality transcend borders. Collective action provides the framework for global cooperation to address such issues. By pooling resources and expertise, communities can tackle challenges that would overwhelm individuals or isolated groups.

4. Driving Historical Change
Many transformative events in history, from the abolition of slavery to the establishment of universal suffrage, were propelled by collective action. These examples underscore its enduring relevance and highlight the power of united efforts in overcoming entrenched systems of oppression.

D. Challenges to Collective Action

Despite its potential, collective action faces significant obstacles. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for success.

i. Free Rider Problem
Definition: Individuals benefit from collective action without contributing, thereby undermining efforts.
Solution: Implement mechanisms like membership fees, exclusive benefits, or social incentives to encourage active participation.
ii. Coordination Difficulties
Issue: Aligning diverse participants with varying goals and resources can be challenging.
Solution: Strong leadership and clear communication strategies can bridge gaps and ensure uniting efforts.
iii. Resource Limitations
Issue: Mobilizing sufficient resources—financial, human, or logistical—is often difficult.
Solution: Strategic partnerships, efficient use of technology, and creative fundraising approaches can address resource gaps.
iv. External Opposition
Issue: Governments, corporations, or other entities may resist collective action to protect their interests.
Solution: Resilience, legal safeguards, and media advocacy and building alliances with influential supporters can mitigate opposition.

E. Examples of Successful Collective Action

The Civil Rights Movement

- Impact: Achieved monumental gains in racial equality, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Strategies: Peaceful protests, legal challenges, and strategic alliances ensured widespread support and visibility.

Global Climate Strikes

- Impact: Mobilized millions worldwide to demand urgent action on climate change.
- Leadership: Youth activists like Greta Thunberg inspired broad participation, showcasing the power of grassroots leadership in global movements.

Labor Union Movements

- Impact: Secured worker rights, including better wages and safer working conditions.
- Methods: Strikes, collective bargaining, and legislative advocacy remain central to their success.

Open Source Software Communities

- Impact: Created free, collaborative tools like Linux and Apache, revolutionizing the tech industry.
- Significance: Demonstrates the potential of decentralized, tech-enabled collaboration in achieving large-scale innovation.

Gen-Z Collective Action on Taxation and Economic Policy in Kenya

- Impact: Repeal of Finance Bill 2024.
- Significance: Demonstrates the potential of decentralized, tech and media -enabled collaboration and innovation in stimulating widespread support and visibility

Strategies for Effective Collective Action

To maximize impact, collective action must be well-organized and adaptive. Here are proven strategies:

Building Awareness and Solidarity

- Educate participants about the cause’s urgency and relevance.
- Awareness campaigns can draw attention to overlooked issues and rally support.
- Foster a shared identity to inspire commitment. Shared narratives and symbols can unify diverse groups under a common banner.

Effective Leadership and Coordination

- Appoint leaders who can inspire, organize, and sustain momentum..
- Leadership training programs can cultivate skilled organizers

Scenario building (scenario boxes)

A. What Is Advocacy?

i. Definition

Advocacy is an organised effort to influence social or policy change, with action directed towards both political decision-makers or society as a whole. Outcomes of advocacy, therefore, aim for change in policy and practice, change in public attitudes or behaviour, change in the political system/ processes or to empower disadvantaged groups. Advocacy can be realised through different activities and tools, which are influenced by the approach used. If the cause is less confrontational and the community actors or human rights defenders have access to decision/makers, approaches that seek for

policy change from inside may be used, through advising or Influencing efforts. In contrast, more confrontational policy questions, that aim at empowering and amplifying voices of more marginalized segments of society or that have an opposition stance, require advocacy actions, such as media campaigning or activism that produce outside external pressure through raising awareness or encouraging action among the broader public.

1 **Adapted from** [Advocacy Toolkit for Diaspora Organizations]

There are various types of advocacy to pursue depending on whether change can be made from inside or externally. These include the following;

a. Advising: Aims at changing policy from inside by producing (commissioned) research studies, policy papers or other evidence-based policy advice to inform decision-makers about a certain policy question or problem.
b. Influencing: Seeks to ensure being present and visible during government and public discussions with attempts to influence decisions made by the government, for example through face-to-face meetings with decision-makers or through speeches in Parliament.
c. Media Campaigning: Aims to raise awareness or encourage action among the general public on a particular policy problem or issue to increase public or external pressure on decision makers needed to achieve results. These can be realised for example through press statements or articles targeting mainstream media outlets (e.g. radio, television, or newspapers) or online campaigns, using new digital tools and social media sites that inspire change and amplify advocacy
efforts.
d. Activism: Plays a critical role in promoting participation and human rights and is often aimed at amplifying the voices of marginalized segments of society. Common approaches include petitions, public protests and demonstrations, posters, and leaflet dissemination. When the cause is more confrontational and the ability to influence through the inside track is blocked, activism provides
alternative avenues to promote a certain cause.

An outside approach is often more confrontational, using tools such as protests or strikes to challenge those in power, whereas an inside approach is more collaborative, engaging with decision-makers, hence seeking change from within. In conducting advocacy campaigns, most organisations do not use
only one approach to realise their efforts, but often combine different actions to leverage their influence for policy change. Using different approaches can be a strategic choice to achieve advocacy objectives.

ii. Key concepts when engaging in advocacy

Legitimacy and accountability are key concepts to consider before engaging in advocacy work.
Legitimacy: “Are we a legitimate actor/organisation to advocate for this issue? Do we have the legitimacy to talk on behalf of the communities we represent? How will our intentions be perceived by other actors?” It is crucial to reflect on these questions together with the team before engaging in advocacy. When it comes to representation, there are simple questions to ask i.e.” Have they asked us to advocate for them? Have they had a chance to provide inputs on our position as their advocates? Are they happy
with our advocacy strategy?” Legitimacy is also important when engaging with decision-makers/ policymakers who may ask, “Who are you, who do you represent and why should I listen to you?”

Accountability: When engaging with decision makers or other stakeholders on your cause, you must be ready to answer questions around your organisation’s overall governance and structure, your donors, and how you engage with the communities affected by your advocacy work. While you work towards holding decision-makers accountable for their actions, you must also make sure that you remain accountable to the people affected by your work.

Who advocates for whom? Advocacy can be categorised by who does it. Advocacy work can be done by those directly affected by the issue (by the people), by a mix of affected and non-affected groups (with the people) or by non-affected groups on behalf of affected groups (for the people).
The advocates affected directly by the issue are often the most legitimate actors to take action, while for mixed groups, it is vital to ensure that the actions are guided by a shared set of values

and understanding of the issue and the context. Advocating on behalf of others often requires more caution, as it may raise
questions around legitimacy.

2. Developing an Advocacy Strategy: Methods and Tools This section provides practical guidance for groups, organisations and individuals to develop and implement an advocacy strategy. There are 5 different stages outlined below.

2.1 Prioritize Issues

There are often too many issues that need addressing, hence the need to prioritise these issues based on resources, networks, interests and experience. Particularly for small organisations or organisations that are new in the advocacy field, it is a good idea to review existing strategies and narrow down the advocacy focus to one or two changes where one's organisation can make a larger impact with existing resources.

The number of issues that can be effectively tackled through advocacy will depend on resources. If you attempt to address every issue that is considered 'important', there is a risk of not making any progress or change. Therefore efforts need to focus where the impact will be most significant. There are tools you can use to help to identify and prioritize issues.

2.2 Analyze the landscape

Once you identify the priority issue(s) you want to address and you know what you want to change, the next step is to find out "How will that change happen?". The answer to this question depends on the context you operate in and the issue you want to tackle. It is therefore important to undertake a context analysis in order to understand fully, the environment in which the strategy is to be deployed.

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis is a common method used by organizations to develop a full understanding and awareness of all the factors involved before they decide on any new strategy. For example, an organisation can undertake SWOT analysis to determine if it has the capacity to address a specific issue within the next year, by evaluating the internal and external context.

A Force Field Analysis can also be used by advocacy actors to analyse the broader social, political and economic environment that impacts the issue and goal. The key assumption behind this tool is that any proposed change will have opponents and allies, and the key to achieving change is to shift the strength of force on each side in favour of the allies.

An Allies and Opponents Matrix is very important to understanding how change will happen, by knowing who will be involved in the change, who has the power to make decisions in relation to your issue, and who is in the best position to influence them. This involves mapping out your potential allies and opponents. Successful advocates are those who are able to build and maintain relationships that help them influence behaviours and policies in favour of their issue.

2.3 Establish the theory of change/goal/objectives

Behind every advocacy effort there is at least one theory of change. A theory of change is a set of beliefs about how change happens. To develop your theory of change, you need to ask four simple questions:

1. What is the overall change we want to make?
2. What must be done before for that change to happen?
3. What is your contribution?
4. What does progress look like?

When you answer these questions, you will develop the logic behind your advocacy. Theory of change links activities and results. They are often presented as “if, then” statements like (If environment and climate justice groups gain skills and understanding of advocacy techniques, then the public becomes more aware of environmental rights issues)

Goals, objectives and activities must all be linked to your theory of change in that they represent the changes you hope to achieve. It is important to articulate clear goals, objectives and activities with logical links to your theory of change in order to increase the chance of achieving positive results. Objectives and goals refer to different things and what level of change they refer to varies by organisation.

Goal: Your goal is what follows your “Then” statement in the theory of change and refers to the highest level of change you hope to achieve through an intervention. Your goal is linked to the impact you want to make.
Objectives: Your objectives describe the changes to happen for you to reach your goal, and are linked to the outcome of your advocacy work. For example, if your objective is to strengthen environmental justice actors to advocate for policy change regarding fossil fuels, an outcome would be a green energy policy prioritizing renewable energy .
Activities: Activities are what follows your “if” statement in your theory of change. Activities are the concrete methods you will use to achieve your objectives. They could be protests, social media campaigns or podcasts and will result in tangible outputs.

2.4 Define target audience

The main target audience will often be decision makers and the individuals, organisations and institutions who can influence them. Decision-makers are often the primary audience, and they could include the country’s President, ministers, parliamentarians, governors, religious leaders (depending on their roles in different contexts), donor organisations, UN agencies, other multilateral organisations and community leaders. Influencers are often considered as a secondary audience, and they may include other environmental justice organisations, civil society organisations, opinion leaders, the media, international leaders, celebrities and social media influencers.
It is important to note that your target audience is different to your stakeholders. While stakeholders are people and organisations that are related to your issue in some way, target audiences are those who are in a position or have the power to bring about change.
The identification of targets should be guided by the question “Who has the power to make change happen?”.

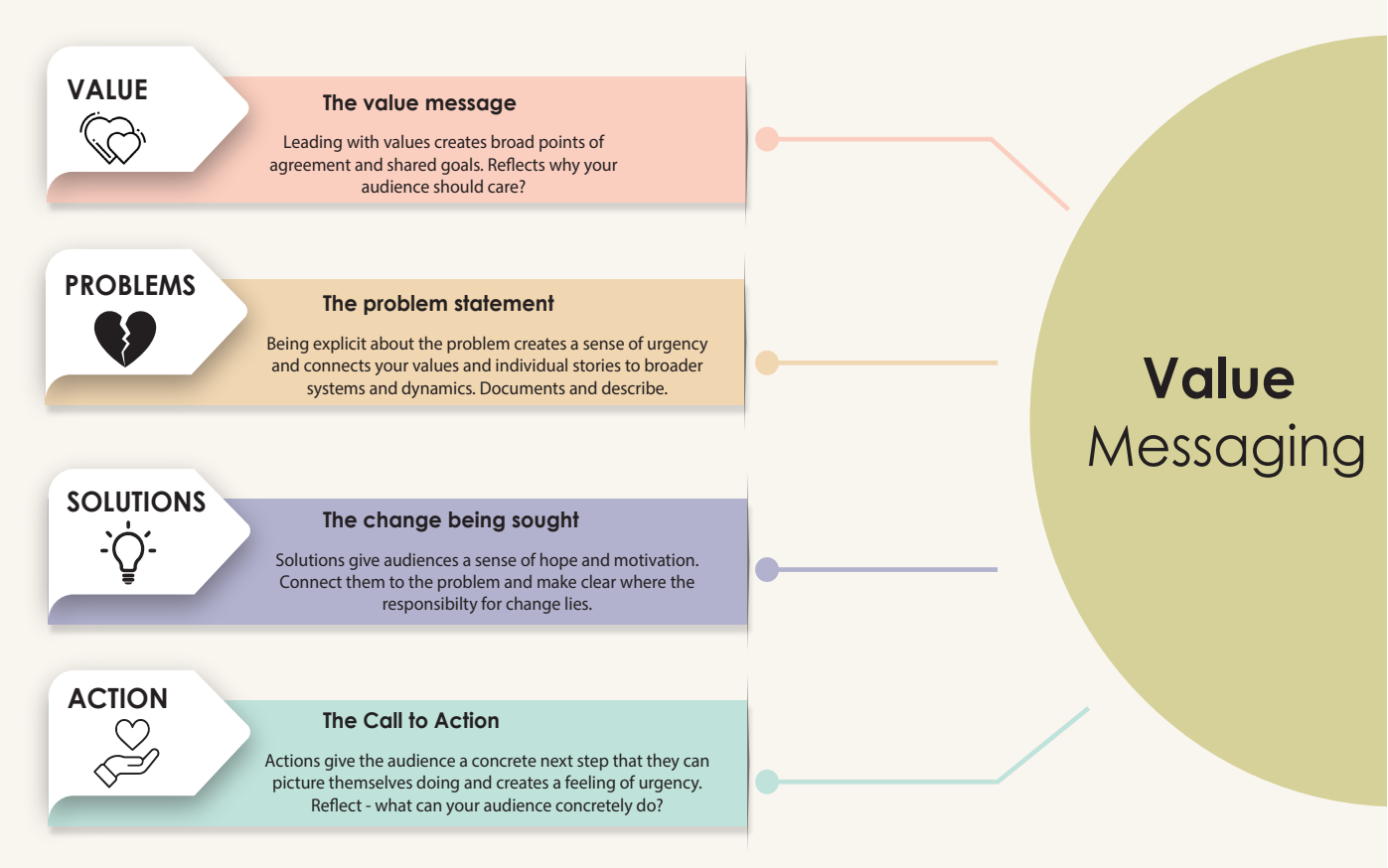
2.5 Develop core message

Once you have identified the people or organisations/institutions that you need to influence to bring about change, you then need to work on a core message that will convince your audience. A core message should present a strong argument for change.
It must answer the following questions, in an accessible and concise manner:

1. What do you want to achieve?
2. When do you want to achieve it?
3. Why is the change important? (support with evidence, statistics and information)
4. How will the change happen?

Remember advocacy messages are not just about disseminating information to your audience, they are also about persuading and influencing them. Infographics are useful to show evidence, but you need strong messaging to get to your audience and persuade them.
If you have a diverse audience, you need to remember to tailor your message depending on chosen target audiences. People in decision-making roles rarely have time to read lengthy emails coming from unknown addresses - you need to think about creative ways of making your message relevant,

persuasive and memorable.
Your core message should ideally include a statement of problem and the desired action, evidence based on statistics and data and an example of the affected groups.



2.6 Select right approach

There are many different methods which can be used, ranging from direct Influencing to public demonstrations, use of media, to organising awareness raising events. Some key recommendations are listed below:

1. Check your internal capacities: make an internal assessment of your organisational capacity, for example with a Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis
2. Be cautious about the potential risks associated with each approach - if you operate in an authoritarian context, you may not want to take the risk of calling people out to the streets. At the same time, in countries where civil society has a limited space, you may consider more high-level Influencing rather than public campaigning. Because if there is limited space for civic engagement, public campaigning may not be effective.
3. Check your power analysis: do you know individuals that are in a position of power or influence?
4. If you use a combination of different methods, make sure they complement each other. For instance, if you will organise a policy seminar and run a public campaign, make sure that the campaign begins before the seminar so that the seminar builds on that momentum of the campaign.

A. Using the Inside Track

Influencing or advising by directly targeting lawmakers and other government officials with the goal of changing laws and government policy can be a central tool for advocacy, especially when the cause is based more on cooperation, rather than confrontation.

3.1 Face to Face

In pursuing Influencing efforts, organising face-to-face meetings with decision-makers can be a highly effective way to influence policy change.

i. Preparing for the meeting

a. Choosing the main message you want to deliver - Most of the time we are driven by many needs and demands, and we want to use the opportunity to articulate as much as possible to show the importance and complexity of our cause. There is the risk that your message gets lost in the details and you may end up with little success. Choosing the message you want to deliver, knowing the particular issue in depth, but also being familiar with opposing views and having arguments in response to them is crucial to achieve policy change.

b. Knowing the decision-maker: Do some research to better understand the decision-maker´s current stance on the issue, statements, and party positions, as well as the different institutions' programs and policy related to the issue. This can help you to align your message(s) accordingly and to frame your (counter-) arguments.

2 Adapted from Advocacy Toolkit for Diaspora Organizations

c. Preparing one-pagers or a leave-behind product: You should have prepared in advance, documents that present your policy position, including key facts and stories that support your message, as well as your contact information, because these will ensure that your main points can be used and followed-up after the meeting.

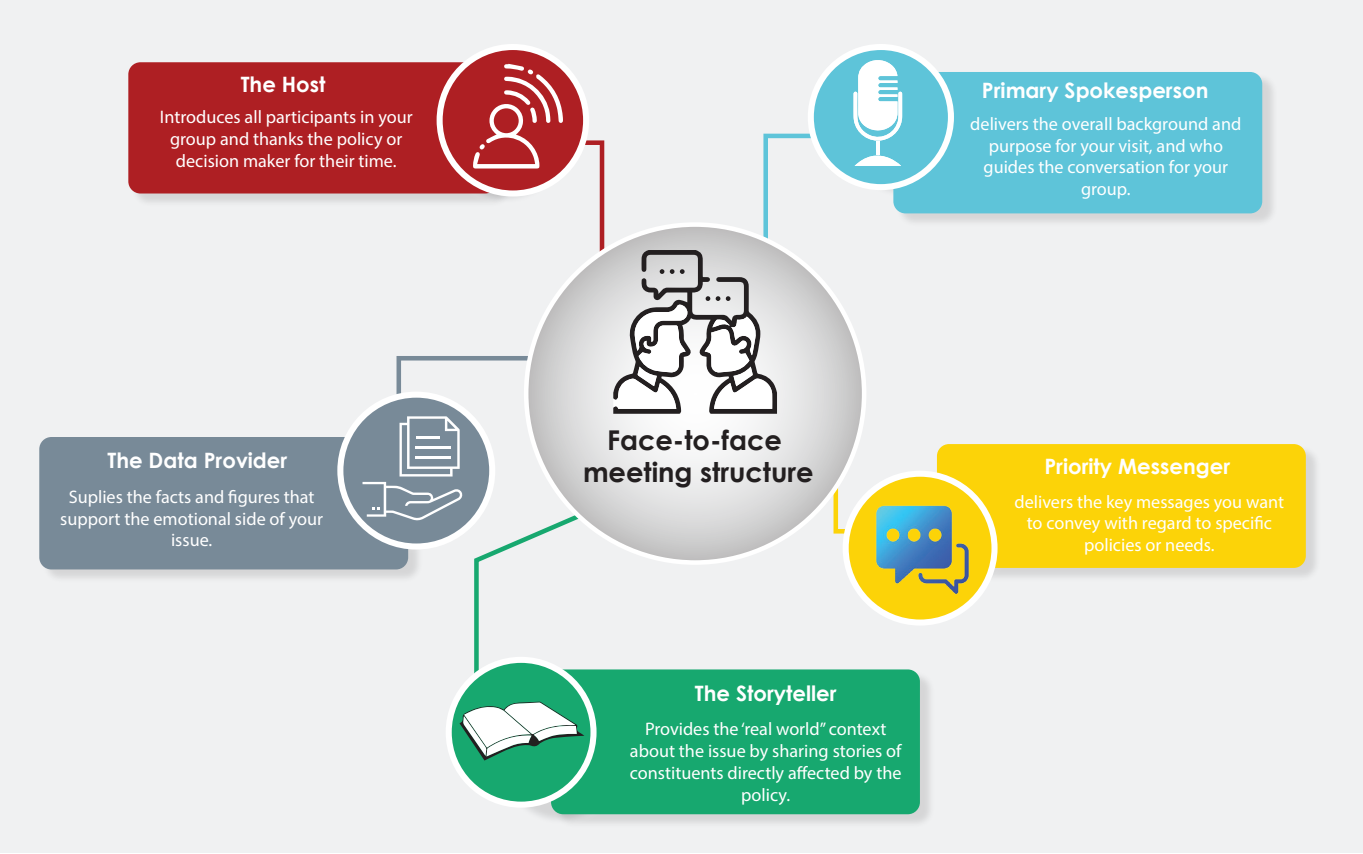
A one-pager is a document that summarises the main message, your solutions to the problem and the action you hope to see, and should follow a concrete structure and format:

- A strong title that clearly states what your ask is and that clearly shows the main benefit of your demands.
- A summary of your cause in three main points (in bullet form or in subheads) that describe the problem, the impact, and the ask. You can flesh out each of the points with 3-4 sentences, where you put facts, figures, and statistics to bolster arguments.
- A paragraph that highlights your solution(s) and offers a concrete plan of what should happen next.
- A conclusion with a call-to-action that clearly states which concrete actions you would like to see.

5. Your contact information A 'leave-behind' is a printed communication material that provides key messages. It follows a similar logic as the one pager, as it illustrates the problem, solution, and a call for action, yet uses visuals and infographics to support messaging.

ii. During the meeting

a. Structuring the discussion with pre-assigned roles: To make sure that your message is delivered clearly and to show that you are prepared and well-organised, it is advisable to pre-assign roles and try to adhere to a structure to perform a powerful presentation.



- The host introduces the participants, provides a brief summary of organisations present and thanks the decision-maker for the meeting. You can also highlight some favourable positions the decision-maker has already taken in relation to your cause, to create a friendly and open climate. The host may also take notes of the meeting for internal record-keeping.
- The spokesperson then delivers the overall background and purpose of the meeting and will facilitate the discussion.
- The priority messenger opens the discussion by framing the key message(s) to convey, also taking a position and identifying any relevant legislation or policy.
- The storyteller supports the message by showing how the policy affects people's real lives. The story should connect your priorities, the policymaker's priorities and the priorities of the affected people.
- The data provider outlines memorable statistics to emphasise your points and is prepared to offer additional information, facts and data if required.
- The spokesperson then makes a specific request for legislative or policy action. If the decision- maker seems supportive, they ask for a specific commitment.
- The host concludes by thanking the decision-maker for hearing your concerns. You can also hand out the prepared documents (one pager, leave behind) and highlight that you are open for follow- ups.

iii. After the meeting

a. Debrief immediately. Debriefing right after the meeting when memories are still fresh will help you to avoid forgetting valuable aspects of the meeting. Reflecting what went well and what needs to be improved in the future will help you to identify learnings for successful advocacy techniques for the future.

b. Follow-up with a thank-you note: You can highlight an expression of appreciation, restate, and reinforce your message and any verbal commitments made by the decision-makers and include additional information if promised in the meeting.

c. Tracking response and action: You should stay connected and track if decision-makers took any action in response to your requests. If they took favourable action, you could thank them and spread the success through your communication channels. In case of inaction, you may want to request an explanation or discuss if you want to put outside pressure to ensure accountability.

3.2 Writing Letters

While face-to-face meetings are valuable in creating more personal relations with decision-makers, which in turn may help to deliver your message and secure support more easily, it also requires access to those in power. Writing letters to decision-makers presents another easy and cost-effective way to express your opinion(s) and get your message(s) across. You can distinguish between two types of letters:

i. Influencing letters are addressed directly and only to the relevant decision-makers (primary targets), and aim to mobilise support for your cause from within the government or institutions.

ii. Open letters are shared with a wider public audience to garner public support for a cause and are usually published in some forum, e.g., on your web presence, a newspaper, or an email list.

Who is your target audience?

Before writing the letter, the first step is to identify your primary target. Knowing the target is not only crucial for personalising your letter, but also helps to select the best way, topics and messages to influence decision-makers. Asking yourself the following questions can help you in the decision who to target:

1. Who has the power to make the change you are seeking?
2. Do you have somebody in your team who had previous contact or relations to the decision-makers?
3. What is their current position on the issue? And how does it align or conflict with your cause?

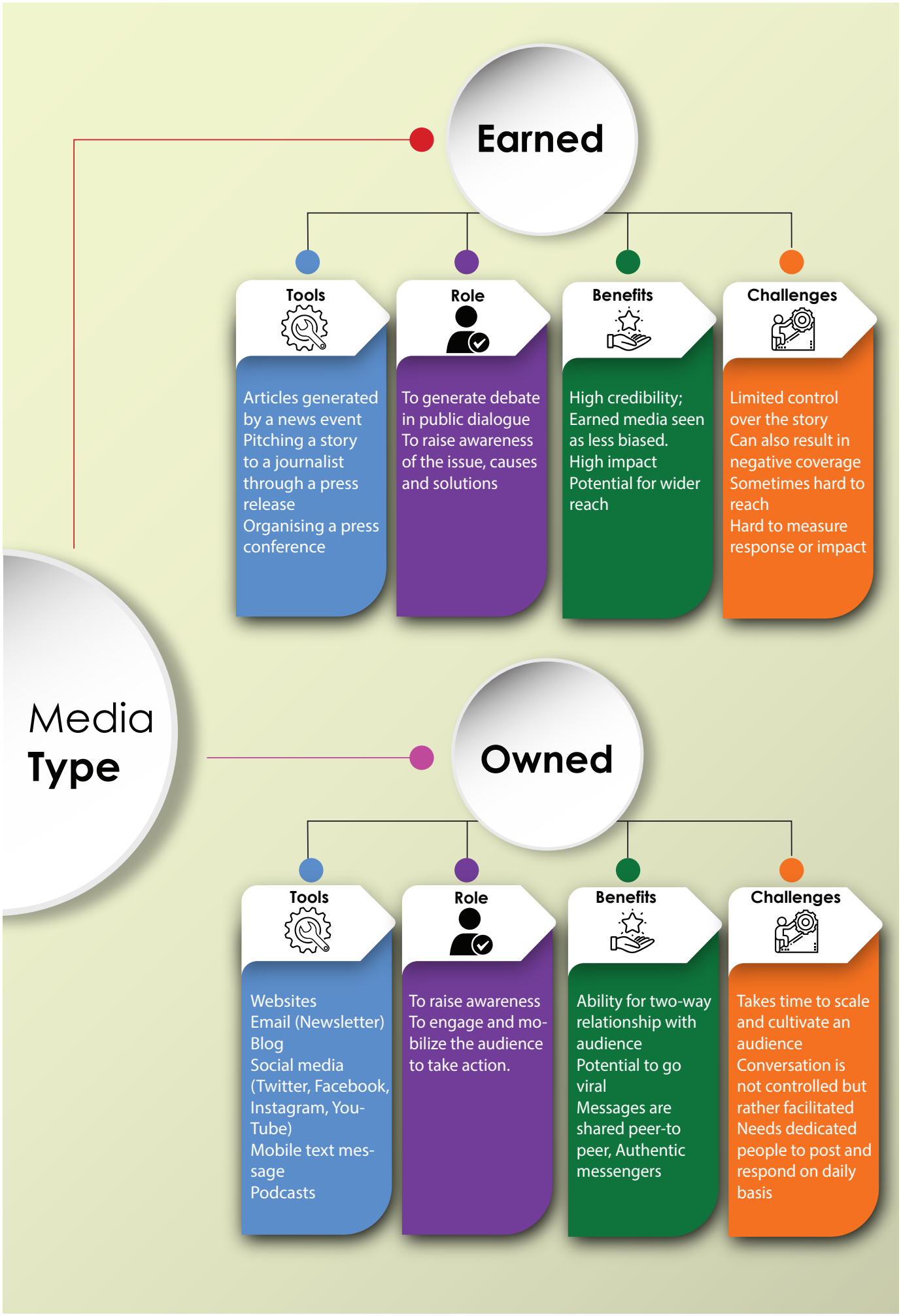
4. Are the decision-makers open to support your cause and create pressure from within the government? Are they open to external pressure and if so, from whom?
5. What are the best ways to influence them?

Sometimes it can be a wise decision to write to a secondary rather than primary target, especially when those in power might be difficult to reach and/or you have a close relationship with a person that is able to influence them.
To get your message and position across, you need to ensure that your letter follows a coherent structure. Keeping your letter short – one page – will have more impact than a longer one. Next to the formal requirements, including the official's name, title, address, your contact information and the date of the letter. A letter usually maintains the following components:

i. Introduction paragraph: says why you are writing the letter, e.g., in response to a public statement, with reference to a specific development/event, with regards to an upcoming meeting, or to follow up a previous request. You need to make clear for whom you are speaking and what has prompted you to do so.
ii. Main body: develops your argument, backing it up with concrete and credible information, facts, figures, specific cases, quotes, relevant legislation.
iii. Concluding paragraph: states what concrete action you would like the official to take, for example: granting a meeting, stating their position, asking questions in parliament, contacting a particular minister or government leader on your behalf, inviting you to address the issue in a hearing.

B. Using Media for Advocacy
Making use of media is an essential part of advocacy campaigns, as strategic use can help to raise awareness of your issue, mobilise support and solidarity for your cause, and influence policy makers for the desired social change. In your advocacy you can make use of different types of media:

a. Earned media refers to coverage received through word of mouth or as a result of reaching out to the media and is often considered the most 'credible' form of media advocacy. It often requires efforts such as press conferences, press releases, or invitation of journalists to your events to raise awareness about your cause and work. Earned media can take the form of newspaper articles on activities, TV and radio coverage or social media posts from traditional media and key opinion leaders.
b. Owned media refers to the content that you create or distribute through channels that you control. In addition to your website, emails and blog posts, this also includes communication via social media channels (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).


Media Type
Earned
Tools
Articles generated by a news event
Pitching a story to a journalist through a press release
Organising a press conference
Role
To generate debate in public dialogue
To raise awareness of the issue, causes and solutions
Benefits
High credibility; Earned media seen as less biased.
High impact
Potential for wider reach
Challenges
Limited control over the story
Can also result in negative coverage
Sometimes hard to reach
Hard to measure response or impact
Owned
Tools
Websites
Email (Newsletter)
Blog
Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
Mobile text message
Podcasts
Role
To raise awareness
To engage and mobilize the audience to take action.
Benefits
Ability for two-way relationship with audience
Potential to go viral
Messages are shared peer-to peer, Authentic messengers
Challenges
Takes time to scale and cultivate an audience
Conversation is not controlled but rather facilitated
Needs dedicated people to post and respond on daily basis

i. Writing a One-Pager

ii. Press releases and press conferences

Press releases and press conferences are important tools for earned media coverage. Releasing a press statement or organising a press conference can help to bring widespread public attention to a campaign. In a press conference, you can invite media representatives as well as other prominent people to speak about your issue, work or campaign. Press releases aim at influencing media coverage for your cause, by framing the issue for the media in a self-determined way, where you decide which
points and messages should be stressed.
A press-release is different from a general statement, that you may publish in response to a certain event or development. A well-written press release follows a defined structure and uses elements that will make it most useful for journalists

Strategic timing is crucial. Identifying opportunities for earned media in your campaign and leveraging key moments or developments can help to gain media attention.
Identifying what is newsworthy. Approaching media too frequently risks an over saturation of the media and may make your cause seen less seriously. You need to be sure that the content is interesting enough to the public and your target audience. Press releases or press conferences can be organised to announce the release of a major report or start of a new project, to comment
on a major development, or for the announcement of the completion of a major activity.
Developing a Media Contact Registry. To effectively engage with the media, it is important to have an up-to-date list of media contacts who can be approached to disseminate your message. You can conduct a mapping of media outlets relevant in your context and issue and use media monitoring to identify which news outlets and journalists are covering our issue. The media contact registry should include the following information:

- Name of the journalist
- Title
- Organisation
- Stance or 'angle' taken on our issue
- Preferred time to contact/send stories
- Contact details
- Digital handles
- Who is your contact to reach them

iii. Social Media & Digital Advocacy

Social media can offer a space to create, produce, articulate and disseminate self-owned narratives to counter dominant representations, and can be considered as powerful tools for advocacy. Digital advocacy aims at engaging with audiences and targets through electronic or internet-based communications channels, mostly through owned media channels, such as social media sites. Social media tactics range from creating content that raises awareness of a cause, mobilising others to take tangible actions towards social change, to directly engaging decision-makers or key opinion leaders. Social media can help us in fundraising efforts, to plan, promote and document events, call others to join activities, spread stories and raise awareness of a cause.

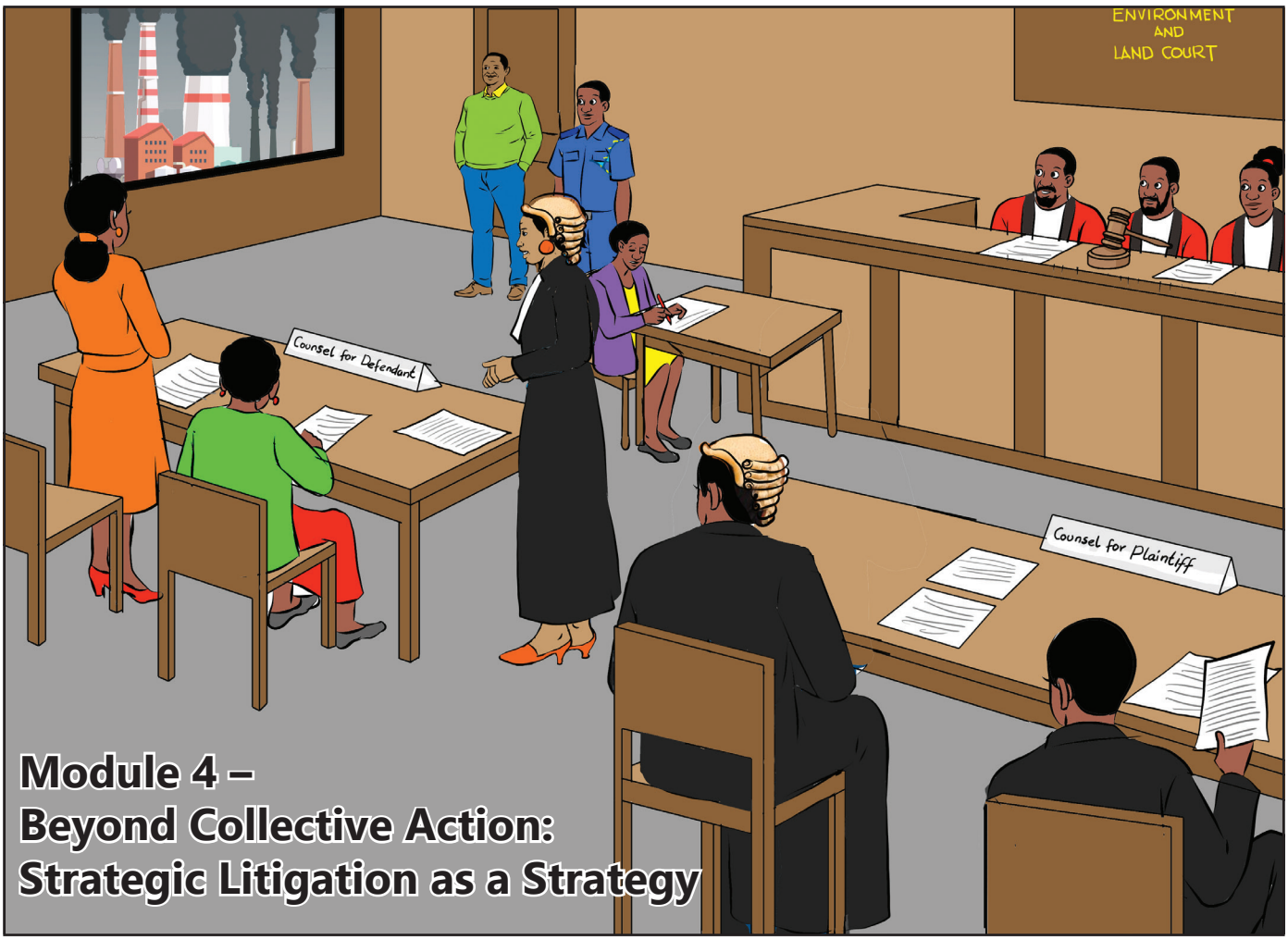
a. The power of images: Using visuals or images to convey a message is a central aspect of advocacy and even more so on social media, with limited space for text and low readers' attention to details. A concrete language, images and visuals can help to make often-complex causes more understandable, highlight the human experience, and enable people to make their own conclusion, rather than telling them what is right or what is wrong.
b. Taking a cause from the screen to the street: You might be inclined to think of yourself as a great agent of change due to the followers and clicks you have generated and mobilised for an online cause. Yet, getting people following (or contesting) online, is much easier than actually mobilising others for your activities on the ground. Sharing a message and raising awareness

online is a critical part of advocacy, but it needs to translate into concrete action on the ground to drive real change.

iv. Podcasts

Storytelling is an essential aspect of advocacy work - a powerful story helps to build solidarity, to develop a shared understanding of a social problem and can mobilise others to participate in a cause. Nowadays, audio mediums such as radio and podcasts can help us to reach a large number of people

and are an effective way of conveying powerful messages. In advocacy work you want to educate, raise awareness and empower others, and podcasting provides a powerful platform to spread campaigns, to offer news/ updates, and to deliver educational content. Especially, when a cause is confrontational, podcasts can offer an alternative space to raise a variety of voices that may not have been heard otherwise. Producing a podcast needs time, money, and a significant amount of labour. Creating a concept and content for a podcast series and identifying and reaching out to potential guest speakers needs a lot of time and effort. You need to keep in mind that podcast episodes must be delivered on a regular schedule, which requires continuous commitment. Time is also needed for advertising the podcast via social media and other communication channels. And finally, to produce a high-quality podcast, you will need technical equipment such as microphones, audio editing software, and podcast hosting services.



Module 4 – Beyond Collective Action: Strategic Litigation as a Strategy

A. Strategic Litigation

i. Definition

Litigation means taking cases to court. Strategic litigation is a method that can bring about significant changes in the law, practice or public awareness via taking carefully-selected cases to court. The clients involved in strategic litigation have been victims of [wrongs] that are suffered by many other people. In this way, strategic litigation focuses on an individual case in order to bring about social change[3].

A common characteristic of strategic litigation is that cases are brought by individuals to test a legal provision in the Constitution that also applies to cases other than just their own. Hence, strategic litigation is sometimes referred to as “impact” or “test case” litigation.

The aims of strategic litigation involve more than simply winning legal arguments in court: test case strategies might seek to create awareness and publicise the cause for which the strategy is mobilised, encourage public debate, set important precedents, achieve change for people in similar situations, and spark policy changes.

Individuals and groups might consider using strategic litigation where they want to:

- Enforce the law
- Clarify the meaning of the law
- Challenge the law and create new policies
- Create new law

3 (Mental Disability Advocacy Centre: http://mdac.info/en/what-we-do/strategic_litigation)

ii. Overlap between Strategic Litigation and Public Interest

Strategic litigation by community and pressure groups has also become synonymous with the public interest law movement which originated in the United States and sought to use the law to achieve social reform and benefit disadvantaged social groups through access to justice. The public interest law movement has become a worldwide phenomenon, with the higher judiciary in countries such as India taking a lead role in developing what has been referred to as a 'poverty-oriented' jurisprudence[4].

iii. The key steps to strategic/public interest litigation[5]

a. Step 1: Research and Planning

Preparations for public-interest litigation typically begin with preliminary research into the legal and factual basis of the lawsuit to be brought. Research into relevant national and international legal frameworks and similar cases (including resolutions reached and remedies ordered) is usually undertaken in parallel with research into key facts, witnesses and petitioners relating to the case.
Careful consideration of the social and political context surrounding the issue is also essential when preparing public-interest litigation. This serves as a useful precursor to stakeholder mapping. Human rights monitoring – to assess the impacts of the injustice in question on those directly affected and identify the perpetrators of violations – may also be appropriate at this stage.

b. Step 2: Building Alliances

Tapping into the collective energy, skills and resources of multiple partners (individuals and organisations) is often essential when embarking on the long road of a successful public-interest litigation process. Harnessing new and existing networks, partnerships and coalitions creates opportunities to maximise resources, avoid duplication of efforts, and leverage the social capital (relationships, reciprocity, reputations), credibility and legitimacy of multiple organisations and individual actors. If well coordinated and closely managed, a networked approach to public-interest litigation also helps to ensure consistency in campaign messages and complimentary advocacy efforts.

c. Step 3: Community Engagement

Moving beyond interactions with individual witnesses or petitioners to direct engagement with wider communities provides opportunities to raise awareness of citizens' rights and the corresponding obligations of the state. Such interactions can also help to verify testimonies, identify additional witnesses, gather key information on the wider circumstances surrounding the case, and develop communications and media strategies in collaboration with affected communities.

d. Step 4: Risk Benefit Analysis

Given that undertaking public-interest litigation invariably entails a variety of risks, it is important to conduct a careful risk assessment to analyse the potential risks and plan mitigation strategies. Adopting a networked and collaborative approach to the initiative can help to manage any associated risk by sharing responsibility and diffusing impacts across a wider coalition of actors.

e. Step 5: Litigation

Once the litigation stage is reached, it is important to manage the flow of information about the case and to generate as much positive publicity as possible. It is crucial that all internal and external communications to be overseen and coordinated by a central person or organisation, to ensure the consistency of messages and accuracy of information shared. During the litigation stage, all those involved – litigants, communities and, in some cases, witnesses – will need not only information but also various types of support. Such support might include psychosocial services, counselling and financial and logistical assistance.
The specialists required to provide these forms of support might be brought in during the alliance-building described in step two.

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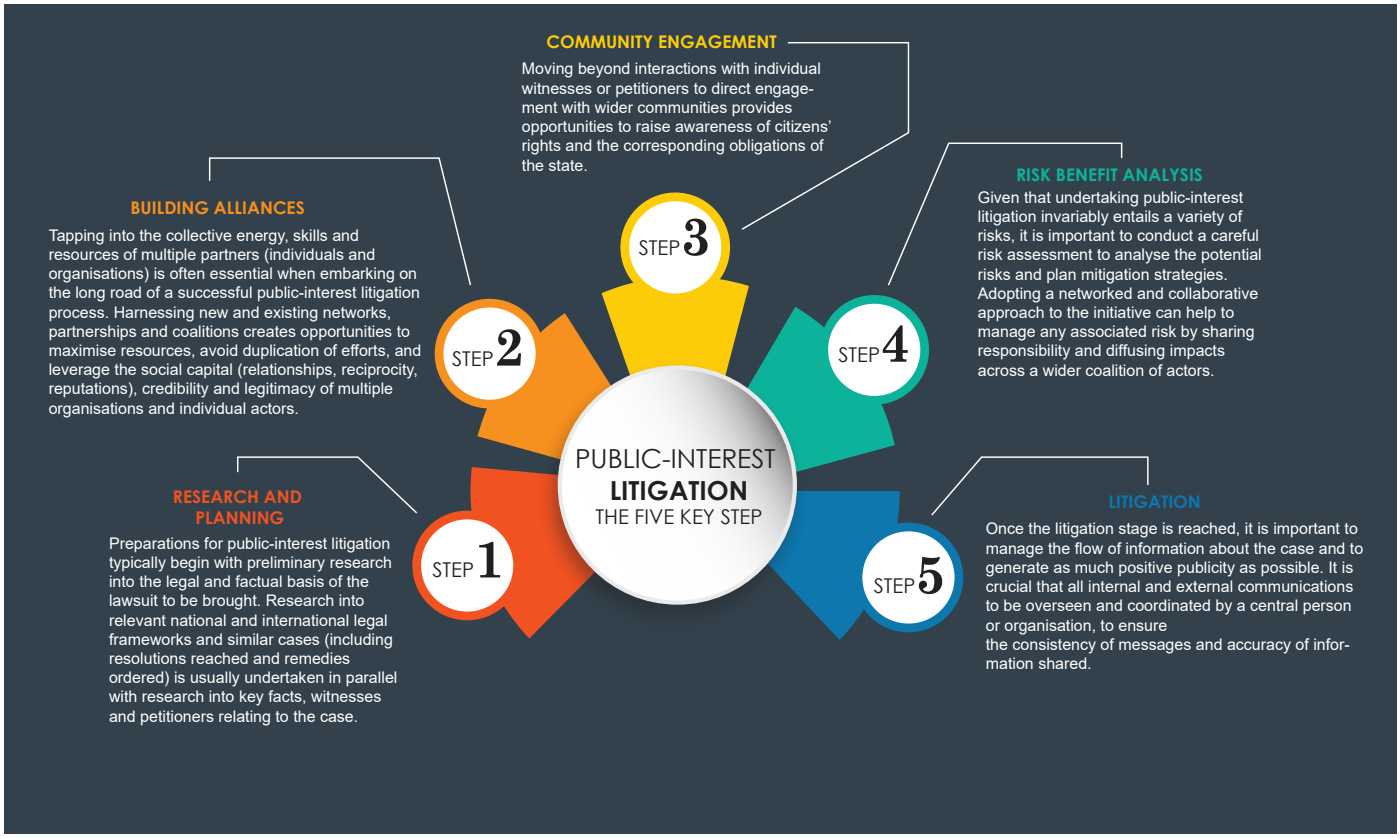
4 The Guide to Strategic Litigation

5 Combatting Land Corruption in Africa:Good Practice Examples



In a case of successful public-interest litigation, the court may order a variety of remedies, such as:

- finding that a certain fact is true
- ordering the government or another actor to do something specific
- ordering the government to take action to address an issue and report back to the court and the litigants about how it is taking action
- changes to an existing law
- penalties for perpetrators the establishment of mechanisms or procedures to ensure effective enforcement of a certain law
- the establishment of a dedicated complaint and follow-up mechanism for the violations.

As with any legal action, the judgement in a public-interest litigation case may not be favourable to the parties. If the parties believe the initial case was not fairly heard, or that the court failed to consider important requests, an appeal may be made to a higher court. Appeals help to ensure a case is fairly heard and enable access to a higher – often more prominent – court, which helps raise the profile of the case still further. It is important for all parties to analyse the merits of the initial judgment before deciding to appeal to a higher court, to ascertain whether the appeal is necessary and likely to succeed. Petitioners, communities and advocates should be prepared for potentially losing the case, and have developed a strategy to deal with an adverse result. In instances where public-interest litigation does not achieve the desired results,other strategies can still be employed to advance the cause.