

**A Training Module**  
**on**  
**Media Advocacy**

**PREPARED BY**  
**MEDIA ADVOCACY GROUP**

# MEDIA ADVOCACY

THE STRATEGIC USE OF MASS MEDIA AS A RESOURCE FOR ADVANCING A SOCIAL OR PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVE. MEDIA ADVOCACY USES MEDIA TO MOBILIZE COMMUNITY OPINION AND INTEREST IN POLICIES.

- \* ACTIVISTS USE THE MEDIA LIKE SEARCHLIGHTS - POINTING A BEAM IN THE DIRECTION OF WHAT THEY WANT TO CHANGE.
- \* MASS MEDIA CONSTITUTES AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE SELECTION, PRESENTATION, DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC ISSUES OCCUR.
- \* MEDIA ADVOCACY SEEKS TO INFLUENCE THE SELECTION OF TOPICS BY THE MASS MEDIA AND SHAPE THE DEBATE ABOUT THESE TOPICS.
- \* THE GOAL IS NOT TO SEEK OUT MEDIA COVERAGE, RATHER THE ISSUE IS PLACED ON THE PUBLIC AGENDA BY USING THE MEDIA.
- \* MEDIA ADVOCACY CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL AND POLICY INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELL BEING AND ARE BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

## KEY ELEMENTS OF MEDIA ADVOCACY

Include three concrete, fundamental steps:

- , SETTING THE AGENDA (FRAMING FOR ACCESS)
- , SHAPING THE DEBATE (FRAMING FOR CONTENT) AND
- , ADVANCING THE POLICY

### , SETTING THE AGENDA

Framing for access

*Shaping the story to get the attention of journalists to gain access to the media.*

- ◀ Why is it important? *If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes, you don't exist* Daniel Schorr, US journalist.
- ◀ The public agenda setting process is linked to the level of media coverage it receives. Media are a vehicle for gaining access to specific opinion leaders. (Community leaders, politicians, corporate executives)
- ◀ To gain media access media advocates must interpret the issues in terms of newsworthiness. Advocates should understand how news is constructed and what the objectives are.
- ◀ News must be sensation, conflict, mystery, celebrity, deviance, tragedy and proximity and have a breaking quality. Must fit the attention getting cycle - link to anniversary or day.

### , SHAPING THE DEBATE

Framing for Content.

*Telling the story the way you want it told.*

- ◀ An essential task of the advocate is to frame social and health issues in a social and political context to highlight public policy approaches rather than personal

behavior solutions.

- ◀ Problem definition is a battle to determine which group and which perspective will gain primary ownership to the problem.
- ◀ It is important that the issue or problem is not trivialized but seen as part of a larger context.

, **Advancing policy**

- ◀ The key goal of media advocacy is to advance a policy or approach to address the problem. Getting the media's attention is often the easiest part. The difficult part is when you have to frame your issue and solution in the media for the people you want to reach.

**THE CRITICAL WORK IN MEDIA ADVOCACY IS DONE IN THE PLANNING STAGES:**

- , **How will you advance your approach?**
- , **What symbols will you use?**
- , **What issues will you link it with?**
- , **What voices will you provide?**
- , **What messages will you communicate?**

Strategies must be developed to frame for access and for content which force us to think in terms of the media and its needs.

Gaining access to the media and framing the issue to tell your story. - Involves planning, flexibility and the ability to assess continually the connection between media needs and policy goals.

**Media advocates must be proactive, prepared, coordinated, watchful and willing to take risks.**

## DOING MEDIA ADVOCACY

The long term goal is to ultimately change policy. Short term goals may focus on getting on the media agenda, building public awareness, alerting opinion leaders to the importance of an issue, discrediting the opposition, stimulating community concern or mobilizing community resources.

THE PRACTICAL STEPS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

### — Structure and plan your media initiative

- 9 What are your media goals and objectives - what do you want media advocacy to accomplish?
- 9 Who is the target audience? - What are their concerns, interests, issues they support?
- 9 What is your message? - Do you have any way to test messages to ensure they are appropriate? Will the message be appropriate for different parts of the country?
  - 9 Difficult challenge of media advocacy is to reframe the dominant view of health and social problems from individual matters to public issues.
  - K Translate individual problem to social issue
  - K Shift responsibility away from blaming the individual
  - K Present solution
  - K Develop story elements
  - K Create compelling pictures and images
  - K Do the social math
  - K Identify authentic voices
  - K Identify compelling symbols- visuals
  - K Prepare the media bite
  - K Tailor to your audience

### — Learn how the media operates

- 9 Know and understand the outlets and gatekeepers that you are trying to influence and to be able to speak to them in the language of their interests. (It is not the job of the journalist to tell your story, rather the media advocate must work to engage and interest the journalist.)

- 9 Study the media and get familiar with it. Each media outlet contains within it several possibilities for coverage. Knowing your issue and knowing your media are fundamental to taking full advantage of available resources.
- 9 Examine media access points - Each medium has within it numerous access points for you message.

<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>ACCESS POINTS</u>
TELEVISION	NEW PROGRAMMES, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SHOWS, ISSUE SPECIFIC SHOWS, PUBLIC SERVICE
NEWSPAPERS	FRONT PAGE, ECONOMIC PAGE, GENDER SECTION, HEALTH PAGE, EDITORIAL PAGE, LETTERS-TO-THE-EDITOR, POLITICAL CARTOONS
RADIO	NEWS, TALK SHOWS, SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS, PAID ADS
BILLBOARDS	PAID PLACEMENTS

- 9 Monitor media - Assess position of outlet on social issues, discover the communities concern for issues, identify a sympathetic or interested journalist, look for opportunities to respond to editorials.
- 9 Keep media lists current - names, addresses, phone, fax, areas of interest.

## — Determine your strategy(ies) for doing media advocacy

There are three main avenues for getting your message across:

- 9
- 9 **Pay for it** - Surest route to get your message where you want it. Can be used for a strategic message. Highly visible. Expensive.
- 9 **Ask for it** - Public service. Little control of placement.
- 9 **Earn it** - Most media advocates utilize this approach. Getting message on the news is the core of media advocacy. Media advocates, ideally, emphasize working proactively by seeking opportunities to frame the story and force opponents to respond to points or defend their positions.

## — Cultivate journalists

- 9 Journalists' primary interest is in getting a story and getting it right. Objective coverage and balanced stories are important.
- 9 Cultivate relationships with the media - make yourself a resource. Provide accurate data, examples of local activities, summary of key issues and names of potential sources. Develop useful media kits-press release, fact sheets, organization's brochure.
- 9 Pitch the story or structure stories so they meet the criteria of what constitutes news is critical to keeping your message alive and fresh with the media. Your issue can capture journalists interested if put in an appealing contexts. These include:

**Anniversary peg** Can this story be associated with a local, national or topical historic event?

**Breakthrough** What is new or different about this story?

**Celebrity** Is there a celebrity already involved with or willing to lend his or her name to the issue?

**Controversy** Are there adversaries or other tensions in this story?

**Injustice** Are there basic inequities or unfair circumstances?

**Irony** What is ironic, unusual or inconsistent about this story?

**Local peg** Why is this story important or meaningful to local residents?

**Milestones** Is this story an important historical marker?

**Personal Angle** Who is the face of the victim in this story? Who has the authentic voice on this issue?

**Seasonal Peg** Can this story be attached to a holiday or seasonal event?

- 9 The more newsworthy elements your story contains and the broader the audience it can interest, the more likely it will show up in the news.

— Prepare for media interactions.

- 9 Be prepared - have data, resources, spokespeople available
- 9 Stay focussed on your issue and message
- 9 Be honest
- 9 Educate the press
- 9 Know your limits
- 9 Be on guard - everything is on the record.

— Evaluate how you have done

- 9 Review news stories that contain your messages
- 9 De-brief with colleagues on how the coverage worked?
- 9 Did your message get across in the news piece?
- 9 Did your message get lost or misinterpreted?
- 9 Were your data and/or resources used?
- 9 Was the placement appropriate for the audience you want to reach?
- 9 Is there any follow-up steps to take?

— Discuss media strategies with sympathetic NGO's on a regular basis

— Discuss new angles, studies, data, approaches

— Plan future activities

— Assess message



# PLANNING YOUR MEDIA ADVOCACY INITIATIVE

## STRUCTURING YOUR MEDIA ADVOCACY PROJECT

1. LIST THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT.
2. IDENTIFY TARGET GROUP(S)
3. LIST CONCERNS, OPINIONS, INTERESTS ETC. OF TARGET (IF UNCERTAIN, IDENTIFY HOW THIS INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED)
4. WHAT IS YOUR SINGLE MESSAGE?
5. IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE?
6. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION YOUR MESSAGE OFFERS?
7. WHICH VOICES WILL YOU SELECT TO TELL THE STORY?
8. WHAT SYMBOLS CAN YOU USE TO VISUALLY CONVEY THE MESSAGE?
9. ARE THERE COMPELLING DATA OR NUMBERS THAT YOU CAN USE CREATIVELY? GIVE EXAMPLES?

## LEARN HOW YOUR MEDIA OPERATES.

1. WHAT MEDIA FIT YOUR TARGET GROUP AND MESSAGE?
2. WITHIN THOSE MEDIA, WHAT FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE AND APPROPRIATE?
3. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS WHO REPRESENT THESE OUTLETS? IF YOU ARE UNCERTAIN - HOW WILL YOU GO ABOUT FINDING OUT THIS INFORMATION?

## STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA ADVOCACY

1. WHAT STRATEGY WILL YOU CHOOSE FOR DOING MEDIA ADVOCACY PAY, ASK OR EARN?
2. WHY?

## CULTIVATE JOURNALIST

1. WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE AVAILABLE FOR JOURNALISTS (DATA, STUDIES, COMMUNITY PROJECTS, ETC.)?
2. WHAT WOULD YOU INCLUDE IN A MEDIA KIT?
3. PITCHING THE STORY - CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PITCH YOUR MESSAGE USING THESE PEGS:
  - ANNIVERSARY PEG
  - BREAKTHROUGH (WHAT IS NEW OR DIFFERENT?)
  - CELEBRITY
  - CONTROVERSY (ARE THERE ADVERSARIES OR TENSIONS?)
  - INJUSTICE
  - LOCAL PEG
  - MILESTONES (HISTORICAL MARKER)
  - PERSONAL ANGLE
  - SEASONAL PEG
  - OTHER

A SLIDE  
PRESENTATION  
FOR TRAINING ON  
MEDIA ADVOCACY

## **PRESENTATION ON MEDIA ADVOCACY.**

### **SLIDE ONE**

#### **Media Advocacy**

The strategic use of mass media as a resource for Advancing a-social or public policy initiative,

### **SLIDE TWO**

#### **Media Advocacy**

##### **The premise**

- Mass media contributes to the environment in which the selection, presentation, definition and discussion of public issues.
- The public agenda setting process is linked to the amount of media coverage it receives.
- Media are a vehicle for gaining access to opinion leaders

### **SLIDE THREE**

#### **Media advocacy Uses a range of media and advocacy strategies to:**

- Simulate broad based coverage
- Shape public discussion about issues
- Increase support for and advance gender sensitive policies.

### **SLIDE FOUR**

#### **Media advocacy: What it can do**

- Generate public Debate
- Increase media coverage
- Promote gender-sensitive perspective Influence public opinion
- Influence public policy.

#### **EXAMPLE: Anti arrack Movement in Andhra Pradesh.**

**Policy goal:** Discourage drinking by local men by closing the government run arrack shops.

**Messages:** We have had enough... Drinking is destroying our families...The distribution and sales of arrack must stop.

**Public debate:** First agitation by women groups in villages received coverage-positioned by supporters as women fighting back and taking problem into their own hands. Opponents say the agitation as antigovernment and obstructionist.

**Media Coverage:**

1. Fueled interest by women in other communities who had same problems thus helping spread the message.
2. Local media was sympathetic to women I supported the movement.
3. Coverage sustained over year period helped discredit the opposition, build support and concern in the community and mobilized community support and resources.

**Outcome:** Ultimately succeeded in banning sales of arrack in A.P and which led to prohibition.

**SLIDE FIVE**

**Key Elements in Media Advocacy**

- Setting the Agenda - positioning your issue in terms of newsworthiness to gain access to the media.
- Shaping the debate - positioning your message to advance a policy change.

**SLIDE SIX**

**Planning for the media advocacy**

- What is the policy issues?
- How will you advance your issue?
- What solutions will you present?
- What issues will you link with?
- What voices will you provide?
- What message will you communicate?

**EXAMPLE: Policy issue** - Reducing child abuse

**How to advance issue** - Focus on changing the laws for trying and Convicting offenders.

**What are the solutions** - remove conviction of child abuse from Umbrella- Rape law.  
Develop separate laws and procedure for child abuse  
Make punishment more stringent.

**What issues will you link with?**

1. Current cases under trial [e.g. Jhaku Case in Delhi]
2. Statistics, studies that show the prevalence of child abuse.
3. Protests, events staged to protect children.

#### **What voices will you provide**

1. Legal experts who can speak for the need to change the laws.
2. Social scientists, organisations who can shed light on the issue.
3. Young men and women- who can talk about experiences that have had effect on them.

#### **What messages will you provide?**

1. The laws do not protect children
2. They provide loopholes for offenders.
3. The laws must be changed and offenders punished.
4. Child abuse is ignored and victims are often not believed.

### **SLIDE SEVEN**

#### **Media Advocacy**

Involves planning, flexibility and ability assess continually the connection-between the media needs and policy goals.

### **SLIDE EIGHT**

#### **Media Advocacy - long term goal**

- POLICY CHANGE.

### **SLIDE NINE**

#### **Media Advocacy - short term goals.**

- Getting on the media agenda.
- Building public awareness.
- Alerting opinion leaders to the importance of an issue
- Discrediting the opposition.
- Mobilising community resources.

#### **Group Exercise :- CREATING A POLICY MENU.**

Select a topic - Violence against women

- First            Have the group identify the key problems, issue.
- Second        Have group develop policy options for each problems. Develop arguments

Third for and against the policy options.  
Review the options to see if they are workable.

## SLIDE TEN

### Implementing Media Advocacy Activities.

#### STEP 1 STRUCTURE AND PLAN YOUR MEDIA INITIATIVE.

- What do you want media advocacy to accomplish.
- Who is your largest audience- what are their, concerns, interest, investment in your issue?
- What is your message? Is it appropriate to your audience?
- How can you translate individual cases to broader social issues? What solutions do you propose?
- How will you develop the story elements?
  - Do you have compelling pictures or images?
  - Do you have numbers that can be easily understood or interpreted by others?
  - Can you identify 'Authentic voices' - people who can convey the policy change message through their own stories or experiences?
  - Are there symbols?
  - Can you deliver your key message in one or two sentences ("Media Bite").
  - How can you tailor the message to your audiences?

#### Discuss Bhanwari Devi case.

What was the policy change or issue?	The legal system does not work for rape victims}
Was that policy message clear?	(not always)
Who was the target of the message?	(legislators)
Who was the spokes person?	(Bhanwari Devi)
Message	(this is a struggle to change the system)
Compelling numbers	(statistics on violence against women).
What worked	Good symbol, central message, collective support from Women's groups.
What is missing	sustained media work, efforts to target community Women.

**Group Exercise - Picking an issue.**

- First** - **Remind** the group that policies to take on, some be
- **Immediate** - people have passion about it recognize it and care about it.
  - **Specific**- people can define it and its solutions succinctly.
  - **Winnable**- the solution is foreseeable with in the lifetime of the group.

**Second** In groups or small groups select an issue from the previous exercise. Designate the policy solution. Who has the power to make it happen and how the group can work to get it on news

**Third** What is the message?

**Fourth** Each group must report back as if they were pitching the story to a journalist.

**SLIDE ELEVEN**

**Step 2-learn how the media operates.**

- Study the media and get familiar with it.
- Examine options and media placements. Monitor the media
- Keep media list of contacts current.

**SLIDE TWELVE**

**MEDIA** ACCESS POINTS - OPTIONS FOR PLACEMENTS.

**Television** News programmes, panel discussions, issue specific shows, public service.

**Radio** News programmes, talk shows, issue specific Programmes, specified shows, paid advertisements.

**Newspapers** Front page, economic page, gender section, health Page, editorial page, letters to the editor, political Cartoons.

**Billboards** Paid placements.

**EXAMPLE** Political cartoon - Anti Arrack Editorial story, Letter to editor.

**Group exercise - Mass Media outlets framing for access,**

**First** Identify target groups from the previous exercises

**Second** Identify media outlets that are best suited for the audience.



## SLIDE THIRTEEN

Step three-determine your strategies for accessing the media.

- Pay for It. Placements can be expensive.
- Ask for it Public service- little control of space
- Earn it get the message on news- main media Advocacy approach.

## SLIDE FOURTEEN

**Step four - cultivate journalists.**

- Make your self a resource on your issue (data, local activities, names of the sources).
- Develop useful press kits, press releases, fact sheets.
- Pitch the story so that it meets the criteria of news.

## SLIDE FIFTEEN

**Making your story news worthy - potential story pitches.**

BREAK THROUGH ANNIVERSARY	What is new or different about this story? can this story be associated with a local, National, or topical historic events?
CELEBRITY	Is there a celebrity already involved with or willing to lend his or her name to the issue?
CONTROVERSY INJUSTICE IRONY	Are there adversaries or other tensions in this Story? Are there basic inequities or unfair Circumstances? . What is ironic, unusual or inconsistent about this story?
LOCAL PEG MILESTONES PERSONAL ANGLE	Why is this story important or meaningful to Local residents? In this story an important historical marker? Who is the face of the victim in this story? Who has authentic voice in this issue?
SEASONAL PEG	Can this story be attached to a holiday or Seasonal event?

### EXAMPLE - Video of stories.

1. **Bhanwari Devi clips-** represents: Controversy (Village denies rape, ruling favored offenders), injustice (victim suffer\_ from ruling), Personal angle (individual struggles against system). .
2. **UNICEF** - Breakthrough (new report, new focus), injustice (war's victims are women and children). Local pegs (interviews with young girls about violence), personal angles (interviews with girls). Seasonal peg (annual report from UNICEF), Good visuals, good statistics, policy recommendations- too many messages in the report.

3. **Gastroenteritis story**-Injustice (water for families in slums are not protected by health officials) Local peg, seasonal peg) annual reporting of unclean water)- missed opportunity to be proactive and discuss public health side and impact on women and children's health. Could prepare spokesperson with figures and the solutions in anticipation of annual outbreaks.
4. **Shoe ad story**- celebrity (models), controversy (nude ad to sell products)- visuals in story focus on female model.

## **SLIDE SIXTEEN**

**Step Five** - prepare for your media interaction.

- Be prepared.
- Stay focussed on your issue and message.
- Know your limits,
- Be on guard.

## **GROUP EXERCISE:**

Group brainstorms media bite that best represents the issue. List all bites and discuss in the group which one is the strongest. Prepare counter arguments to the following questions?

### **Topic - Violence against women**

1. The laws are designed to protect the innocent and find the guilty?  
Why do you think the rape laws are unfair?
2. Is rape becoming more prevalent as women go outside the home and seek work?
3. Often women claim violence against them to get back at the family members. How do we know who to believe?
4. Eve teasing hardly a crime-it is merely young boys having fun?

## **SLIDE SEVENTEEN**

When a journalist calls ..... Ask

- What is your story?
- What is your deadline?
- Whom have you talked to?
- What do you need?

## **SLIDE EIGHTEEN**

**Step Six** - evaluate how you have done

- Did your message get across in the news piece?
- Did your messages get lost or misinterpreted?
- Were your statistics or other resources used?
- Was the placement appropriate for your audience?
- Are there any follow-up steps to take?

## **SLIDE NINETEEN**

**Step Seven** - discuss media strategies with NGO's involved in the issue

- Discuss new angles, studies, dates, events:
- Plan future activities.
- Evaluate message and refine if necessary.

## **SLIDE TWENTY**

### **SUMMARY**

- UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF JOURNALISTS IN IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING NEWS
- SET MEDIA OBJECTIVES THAT RELATE TO YOUR OVERALL POLICY GOALS.
- BE ALERT FOR STORIES ON WHICH YOU CAN PIGGYBACK YOUR ISSUE
- NEVER DO ANY THING THAT WOULD COMPROMISE YOUR CREDIBILITY.