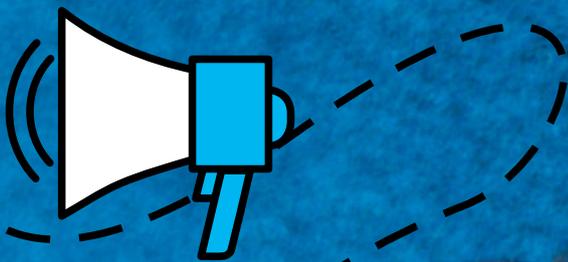


YOUTH ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



**FOR
EVERY
CHILD IN
DANGER**

unicef 
UNITED KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

Unicef works around the world to protect and promote children's rights, all of which are covered in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Convention has 54 articles which also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy their rights.

All the rights in the UNCRC are linked, and no right is more important than another. Almost every country has agreed to these rights and Unicef is the only organisation working for children named in the Convention.

WHAT ARE "RIGHTS"?

Rights are the things every child should have or be able to do. Read more about the UNCRC [here](#).



UNCRC Article 2:

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.



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ABOUT THE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



Advocacy is all about having your voice heard and changing the world.

Youth-led advocacy is about supporting children and young people to speak up and helping them actively take part in the decisions that affect their lives. This toolkit will give you the skills and information you need to stand up for what is important to you.

Who is the toolkit for?

This toolkit is for any young person who wants to start their own advocacy campaign. If you are a teacher or a facilitator, you can also use this toolkit with your group to inspire them to work out which children's rights issues they care about and how to go about creating the change they want to see.

How should you use this toolkit?

The best way to use this toolkit is to **work through the questions in each section**: these will help you create an action plan for your advocacy campaign.

START



EXPLORE

The problem:

What needs to change?

Your vision:

What do you want to happen?

Research and

analyse your issue



THINK

Objectives:

What steps do we need to take?

Targets:

Who has the power?

Who can make it happen?



ACT

Key message:

What do you need to do?

Tactics:

What do you need to say?

Risks and challenges

Complete your
Advocacy Plan



EVALUATE

Lessons for the future

How did you do?

FINISH

Why young people?

Young people around the world have the right to speak out and be heard on matters that affect them. This idea is captured in law in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child:

UNCRC Article 12:

Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.



As a young person you have an important role to play in campaigning to create change. Your voice matters and one way to make your voice heard is through advocacy!

What is advocacy?

Unicef UK is an advocate for children around the world. We provide children and young people with tools to speak out for their rights and take action to defend them.

Advocacy is about...

- 1 figuring out what needs to change and deciding on a plan to get there,
- 2 making sure as many people as possible know about the problems we're looking to tackle so that they can support us,
- 3 understanding who has the power to make the change, and how we can convince them to do that.

Unicef UK believes that all its advocacy should have the following ingredients:



Participation:

all people, including children and young people, have the right to a say in the decisions that affect them

Accountability:

making sure that decision makers recognise their duty to uphold all children's rights

Equity:

all rights apply to all children without discrimination and we must address the reasons for why children's rights are not met

There are many different definitions of the word 'advocacy' and it can include terms such as activism, campaigning, lobbying. In a nutshell, advocacy or campaigning is work that challenges policies or practices to create positive change in the world.

Why start a campaign?

Campaigning, activism, influencing, lobbying, and protesting are drawn together by the theme of "change" and are different ways for people to achieve the positive changes they want to see – in their community, their country or across the world.

Campaigning on issues that are important to you can make a real difference to other children in the UK and around the world. If we work together, we can make sure that children's rights are supported and protected by people who have the power to do so.

With help from young campaigners like you, we have successfully demanded life-saving health care to protect children from HIV, fought for the rights of refugee children, and helped to make sure that more children get the food they need to grow up healthy. We know that you can make a difference!

Raising awareness, signing petitions, making videos, writing blogs, and speaking to people in power like your MP are just some of the ways that you can show how much you care about all children's rights to those who can protect them.



“IT’S TIME PERIODS GOT A MAKEOVER!”

Amika George is a young campaigner and the founder of the **#FreePeriods** campaign.

The interview below was featured on Unicef’s **Voices of Youth** blog. You can read the full interview [here](#).

What made you think about the campaign?

I started **#FreePeriods** after I read about girls in the UK missing school every month because they couldn’t afford to buy pads and tampons... What really shocked me was that the government knew this was happening, but they were refusing to take any action. I decided I would try and raise awareness and call on the government to make sure no girl misses school because of period poverty.”

Many young people care deeply about various issues, but they aren’t sure how to start a campaign. Or they feel they won’t be able to make a difference. Did you have these feelings and if so, how did you overcome them?

I did have plenty of doubts and fears along the way! I realised very quickly that finding a community is really vital, so creating a website where people could contact me to tell me thoughts and give feedback was really important. It helped me to feel connected to people who needed help. I hooked up with a group called The Pink Protest and together, we organised a real-life protest, which helped me to really understand how big the FreePeriods movement had become. Campaigning can be lonely but social media helps us to reach out and find that support when we need it. I would encourage anyone that’s campaigning to find that group of people who can prop you up and encourage you when you start to feel isolated.

“If you feel that something has to change, be the person to start that change. Don’t wait for anyone else to do it, because the chances are, that no one will.”

Amika George



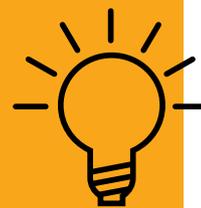
Image courtesy of Amika George

You’ve used a mixture of online and offline tactics/tools in your campaign, do you think one is more effective than the other? How do you decide on campaign tactics?

I would love to say that I have a strategy, but I don’t always! It really depends on how it feels at the time. I try and do as many in real life events as possible – in schools, conferences etc, but there are times when online tools are more effective. Sharing an article or message online can go round the world in minutes on social media but sometimes, when you have a specific message for a specific group of people, it can be powerful to stand up in a small room and interact with the audience.

VOICES OF YOUTH

is a digital community for young people to come together to engage in discussions, to exchange ideas, to inspire, and to get inspired.



This online space has a blog, inspiration board, tools, opportunities and other resources to help you make a positive difference in the world. Why not start by submitting your own blog or video to Voices of Youth, for it to be published on the website? Check it out: www.voicesofyouth.org

1 EXPLORE

This section will help you pick an issue that you care about and then understand the situation.

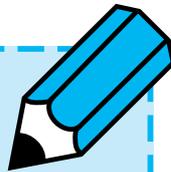
To figure out what you want to campaign to change, you'll need to explore a problem or issue affecting you or young people in your community. It can also be an issue you care about most.

In this section, you will **explore**:

- **The problem:** What needs to change?
- **Your vision:** What do you want to happen?
- **Research** and analyse the issue



THE PROBLEM



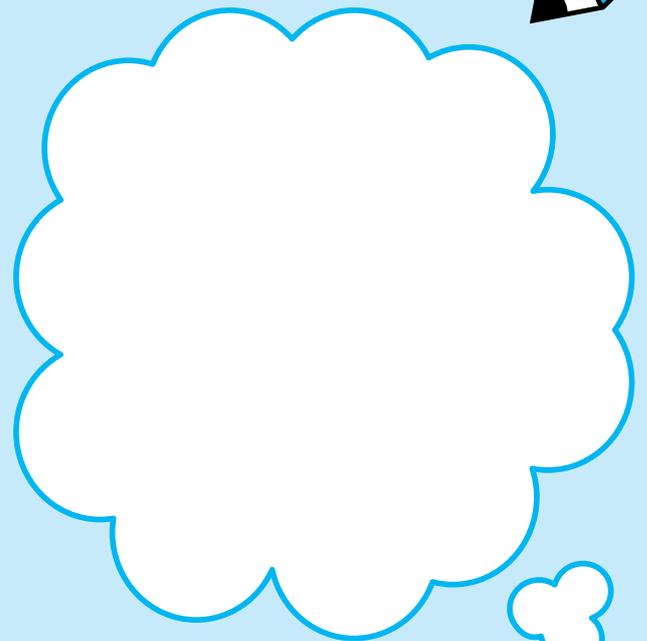
- What do you care about?
What is the problem?
- How does it make you feel? Do you feel angry or upset by this? Why?
- Why do you care about this?
- How might this issue affect children in your community and around the world?
- Which rights aren't being protected?
- Who else should care about this issue? Why?

YOUR VISION

What do you want to happen?

Your vision should be clear and inspirational – try to describe in one sentence the long-term change you want to see from your campaign. Think of this as the heart of your campaign – everything you do should help you make your vision come to life.

Write your vision here:



E.g. every child in my neighbourhood breathes clean air

RESEARCH

Having a vision is only the first step! Now that you've decided the issue that is most important to you, it's time to do some research so you can get a better idea of what needs to be done and how.

1

To begin your research, explore where you first learned about the issue – did you read about it online or in a newspaper? Was it on the news? Is it something that was discussed at your school or workplace or talked about with your friends or family?

2

Start there and go back to that first source to think about where else you might be able to find the information – if you learned about it in school, college, university or work – could someone there provide reading materials?

3

Use the resources you already have – your local or school library; when doing internet research, remember to access a mix of sources including academic journals, news articles and opinions pieces

4

As you are reading, begin gathering evidence: evidence can include case studies of other people who have been affected by or campaigned on the issue; this will help you show how important your issue is.

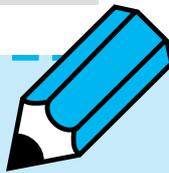
If you can't find evidence while doing research, think about speaking to people who have been affected by or campaigned on this issue – can you conduct surveys or interviews with them? Are they able to offer advice? Which organisations are working on your issue? Can they provide information or resources?

UNCRC Article 17:

Every child has the right to reliable information and adults should help you find and understand the information you need.



As you're doing your research, you can write your answers to the questions in the jigsaw table below or create your own!

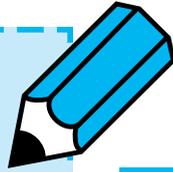


1. What do I know?	2. What do I need to find out?	3. What are the causes?	4. What are the consequences?	5. Who is working to tackle the problem?
6. What are they doing?	7. Is it working? Why? Or why not?	8. What's not working? What needs to happen?	9. Who do I need to talk to?	10. Who or what can help with my research?

Before you start campaigning, it's really important you get to grips with what is causing the problem. You'll need to explore all of the causes and the effects of the problem to figure out what you can do to best solve it. Any one problem may have many different causes and effects, some of which may not be obvious at first.

So it's important you spend the time to analyse your problem properly. By making sure you know your issue inside and out, when it comes to campaigning and building support, you'll know your stuff, and friends, family and decision makers will listen to you.

PROBLEM TREE



Draw your own!

This activity should help you figure out the root causes of your problem and the results.

Begin at the **centre of the tree**: this is the problem or the issue you have decided to campaign to change.

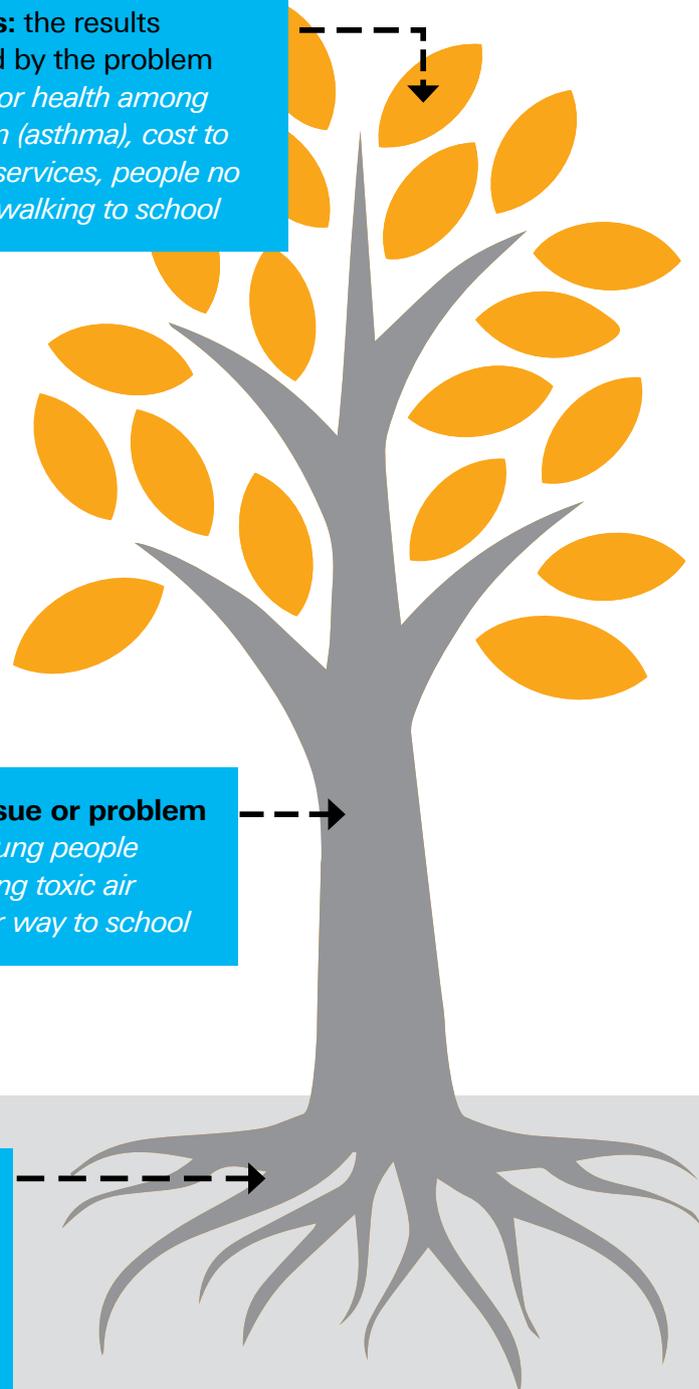
The **roots of the tree** are the causes. Figuring out the root causes is an important part of the problem-solving process because it helps you understand why the problem has developed in the first place and then come up with the right ways to tackle it!

The **leaves of the tree** represent what happens as a result of the problem. Try to think about multi-layered effects, or 'the effects of effects' – so when you come up with a result, ask yourself 'then what happens?'

Effects: the results created by the problem
E.g. Poor health among children (asthma), cost to health services, people no longer walking to school

The issue or problem
E.g. Young people breathing toxic air on their way to school

Root causes:
the basic reasons behind the problem you want to solve
E.g. people driving to school, schools near busy roads with lots of traffic, cars idling



2 THINK

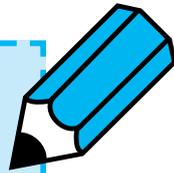
Earlier, you wrote down your vision for your campaign and what you hope to achieve in the long term. Now it's time to think about how to achieve your vision and who can help you.

In this section, you will **think** about:

- **Objectives:**
What steps do we need to take?
- **Targets:** Who has the power?
Who can help make it happen?



SOLUTIONS TREE



Draw your own!

Begin at the **centre of the tree** and write your vision here.

The **roots of the tree** can now be turned into solutions. These are the actions needed to solve the problem and help you achieve your vision. Look back at your problem tree – can you turn the causes into positive statements?

The **leaves of the tree** are the results. Try to think of the long-term effects of solving the problem.

Results:

E.g. my community understands what they can do about air pollution

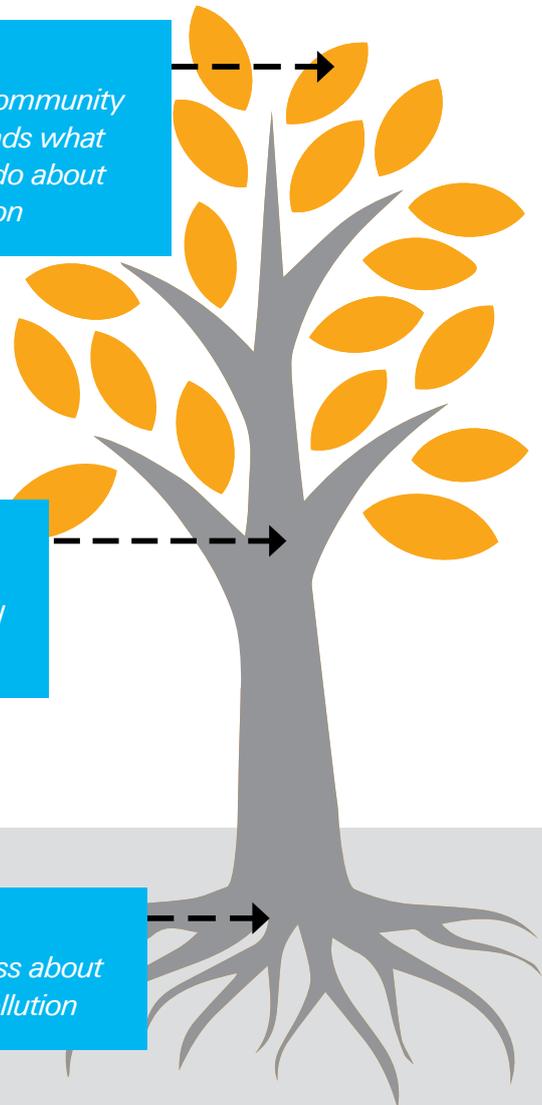
Vision

E.g. every child in my neighbourhood breathes clean air

Solutions:

E.g. raise awareness about what causes air pollution

Look back at your Problem Tree to make sure that your solutions respond to the causes you've identified there.



OBJECTIVES

What steps do we need to take?

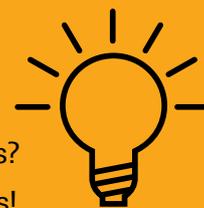
These are the goals you will set to help you achieve your vision – if you are meeting your objectives, it means you are on track to achieve your vision!

Try to be realistic, but don't be afraid to aim high. One of your objectives may not be achieved, but you might have started a conversation with people about these issues which can lead to success in the long-term.

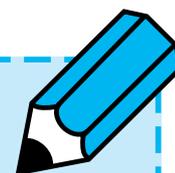
Look at your Solutions tree – what results have you identified?

How can the objectives you set help you achieve those results?

Only write two or three objectives!



Write your objectives on another sheet and make them **SMART**:



S

Specific

Be clear: who needs to do what?

M

Measurable

How will you track progress?

A

Achievable

Is this possible to achieve? Be realistic

R

Results-based

Will your objective help you achieve your vision? How?

T

Time-bound

Set a deadline

E.g. **Vision:** "every child in my neighbourhood breathes clean air"
Solution: "to raise awareness about what causes air pollution"
Objective: "3 schools in my neighbourhood will take part in my campaign by teaching their students about air pollution by October"

Now that you've set your objectives, we need to think about **who** can help you achieve your vision and how you can convince them to do it!

TARGETS

Who has the power?

To move your campaign forward, you will need to identify key people who have the power to help with your issue – the 'decision-makers'. These are the **targets** whose mind you need to change or influence to bring your vision to life.

Influencers:

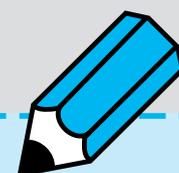
These are the other people who can help you convince your targets – such as local schools, the general public, community organisations or local media.

Brainstorm

To figure out who your targets and influencers should be, make a list of all the people or organisations in your community who are involved in this issue or care about the issue.

You may have already identified these people when you were researching your problem – take a look back!

Examples include other young people who are affected by the problem, your school's headteacher, your local council, a community action group, your neighbourhood parents' network, or a politician.



Now that you've made a list of targets and influencers, think carefully about them:

- Who are they?
- Do they support your issue or are they against it?
- What else do they care about?
- Who can help you reach them? Who do they listen to?
- What do you need them to do?
- How can you convince them to do it?

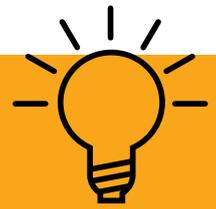
Remember, you can't reach everyone so you'll need to decide on two or three targets who you really think you could influence.

UNCRC Article 4:

Governments are responsible for ensuring all children can access their rights.



THE POWER OF YOUTH VOICE



In the UK, political parties need votes to gain political power. As a young person, you represent a future vote and a valuable one – so your opinion counts and politicians need to listen.

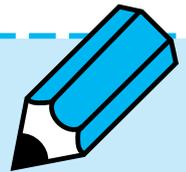
Each Member of Parliament (MP) is elected to represent an area of the country (called a constituency). They believe every visit or letter they get from someone in their constituency represents the views of another twenty people. So when you speak, you speak with the power of twenty!

Your local MP would be a high impact target.

To learn more about how to involve politicians in your campaign, download this resource: [Engaging Political Decision Makers](#)

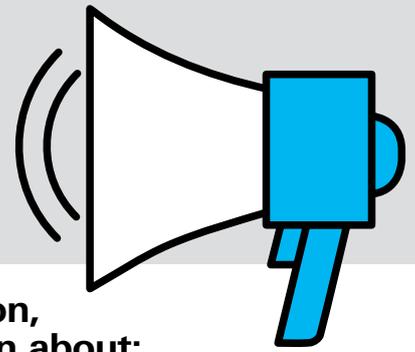
Target analysis

To help decide which targets you should focus on, complete the Target Analysis tool below.



<p>Target Influence Level: The difficult or easy scale is based on how likely it is for you to change their mind.</p> <p>Target Impact Level: The high or low scale is based on how much power they have to help you achieve your vision.</p>	<p>Difficult to Influence High Impact</p> <p>Reach out to these people and try to find ways to get their attention but keep in mind it may not be easy</p>	<p>Easy to Influence High Impact</p> <p>Focus on these people! They are your main targets</p>
	<p>Difficult to Influence Low Impact</p> <p>Remember these people in case they become easy to influence or more powerful in the future but don't focus on them for now.</p>	<p>Easy to Influence Low Impact</p> <p>Get in touch with these people right away. They may be able to help you reach your targets or give you important information for your campaign.</p>

3 ACT



In this section, you will learn about:

- **Key messages:** What do you need to say?
- **Tactics:** What do you need to do?
- **Risks and challenges**

Congratulations! You know what you want to happen and who can help you. Now it's time for the best bit – doing something about it!

KEY MESSAGES

What do you need to say?

The message you're going to send to your targets is the driving force behind your campaign. Your message needs to be clear and easy to communicate – it has to capture people's attention and convince them to support you.

Think about a campaign you liked – what caught your attention? That is the key message.

Your key message should appeal to the heart, head and hands of your target:

UNCRC Article 13:

Every child has the right to express their thoughts and opinions.



Your campaign can have a few key messages because different audiences need different messages.

Would you say the same thing to your friends as you would to a politician? Probably not. So remember to adapt your message based on who you're speaking to – the best way to get someone's attention is to speak their language!



HEAD

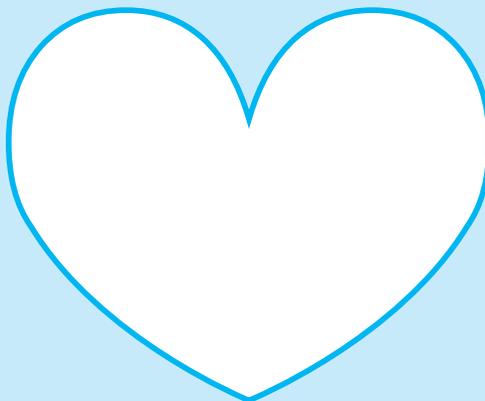
What do you want people to know?



Facts and statistics are important! But you should also try to tell a story about what can change

HEART

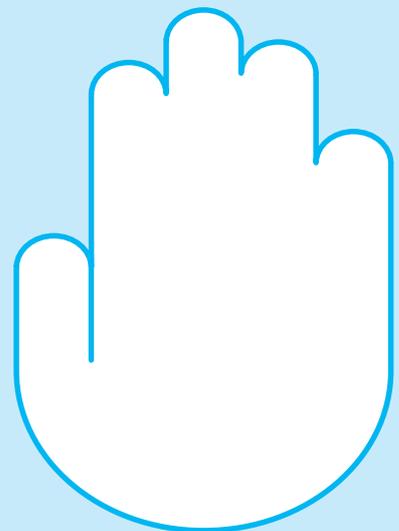
Why should they care?



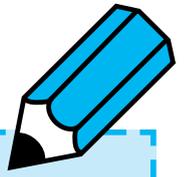
Think about how you want them to feel and remember to link back to what your targets care about – appeal to their specific interests and emotions.

HANDS

What do you want them to do?



Keep in mind what they can do and what they have power over



Key messages

Step 1

Keep these points in mind when writing your campaign's key message:

- The problem
- Evidence (Facts, Stories, Statistics)
- Why is this important?
- What needs to happen to make the change?
- The audience

Step 2:

Look back at your two to three main targets.

Can you write a specific key message for each of them?

Step 3:

Finally, test your message!

Talk to the people who are involved in working on this issue or your friends and family, and ask them for feedback; are the facts clear and correct? Did the message move and persuade them?

TACTICS

What do you need to do?

Now that you know which people hold power, you need to think about how to reach them. Tactics are the actions you take to achieve your objectives. The right tactics help other people learn about and help you build support for your campaign.

When choosing your tactics, think about:

- Is this easy to do? Can we use the skills and resources we already have?
- Has anyone else tried this? How did it work? Was it successful? Why not?
- What would you or your group enjoy doing?
- What would engage your audience or influence decision makers?

You can think about tactics in two ways:

- Public campaigning: how you can raise awareness, build public support and engage your audience including through media
- Private campaigning: how you can engage and influence political decision-makers

Take a moment now to look back at your campaign – review your vision, objectives, targets and the key messages.



Your tactics need to match all of these things.

For example, if one of your objectives is to help the public learn more about your issue, one tactic could be to launch an awareness raising campaign on social media. This could work better than launching a petition because people might not want to sign a petition if they don't know enough about the problem.

In the same way, if one of your targets is your local MP, a tactic could be to organise a letter writing campaign in your neighbourhood. MPs care about what their constituents think so this will make sure they hear how many people care about your issue.

UNCRC Article 15:

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.



Examples of Tactics:

- **Social media campaign** – this is a great way to make sure your message reaches the public. Use all the same hashtags on all channels
- **Petition** – the more signatures you get, the better you can show that your campaign has lots of support
- **Write letters** – to your targets and/or the people who influence them to explain your campaign issue and what you want them to do
- **Request meetings** – even if you can't get face time with your targets or influencers, it's a good idea to meet with people who are also working on your campaign issue so they know about your work
- **Organise a performance or public exhibition** – this can be a creative and fun way to raise awareness and get people excited
- **Host events** – this can help you raise awareness of the issue within your community
- **Contact media** – get your local newspaper or radio station involved and raise the profile of your campaign

If you want to get media attention for your campaign, you can download this resource for some tips: [Engaging Local Media](#)



Don't forget to follow up:

Make sure to phone or email new supporters and thank them for getting involved. You should also keep them updated on your campaign throughout!

If you have a social media page or website, it's a good place to keep your supporters informed but remember, not everyone uses the internet!

These are just some ideas for how to take action, but you can come up with your own. Always keep in mind what you want to achieve and be creative!

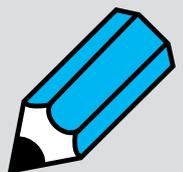
RISKS AND CHALLENGES

This is an important part of your campaign work. Advocacy can be risky – you might be questioning people in power or trying to change people's behaviours. So you need to consider potential risks and how you might deal with them.

Fill out the table below or create your own. Your risks might change so remember to come back to them!

Some examples of risks and challenges are:

- Lack of public support for your campaign
- Not enough evidence to support your claim
- Lack of resources or funding
- Risks to your safety or wellbeing



Risks and Challenges	Rating: Low/Medium/High	What will we do to lower the risk?
1.		
2.		
3.		



ADVOCACY PLAN

What needs to change?
The problem:

What do you want to happen?
Our vision:

What steps do we need to take?
Objectives:

1.
2.
3.

Who has the power? Who can make it happen?
Targets:

1.
2.
3.

What can we say to convince them?
Key messages for each target:

1.
2.
3.

What does the public need to know?
General key message:

ADVOCACY PLAN

What do we need to do?

Tactics:

TO DO	BY WHOM	BY WHEN

Who else can help us make it happen?

Influencers and key supporters

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are the risks and challenges?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How will we manage the risks and challenges?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What will success look like?

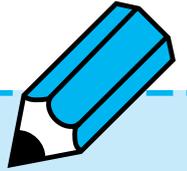
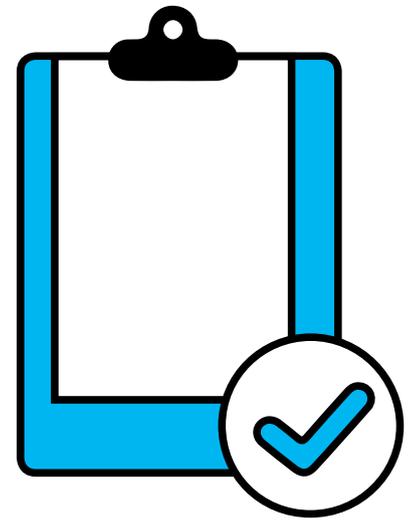
4 EVALUATE

Evaluation and monitoring

How did you get on?

It can take time for you to start seeing results so monitoring your campaign will help you collect evidence about whether change is happening and how it might be bringing you closer to your vision.

Evaluating your campaign at the end will help you figure out what worked, what to change and remind you to celebrate the successes!



<p>1. What did you want to happen?</p>	<p>2. What actually happened?</p>	<p>3. What worked?</p>	<p>4. How do we know? (Evidence)</p>
<p>5. What didn't work?</p>	<p>6. What can we change next time?</p>	<p>7. What don't we know?</p>	<p>8. How can we find out?</p>