SOLIDAR & SOLIDAR Foundation Training Academy

Introduction to Advocacy

Athens, 26th - 29th September 2019

Follow up Training Materials

Published in 2019 © SOLIDAR - SOLIDAR Foundation
Disclaimer:
The information, definitions, suggestions and recommendations contained herein are for general informational purposes only. This information has been compiled from sources believed to be reliable (quotations available upon request), and it will, hopefully, be used to inspire participants of SOLIDAR Training Academy to further explore the topic of advocacy.

This handout includes some training material covering:

1. Basics about advocacy:
   - Definitions
   - Advocacy activities and similar concepts
   - Key steps
   - Resources

2. Inspiration:
   - Advocacy initiative presented at Training Academy

3. SOLIDAR seen by members:
   - Presentation of some SOLIDAR members and partners
   - Three reasons to join SOLIDAR
   - Network building
   - Action Points

4. Develop your own idea:
   - How to choose and develop a topic for advocacy initiative (handouts)

5. Additional learning and inspiration:
   - Tools and resources to build advocacy strategies, campaigns, fundraising campaigns and framing
1. Basics about advocacy

In a world where civil society organisations become one of the key drivers of change in the society, it is inevitable that systemic and radical changes become more needed and more important. Today, more than ever, we have the mechanisms to influence decision makers. It is precisely the understanding of the problems and the expertise that CSOs have that is the most valuable resource when it comes to planning and implementing advocacy initiatives.

Therefore, it is important to understand the essence of the concept of advocacy, as well as to understand the truly wide range of possibilities and formats for citizen actions.

Although it may not be possible to practice every aspect of advocacy, the act of advocating itself can open new spaces for active participation of various groups and actors in the society.

Let’s look at some basics about advocacy:

Definitions

There are so many definitions of advocacy, and simply by googling (or using any other web search engine) you can explore different perspectives on the importance of the process, key elements, resources, etc.

But in general, advocacy refers to organized efforts by citizens to influence the formulation and implementation of public policies and programs by persuading and pressuring state authorities, and other powerful actors.

Advocacy embraces various activities undertaken to gain access to and influence decision-makers on matters of importance to a particular group or to society in general.

Advocacy is also a tool for citizen participation – real participation by citizens in decision-making by government and other powerful bodies. It is one of the ways, together with elections, open forums, special commissions, and so on, that different sectors of civil society can put forward their agendas and have an impact on public policies, participating in a democratic and systematic way in decision-making about matters that affect their lives.

Advocacy consists of more than one strategy or activity. It entails the implementation of various strategies and activities over time, with creativity and persistence. Advocacy victories often are preceded by numerous failures. It is important not to give up, but to learn from our mistakes and to continually strengthen an organization in terms of its social power and technical capacity.

Advocacy combines various complementary initiatives in order to achieve an objective. Through a series of small wins on specific issues that may appear not to be of great consequence, an organisation or coalition gradually builds the social power and technical capacity needed to do advocacy on more complex issues.

There are many reasons to engage in advocacy. The most important from a civil society perspective are:

a. to solve specific problems through concrete changes in public policies and programs;
b. to strengthen and empower civil society; and
c. to promote and consolidate democracy.

Advocacy is also: speaking up, drawing a community’s attention to an important issue, and directing decision-makers toward a solution. Advocacy is working with other people and organisations to make a difference. (CEDPA, Cairo, Beijing and Beyond: A Handbook on Advocacy for Women Leaders)
Advocacy activities and similar concepts

In order to understand advocacy, it is important to understand and differentiate it from other processes and activities. Some of those activities are part of advocacy, but they are just one step in the process of reaching the overall advocacy goal. So, what kind of activities comprise advocacy work?

The following list is not exhaustive. The list and examples can serve to motivate others and suggest ideas for future advocacy on all fronts and in all kinds of struggles.

- **Organising**: Build power at the base.
- **Educate Legislators**: Provide information on issues.
- **Educate the public about the legislative process**: Introduce communities and constituencies to the legislators who represent them.
- **Research**: Produce relevant resources that reflect the real story of your community.
- **Organising a rally**: Mobilize for your cause.
- **Regulatory efforts**: Take action at the agencies.
- **Public education**: Educate the community on the issues.
- **Nonpartisan voter education**: Inform the electorate on the issues.
- **Nonpartisan voter mobilisation**: Encourage citizens to vote.
- **Educational conferences**: Gather, network, share information, and plan for the future.
- **Training**: Teach successful strategies and skills for direct action organizing on issues related to citizens.
- **Litigation**: Win in court for your cause or your community.
- **Lobbying**: Advocate for or against specific legislation. All nonprofits are permitted to lobby. (How is advocacy different from lobbying? Lobbying is only one kind of advocacy, and lobbying is usually very strictly regulated by the law. Not all advocacy is lobbying but all lobbying is advocacy.)

**Similar concepts:**

There are some activities, which are usually perceived as advocacy, but are not. Goals of these activities are very different - to raise awareness, to do PR, to fundraise.
Key steps

Use this framework as a general orientation tool. You do not have to go through the steps in strict order, and you will probably need to revisit some steps and modify your initial action plan as you plan and implement your strategy.

Planning an advocacy campaign is a dynamic process. It involves identifying the issue, developing solutions, building support, and bringing issues, solutions, and political will together to ensure that the desired change takes place. Finally, it involves monitoring and evaluating the entire process.

The key steps in planning for advocacy work are:

- Know your issue
- Establish your objective(s)
- Conduct a stakeholder analysis
- Develop a strategy
- Plan the activities
- Identify and mobilise the required resources
- Monitor and evaluate the campaign’s progress

It may well be necessary to revisit and revise several of these steps throughout the implementation of your advocacy campaign. Successful advocacy does not proceed in a straight line and rarely unfolds exactly according to plan. Be prepared for unforeseen events and consequences. Be flexible.
Civil society organisations derive their power from:

• their constituency
• their membership
• previous credible campaigns
• their experience
• their ability to analyse issues and events
• their commitment
• their contacts in government
• their ability to mobilise supporters

The effectiveness and success of any advocacy process depends, amongst other factors, on how well the following steps are implemented:

• Identifying and stating the issue
• Collecting the relevant information

In summary, advocacy begins with a problem or with a perception that there is a better alternative to a current condition and seeks to solve that problem and/or implement the selected alternative.

Advocacy is both an art and a science. There are no strict rules for advocacy work. Its approaches must be culturally, socially and politically specific. Widespread participation in an advocacy campaign is generally a precondition for success.
2. Inspiration

Make Europe sustainable again

Make Europe Sustainable For All is a 3-year cross-sectoral project run by 25 partners from across Europe. Its aim is to promote ambitious implementation of the world’s crisis plan – the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – by and in the EU. The project aims to strengthen civil society networks working on SDG implementation across the EU and to highlight to the public and political leaders at the local, national, and European level that SDG implementation is crucial for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for all people and planet.
Campaign against inequality

Without reducing inequalities, none of the SDGs can be achieved. The ‘Fighting Inequalities’ Campaign aims to leave no one behind while still respecting our planetary boundaries. Local, national and European actors from 15 countries will join forces to increase awareness and push for policy & social changes in order to tackle inequality and poverty in Europe and beyond.

This campaign is about empowering and promoting the social, cultural, economic and political inclusion of everyone – especially women, children and minorities. Equal opportunities and equality of outcomes need to be ensured by advocating that discriminatory policies and practices be replaced.

The campaign contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in particular to achieve the sustainable development goal number 10: Reduce inequalities, that will subsequently contribute to the achievement of the other SDGs.
3. SOLIDAR seen by members

Who are some members and partners?

**ARCI, Italy**
www.arci.it

**ARSIS, Greece**
www.arsis.gr/en
Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich (BFI), Austria
www.bfi-ooe.at

Community Development Institute (CDI), North Macedonia
irz.org.mk

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Training Academy I 10
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Centres d’Entrainement aux Methodes d’Education Active (CEMEA), France
www.cemea.asso.fr

Center for Peace Studies (CMS), Croatia
www.cms.hr/en
FICEMEA, International Federation of CEMEA
www.ficemea.org

Humanitas, The Netherlands
www.humanitas.nl
Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC), Serbia
idcserbia.org/

Institute for Social Integration (ISI), Bulgaria
www.isi-bg.org
Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL), Spain
www.mpdl.org

Multicultural Center Prague (MKC), Czechia
mkc.cz
Organizazion for aid to refugees, Czechia
www.opu.cz/en

PGA, Hungary
atalakulasintezet.hu
Solsoc, Belgium
www.solsoc.be

Volunteering Matters, United Kingdom
volunteeringmatters.org.uk
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Willi-Eichler Akademie (WEA), Germany
www.web-koeln.de

SOLIDAR & SOLIDAR Foundation
Three reasons to join SOLIDAR

Diversity

SOLIDAR is the European network for progressive Civil Society Organisations working for social justice.

We help our diverse membership to showcase their activities and campaign for their objectives at the European level. At the same time, we monitor EU policy developments and advocate for the inclusive and progressive cause more broadly. By participating in these important debates with our members and on a European level, we steer the discussion and significantly contribute to the promotion of social justice in Europe and beyond.

We understand social justice as multi-level issue and organise our activities on three main pillars which work in a mutually reinforcing manner: Social Affairs - International Cooperation – Education & Lifelong learning.

Principles & structure

- We take social justice as our guiding principle that connects the three pillars of our work. Solidarity is a value that travels borders within and beyond Europe.

- We believe that sustainability must be the guiding light for any forward-looking policy and we mainstream it in our work.

- We put people and the inclusion of the marginalised at the centre of our work.

- We consider migration a crucial feature of our time and we work on it with a cross-sectorial and humanitarian approach.

SOLIDAR has a democratic structure. The General Assembly, where each member is represented, elects the board and its chair, the President, every third year. The board defines the priorities and the Secretariat, based in Brussels and coordinated by the Secretary General, executes those. Every full member has voting rights and the right to elect representatives in the board, while affiliate members can participate in the multiple activities carried out throughout the year but they hold no voting rights.

Network & international reach

As of today, SOLIDAR counts on 62 member organisations working in 24 countries in Europe and 90 worldwide. Thanks to our European umbrella organisations - Social Platform, CONCORD, Lifelong Learning Platform, Civil Society Europe, Social Services Europe - we multiply and diversify our impact. What’s more, we have a leading role in the Liaison Group of the EESC, co-chaired by our Secretary General.

Our goal is to enhance the interconnectedness of our network, build bridges and capacities, foster knowledge sharing and champion our common cause.

We enable our members to engage in speaking opportunities on a European level, as well as facilitate meetings with relevant stakeholders and decision-makers. Internally, we amplify our network by peer-to-peer learning and empowerment, the organisation of European projects, training academies and international conferences.
Network Building

The following table summarises an exercise done during the Traning Academy in Athens in which the members identified a number of challenges they face when it comes to participation to SOLIDAR work and activities. The challenges, as well as the solutions, were identified and proposed in the small groups and complemented in the plenary discussion among all participants. This exercise can be applied in every organisation/network as internal reflection and base for organisational development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Identified solutions</th>
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| Time / Human resources              | • Explaining better and in more detail what is the aim of the meeting and what will be the tangible outcomes  
• Participants of the SOLIDAR activity have together with the secretariat shared responsibility for follow up actions in their organisation (for example dissemination of the acquired information among their colleagues) |
|                                     |                                                                                      |
| Different nature of the activities  | SOLIDAR secretariat should regularly update the mailing list upon input from members  
The expectations and aim of the meeting should be better explained in the invitation to ensure a suitable representation. |
<p>| | |
|                                     |                                                                                      |
| Financial Resources                 | SOLIDAR staff explained the reimbursement scheme is quite flexible and there are possibilities to increase the reimbursement in some cases SOLIDAR could organise a session to share best practice on alternative funding |
|                                     |                                                                                      |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU focus</th>
<th>SOLIDAR Board should discuss how to renew work on Western Balkans and other EU candidate countries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Non-EU members see difficulties and very little added value in a discussion focusing solely on the EU</td>
<td>- SOLIDAR staff should improve the communication about their advocacy efforts/outcomes to avoid that lot of work remains unseen or not understood by members</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Many EU members feel the distance between the SOLIDAR work and work of their organisations</td>
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<tr>
<th>Too many information</th>
<th>SOLIDAR is currently working on Intranet where members can share their info</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Too many emails coming from secretariat and MailChimp makes it difficult to identify what is important and what is not</td>
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<td>- Information in weekly roundup is often lost</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sharing space among members</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Except for physical meeting, members get very little info from the network</td>
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<tr>
<th>EU projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Members requested for SOLIDAR to be leading partner in the EU projects. It would lead to the strengthening of the network and bring financial resources to other activities as well</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Small amounts of subcontracting</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Members expressed their concerns with subcontracted amounts in relation to the amount of work requested</td>
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</table>

Based on the grid above a clear list of action points should be derived. When writing the action points it is important to target them at different and most relevant levels (secretariat; head of units; leadership; board...)

**Action Points**

1. Implement better communication about aims, outcomes and added value of the meetings.

2. If any decisions should be taken during the meeting it must be communicated in advance in order for members to decide the suitable representation.

3. Improve follow up communication after meetings.

4. Organising a workshop to share best practice with alternative funding for CSOs.

5. Implementing intranet where members can share their initiatives.
6. Updating regularly the contact lists

7. Uncovering SOLIDAR advocacy to better explain the connection between work in Brussels and national level.

8. Board to discuss the political direction and related activities to strengthen work on/with non-EU states

Building upon the previous two aspects of the exercise members were asked to identify what are the opportunities and what are the aspects of SOLIDAR network that could be put to better use.

Creating thematic clusters in SOLIDAR (different than the pillars). Members could participate only to the topic of their current interest/priority that often changes with projects they are currently implementing.

| Better facilitate project partnership and assume a leading role |
| Empowering the CSOs to reach the political level (more training for members) |
| Strengthen the work on the integration of non-EU states |
| Sharing inside information from institutions with members |
### 4. Develop your own idea

How to choose and develop a topic for advocacy initiative

**Check-list for choosing an advocacy topic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic no.1</th>
<th>Topic no.2</th>
<th>Topic no.3</th>
<th>Criteria (will this topic/issue...)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. ... affect a large number of people?</td>
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<td>2. ... get broad support?</td>
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<td>3. ... be supported by good data?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. ... be easy to understand?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5. ... achieve a real improvement in the lives of people?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. ... be achievable?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. ... help build a network of different groups?</td>
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<td>8. ... have a clear timeframe?</td>
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<td>9. ... help local community activism?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. ... strengthen relations with civil society organizations?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. ... be in line with our values?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12. ... respond to the needs of the community?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A good topic for advocacy is the one that has the best ratings in most of the criteria. Rate your topics in relation to the criteria (score with 1, 2 and 3)

3  always or almost always meets the criteria  
2  often meets the criteria  
1  rarely or never meets the criteria
Message development

What is the **goal**?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Who is the **target group**? And why is this **important** to them?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

What is the **key message** (15–20 words)?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Write three **supporting points**:

1. _______________________________________________________________________________

2. _______________________________________________________________________________

3. _______________________________________________________________________________

What **communication channels** will you use?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Who will you **partner** with?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
5. Additional learning and inspiration

Fundraising

**Online FR manual:**
Download here

This guide will take through key steps and resources needed for successful online fundraising campaigns.

**SOFII – Showcase of fundraising innovation and inspiration**
www.sofii.org

This site is an amazing inspiration resource for your next fundraising campaign! But also, you can find info on this website in several languages: French, Italian, Spanish, German... Check it out.

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Some ideas for **fundraising events** - to help boost, promote and fundraise for your advocacy:

- **SPIN-A-TON**
  Have businesses "sponsor a bike", or have people find friends to sponsor them to do a "Century Ride" — 5 hours / 100 miles = $200. [https://hinsdalecentral.younglife.org/Pages/Spinathon-Fundraiser.aspx](https://hinsdalecentral.younglife.org/Pages/Spinathon-Fundraiser.aspx)

- **RUN OR WALK**
  Organize a Run or Walk to raise awareness for your organization’s mission. Include incentives for local businesses to sponsor your event, such as advertising on all of the promotional material for a $1,000 donation.

- **RESTAURANT NIGHT**
  Ask a restaurant or store to donate 10% - 20% of their revenue from a specific night to your organization. [https://www.groupraise.com/restaurant-fundraisers](https://www.groupraise.com/restaurant-fundraisers)

- **BATTLE OF THE BANDS**
  Host a concert featuring local bands and charge a small ticket fee. Include incentives for organizations to sponsor your concert, like advertising opportunities.

- **SIP AND PAINT**
  Collaborate with a local artist to host an art class. Participants can paint, drink, and donate! [https://www.paintnite.com/group-events/fundraiser](https://www.paintnite.com/group-events/fundraiser)

- **SWAP SHOP**
  Invite people to bring their gently used clothes and trade their clothes! Charge a small entry fee. [http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-stage-a-clothes-swap](http://www.shareable.net/blog/how-to-stage-a-clothes-swap)

- **COMEDY NIGHT**
  Collaborate with a local comedy club to donate part of their ticket revenue for a night, or host an open mic comedy night for local comedians.

- **SANTA BEARDS**
  Have people in the community sponsor the men in your office from December 1st until Christmas! $10 = one person not shaving for a week! Email progress picture to keep your donors engaged.

- **GIVE IT UP**
  Have community members sponsor people in your office to give up their favorite food or drink for a month! $10 per week per person invite sponsors to a picnic with all the forbidden food after the four weeks are up.
Framing messages and communication

A practical guide for communicating Global justice & solidarity


A practical toolkit developed by Health Poverty Action with useful tools to organise campaign and reflecting on how to communicate building a new narrative that builds solidarity and demands social justice.

Framing Equality Toolkit

www.ilga-europe.org/communicationsresources/framingequality

The toolkit developed by ILGA-Europe is a short guide to strategic communications, aims to provide a framework; helping you to ask the right questions rather than giving the right answers. The guide is written with a focus on European LGBTI activists, but it is useful to others with a similar vision.

More guides on framing messages can be found here

publicinterest.org.uk
Advocacy Guides

Euromed rights: Interactive guide EU Advocacy
euromedrights.org/training-path-program

A practical web-based version of Euromed training guide on influencing EU relations with the Southern Mediterranean countries. The guide helps to navigate the European Union and understand how to build a process of advocacy towards the EU institutions.

Campaign Canvas
https://mobilisationlab.org/resources/campaign-canvas

A tool Inspired by the Business Model Canvas, supporting the building of a campaign. Working through each element of the canvas will ensure that the bases for a solid campaign are covered.

Supports to design campaigns

Moblab: The 21st-Century Advocacy Playbook
mobilisationlab.org/resources/21st-century-advocacy-playbook

A website where to find resources and training on developing campaigns.
SOLIDAR is a network of membership based Civil Society Organisations working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR brings together 60 member organisations based in 25 EU member states and in 6 candidate countries. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation. SOLIDAR Foundation is the cooperation platform of SOLIDAR responsible for the Building Learning Societies Pillar that includes 23 members, covering 18 EU member states. SOLIDAR Foundation engages through member and partner organisations citizens in EU decision making processes, empowers people through lifelong learning and VET, and voices their concerns to the EU institutions by carrying out active lobbying, project management and coordination, policy monitoring, research and awareness-raising.