



Watch Stories

Tell Your Story

About Us

9



We have to make sure that women's issues are an essential element on the agendas of all heads of state, all governments.

Michelle Bachelet

POWER  
GIRLS  
OF CHANGE  
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# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Red de Jóvenes Municipio de Jatlapa

## INTRODUCTION

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The strategic use of media is absolutely key to winning over the hearts and minds of decisionmakers and the general public to support strategies that improve the lives of girls across the globe. More traditional forms of communication, like TV, radio, and newspapers, as well as new media like Twitter, Facebook, and blogging, can amplify girls' stories and engage audiences in the urgency to end child marriage, strengthen girls' education, and provide economic opportunities for girls.

Another strategy to inform and educate decision-makers about the challenges affecting adolescent girls . Educating decision-makers is a way to make a direct appeal made to policy makers on a particular issue that is significant within the current political context. Decision-maker engagement also allows advocates to work closely with those decision-makers who are already in favor of our cause so that they can publicly champion the rights of adolescent girls in the media and with their own colleagues.

# 9.1

## MEDIA TOOLS: TRADITIONAL METHODS SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

- 4 Divide participants in groups of three people. Give each team a flip chart representing a different type of media. Ask teams to work to develop a list of three positive and three negative features of the medium assigned to them.

Example: Movies

Positive features:

1. They have been present for over 100 years.
2. Lots of people go to the movies.
3. Movies can catch the public's attention, because images are large and sounds are loud.

Negative features:

1. Making movies is expensive.
2. Going to the movies is expensive.
3. Feature-length films are two hours long, which makes it difficult for families and children to go together.

20 min

- 5 Ask a member of each team to read the list of positive and negative features while the rest of the participants listen. Next, invite participants to put stars on each sheet next to the positive and negative features they identify with their own experience and perspective.

10 min

- 6 Ask teams to return to their flip charts with the list of pros and cons. Ask them to work together and make a list explaining how this medium can be used in an advocacy campaign.

**Example:** Even though movies are expensive, we could organize a screening of a movie in our community and facilitate a debate about the work of our organization.

20 min

- 7 Ask a member of each team to read the team's ideas about how to use their medium for advocacy work focused on the lives of girls and young women. Then, invite participants to put stars next to the campaign strategies they deem most useful and convincing for gender-focused advocacy.

10 min

- 8 Make sure all participants in each group are from the same country. If there are multinational groups, divide those groups in teams according to the different countries. Each group must identify different media channels for each category—for example, radio stations or TV channels—specific to their country, and then identify if each one of them would be a positive or negative channel for their advocacy work.

15 min




### NOTE

If time allows, study a relevant Facebook page that can give participants an example of how these channels can be used for advocacy. Ask participants their ideas about what worked in terms of what they observe or observed, and how this can influence the way they build their own campaigns.

# 9.1

## MEDIA TOOLS: TRADITIONAL METHODS SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

### ACTIVITY TWO

 35 min



#### NOTE

If you are using YouTube, be sure to download the video prior to the session.

### Digital Stories

- 1 Show Roberto Morales's digital story from the GOJoven CD or [www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JQ2zAricWc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JQ2zAricWc).

Discuss the following questions in group:

- What impacted you the most about this story? Why?
- How does Roberto tell his story? What kind of images and words does he use?
- The story is told from the point of view of a man, but how does it impact the lives of women and girls?
- Which problem(s) does this story address? Who do you think is the audience, and how does this shape the way Roberto tells his story?
- How can Roberto's story be useful in an advocacy campaign?

20 min

- 2 Introduce the method and process of digital storytelling. Digital stories are a great form of learning and political change, and they have a strong connection with testimonials in the sense that a person "witnesses" an event in their own life. Think of "I, Rigoberta Menchu" as a well-known testimonial.

- Introduce the Center of Digital Stories and the Let Girls Lead digital stories featured on the Let Girls Lead website. Show the group a copy of the GOJoven Stories CD and guide ([gojoven.org/digital-stories/](http://gojoven.org/digital-stories/)), and review the titles and pertinent questions to the stories that may be most relevant to the group.
- Distribute the "The Seven Components of Digital Stories" handout and briefly review the components of digital storytelling. Highlight the pros and cons: cost, training, equipment, and distribution of the stories.

15 min

# MEDIA TOOLS: TRADITIONAL METHODS SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING



Session time:  
85 min.

TIME

Activity 1  
Activity 2  
Activity 3



PARTICIPANT  
Guide

## OBJECTIVES

- To summarize the importance of working with several media tools for developing advocacy campaigns
- To identify different kinds of media, such as journalism, new communication media, and digital stories, useful in designing and launching advocacy campaigns
- To understand the pros and cons of each media tool used to advocate

### ACTIVITY ONE

85 min

## Introduction to the Media: Its Forms, Advantages, and Limitations

- Review (2 minutes)
- Review handout: Visual Definition of Communication Media (3 minutes)
- Team work (20 minutes)
- Group review (2 minutes)
- Team work (20 minutes)
- Group review (10 minutes)
- Media mapping (15 minutes)

## MATERIAL

- Digital stories and projector
- Flip chart with session objectives clearly written on it
- Markers, notebooks, pens, and paper for each participant

### ACTIVITY TWO

35 min

## Digital Stories

- Showing of Roberto Morales's digital story (20 minutes)
- Introduction to digital stories method and process (15 minutes)

## HANDOUTS

- "Visual Definition of Communication Media"
- "The Seven Components of Digital Stories"

## MEDIA

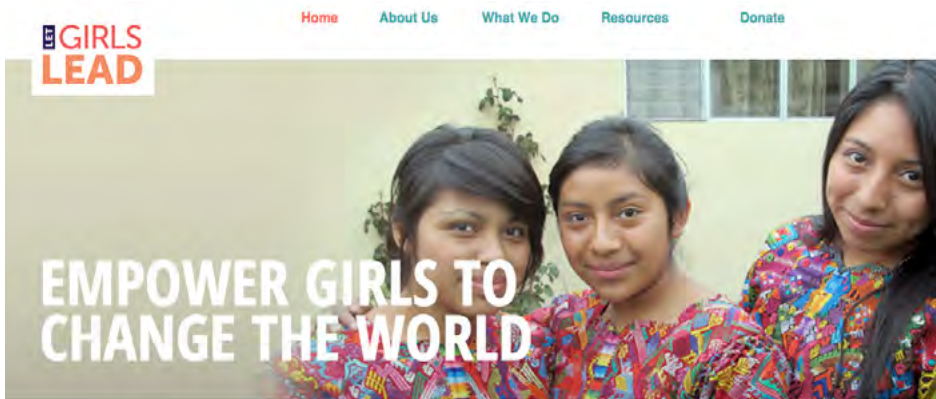
Any means of public communication and entertainment—for example, books, radio, newspapers, magazines, movies, TV, Internet, and video games.





# 9.1 MEDIA TOOLS: TRADITIONAL METHODS SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING HANDOUT: MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR ADVOCACY

## Visual Definition of Communication Media



Let Girls Lead is building a global movement to improve the lives of 600 million girls and their communities around the world.

Let Girls Lead protects girls from violence, and ensures girls can attend school, stay healthy, and learn skills to escape poverty. To date, we have contributed to the improved education, health, livelihoods, and rights of 3 million girls through girl-friendly laws, funding, and programs around the world. Let Girls Lead's sister initiative, *Champions for Change*, leverages Let Girls Lead's proven model to empower leaders and organizations to improve reproductive, maternal,

**STRONG GIRLS,  
STRONG FAMILIES  
AND STRONG  
COMMUNITIES.**





## 9.1 MEDIA TOOLS: TRADITIONAL METHODS SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

### HANDOUT: THE SEVEN COMPONENTS OF DIGITAL STORIES



#### Why tell stories?

People tell stories to give the world meaning. We are forever storytellers. We remember events as revived scenes, as symbols of context and character, and as actions that take us to understanding.



The seven components of digital stories are as follows:

- 1 **Revealing.** Stories seem revealing, as if the author was sharing new knowledge through the story. This gives the story a feeling of immediacy and discovery.
- 2 **Personal or in first person.** Stories are personal reflections on a topic. They are known to communicate emotions of great importance to the author.
- 3 **About lived experiences.** The author shows something he or she lived, or a description of a specific moment.
- 4 **Pictures more than video.** Though many stories use video, the main strategy is still using pictures, usually a few, to create a relaxed and calm rhythm with the narration.
- 5 **Soundtrack.** Stories usually have music or background music that adds meaning and impact to the story.
- 6 **Length and design.** Brevity is key. A digital story usually lasts no more than five minutes, and is ideally between two and three minutes.
- 7 **Intention.** The process of creation is more important than the product, and function is more important than form. Personal expression and self-awareness have priority. In all senses, the storyteller must own the story.

For further information, visit The Center for Digital Storytelling: <http://storycenter.org/>.



Session time:  
60 min.

TIME

Activity 1  
Activity 2



FACILITATOR  
Guide

# POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS

## OBJECTIVES

- To respond to challenging questions in an interview setting
- To practice public speaking in a safe and supportive setting

## MATERIAL

- Flip chart with session objectives clearly written on it
- Recording device, preferably a video or sound recorder like a phone or camera

## HANDOUTS

- “Tips for Communicating with the Media”
- “Interviewer’s Guide”
- “Example Answers for Difficult Questions”

## ACTIVITY ONE



20 min

## Interview Best Practices

- 1 Ask the group if anybody has any experience being interviewed by the media. If so, ask those people to share some of the positive and negative experiences they have had. 5 min
- 2 Ask if anyone knows radio or TV presenters who are famous for their interviewing style. Ask those people to share names and styles with the group. 5 min
- 3 Tell participants that before accepting an interview, they must know well the medium, policies, and practices of the channel or journalist, as well as the topics they want to cover. This is a key part of preparation for success.
- 4 Point out that participants should create a clear and short message they want to communicate during the interview. Winston Churchill once said that it took him 10 minutes to prepare a one-hour speech, but it took him an hour to prepare a 10-minute speech! The briefer the presentation, the more intense the preparation.
- 5 **Handout: Tips for Communicating with the Media**  
Review each item with the group and demonstrate different postures of nonverbal communication we sometimes use without thinking during interviews. 10 min



# 9.2

## POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS

### ACTIVITY TWO

 40 min

### Practicing Interviews

- 1 Divide participants into groups of five or fewer people. Explain that the facilitator and some participants will assume the role of a TV journalist going against their point of view. The interviewer will ask three questions to each participant, and the group will give feedback about the exchange. The facilitator may refer the interviewers to the “Interviewer’s Guide” handout for help with asking difficult questions.
- 2 Using observations about each participant and what they have shared in this session, interviewers ask questions that cover a wide scope, as well as some specific questions, to individuals referring to their position, gender, job, career path, etc.

Some examples of wide questions include the following:

- How did you start to work in favor of adolescent girls?
- What is the greatest problem adolescent girls face in your country?
- Why do you not work for boy and girls, since both of them need support?
- Why do adolescent girls need special attention?
- Why do you want to change indigenous traditions, where everybody —men and women— has well-defined roles?
- Some adolescent girls dream of becoming wives and mothers—why do you want to take that dream away from them?

Some examples of more personal questions (directed to people who fit the profiles) include the following:

- Do you want to do feminist advocacy?
- How do adolescent girls fit into the work you do for LGBTI rights?
- Is it that you have a left-wing political agenda and hence want to advocate?
- The church does value women, the way we value and worship the Virgin Mary, mother of God—is that not enough?

- 3 After asking each person three questions, open the discussion for feedback. Remind the group they must use the following guidelines:
  - Share a positive aspect of the person’s interview
  - Comment on things that can be changed
  - Speak in the first person about what you observed, and give suggestions about how it could be even better.
- 4 Each person must receive feedback from at least two people before starting the next interview.
- 5 Distribute the handout “Answering Challenging Interview Questions”. Participants can review the responses and have a brief discussion as to how else they might respond to challenging questions.

**Handout: Example Answers for Difficult Questions**

# POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS



Session time:  
60 min.

TIME

Activity 1  
Activity 2



PARTICIPANT  
Guide

## OBJECTIVES

- To respond to challenging questions in an interview settings
- To practice public speaking in a safe and supportive setting

### ACTIVITY ONE



20 min

## Interview Best Practices

Review tips for communicating with media

## MATERIAL

- Flip chart with session objectives clearly written on it
- Recording device, preferably a video or sound recorder like a phone or camera

### ACTIVITY TWO



40 min

## Practicing Interviews

- 1 Practice in-person interviews
- 2 Give and receive feedback on video recordings of interviews

## HANDOUTS

- “Tips for Communicating with the Media”
- “Interviewer’s Guide”
- “Example Answers for Difficult Questions”



## 9.2 POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS

### HANDOUT: TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA



Interview with LGL Fellow Juany Garcia

### Preparation

- Take a deep breath before starting to help calm nerves!
- Prepare 3-5 key points you want to communicate during your speech or interview, and cover them when you can, regardless of the question.

### Nonverbal Communication

- Make visual contact with the person who is interviewing you. If it is a TV interview, ask which camera you should look at.
- Instead of saying “um...” or “well...,” pause or make a silence during your answer to give yourself time to think and the audience time to reflect.
- Avoid crossing your arms, hiding your hands, or putting your hands in your pockets—this denotes nervousness. You can gesture with your hands often, but not excessively. Avoid holding objects in your hands such as pens or papers, to avoid fidgeting with them when nervous.
- Wear comfortable and professional clothing, preferably something you have worn before. For TV interviews, avoid wearing solid white clothing, arrive early to the stage to learn camera positions, and consider the color of the interview background when you are making final wardrobe adjustments.

### Verbal Communication

- Get to the point with your message. Do not waste time with too much context or theory.
- Avoid overcomplicated terms or jargon. Refer to organizations or terms by their full names instead of just their initials.
- Give short and clear answers. Know when you have answered the question and stop speaking.
- Quote key numbers or authorities, as long as they are respected by their audience and you are certain the numbers are recent and accurate. Never quote statistics you are unsure of—it ruins your credibility. It is better to say that you are not sure.
- Do not let an interviewer “bait” you with confrontational questions—turn these around to speak positively about your message.
- If you have time at the end, stress the important parts of message by repeating or reviewing them briefly.
- Speak and pronounce your words clearly, especially at the end of the phrase, when the tone of voice naturally tends to lower.



## 9.2 POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS

### HANDOUT: INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE



Assume the role of a TV journalist that will challenge the advocate's point of view. Use what you know about each participant and what they have shared in this session. You will ask the advocate three challenging questions that cover a broad range, and some questions specific to the individual. You may refer to the person's position, gender, job, career path, etc.

Some examples of broad challenging questions include the following:

- How did you start to work in favor of adolescent girls?
- What is the greatest problem adolescent girls face in your country?
- Why do you not work on behalf of boys as well as girls, since both of them need support?
- Why do adolescent girls need special attention?
- Why do you want to change indigenous traditions, where everybody —men and women— has well-defined roles?
- Some adolescent girls dream of becoming wives and mothers—why do you want to take that dream away from them?

Some examples of more personal challenging questions (directed to people who fit the profiles) include the following:

- Do you implement a feminist agenda in your advocacy work?
- How do adolescent girls fit into the work you do for LGBTI rights?
- Is it that you have a leftist political agenda and want to advocate for liberal causes?
- The church does value women, the way we value and worship the Virgin Mary, mother of God—is that not enough?





## 9.2 POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS

### HANDOUT: EXAMPLE ANSWERS FOR DIFFICULT QUESTIONS



Advocates may encounter journalists that ask very challenging questions meant to undermine or contradict the advocate's work. Advocates must be prepared to answer these types of questions, and learn to reframe them. It can be difficult not to react to an interviewer's question that is specifically meant to incite anger or a backlash from you.

Some interviewers may go as far as to ask direct personal questions like the following:

- Are you gay or lesbian?
- Are you a feminist?
- Are you married?
- Are you a mother/father/parent?
- Are you indigenous?

Advocates may choose to answer the question directly or to deflect the question. Advocates who choose to answer the question run the risk that the interviewer may use personal politics or identity to discredit or distract from the real issue at hand.

An effective way to deflect personal questions is to answer: "I am not here to talk about my sexuality/politics/ethnicity/marital status. I am here to talk about the issues faced by so many girls in our communities, like... [give concrete example here]."

Here are some example answers to difficult questions:

- **Why do you not work for boy and girls, since both of them need support?**

We recognize the importance of working with boys to improve the lives of girls. Both sexes can work together to start redefining gender roles. We try to incorporate boys in our activities as much as we can, and we actually encourage boys to get involved with gender rights issues. Our strategy focuses specifically on girls because they are at a disadvantage as compared to boys. For instance, girls in our country are X times as likely to drop out of school as boys.

- **Why do you want to change indigenous traditions, where everybody — men and women— has well-defined roles?**

We believe in changing gender inequalities. People can follow traditions without reproducing inequalities between girls and boys and women and men. Our advocacy strategy empowers communities to redefine gender roles for themselves.



## 9.2 POWER INTERVIEWS: PRACTICE AND TIPS

### HANDOUT: EXAMPLE ANSWERS FOR DIFFICULT QUESTIONS



- Some adolescent girls dream of becoming wives and mothers—why do you want to take that dream away from them?

We empower girls to make informed decisions about marriage and motherhood that will allow them to achieve their full personal and professional potential. Girls have the right to decide when to get married, when to have children, and how many children to have.

- How do adolescent girls fit into the work you do for LGBTI rights?

LGBT rights are human rights, and so they are also girl rights. Adolescence is a critical time period where many boys and girls start exploring or defining their gender and sexuality. It is important to safeguard their human rights, whether they are born as girls or define themselves as girls, and provide a safe atmosphere where they can express themselves.

- Is it that you have a leftist political agenda and hence want to advocate liberal politics?

Our organization is not political, and we do not advocate for any particular political agenda. We advocate for girls, and do so through partnerships in collaboration with several organizations. We endorse policies proposed by a particular political party, not because of their political stance, but because the policy would benefit girls.

## NOTES

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Session time:  
120 min

TIME

Activity 1  
Activity 2



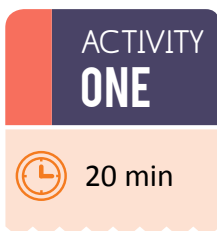
FACILITATOR  
Guide

# Educating Decision-Makers: Strategies



## OBJECTIVES

- To define decision-maker education
- To understand how to shape their engagement goals, choose their primary audience, leverage their resources, and anticipate their
- To create appropriate strategy tailored to a specific decision-makers
- To know the basic elements if conducting positive calls and meetings with decision makers



## Defining Decision-Maker Education

- 1 Review written session objectives on flip chart with the group. 3 min
- 2 Ask participants about their experiences with educating decision-makers. Have 2-3 people share experiences where they had to educate a decision-maker, for what reason, and what kinds of strategies they used. Make sure to get good details from each person who shares. Ask them to describe the context for their experiences.
  - How did they approach the decision-maker to arrange a meeting?
  - What materials did they share while they were engaging them?
  - Where did the engagement with a decision-maker take place, and for how long?
- 3 Using the participants' experience as a basis, facilitate a group definition of educating decision-makers.
  - Make sure the core of the definition includes that educating a decision maker should include a *direct appeal* made to policy makers on a particular issue that is significant within the current political context.
  - Ask the group to name examples of the kinds of policy makers that they might want to advocate with. The list could include the following:
    - Office of the president
    - Cabinet and ministries
    - Political party leaders
    - Members of the legislature/parliament
    - County officials
    - Chiefs and traditional authorities
    - President/CEO of a corporation

12 min

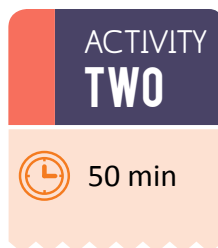
## MATERIAL

- Flip chart with session objectives written on it
- Markers
- Blank pieces of paper to use as name tags during role play
- LCD projector
- Participant notebooks or journals

## HANDOUTS

- PPT presentation on decision-maker education
- "Tips for Educating Decision-makers"

- 4 Now that the participants have defined education for decision-makers, ask them whom, specifically, they might want to approach regarding girls' issues in their local, municipal, or national governments. They should name specific policy makers by first and last name and specify why each policy maker would be a strategic person to educate regarding a specific girls' issue.



## PPT on the Elements of Educating Decision-Makers

### Slide 2: An Overview

- Advocates provide clear and accurate information to policy makers.
- Advocates build trust with policy makers and form two-way relationships: You help me, I help you.
- Advocates persuade, mobilize, and strategize with policy makers.

Unfortunately, advocacy also has the negative stereotype that you, the advocate, must fight against.

3 min

### Slide 3: Name the Different Elements of a Strategy to Educate a Key Decision-Maker

- Identify goals
- Identify decision-maker
- Identify resources
- Identify opposition
- Build your support network
- Build your strategies

2 min

### Slide 4: What Is the End Goal of Your Decision-Maker Education?

- Policy-related goals:
  - Enact a new law
  - Advance a new policy or update an old one
  - Make a bad bill better
  - Increase (or decrease) funding in a particular area
  - Secure a vote that can be used electorally



# 9.3

## Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

- Movement-building goals:
  - Draw public/media attention to your cause
  - Educate citizens about an opportunity or threat
  - Mobilize citizens
  - Build your coalition

5 min

### Slide 5: Evaluating Decision-Maker Engagement Goals

- Consider: What are the chances of success?  
Adjust goals if necessary!!!
- What interim steps do you need to take to reach your goal?
  - Building relationships with policy makers
  - Securing smaller policy changes
  - Garnering media attention and increasing public education
  - Building your coalition
- What are acceptable alternatives to the ideal?
  - Where do you draw the line between acceptable policy and unacceptable policy?

3 min

### Slide 6: Know Your Decision-Maker

- Some policy makers will be on your side, some will be against, and others will be neutral or apathetic.
- Most important to focus on:
  - Those who are on your side: Mobilization and strategizing
  - Those who are somewhere in the middle: Persuasion
- Do not waste time targeting policy makers who are explicitly opposed to your position
  - If a majority of policy makers are opposed to your effort, you may need to adjust your goals!

3 min

# 9.3

## Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Slide 7: Identify the Main Decision-Makers and Influential Targets

- Make two lists:

**A list that** categorize all Decision-Makers who either support or are against your issue:

- Supportive
- Somewhat Supportive
- Mixed/Unknown
- Somewhat Against
- Against

**A list of important influential targets** Those who will have particular influence in the process (pro or con) and who can influence your decision-maker to act.

3 min

### Slide 8: Identify the Main Decision-Makers and Influential Stakeholders (cont'd.)

Use the lists of decision-makers and the influential targets to choose key decision-makers:

- Provide basic information to all other supportive, somewhat supportive, and mixed/unknown influential targets.
- Work closely with the most supportive decision-makers or influential targets to champion your cause.
- Work to persuade as many mixed/unknown influential targets as possible; if there are too many to focus on, prioritize based on region, party, vote history, etc.
- Pay special attention to the most influential targets.

3 min

### Slide 9: Know the Goals of Your Influential Targets and Decision-Makers

- What are the goals of each Decision-Maker and Influential Stakeholder?
  - Re-election?
  - Public recognition?
  - Moral/ethical accomplishment?
- How can you frame your goals so that they align with their goals?

3 min

# 9.3

## Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Slide 10: Frame Your Message

The importance of *framing*:

- **Example:** What kind of decision-maker is more likely to agree or disagree with the following statements?
  - Girls' education is a human rights issue.
  - When girls are educated, the country's GDP increases by 0.3 percentage points and raises annual GDP growth rates by 0.2 percentage points.
- Girls' education can be framed in terms of community development, girls' empowerment, family well-being, and economic growth. Which works best for each decision maker and why?

5 min

### Slide 11: Know Your Resources

What resources do you bring to the table?

- You know why your goal is good policy. You have:
  - Ethical arguments, economic arguments, etc.
  - Data and stories supporting your arguments
- You can draw on your base of support
  - How many people are affected?
  - Where are they located? Nationally or in specific areas?
  - How committed are they? Can they be mobilized?
  - Do they have any resources themselves?
  - What other groups are in coalition with you?

3 min

### Slide 12: Leveraging Your Resources

How can you leverage your resources?

- Considering the goals of the primary audience, why should they listen to you?
- What persuasion tactics can you bring to bear (to motivate or to threaten)? For example:
  - Publicizing a vote or another action
  - Seeking media attention by writing editorials, etc.
  - Informing community members
- Be careful not to anger or alienate potential supporters!!

3 min

# 9.3

## Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Slide 13: Know Your Opposition

- Who will proactively work to block your efforts?
  - How organized are they? How strong are they?
  - Remember: They will be preparing like you are!
- Preempt their efforts:
  - Anticipate their arguments
  - Prepare counter arguments (oral and/or written)
  - Debunk myths
  - Frame your position in a way that already answers the questions they will raise

3 min

### Slide 14: Build Your Support Network

- Use your base:
  - Get them involved in advocacy
  - Can they advocate? Personal stories are effective
- Build your coalition:
  - More groups = more powerful
  - Are there any supportive individuals/groups not usually associated with your cause?
  - Tactically, which group(s) should take the most prominent roles?

3 min

### Slide 15: Build Your Strategy with Direct Outreach

- Written communications
  - Documents analyzing the issue and reasons to support it
  - “Sign-on letters” formally expressing organizations’ or parliament members’ opinions
  - Ghost-writing for policy makers—make it easy for them!
- Oral communications
  - Calls to policy makers or staff
  - Meetings with policy makers or staff
- Activist involvement:
  - Advocacy days
  - Citizen petitions to deliver to policy makers
- Always have a concrete “ask.”

5 min



# 9.3

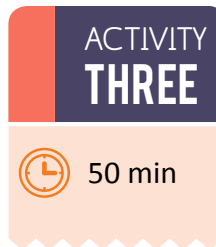
## Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Slide 16: Build Your Strategy: Tools for educating decision makers

- Always prepare documents in advance if possible.
- Use calls and meetings when the issue is “hot.”
  - Use calls to reach many quickly
  - Hold meetings for deeper impact with a narrower group
- Use sign-on letters (1-2 pages) to solidify a supportive coalition or group of policy makers.
  - You can provide these can be to the press to publicize broad support.
- Advocacy visits and petitions are useful to involve your base, but they can be time-consuming.

3 min

**Pass out handout: “Tips and Preparation for Educating Decision-Makers.”** Briefly review main points regarding preparing documents and getting organized for meetings and calls with targets or influential stakeholders.



### Role Play

- 1 Give participants three minutes to identify a relevant issue regarding girls’ lives. This should be an important issue already identified by the participants either in a previous session or in the examples that participants shared during the first activity. For example, the issue might be early marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, education for women and girls, etc.
- 2 Divide the participants into two equal groups.
- 3 The first group plays the role of decision-makers and influential stakeholders related to the issue that the group identified. Give this group seven minutes to decide which relevant influential targets and key decision-makers they will each play based on the selected issue. Decision-makers could be government officials, community leaders, traditional authorities, etc. depending on the issue. Influential targets could be the first lady, popular news or talk show hosts that shape public opinion, vice-ministers, cabinet members, etc. Each person should take on a specific identity using the decision-makers' or influencers' first and last name and position. The more these characters are based in reality, the better. Each person must write their decision maker/influential target's name and title clearly on a regular sheet of paper and tape it to him- or herself so that it is clearly visible to the other group. Based on their identities, the individual decision-makers/influential targets must formulate responses to the advocates and try to foresee the tactics advocates will use to convince them. They should base these responses in reality and, as much as possible, hold the same opinions as their real-life counterparts.

## 9.3

### Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

- 4 The second group plays the role of advocates who are educating decision-makers. Give this group seven minutes to identify for themselves whom they will play. As advocates, they can be from the civil society sector, from the business sector, concerned citizens, teachers, parents, etc. Each person should take on a specific identity using the lobbyist's first and last name. The more these characters are based in reality, the better. Each person must write their advocate's name and title/organization clearly on a regular sheet of paper and tape it so that it is clearly visible to the other group. Advocates should base their tactics and approaches in reality and, as much as possible, reflect the same opinions as their real-life counterparts.
- 5 Once both groups have decided their identities and identified themselves with their names and titles, have each group briefly introduce themselves to the other using their role-play identities. Ask that each group pay special attention to whom the other is playing, as this will influence their strategy and responses.
- 6 Each group must review the handout more closely and, based on the tips there as well as the identities of the opposing group, formulate a communication strategy. The advocates must use these tips to prepare information and documents to convince the targets to change policy. The decision-makers must use these tips to help them foresee how they might react to the lobbyist approaches. For example, a decision maker might try and avoid meeting with an advocate by referring them to another decision-maker or influential person in the group. The decision-makers must really listen to the information presented by the advocates and make decisions based on their role and the information presented. Though the lobbyist group will not have time to fully prepare materials and statements, reference the materials in the handout and pretend you have developed them in the role play. Advocates should spend the bulk of their time framing their issues and developing their specifically tailored messages to each decision-maker in the other group.
- 7 Each group has 10 minutes to review the tips sheet and decide on a strategy to educate this group of decision-makers or, in the case of the decision-makers, how they will react to the advocates' strategies.
- 8 Once the facilitator calls time, participants have 20 minutes to role play a strategy to educate decision-makers. The advocates must decide how best to approach the decision-makers and role play a meeting, a phone call, or whatever strategy they want to employ. Encourage as many people in both groups to participate in the scenarios. There are no scripts, so it is OK to improvise!
- 9 Once the decision-maker education strategy has run its course or time has been called, all participants reunite to debrief. Discussion questions include the following:
  - **Advocates:**
    - How did the advocates decide which strategies they would employ?
    - Why did you consider that those strategies would be the most effective with this group?

# 9.3

## Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

- **Decision-Makers:**
  - How did the decision-makers decide how to react to the advocates?
  - How easy was it to put yourself into the shoes of your decision-makers' opinions?
  - Did you find yourself believing your decision-makers' opinions at all?
  - Were any of the advocates' strategies particularly effective?
- **Whole group:**
  - Did anything surprise you from this exercise?
  - Was there an unexpected tactic or opinion that you did not see coming?
  - What did you learn here that might influence the way you engage with decision-makers next time?
  - Was there any specific strategy that you did not see employed that might have been effective in this scenario?
  - How is a decision-maker education strategy different from an advocacy strategy?

**Advocacy:** Advocacy is a set of political actions implemented according to a strategic plan and aiming to focus the attention of the community on a specific problem and guide decision makers toward a solution.

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**Decision-maker education:** Decision-maker education is communicating directly with a policy maker (legislator, etc.) with the purpose of influencing any executive action, legislative action, or administrative decision.



## 9.3 Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Handout: Tips on Educating Decision Makers

## Document Preparation

Preparing documents with targeted information about your goal is the basis of a good decision-maker education strategy. Be as specific as possible when making recommendations for a particular bill, amendment, or policy. Write out the exact language that you would like policy makers to use. Include your full contact info on all materials. If you do not know the answer to a question and it is not in any documents you have prepared, tell the decision-maker that you will try to find out and then provide the information promptly in a letter, email, or call to their staff.

Here are some documents you will want to prepare before your meeting:

- **Overview (one page)** with key talking points
  - Include the straight facts and the main arguments in support of your position
  - Use simple language
- **Documents with more details**, including data and personal stories
- **Sign-on letters:**
  - Clearly state signers' recommendations
  - Can use more complex language

Examples of other tools include:

- Talking points
- Fact sheets
- Bill drafts
- Policy briefs
- Coalition letters
- Editorials
- Press releases

## Tips for In-person Meetings

Staff are often more knowledgeable about the issue and more available for meetings. You can generally go into greater detail with them and will often end up meeting with them if your targeted decision-maker is not available.

Policy makers have more direct influence but are busier. Limit these meetings to the most important efforts, and bring your most senior staff or coalition partners to these meetings.

- **Be a good listener.** It will help endear you to the lawmaker and give you valuable information about the decision-maker's views and concerns. Have a conversation and make sure you are not doing all the talking.
- **Research your decision-maker.** Know your targeted decision-maker's history, voting record, and public statements on your issue. Research related bills he/she has supported, view old footage, or listen to old interviews having to do with your issue.





## 9.3 Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Handout: Tips on Educating Decision Makers

- **Prepare an opening for the meeting.** Summarize the facts in brief, clear statements. Think about how to pitch your goal. Rely on ethical arguments, key pieces of data, and personal/political appeals to make your argument. Begin with a general explanation of your issue, including any necessary background information. Remember that you have very limited time, so be brief and get to the point quickly.
- **Share personal stories.** Share how your own work, life experiences, and/or family have illustrated the need for policy change. You can also share the story of girls that you work with or have encountered in different areas of your life.
- **Bring materials.** Leave behind any materials about the topic. If it is not written down, the busy decision-maker will be much less likely to remember it. Written materials are also a good basis for their staff to inform others of your issue.
- **Take notes and say thank you.** During the meeting, take notes to keep a record of your conversation/exchange so that you can share it with other people working with you on this issue. Be sure to follow up with a thank you note that references some part of your meeting specifically so that your decision-maker is more likely to remember you. Note: A handwritten card or letter can stand out more than a thank you email.

## Tips for Engaging Supportive Policy Makers

- Motivate them to prioritize this issue.
- Involve them in strategizing; give them ownership over certain tasks.
- Ask if they will speak publicly about the issue (if so, offer to draft or review remarks).
- Get tips from them on how to approach “mixed” policy makers.
- Thank them for their support on your issue and provide them with positive feedback.

## Tips for Engaging Mixed/Neutral Policy Makers

You should focus most of your efforts here because they are persuadable “swing” votes. Do not waste your time on known opponents of the issue or on your known allies (except to say thank you).

- **Ask your decision-maker/influential stakeholder to state his or her position on your issue.** If his or her position on the issue agrees with yours, ask what you can do to strengthen that support and how you can get others to help support the issue. If his or her position is different from yours, ask what information or show of public support is necessary to change that position. Have on hand a variety of details/data/stories, depending on what the decision-maker finds compelling.



## 9.3 Educating Decision-Makers: Definition and Strategies

### Handout: Tips on Educating Decision Makers

- **Use persuasion tactics subtly.** First and foremost, you are a friendly group providing information and assistance. Decision-makers depend on people like you to provide good information to them so that they can then make good decisions.
- **Involve coalition partners.** Build coalitions that are as broad and deep as you can make them. Mention the number of groups in your coalition.
- **Frame your issue.** Contextualize your issue in a way that directly affects the decision-maker (their family, constituents, job, etc.
- **Make a specific and direct “ask”.** For example, can the policy maker sign a letter? Vote a certain way? Have the person verbalize this commitment specifically so that it is clear and you heard it directly from him/her. Nodding does not indicate that they are committed to an action.

## NOTES



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