

LWF Advocacy Handbook

A guide for member churches and
country programs



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches



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Preface

God's incarnation in Jesus Christ is a strong, powerful signal of the direction of God's action: it is always directed towards the world. In Jesus Christ, God seeks to come and visit, to establish a presence of compassion and justice. God comes to open the hearts and the minds of human beings, otherwise so much turned into themselves and their perennial stories of violence, oppression and death. God comes to liberate human beings, by grace alone.

It is out of this understanding of God's mission in the world that The Lutheran World Federation has been defining 'mission' as being holistic: it is about proclamation, diakonia (service to the neighbour) and advocacy — hence about the public voice of the church that embraces realities as God wants them to be, and challenges what conflicts with that vision. Advocacy is therefore an integral part of what the church is called to do as it participates in God's mission that is expressed in and through Christ.

I am grateful for this LWF Advocacy Handbook, which gives congregations and churches meaningful tools to engage in advocacy work. It states in clear ways that while engaging duty bearers in the public space, the church needs to equip itself with the language common to the public space: it is the framework of rights that are either in place, or need to be put in place. It makes a case as to why our faith does not stand in contradiction to the Human Rights framework, but is the common ground to pursue in the public space issues of human dignity and justice, which are so much at the core of faith. Finally, it lays out approaches

and tools to be used while advocating with and on behalf of marginalized and oppressed communities for their inalienable rights.

I commend this Advocacy handbook for study, discussion and use. I pray for it to become a tool that enables congregations and churches to further grow into God's call to mission. I hope for their witness to become a source of transformation, supporting all people and communities to enjoy their God-given dignity and their rights.

Finally, I express my appreciation to all LWF staff who contributed to this handbook: Dr Ojot Miru Ojulu, Assistant General Secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights; Ms Maria Cristina Rendon, Program Assistant in Women in Church and Society; Rev. Dr Chad Rimmer, Study Secretary for Lutheran Theology and Practice; and Mr Michael French, Regional Program Coordinator. A special thanks to Dr Michael Kaune, who edited the handbook and Ms Anastasia Angelovskaya for the design.

Rev. Dr Martin Junge
General Secretary

Introduction

The pursuit of a more just, peaceful and reconciled world has always been an integral part of the LWF's self-understanding and mission. The LWF understands its holistic ministry as encompassing proclamation, service and advocacy.

Already from its constitutive assembly in Lund, Sweden, in 1947, the LWF advocated for the acceptance of a declaration of human rights. A US Lutheran scholar, O. Frederick Nolde, played a key role in the development of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10 December 1948. Similarly, one of the former LWF General Secretaries,

Rev. Gunnar Staalsett, advocated for the creation of the current UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The last LWF Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia, reaffirmed this commitment in all its substantive resolutions by urging member churches and the communion office to uphold human dignity in all of their operations and programs.

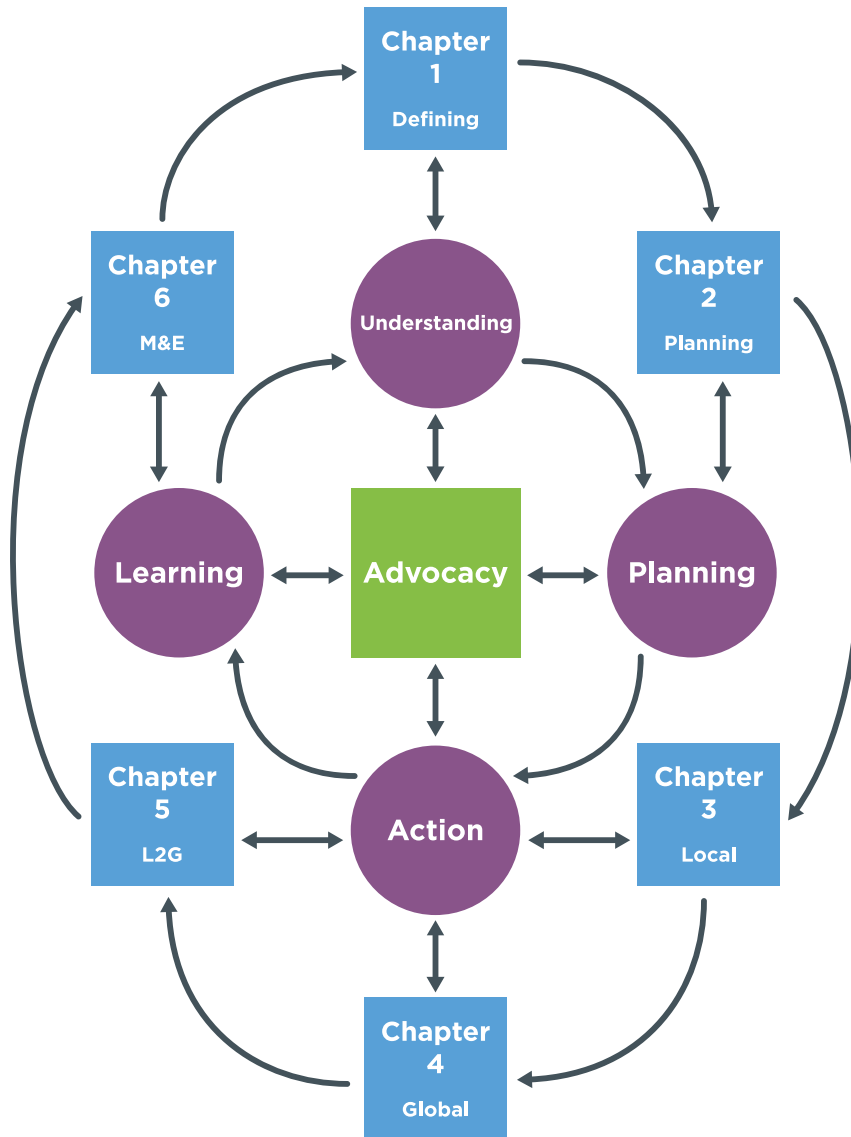
This advocacy handbook serves as a one building block towards creating a more just, peaceful, and reconciled world. It is a practical tool on how to plan and organize effective advocacy actions. It offers a wide range of advocacy strategies and tactics that can be used and adapted to different contexts. What makes it special is its attempt to connect local and international advocacy actions. This is drawn from the Lutheran World Federation's experience in Local to Global (L2G) Advocacy.

Despite numerous insightful LWF's studies on Human Rights and Lutheran theology, there has been no concrete tool developed on how to practically defend the rights of the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed. A number of LWF member churches and country pro-

grams have expressed the need for such a tool to support their local advocacy initiatives. In response to this demand, this handbook is developed by subject experts from the LWF communion office based on the experiences of our member churches and country program. It is to be treated as living tool that will continue to be revised and adapted to evolving needs and contexts. As such, your feedback, comments and experiences are highly encouraged and welcomed to improve the handbook and make it more relevant to your respective experiences and contexts.

The handbook could be used by different stakeholders such as faith-based actors, local and international NGOs, development or humanitarian practitioners and individual human rights activists. It can also be applied to protect and promote various issues like freedom of speech, press, religion; right to education, health, housing; or rights of indigenous peoples, minorities, women, children and others. In general, the handbook can be used by people who are working for a more just and peaceful world, whatever their belief or background. We particularly invite LWF member churches and country programs to utilize the handbook and adapt it to their own contexts as they continue to protect and promote human rights in their respective ministries.

The content of the handbook is organized around the four major steps in advocacy cycle namely — Understanding, Planning, Action and Learning. The following diagram illustrates the logical connection of the chapters to these four steps.





Bible studies during 2018 LWF Council. Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert



Chapter 1: Understanding Advocacy

1.1 What is Advocacy?

The word advocacy has its origin in law and is defined by most dictionaries as the act of speaking on behalf of someone or in support of something such as a cause, an idea, or a policy. Today the term is often used to describe the work undertaken by civil society groups, NGOs and individuals on behalf of poor, marginalized and oppressed groups.

Advocacy encompasses a range of actions undertaken on behalf of various groups and targeted at multiple actors. As such, different organizations define advocacy in their own terms depending on their priority issues, groups they intend to protect or their primary target actors. For example, the following organizations define advocacy as follow:

- CARE defines advocacy as the deliberate process of influencing those who make policy decisions.¹ This definition focuses on the target actors which in this case is policy makers or decision makers.

1 The CARE International: Advocacy Handbook, May 2014, P. 1.

- The World Vision defines advocacy as a ministry of influence using persuasion, dialogue, and reason to affect change. Advocacy seeks to address the structural and systemic causes of poverty by changing policies, practices, and attitudes that perpetuate inequality and deny justice.² This definition underscores the issues that advocacy wants to change.
- The Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) defines advocacy as the process of managing information and knowledge strategically to change and or influence policies and practices that affect the lives of people, particularly the disadvantaged.³ However, for this definition, although it also touches upon issues, it focuses on certain group of people, the marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

In this booklet, advocacy refers to **organized actions**, whether at local, national or international level, by ordinary people, associations or organizations that **aim to bring about changes** in policies, practices, or value systems that perpetuate injustice in order to **safeguard dignity and human rights** of all.

In this definition, three components merit further elaboration. First, advocacy is not only about changing bad policies. Some societal problems do not necessarily stem from ill-conceived policies, but from deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices or other value systems. For example, although Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is outlawed in many countries, the practice still persists due to entrenched traditional belief systems. Hence, advocacy subjects can range from formally instituted laws or policies to customary practices or beliefs and social prejudices.

Second, an advocacy target might not always be national policy makers, politicians or duty bearers in the strict sense. Depending on the issue in question, important actors that can bring about change might be local chiefs or religious leaders who wield an important soft power behind the scene.

Finally, this definition underscores that the ultimate goal of an advocacy action is to create a better and just society for all. This is an important element because even under circumstances where marginalized groups or minority rights are prioritized, the end goal is not to put the

2 World Vision: A Citizen's Guide to Advocacy, P.6.

3 Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC): Advocacy Sourcebook, December 2003, P.1.

rights of one group over another but to enable marginalized groups enjoy their human rights equally with the rest of the population.

1.2 Human Rights-Based Approach and Gender Integration

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is utilized by many Civil Society Organizations in an effort to promote and mainstream international human rights. The HRBA process begins with the identification of rights holders and their entitlements. Corresponding duty-bearers and their obligations are identified. Rights holders are empowered in making their claims to the appropriate duty-bearers, who in turn are urged to meet their obligations.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, the universal and inalienable rights of all human beings provide the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world. The human rights-based approach (HRBA) is based on such universal values as freedom, equality and non-discrimination for all – women, men and children – as reflected in the UDHR.

The HRBA focuses on the most marginalized, excluded or discriminated against in societies such as children, women and minority groups (example: religious, national, ethnic or linguistic minorities). This often requires an analysis of gender norms, discriminatory practices and power imbalances (including between women and men) to ensure that interventions reach the most marginalized sections of the population and that the root causes of human rights violations and the challenges in human development are fully addressed.

The twin principles of equality and non-discrimination call for a focus on gender equality and the engagement with women's human rights in all development programs. Equality, non-discrimination and participation are core guiding principles in the HRBA that needs to be taken into consideration in order to adopt a "gender lens" so that the HRBA fully meets the specific needs and potential of women and men.

1.3 Biblical foundations for Advocacy

The issue of human dignity, social justice and wellbeing for all creation is one of the central teachings of the Bible. In this section we shall look at four key biblical concepts to highlight the theological significance of advocacy to Christian faith.

1.3.1 Image of God

In Genesis 1:27, “So God created humankind[e] in his image, in the image of God he created them;[f] male and female he created them.” The theology of “image of God” asserts that because God created humans in his own image, all human beings are therefore equal in dignity and worth by virtue of being human. Similarly, since the image of God is bestowed on all human beings, human dignity and worth are therefore inherent and non-negotiable. From this text we can derive two very important human right principles namely ‘equality of all human beings’ and the ‘inalienability’ of human rights. Human rights are not given by governments nor can they take them away. They are rights everyone has by the virtue of being human.

The first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), reads, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...”⁴ Therefore, the theology of “image of God” calls Christians to treat everyone with dignity and to demand from others, especially those in the positions of power, to do the same. Commitment to respecting human dignity is a common ground between the theology of image of God and Human Rights Based Approach.

1.3.2 Love your neighbour as yourself

In the Bible, one man — an expert in the law, asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Jesus replied to him “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:35-40). These two commandments are intertwined, one cannot love God without loving her/his neighbour (1 John 4:20). Jesus’ definition of neighbour in the Bible is far reaching — it includes anyone who is in need (Luke 10:25-37).

Moreover, Jesus calls his followers to love not only their neighbours but also their enemies “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). From this commandment — love your neighbour as yourself, we can derive another important human rights principle — the principle of non-discrimination. This principle is a cross-cutting theme in international human rights law. It applies to everyone in relation to all human rights and

4 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 10 December 1945.

freedoms and prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories such as race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The UDHR article 7 reads, “All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law”. Hence, Christians are called not only to embrace those with whom they are intimately acquainted, but instead also those whom they might not know or look alike including those who hate them.

1.3.3 Justice for the Vulnerable and Oppressed

There are two central themes concerning justice in the Bible. The first one is God’s all-encompassing love and mercy for humankind. The second is God’s special concern for the poor, the widows, the orphans and the vulnerable in general. In the Old Testament, Prophet Isaiah wrote: “How terrible it will be for those who make unfair laws, and those who write laws that make life hard for people. They are not fair to the poor, and they rob my people of their rights. They allow people to steal from widows and to take from orphans what really belongs to them” (Isaiah 10:1-2). At the outset of his ministry, Jesus stood up in the Synagogue at Nazareth and declared his mission as follow: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Luke 4:18-19).

Whenever the Bible denounces injustice, the plight of the vulnerable is most often underscored as they are the most affected by unjust practices and systems. Human rights discourse also emerged primarily to protect the vulnerable in society from abuse and exploitation by the powerful. Under international law, States assume obligations and duties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights for all. This means that States must refrain from curtailing or interfering with enjoyment of human rights; they must provide protection for individuals and groups against human rights abuse by third parties; and that they must take pro-active measures to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights for all.

Hence, the special biblical concern for the vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed mandates Christians to be watchful to their situation and to denounce any laws, policies or practices that stigmatize them.

1.3.4 Care for Creation

In the biblical creation story, all creation is God's work and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1). God entrusted mankind with the authority and responsibility to rule over every living creature on earth. This responsibility is interpreted in numerous ways by different biblical scholars. However, mainstream scholars agree that the authority delegated to mankind to rule over the creation is to care for it within the realm of the higher authority of God. In this understanding, to "rule over" or to have a "dominion" over the earth does not mean exploitation. It means to care for the earth with responsibility and compassion and to protect the planet's capacity to support life.

This responsibility is not only limited to how humans should relate with other creation, it also involves the kind of relationship that the creator expects among human beings. In Genesis 4 God expected Cain to be a keeper of his brother in the same way as "God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." (Gen 2:15). Caring for one another is a responsibility that God expects of Human beings and for which God would hold us accountable for failing to do so. This is true for human institutions (political, economic, social, and religious), that God expects them to be agents of justice for those under their respective authorities, not to abuse or exploit them.

The theology of creation underpins the interrelatedness of all creation and thus reaffirming the interdependence and indivisibility of human rights whether political or civil rights; economic, social and cultural rights; ecological and environmental rights. God has entrusted humans to be good stewards of the nature and human beings in their individual lives and also to be just and responsible as institutions toward the creation and those under their authorities.



Questions for Discussion

- How do you define advocacy in your context?
- What other theological concepts or biblical texts justify advocacy as an integral part of Christian faith? For other faiths communities, what are the spiritual concepts or passages from your sacred text justify advocacy as an integral part of your faith?
- How do you see the Synergies between biblical teaching and human rights discourse?
- What examples of advocacy work have you been involved in either as an individual or institutions?
- Which groups, communities, or sections of societies need specific support to be able to claim their rights? Which biblical passages (or texts from your respective religion) call for their protection and empowerment?



LWF Strategic Objectives

DRR, Emergency Preparedness & Response

Sustainable Livelihoods

Human Rights

Stakeholders

- IDPs, Local Communities (Astrua Households (PAH))
- CBDRM, Camp Management Committees
- Women Groups, Youth Groups, IDPs, Farmer Groups, Livelihood Groups
- Local Communities (non-IDP)
- VPIs, School Management Committees, Child Clubs
- Development Committees
- State, Township Authorities, CSOs, ...
- State/Regional level
- GEN, AWW, FSUW, ... (MERN- Forest)

PRIORITIES

- Access to ...
- Protection forced ...
- Freedom of ...
- Access to ...
- Education ...
- Land grabbing ...
- Access to Health ...
- Access to basic ...
- Birth registration ...
- Voter Participation ...
- Freedom of associa ...
- Rights to nationa ...
- Freedom of movem ...

Wyne Sandy Mint: LWF Myanmar Country Program, Human Rights Consultant, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) advocacy planning meeting for Myanmar and Nepal. Photo: LWF/O. Ojulu



Chapter 2: Planning Advocacy

For a successful advocacy, planning and preparation are as important as taking actions. What makes advocacy different from other actions for justice is that it refers to organized actions with clearly defined strategies to achieve concrete goals. In this respect, advocacy planning involves articulating where you are, where you want to go and how you can get there. This section discusses some of the key steps for planning advocacy.

2.1 Problem Identification and Analysis

Before you start advocacy you need to have a clear and shared understanding of what the problem is, in another words what rights have been violated or what rights are not recognized by the state laws. Sometimes problems that may look obvious to us, are not so obvious to others. Defining the problem with concerned affected groups and reaching a consensus about the nature, causes and effects of the problem is a very important step in advocacy planning. This important step can facilitate the advocacy process and minimize hiccups on the way. Problem identification also helps narrow a bigger problem into more focused concrete issues that are manageable and actionable through advocacy. For example, a rural community may identify 'poverty' as one of their major problem. But this is an overly broad problem for an advocacy action. Instead, the community might narrow their problem into concrete issues such as 'access to primary education', 'health care', 'clean drinking water', 'agricultural extension services' and so on.

Problem identification goes hand in hand with problem analysis. Once the problem is identified, a consensus on priority issues within the problem needs to be developed. Subsequently, an analysis to understand the background, causes, effects and other factors that underpin the problem needs to be undertaken. Good problem analysis helps the affected communities or activists to focus their demands on the most critical aspects of the problem and therefore bring about the needed changes. It also protects the advocacy process from possible attacks from various interest groups because it can provide factual answers to critics.

There are many tools that can help with problem identification and analysis. Some of them include one-to-one interviews, focus group discussions, informal conversation in public spaces, reports and research findings, surveys etc. The appropriateness of the tools can depend on the nature of the problem at hand, the level of your acquaintance with the affected groups, the size of the group and other factors. However, as a golden rule, problem identification and analysis must be as participatory as possible. It should be inclusive and attentive to the range of various perspectives of the affected communities including from gender and intergenerational perspectives. For instance, collecting data by sex and age groups may uncover structural barriers, customary laws and gender norms that, if not addressed, will maintain vulnerable groups deprived of their rights.



Questions for Discussion:

- What is the problem that you want to address?
- What are the root causes of this problem?
- Who is the most affected by this problem and how?
- Who is the most affected by this problem and how (example, minorities/indigenous communities, women, children, youth, refugees, migrants, human rights defenders, etc.)?

2.2 Setting Advocacy Goals and Objectives

Sometimes it is easy to criticise actions or practices without proposing alternative solutions. Advocacy aims to bring about changes. Defining advocacy 'goals' and 'objectives' helps you to have a clear idea of the changes you want to see both in the long-term and short-term of

your advocacy action. The terms ‘goals’ and ‘objectives’ are often confused with each other. Although both describe the things that you may want to achieve, ‘goals’ are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve in your community, they usually refer to long-term intentions. Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals. Unlike goals, objectives are short-term in character and they are specific and measurable. For example, a project may have the goal “To alleviate poverty among indigenous communities”. In order to achieve this goal, it may have different objectives such as “To increase household incomes of indigenous communities; to improve their farming technologies for better productivity; to ensure their access to credit”.

Setting advocacy goals and objectives helps to convert problems into solutions. Instead of talking about problems, here we shall be talking about solutions, what changes do we want to see for the problems that we have identified? The overarching goal articulates the broader change that the advocacy action is designed to achieve, while objectives outline the specific outcomes we want to see after each activity on our way to achieving that overarching goal.



Questions for Discussion

- Who are the main beneficiaries of your advocacy project?
- What improvement do you want to see happening in your lives as beneficiaries or in the lives of your main beneficiaries, if others, at the end of the project?
- What specific steps or progresses will lead you to achieving this bigger change?

2.3 Internal and External Context Analysis

Understanding who we are as an organization in the wider political, economic, social and cultural context in which we operate vis-à-vis the problem is another important part of advocacy planning. In the gospel of Luke 14:31, Jesus asked this question “Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand?” This text, in its literal meaning, pretty much sums up what this step is about. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses, what resources do we have (human, financial, expertise) and our organizational vision and mission is critical to the development of an effective advocacy

strategy. The purpose here is not to deter us from taking action, but to be realistic and put in place necessary measures that could mitigate our limitations. The same is true for external context. The objective might not always be necessarily to fight back and confront but also to identify windows of opportunities and possible synergies.

One widely used tool for such analysis is called 'SWOT analysis' which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.⁵ It provides a simple way to assess the internal forces that determine your organization's potential to carry out an effective advocacy action (the S & W), and as well as the broader external forces that will help or hinder you (the O & T). The overall purpose of conducting a SWOT analysis is to have a clear picture of positive forces that can work together to help you achieve your advocacy action goals and potential problems on the way that needs to be recognized and possibly mitigated.



Questions for Discussion: SWOT analysis

	Helpful to Advocacy Goals	Harmful to Advocacy Goals
Internal Origin	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <p>What are the internal organizational factors that are favourable for achieving your advocacy goals?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <p>What are the internal organizational factors that are unfavourable for achieving your advocacy goals?</p>
External Origin	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <p>What are the external environment factors that are favourable for achieving your advocacy goals?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <p>What are the external environment factors that are unfavourable for achieving your advocacy goals?</p>

⁵ Free Management E-books (FME), SWOT Analysis, 2013.

2.4 Stakeholder Mapping

Context analysis tries to identify the internal organizational factors and the external social, economic or political environment that could affect our advocacy plan. The next step in the process, stakeholder mapping, tries to identify the relevant stakeholders or actors in your advocacy plan. These stakeholders could be both duty-bearers and rights-holders. The United Nations defines duty-bearers and rights-holders as follows:⁶

Duty bearers are those actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations. The term is most commonly used to refer to State actors, but non-State actors can also be considered duty bearers. An obvious example is private armed forces or rebel groups, which under international law have a negative obligation to refrain from human rights violations. Depending on the context, individuals (e.g. parents), local organizations, private companies, aid donors and international institutions can also be duty-bearers.⁷

Rights holders are individuals or social group that have particular entitlements in relation to specific duty-bearers. In general terms, all human beings are rights-holders under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In particular contexts, there are often specific social groups whose human rights are not fully realized, respected or protected. More often than not, these groups tend to include women/girls, ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants and youth, for example. A human rights-based approach does not only recognize that the entitlements of rights-holders needs to be respected, protected and fulfilled, it also considers rights-holders as active agents in the realization of human rights and development — both directly and through organizations representing their interests.⁸

It is not enough to know only the legal and policy environment in which we operate, but it is also important to know the names of the stakeholders responsible for the problems we are dealing with. Stakeholders mapping tries to place names — be it the appropriate government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, business enterprises, influential personalities, or media behind our advocacy plans. It helps to visually draw the power dynamics between these actors.

6 United Nations Glossary: Definitions A-Z.

7 UNICEF Gender Equality – UN Coherence and You – Glossary: p.1.

8 Op. cit., p. 5.

This process can help advocacy planning to know potential allies to work with and potential opponents to be dealt with. It can also save time and resources to know who the big fish are so more time and resources could be invested on these stakeholders rather than going after every stakeholder.

Sample Stakeholder Mapping





Questions for Discussion

- Who will support our advocacy goals and objectives? In what ways will they support it? And what power do they have in relation to our advocacy goals?
- Who will resist our advocacy goals and objectives? In what ways will they resist it? And what power do they have in relation to our advocacy goals and objectives?
- How can we change the power balance in favour of the stakeholders who will be supportive of our advocacy goals?

2.5 Identify Strategies and Tactics

Most problems usually have many causes and therefore cannot be addressed through only one solution. Problems may also have multiple layers and dimensions that need to be looked at if a lasting solution is to be attained. As such, advocacy action needs to be multi-dimensional. In some cases, you might have to decide between taking more a confrontational/adversarial approach or a more positive/constructive engagement approach.

For example, if access to education is the problem, one strategy of your advocacy may be to lobby the government to increase the budget for schools and teachers. However, increasing the budget alone might not fully address the problem. There might be other issues, such as mismanagement of resources, discrimination against certain groups (minorities, refugees, girls etc.) and other barriers (economic, social, cultural, religious etc.) that limit access to education.

Identifying advocacy strategies and tactics helps you to compare and choose the right strategy for each problem and match it with the appropriate tactic or tool to execute these strategies. For example, your organization may not have the necessary expertise needed to address the multiple levels of a problem. In this case, one might build a coalition with an organization that has that particular expertise. In other cases, public demonstrations might prove too risky, hence you might opt for quiet diplomacy with concerned authorities.

Problems evolve over time and context and actors change. Advocacy strategies and tactics should not to be static; they need to be flexible enough to adapt to new contexts and embrace

new realities. Organizational internal circumstances (finance, human resources, security risk assessment etc.) might also determine the choice of some strategies and tactics over others.



Questions for Discussion

- Which advocacy strategies (confrontational or constructive) suits your advocacy goals?
- Could you think of specific advocacy strategies and tactics that could better help you achieve your advocacy goals and objectives? List them and discuss why.
- Does your advocacy strategy takes into account cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and youth participation?

2.6 Rolling-out an Advocacy Action Plan

An advocacy action plan summarizes all the elements described in the preceding steps. It reminds the organizations involved of the main goals they have set for their advocacy action and how they have agreed to go about achieving them. It also helps them to track their progress and make necessary amendments as external contexts and internal circumstances evolve.

Sample Advocacy Action Plan: Access to Land and Tenure Security for Small-Scale Farmers

Goal	Objective	Progress Indicators	Activities	Stakeholders	Responsible	Time Frame
To achieve equitable access to land and tenure security for small scale farmers	To enact small scale farmers friendly land law	Draft bill presented to National Assembly	Lobby National Assembly Members through direct meetings & workshops	Community Based Organizations (CBOs)	Network of CBOs & National Assembly	2019
	To legally recognize communal land holding in rural areas.	Communal land holding recognized in the draft bill	Research to provide evidence based arguments for recognition of communal land holding	Traditional Leaders	CBOs and Lawyers Association	2019
	To support rural communities secure land certificates.	Communities in 5 villages receive their land certificates	Provide technical and financial support for local communities to get land certificates Ensure full women participation and benefit from the outcome	National Assembly NGOs Lawyers Association Women groups	International and Local NGOs	2020



Photo: LWF Colombia



Chapter 3: Local and National Advocacy Strategies

Based on the SWOT analysis, various advocacy strategies could be developed for different types of problems. The list of strategies in this chapter is not an exhaustive, but it represents some of the most utilized advocacy strategies in different local and national contexts. How these strategies are used can vary depending on many factors such as resources, technology, security consideration, culture and traditions etc. However, we hope that the chapter could help you discover some ideas for new initiatives or encourage you to sharpen the work you might already be doing in some of these areas.

3.1 Awareness-Raising and Mobilization for Change

When dealing with human rights violations that are deeply embedded in the structures, traditions, culture, religious beliefs and world view of a society, legal measures and policies alone are not enough. To the contrary, they might sometimes be counterproductive even among the group that you intend to defend. Under such circumstances, awareness-raising forums where community members openly discuss, debate and question some of their practices, might be a good starting point to mobilize the support of the community behind the change needed. This being said, it is important to guard against misinterpretation of religious teachings that justify messages of hatred, violence, stigmatization or discrimination of minorities, vulnerable groups or the promotion of harmful practices against women and girls.

For example, the practice of caste-based discrimination is currently outlawed in many South-East Asian countries; however the practice still prevails in many forms because it is deeply

rooted in the cultures and traditions of some societies in the region. The same is true for child marriage in many countries around the world.

For such issues that require a change in behaviour and attitude at the individual and community level, awareness-raising is a very good advocacy strategy. Awareness-raising helps to create a sustainable ground for change and ensure that policy and legal measures are adhered to at all levels.



Questions for Discussion

- What are the underlying causes for the human rights violations you intend to change through awareness-raising? Is it cultural, religious, legal, political or economic?
- Who are the main protagonists sustaining and perpetuating this particular human rights violations?
- Reflect on the most effective strategies and actions that could bring about lasting and sustainable change.

3.2 Citizens' Empowerment

It is important to note from the outset that the meaning and value of citizenship may vary from context to context. In some contexts, good citizenship might be associated with active participation in political life (i.e., voting), while in others loyalty to the state might be valued more than independent thinking. Before engaging in citizen's empowerment, it is important to ask what good citizenship means in each context and what values are attached to it.

Generally speaking, citizens' empowerment emerges from the premise that people have certain inalienable civil and political rights and expect minimum standards of economic, social and cultural rights from their governments. Citizens' empowerment encourages people to stand up for their own rights with self-confidence from a position of political, economic and social strength and to ultimately help create healthy and just societies. In this understanding, citizenship is not only confined to a singly civic obligation. It also involves shaping the systems, structures and rules of the game to be fair and just to every citizen.

As a strategy, citizen's empowerment has better chance of stimulating change in situations where there is an established rule of law and a clear social contract between citizens and the State. Under authoritarian rule where there might not be even a constitution, international standards and obligations could be used to empower people to know about their rights under international human rights standards and demand the fulfilment of those obligations from their respective governments.



Questions for Discussion

- What is the understanding of citizenship in your own context, what does it mean to be a good citizen?
- What are the rights of citizens under your constitution or legal system? Do they comply with the rights mentioned under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)? What is missing?
- Do ordinary people know their rights under the constitution? Do they know how to defend them vis-à-vis duty-bearers in case of violations?

3.3 Behind the Scenes Advocacy and Lobbying

Behind the scenes advocacy and lobbying encompasses a wide range of direct face-to-face meeting with decision makers to persuade them to support an advocacy issue or proposal. Depending on the sensitivity of the issue in question, lobbying is sometimes done privately so as to make it easier for those with decision-making power to change their minds without losing face, and to allow them to present the change in their own way.

For advocacy issues that are related to policies and legislations, lobbying can be a good tactic to directly convey your point of view to decision-makers and also to hear their perspective on the issue. Since this might involve some kind of negotiation, prior preparation is extremely important for effective lobbying not only on the advocacy issue in question but also to know a bit more about the background of the decision-makers that you are going to meet. Knowing where the decision makers stand on your issue and how much influence they have either as key decision makers themselves, or in persuading others is very important.

Religious leaders and community elders, who traditionally hold some form of status in many societies, often have easy access to important decision-makers. They are often invited to state dinners, receptions or regular consultations with political leaders. They could use all the meeting opportunities at their disposal to raise issues of public concerns to decision makers without necessarily waiting for formal lobbying occasion.



Questions for Discussion

- Are you knowledgeable enough about the issue that you want to bring to the attention of decision makers or push through parliament?
- Who has more decision making power over this issue either in the government, parliament or any other organization/institution you are trying to influence?
- How do you get access to this person, group or organization that has more decision making power?

3.4 Campaigning and Public Demonstrations

Campaigning and public demonstrations are two things. However, unlike lobbying, both are public actions whose primary strengths lie in the number of people they attract or level of attention they draw. Campaigning is broader in scope and it might involve various tactics to earn public support for an initiative to encourage those in power to take action. Public demonstrations, often involve public marches or rallies for or against something. As advocacy strategies, the ultimate goal of both campaigning and public demonstrations is to put public pressure on decision-makers to take up the issue and act upon it.

In situations where some important issues are ignored or side-lined by those in power, campaigning and demonstrations could be good strategies to bring these issues to the fore of public attention. Sometimes sustained campaigns and demonstrations can encourage authorities to sit around the table with the organizers, even on issues that they might have deliberately ignored before. In this respect, having a clearly defined goals and objectives for a campaign or public demonstrations could be very helpful as starting point for a discussion or negotiation with authorities.

However, one needs to note that these strategies are most often suitable in situations where there is some democratic space and mature culture of peaceful assembly and association. In the absence of these, carrying out public campaign and demonstrations could prove to be very risky and might do harm to people involved. Sometimes there could also be the risk of infiltration by external groups to radicalize and discredit campaigns and demonstrations. Therefore a thorough and careful risk assessment, even in situations with meaningful democratic space, is a very important step before organizing any public campaign or demonstration. One strategy to mitigate the risk of infiltration could be to print T-shirts only to be distributed to people carefully vetted by the organizers. For example, LWF and other ecumenical and inter-religious partners have over the years observed the 16 Days of Activism to overcome Gender-Based Violence to raise awareness on the scourge of discrimination against women within the churches and in the society.

For more details on the 2017 campaign: <https://genderjustice-interfaith.net/>



Questions for Discussion

- Is public demonstration allowed in your country/town? What are the procedures of getting permission from authorities?
- How do you make sure that it attracts as many people as possible while maintaining it peaceful and safeguarding it from infiltration by external parties?
- How do you make your voice heard? How do you publicize the event and what kind of messages do you want to spread?

3.5 Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience

Both non-cooperation and civil disobedience challenge unjust laws, or activities. They are two different strategies, however. While non-cooperation takes more a passive role in restraining oneself from participation in those unjust systems; civil disobedience takes a more active meaning. Civil disobedience by definition requires people take deliberate actions to disobey or even break unjust laws. Examples of non-cooperation include, boycotts of consumer goods produced through exploitation or on lands taken by force from marginalized groups, refusal to work for employers that are implicated in supporting injustice, refusal by

a community to leave their land that might have been leased to investors without their consent. On the other hand, examples of civil-disobedience include, disobeying unjust curfews, organizing public demonstration in places where freedom of assembly is forbidden, or the use of facilities only reserved for the whites by black activists during the apartheid regime in South Africa or racial segregation in the USA.

Both tactics are attempts by people to refuse to be part of a problem or accept an unjust situation. They stem from the belief that the ultimate power resides with the people and that government, policies, and laws should reflect the will of the people. It needs to be noted that both strategies are non-violent and historically have been associated with non-violent movements of Mahatma Gandhi of India, civil rights movements in USA and anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. However, the response from the government may not be non-violent and extreme caution must be taken before engaging in these practices, particularly any form of civil disobedience. These strategies can sometimes also end up in fierce legal battles so it is very important to have lawyers ready to advise and engage when necessary.



Questions for Discussion

- What is the level of public awareness about non-cooperation or civil disobedience?
- What do you want to challenge or change by engaging in non-cooperation or civil disobedience activities?
- Who is affected by or benefiting from these laws, policies or practices that you want to challenge?

3.6 Documentation of Human Rights Violations

The documentation of human rights violations is central to human rights advocacy. The effectiveness of human rights advocacy depends on the accuracy and truthfulness of the issues raised and the integrity of the organizers. One way of ensuring accuracy and reliability of our information is through detailed and comprehensive documentation of evidence as to what happened, who suffered from it, who did it, how did they do it, why did they do it, and any other important information that could shed further light on the violation.

Documentation, in addition to establishing the truth, also brings human rights violations and abuse to public attention and therefore calls for justice for the victims of abuse by pressuring governments to hold perpetrators to account. In addition to written texts and testimonies from the victims, visual photos and videos that capture the human rights violation in question have proven to be powerful aids in rallying the support of the international community for the victims and their cause. The more details the documentation contains the better. Details can help those in positions of authorities, nationally or globally, to pursue the perpetrators and make sure justice is done for the victims. In certain situations where human rights violations result not only in the loss of people's dignity but also livelihoods, documentation can help secure assistance and rehabilitation for the victims involved.

Since human rights abuse and violations are often traumatic experiences and often happen to people who are under oppression and marginalization, a significant degree of understanding and sympathy is required from those doing the documentation. Documentation requires serious preparation and thought, and a methodology that respects the dignity of the victims. The Do No Harm (DNH)⁹ principle is an important concept to keep in mind when carrying out documentation.



Questions for Discussion

- Are there human rights defenders trained in documentation of human rights abuses?
- Do they have the necessary equipment for documentation?
- Is there a system of preserving the documents and protection from possible seizure by authorities?

3.7 Fasting and Prayers

Fasting and prayers, either individually or collectively, are sometimes used as a means of purification, self-discipline and entering into the suffering of the oppressed. Fasting and prayers can also be used as a means of drawing attention to the gravity of a situation and conveying the depth of feeling and commitment in those trying to remove the injustice or bring an end

9 CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, From Principle to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm, October 2015.

to the violence. Group prayers, meditation, and other activities of this kind provide not only a level of reassurance but also a way of expressing solidarity in the face of a problem.

For example, in order to show solidarity with those suffering famine and lack of food, the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, issued the following call for prayer and fasting for hunger awareness:

“We fast to fortify our advocacy in solidarity with families who are struggling with hunger. We fast to be in solidarity with neighbours who suffer famine, who have been displaced, and who are vulnerable to conflict and climate change. We fast with immigrants who are trying to make a better future for their families and now face the risk of deportation. We fast in solidarity with families on SNAP, who often run out of food by the last week of the month.”¹⁰

Towards the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, the LWF mobilized faith based actors to Fast for climate under the “#FastfortheClimate” campaign. This attracted wide range interest from both faith based and non-faith based organizations and individuals alike. For further information on the campaign, you can consult the LWF website, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/climate-justice/fast-for-climate>.

Fasting and prayers can be combined with clear advocacy messages that people observing should follow and publicise. Fasting from food is one option that is usually used. But sometimes people are also given options of self-discipline or self-denial such as fasting from technology, or particular habits that will help them think of others and be in solidarity with them.



Questions for Discussion

- Who is your target audience for fasting and prayers? Are they church people who are already familiar with fasting and prayers or do they include wider public?
- How do you embed your message in the fasting and prayers programs?
- How do you make sure that the fasting and prayers campaign will lead people to some kind of action?

¹⁰ The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA),

3.8 Online and Social Media Campaigns

Today we live in a world where the public and individuals are not only consumers of media content but also active participants in generating news and the dissemination of real time information. Social networks such as Twitter and Facebook have become powerful platforms that allow individuals to mobilize and rally public support around their causes. Instead of lobbying the traditional media such as newspapers, television or radio for coverage of their advocacy issues, individuals and groups can use a social media platform to disseminate their information.

A recent example of the power of social media is the #BringBackOurGirls campaign that was started in Nigeria after the abduction of more than 200 school girls in the town of Chibok, Nigeria by the terrorist group Boko Haram. Soon after its launch, the hashtag became a huge global phenomenon and a talking point for traditional media, heads of states and the international community.¹¹

It needs to be noted that social media alone does not always bring about the needed change. Social media is a platform for the distribution of information and it should be accompanied by a strong grassroots movement. The use of social media has become effective in situations where it supports and amplifies the effects of other on-ground advocacy strategies and tactics such as protest, non-cooperation, civil-disobedience and others mentioned above.



Questions for Discussion

- What is the level of internet access and percentage of people with smartphones in the country?
- Who is your target audience (for example, age group, urban or rural) for the online campaign?
- How do you make sure that the online campaign is accompanied by on-ground concrete actions to bring about change you are aiming at?

11 Bring Back Our Girls Campaign, www.bringbackourgirls.ng



Advocacy training on women's human rights. Photo: LWF/C. Rendon



Chapter 4: International and Regional Human Rights Advocacy Platforms

There are many platforms for international and regional human rights advocacy. Some of them are civil society networks; others are ad hoc thematic interest groups or formally instituted inter-governmental bodies. Given the diversity and fluidity of advocacy forums, it is beyond the scope of this handbook to try to capture all of them. This chapter will discuss only the major United Nations and regional Human Rights Mechanisms. We will discuss what they are, how civil society could engage with them and what types of advocacy issues they could best address. At the end of each section, web links are provided to help readers explore further each mechanism.

4.1 Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council (HRC) of the United Nations is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights around the globe. It is made up of 47 UN member states elected by the UN General Assembly. It meets three times a year in Geneva and discusses both thematic human rights issues and specific country situations that need its attention.

During the council meetings, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) with ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) status, such as the LWF, can take part in discussions by delivering what are called ‘oral statements’, CSOs may also submit ‘written statements’ on human rights issues of their concern. The HRC also provides space for ECOSOC-accredited civil society

organizations to organize side-events during its meetings to discuss in greater depth the issues in focus at the council. These side-events often allow the CSOs to shed light on some human rights issues or country situations.

The LWF, as an ECOSOC accredited CSO, strives to bring grassroots voices and concerns to the council through oral and written statements, side events and by lobbying diplomats in Geneva. We work closely with our ecumenical partners and other civil society organizations in Geneva to ensure that the Council delivers on its mandate to promote full implementation of human rights obligations undertaken by states. The HRC sessions are some of the best forums available to give visibility to human rights violations that are not given necessary attention by the international community. It is also the best forum to initiate and advocate for thematic human rights issues that are side-lined by the international community.

For further information on the work of the Human Rights Council, you can find more details on:

- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Website: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx.
- United Nations Human Rights Council: A Practical Guide for NGO Participants, www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/PracticalGuideNGO_en.pdf

4.2 Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is one of the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council aimed at improving the human rights situation in each of the 193 United Nations member states. It includes all UN member states in its deliberations on human rights issues. Under this mechanism, the UN reviews the human rights situation in each of its members once every four and a half years. The review is conducted mainly on the basis of three types of reports: national reports (prepared by the state under review), UN reports (compiled by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – OHCHR), and other stakeholder reports (submitted by civil society and national human rights institutions). After the review, the HRC provides a list of recommendations to the State under review, encouraging it to implement them before its next review.

Since the inception of the UPR, the LWF through its country programs, member churches and partners have brought local voices to the attention of the UN and influenced the review to include those local voices. The LWF carries out this by training national CSOs and support-

ing them in their creation of strong national UPR coalitions in preparation for the review. Prior to the formal UPR, the LWF encourages these national coalitions to submit alternative reports to the OHCHR and to lobby relevant Missions/Diplomats in Geneva in order to highlight the concerns identified in the CSOs report during their interactive dialogue with the State under review. Once the review is completed and recommendations are made to the State under review, the LWF also supports national UPR coalitions in their efforts to follow up the implementation of the recommendations with their respective governments.

In terms of State cooperation, the UPR mechanism has proved to be one of the most successful UN human rights protection and promotion mechanisms. Since its creation, all of the UN member states have agreed to be reviewed and in most cases accepted the majority of the recommendations proposed to them by other member states. However, because the review occurs only at a fairly lengthy period, once every four and a half years, the UPR mechanism is most suitable for addressing systematic human rights issues related to national policies or legal framework rather than addressing urgent human rights violations.

For further information on the UPR mechanism and how to work with it, you can consult the following websites.

- UN OHCHR, www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/UPRMain.aspx
- UPR-info, www.upr-info.org/en
- LWF UPR submissions, www.lutheranworld.org/content/international-affairs-and-human-rights

4.3 Special Procedures

Included in the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council are a group of independent human rights experts appointed by the HRC with mandate to monitor and report on a wide range of human rights and advocate for their protection. These experts are known as “Special Rapporteurs”, “Independent Experts” or “Working Groups”. How they are called does not really matter. Although they are all appointed by the HRC, they are not employees of the UN; rather they are independent experts. They carry out their mandates by undertaking country visits, conducting thematic studies, raising public awareness on human rights issues they are appointed for, and engaging in advocacy by sending letters to states about alleged human rights violations. Special Procedures can be either thematic mandate holders like the “Special Rapporteur on the right to Development” or specific country mandate holders

like the “Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia”. As of 01 August 2017, there are 44 thematic mandates and 12 country mandates.

Civil Society Organizations play an important role in the work of the Special Procedures. In most cases, the CSOs are the ones feeding information to the various special rapporteurs. They support the country visits of special rapporteurs and enable them to talk to local communities, submit input for the preparation of thematic reports and organize seminars and conferences to disseminate the findings and reports of Special Rapporteurs. For instance, the LWF has worked with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous People, the Independent Expert on persons with albinism.

The special procedure mechanism, in addition to addressing systematic human rights issues pertinent to their mandate, also addresses urgent human rights violations through direct communications with governments. Sometimes they also issue press release on human rights violations that are not given sufficient attention by the international community. In this respect, they can be a very helpful mechanism for drawing the attention of the international community to urgent human rights issues that deserve immediate action. However, before sending information to a Special Rapporteur, you need to make sure that the information is related to his/her mandate. You can easily go through the list of the mandates on OHCHR website to identify under which mandate your concern falls and identify the appropriate Special Rapporteur.

When considering sending information to a Special Rapporteur, it is important to include details on the following questions:

No	Question	Your answer for example
1	What human rights violation has taken place?	Forced displacement
2	Who carried out the violations?	Local police
3	Who is/are the victims of the violations?	Local communities (name them)
4	Where and when did it take place?	Name of specific location and the dates in which this forced displacement took place
5	Has the government been informed about it (if it is not the perpetrator), if so what action have they taken?	Yes, but no action
6	What do you want the international to community to do?	We want the international community to ask the national government to respect the rights of local communities.

Providing elaborate answers to these questions can help the Special Rapporteurs to make informed decision and take action on your request.

For further information on the Special procedures mechanism and how to work with it, you can consult the following websites.

- UN OHCHR, www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx
- LWF communications to Special Procedures, www.lutheranworld.org/content/international-affairs-and-human-rights

4.4 Human Rights Treaty Bodies: CEDAW

As of August 2017, there are nine core international human rights treaties negotiated and ratified by the UN member states. Some of these treaties are supplemented by what are called “Optional Protocols”. Optional Protocols address specific concerns either of procedural or substantive nature related to the treaty. Optional Protocols to human rights treaties are

treated as treaties in their own rights and States, including those that are party to the main treaty, have to ratify them if they want to be party to them.

After their creation, each of the treaties establishes a committee of independent experts that monitor the implementation of the treaty provisions by states that have ratified them. These committees are called “Treaty Bodies”. At the moment, there are ten UN Treaty Bodies, nine for each of the treaties and an additional committee for the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. These committees are composed of independent experts of recognized competence in specific human rights and they are nominated and elected for fixed renewable terms of four years by State Parties.

The Treaty Bodies carry out their responsibilities of monitoring compliance to the treaty provisions through the review of periodic reports submitted to them by State Parties. In order to verify compliance with the substantive provisions of the treaties, State Parties are required to submit regular reports on how they have implemented respective treaty provisions. Then the concerned Treaty Body considers these reports in the presence of a delegation of the State Party and in the light of all information, including oral information provided by the State Party during the consideration of the report. The committees also consider reports known as “Shadow Reports” from United Nations agencies, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and civil society actors, in particular non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professional associations and academic institutions. Based on these reports, treaty bodies adopt what are generally known as “concluding observations”. These observations address the positive aspects of a State’s implementation of the treaty and also identify actions that the treaty body recommends the State to take further action.

CSOs play many important roles to promote these international human rights treaties and to make sure that they are respected and implemented around the world. In situations where countries have not ratified treaties, national CSOs can lobby and advocate for the ratification of those treaties by their governments. If your country is already party to a treaty, you can also follow up with your national government to make sure that they submit their reports to the committee regularly. As a CSO, your organization can also submit a shadow report to the committee to provide CSO perspective during the review. It is also possible for CSOs representatives to attend the review process in Geneva and talk to committee members in person. After the review, CSOs can follow up with their respective governments to make sure that the recommendations of the committee are implemented on the ground. For further information

on the United Nations human rights treaty bodies and how to work with them, you can consult the following link.

- UN OHCHR, www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention) is one of the nine human rights treaties that specifically addresses women's human rights. The UN General Assembly adopted the CEDAW Convention on 18 December 1979 and it is one of the most widely ratified international human rights conventions. To date it has been ratified by 189 countries. The core obligations that seek to achieve genuine equality for women under CEDAW's convention can be summarized as follow: no direct or indirect discrimination against women; improvement of the de facto (real) vs de jure (in law) position of women; and addressing prevailing gender relations and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes.

The CEDAW Committee is composed of a pool of experts in the field of women's human rights from different regions and backgrounds. The Committee, whose members are independent consultants and not UN staff members, monitors state implementation of the CEDAW Convention through the reports submitted by state parties.

The CEDAW Convention and the working methods of the Committee offer a unique opportunity for NGOs to get involved at different stages of the reporting cycle. States are encouraged to carry forward participatory processes at the national level, involving civil society organizations in the preparation of the report and in supporting the NGOs' work in disseminating the Convention and working towards its implementation.

The Committee has opened concrete spaces of engagement for NGOs, such as the possibility of sharing a list of issues that they consider key to be addressed during the state's review. This opportunity is given during the Pre-Sessional Working Group, a few months before the state's report is discussed. Informal meetings and briefings with members of the Committee in Geneva during the week the state's report is scheduled are also a powerful way of putting forward the specific challenges regarding women's human rights in a specific country.

Furthermore, NGOs are considered essential in providing alternative or shadow reports that complete and/or highlight gaps in the implementation of the Convention or the Committee's concluding observations. The expression "shadow reports" refers to NGOs' own reports after they have had access to the government's report. State parties' reports can be found on the OHCHR's website¹² or by contacting the CEDAW secretariat.¹³ "Parallel reports" are the NGOs' reports prepared when the government's report is not accessible or has not been submitted.

For further information on how to engage with CEDAW mechanism, please refer to the following document.¹⁴

4.5 The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights

This charter intends to promote and protect human rights in the African continent. The body responsible for monitoring the compliance of member states to the provisions of the charter is the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights based in Banjul, Gambia. The commission also has the responsibility of interpreting the charter. According to Article 45:1a of the Charter, the Commission is mandated "to collect documents, undertake studies and researches on African problems in the field of human and peoples' rights, organise seminars, symposia and conferences, disseminate information, encourage national and local institutions concerned with human and peoples' rights, and should the case arise, give its views or make recommendations to governments." For further information please consult the website of the Commission: www.achpr.org

In order to complement and reinforce the functions of the Commission, African countries have established an African Court on Human and Peoples Rights based in Arusha, Tanzania. The court can receive cases filed by member State parties to the Protocol on African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights or African Intergovernmental Organizations. Moreover, individuals and NGOs with observer status before the Commission may also bring cases directly before the court as long as the State against which they are complaining recognizes the jurisdiction of the court as per Article

12 http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?TreatyID=4&DocTypeID=29_

13 cedaw@ohchr.org

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34(6) of the Protocol. For further information on the Court please consult the court's website www.african-court.org/en/index.php/12-homepage1/1-welcome-to-the-african-court

4.6 The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

This is the principal organ within the Organization of American States (OAS) for the protection and promotion of human rights. The work of the Commission rests on three main pillars; the individual petition system; monitoring of the human rights situation in the member States; and, its work on priority thematic areas. With the adoption of the American Convention on Human Rights in 1969, the commission also monitors and oversees the compliance of member states to the provisions of the convention.

Another important organ of the OAS for the protection and promotion of human rights in the region is the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Established in 1979, the court plays two major functions. First as judicial body to hear and rule on specific human rights cases referred to it and second as advisory body to issue legal opinions on matters of legal interpretation brought to its attention by member States or other Intergovernmental bodies of the OAS. Under the Convention, cases can be referred to the Court either by the Commission or State Party. Unlike the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, individual citizens of the OAS are not allowed to take cases directly to the Court.

For further information on the Inter-Americas human rights system consult the website of the OAS and IACHR, www.oas.org/en/iachr

4.7 European Convention on Human Rights

This is the founding treaty for the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. It was the first real human rights treaty under which the member States of the Council of Europe promised to secure fundamental human rights and freedoms for their own citizens and also everyone within their jurisdiction. As stated in its preamble, the purpose of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is "to take the first steps for the collective enforcement of certain of the Rights stated in the Universal Declaration". While the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was intended to be universal and a declaration of ideas, the ECHR was intended to be a regional, binding agreement. Unlike the UDHR, the ECHR bound the contracting members to live by the rights enumerated in it.

All member States of the Council of Europe are party to the ECHR and its ratification is one of the requirements for admission into the Council's membership.

To ensure enforcement, the convention established the European Court of Human Rights. The Court can rule on individual or State applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the Convention. As such, any person who feels her or his human rights have been violated under the Convention by a State party can take a case to the Court. In the last fifty years, the Court has delivered more than 10,000 judgments that are binding on the States concerned and have led governments to alter their legislation and administrative practices in a wide range of areas. For further information on the regional Human Rights Protection and Promotion system in Europe consult the following website, www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home&c=

4.8 Association of Southeast Asian Nations Intergovernmental commission on Human Rights

Unlike the aforementioned regional human rights mechanisms, there are no binding conventions or mechanisms yet to promote and protect human rights across Asia. Each country has its own approach and they all vary in their record of human rights promotion and protection.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the equivalent of other regional inter-governmental organizations. Established in 1967, ASEAN is an economic and geo-political organization of 10 Southeast Asian countries encompassing Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The major goals of ASEAN are to accelerate economic growth among its members, cultural and social development and the promotion of peace in the region.

In 2010, ASEAN made a step towards the protection and promotion of human rights by establishing the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. Two years later, it adopted the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. However, until now there is no Asia-wide binding human rights convention or a court. For further information on the protection and promotion of human rights in the ASEAN region, consult the following website, asean.org, www.forum-asia.org



Maria Corina Ramirez Hernandez, Lutheran Church of Guatemala (left) and Guido Castro Endara, Ev. Luth Church of Bolivia at the UN in Geneva. Photo: LWF/O. Ojulu



Rose Lokonyen speaking at the UN in Geneva. Photo: Peter Kenny



Chapter 5: Local to Global Advocacy

In the preceding chapters, we discussed various types of national and international level advocacy strategies and instruments. This categorisation is not absolute. Some national strategies can be employed for international advocacy and vice versa. Moreover, in today's globalized world, local, national and international level advocacy and rights-based action have to be synchronized in order to achieve concrete results.

The LWF intentionally and strategically tries to synchronize its national and global level advocacy — together with rights-based action within communities — in order to maximize impact at a local level. We call this Local to Global (L2G) advocacy. This chapter tries to define L2G advocacy, when to use it and how it can be applied.

5.1 Defining L2G Advocacy

L2G refers to an advocacy approach that addresses advocacy issues at all levels — local, national and global — in order to effect maximum and sustainable change at a local level. It is largely about how we plan, manage and resource advocacy, link it to rights-based programming, and ensure synergy and join-up between the various levels. First, as an advocacy strategy, L2G can be more effective in tackling certain types of problems than others. Not all advocacy issues need L2G approach. Hence, identifying when to use L2G and for what types of problems is crucial. Second, L2G recognizes that most advocacy problems of the globalized world today may not recognize State territorial borders. Addressing such problems only from one source might not be sufficient. In order to fully tackle such problems, L2G

presents multi-layered interventions at all the necessary levels. Likewise, implicit in the L2G approach is the recognition that some problems are technically sophisticated and sometimes may have multiple root causes. Addressing such problems only from one dimension (eg. political, economic or social) might not be sustainable. In order to comprehensively tackle such problems, L2G tries to draw upon multiple areas of expertise and squeeze the problem from all the relevant angles.

Finally, L2G gives emphasis to producing concrete results on the ground. All the different advocacy engagements at various levels and through multiple dimensions are geared toward making a difference at a specific location and in the lives of a specific community. Hence, even though for convenience reasons we call it L2G, in reality, the circle actually begins with local and also ends at local level (Local to Global and back to Local).

L2G is therefore not about erudite NGO policy specialists in the corridors of power. It is about enabling the truly legitimate voices — those of local communities — to be heard in those centres of influence.

5.2 Issues for L2G Advocacy

Knowing when to employ the process of L2G Advocacy is an important step. The following non-exhaustive list discusses certain categories of advocacy problems that are more pertinent for L2G approach.

5.2.1 Transnational Problems

While economic globalization has created development opportunities in some countries, it has also brought negative impacts to others. Most negative impacts often occur in developing countries where state institutions are weak or non-existent. In these countries, transnational corporations exploit natural resources, abuse human rights and destroy natural environment with little to no impunity. Because of economic globalization, a local problem in a remote village in Africa today might have its cause somewhere else in the world. If such problems are to be meaningfully addressed, there should be integrated advocacy strategies that address both the local and global dimensions of such problems. So far, most of the advocacy interventions are either tuned toward local/national level or global/international level. The L2G approach strives to bridge this divide and address the problem meaningfully from all ends.

5.2.2 Structural Violence

This term was primarily used in conflict studies to describe usually subtle forms of violence that are embedded in the economic, political and social organizations of a society. Today structural violence is used in many fields to describe invisible underlying forces, whether national or global, which prevent individuals or populations from realizing their basic human rights. One key aspect of structural violence is that it is often not even seen or known to its victims. Moreover, even when known it is difficult to pin culpability to one body. For example, hunger today is seen as a form of structural violence. But when someone or a population is suffering from hunger, who should we really blame? Or when a baby dies from a preventable disease, whose fault is it? The impacts of climate change and some forms of violence against women are other examples of structural violence. In such situations, the L2G approach can help mobilize necessary technical expertise to connect the dots and unmask hidden structures behind the suffering of a community and its citizens. It is important to understand that some social gendered norms, practices and customs can contribute to the reproduction of structural violence, affecting men, women, girls and boys negatively.

5.2.3 Protracted Institutionalized Injustices

Some populations suffer from institutionalized forms of injustice that subject them to discrimination and marginalization based on their language, religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, sex, or any other categories. For example, the apartheid regime in South Africa institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination where black South Africans suffered at the hands of the government. Today, the Palestinian struggle for justice, the caste-based discrimination of the Dalit in South East Asia, the struggle of indigenous populations and Afro-descendants in Latin America, sexual and gender-based violence globally are some examples of protracted institutionalized injustices.

Since these types of injustice are difficult to be resolved through domestic measures, international solidarity and pressure can be a powerful driver for change. The L2G approach can assist such struggles by mobilizing solidarity groups outside the country. The L2G process can connect the local activist with the external world and facilitate pressure on the national government to affect change.

5.2.4 Breach of International Accountability mechanisms

After the horrors of the Second World War, member States vowed “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained.” Member States are held accountable to these principles by international instruments such as treaties, customary international laws or the body of international law. Civil Society Organizations and active citizenry can also hold governments accountable to their international commitments to these principles.

The monitoring of States’ compliance with their international commitments often relies on the cooperation of the State. However, CSOs can play a very important role in this process. CSOs can encourage their respective governments to cooperate with these mechanisms and also provide alternative voice to the international community. This can provide the international community with a more comprehensive picture of the real situation on the ground. CSOs can also help disseminate recommendations and comments from the international community to the wider public and hold their respective governments to honour their commitments. The L2G approach can be a very important methodology to report breaches of international instruments and to ensuring that international commitments are respected.

5.3 Essential Preconditions for an Effective L2G Advocacy

Putting L2G into action requires some serious planning and preparations. Depending on the advocacy issue in question some factors are critical for effective L2G intervention. This section discusses some of these factors.

5.3.1 Engaged Communities ready to act

The fundamental starting point for a L2G approach is an engaged community ready to act, with the support and solidarity of partners such as LWF. L2G is about amplifying their voice and the rights-based action they are willing to take, and making sure it is heard at a national and international level. Communities identify what the important issues to address; what is the change they want to see in response to these issues; and, what action need to be taken

in order to rectify those issues. Other partners then can provide assistance, guidance and training to members of the community who are committed to a plan of advocacy.

5.3.2 Institutional Infrastructure

One of the key determinants for an effective L2G advocacy programming is a local to global perspective and institutional arrangement. Organizations whose institutional structures stretch from local to global level are most often well placed to consolidate L2G in their work. Under such circumstances, inclusive and participatory advocacy planning plays an important role in order to ensure that there is ownership from all offices at various levels. A clear understanding of responsibility sharing as who takes the lead on what, when and with whom is also required. Institutional infrastructure alone is not enough, political will and support from the leadership of the organization is also needed. Hence, securing “buy-in” from the highest decision making bodies of the respective institutions is very important.

5.3.3 National level Coalition Building

Working in coalition with all relevant stakeholders is a key component in many advocacy initiatives. It is even more so for a successful L2G advocacy. For national organizations working only in one country, building coalitions with their counter-parts in other countries could be the only way they could influence meaningful change beyond their national borders. The same is true for INGOs with limited grassroots presence. If they want to bring some concrete changes in the lives of communities, they must work in coalition with the appropriate grassroots organizations. Although it is often challenging to work in a coalition, if managed effectively, its benefits and success rate usually outweighs the setbacks.

For effective coalition, members should be able to identify organizations with already shared areas of interests, determine who has to take the leadership role in what area, clearly define the respective roles of each of the coalition members, clarify resource mobilization and allocation for different activities, decide how often the coalition has to meet and draft a common agreed advocacy action plan to minimize disagreements and maximize consensus.

5.3.4 Interlinked and flexible Resourcing

Resource mobilization and allocation plays an important role in L2G Advocacy. Advocacy campaigns that are well resourced are most likely to succeed. Successful L2G advocacy requires intentional and strategic allocation of resources at all the relevant levels. L2G advocates need to ensure that all coalition members receive the necessary resources to effectively carry out their share of responsibility.

Resources across various levels should be interlinked and be flexibly moved from one level to another as advocacy progresses. Some levels might need more resources in some period of time than others. Unexpected windows of opportunity might also show up at some levels that might require immediate action. Therefore having an interlinked and flexible resource system can prove very effective for L2G advocacy. The overall goal should be on the success of the advocacy project and not “turf protection” or “resource control” by individual actors in the process.

5.3.5 Identifying Appropriate Global Institutions or Mechanisms

A common dilemma in international advocacy is the risk of wishful thinking among INGOs without concrete implementation. Identifying specific global institutions and the appropriate mechanisms for advocacy can help alleviate the ineffectiveness of wishful thinking. Monitoring and keeping track of initiatives can also help. An effective monitoring program can be used at a national level by CSOs in order to hold governments and other duty-bearers to account for delivery on their commitments.

For example, the LWF in its L2G advocacy has identified the Human Rights Council and UPR mechanism for general human rights issues, CEDAW and CSW for women’s human rights, UNFCCC for climate change, UNHCR forums for refugees’ rights, as its major target for global advocacy. Through this mechanism, the LWF can track the recommendations it prioritizes and help ensure those recommendations are implemented. Other INGOs use a similar process to review policies of global financial institutions or other inter-governmental organizations such as the World Bank, IMF or the European Union. Hence, being specific about the global institutions or mechanisms that one wants to work with can help L2G advocacy to make a global and local impact on selected issues.

5.3.6 Civil Society Space

As of late, the issue of civil society space has become a huge challenge for many NGOs. Many governments have put in place restrictive legislations to undermine the work of civil societies. This seems to be particularly targeted towards those organizations who are working on human rights issues. Sometimes local organizations that partner with INGOs have been specifically targeted through some of these legislations and they have been accused of facilitating the agenda of foreign agencies. This practice directly challenges the L2G advocacy approach as it tries to limit cooperation between local and international organizations. Without an unencumbered civil society environment, it will be very difficult to do L2G advocacy.

As a consequence, the practice of shrinking civil society space, in and of itself, requires concerted L2G advocacy efforts in order to challenge those laws and ensure respect for freedom of association and assembly. An unrestricted CSO space and environment is critical to the advocacy process. Hence, the issue of Civil society space needs to be a cross cutting theme across any L2G intervention.

5.4 Designing L2G Advocacy

A L2G advocacy project or programme may be designed with the following elements:

- Identify the particular issue (e.g. land rights) and the particular place and country where change is desired, and work with the community and local organisations to identify what action can be taken.
- Identify what are the changes required at national and international level in order to achieve that local change.
- Build on these actions and outcomes and create a project of defined duration with clear deliverables.
- Identify any allies who can aid in the process and seek out their assistance.
- Ensure mechanisms for a fluid exchange of resources and information between allies.
- Ensure adequate resources are obtained for activity at all levels, based on a clear expenditure program.
- Implement and monitor according to a tight project cycle, with commitment to the discipline of demonstrating impact.
- Monitor results and engage in self-critical analysis for improved delivery and future learning.



Development work in Cameroon.
Photo: LWF/C. Kästner



Chapter 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

Taking a pause and having a moment of reflection on our actions is a crucial step in any project cycle. Advocacy is no different. Effective advocacy interventions are usually those that build on feedback from the stakeholders we work with and it is flexible enough to take advantage of emerging opportunities and avoid potential risks. Regular monitoring and evaluation, formal or informal, sharpens advocacy interventions and helps us stay focused on the core issue.

Nevertheless, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy work presents specific challenges. Unlike development and humanitarian interventions, the impacts of advocacy actions sometimes involve changes that are only seen in the long-term. Hence, until now there is not yet an agreed upon, comprehensive methodology on how to evaluate such types of activities.

This chapter discusses some important questions and key principles that need to be taken into consideration when monitoring and evaluating advocacy interventions.

6.1 Defining Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is meant to be a continuous process. It seeks to understand what is happening throughout the lifetime of an advocacy project. The major benefits for monitoring include:

- The ability to effectively respond to unforeseen events and adapt advocacy plans accordingly.
- To assess the progress of an advocacy intervention as to what is working and what is not working.
- To document the advocacy process for the sake of learning and improving future work.

The most important aim of monitoring is to identify when plans need to be changed because things are not going well, challenges are being faced or new opportunities have been identified.

6.1.2 Evaluation

Whereas monitoring is a continuous process, evaluation is an assessment of the project at a specific point in time — either mid-term evaluation or at the completion of a project. In addition to the benefits cited for monitoring, evaluations can help advocacy projects to:

- Assess the progress of the project against its stated strategy, goals and objectives.
- Draw lessons from the past activities for the sake of improving future engagements.
- Demonstrate the results and impacts of an advocacy project to relevant stakeholders including the beneficiaries, policy makers, donors and others.

Even though the terms of reference for evaluating each advocacy project may vary depending on the specific activities, any advocacy project evaluation should look at the lessons learnt and propose how these lessons could be incorporated in the next phase of the project. Some of the key questions that an evaluation could address include:

- To what extent has the project achieved its original objectives?
- What factors contributed to the success or failure of the project?
- Have there been changes in the project objectives? If yes how and why?
- What specific strategies and tactics worked and which did not? Why?
- What could have been done differently given the hindsight?
- What impact did any change have on the lives of the intended beneficiaries?
- What needs to be changed in the future as a result of this evaluation?

6.2 Key Principles

Too often monitoring and evaluation involve a set of complex tools and forms in order to gather data and information. In advocacy this is not necessary. Simple and friendly systems are more likely to work better than complex and sophisticated ones. The following principles can help you to design a simple monitoring and evaluation guide for your advocacy project.

6.2.1 Setting Clear Advocacy Goals and Objectives

As discussed in chapter two, it is very important that advocacy goals and objectives are clearly defined from the outset. This will greatly help when monitoring the project during its lifetime or after its completion of the project. Knowing what changes the project anticipated to bring about can help to determine if those changes have indeed been realized or not. Hence it is very important that when developing advocacy goals and objectives we understand exactly what the problem is, what must change, what alternative solution should be adopted and what is realistically achievable by the project over its lifecycle.

6.2.2 Identifying Milestones and Indicators

While goals and objectives describe what the project aims to achieve both in the short and long term, milestones and indicators tells us the progress towards the goals and objectives. This is very important especially for monitoring purposes to measure not only what has been done but also how well it has been done. If we are clear about our milestones and indicators they will tell us whether or not we are on the right track of achieving the advocacy goals and objectives we have set for our advocacy project.

6.2.3 Active Participation of key stakeholders

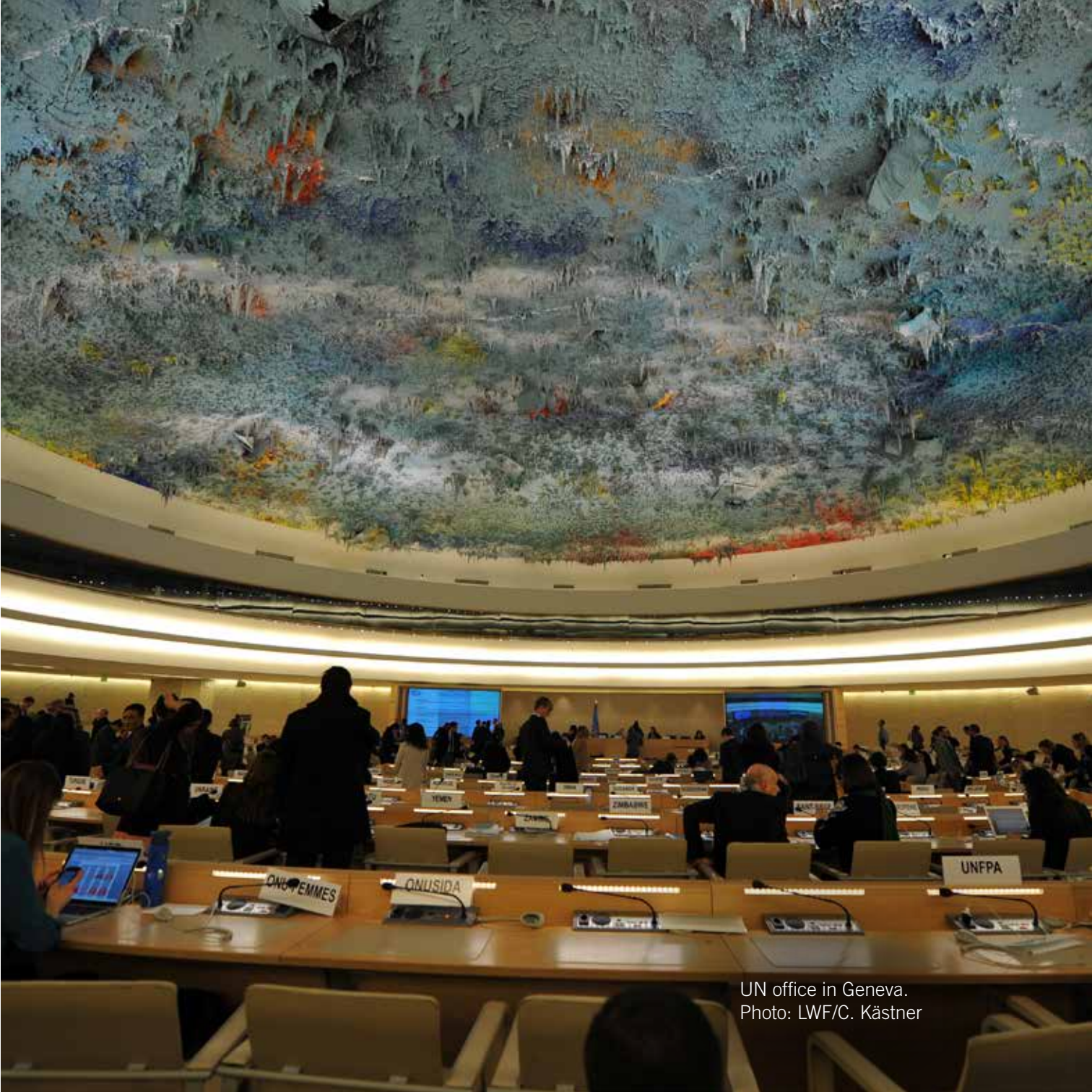
Most advocacy programs and projects involve campaigning on behalf of particular groups or communities. The need for involving such groups or communities in the advocacy planning stage was already highlighted in chapter two. This is also true during advocacy project monitoring and evaluation phase. The intended beneficiaries should have a say on whether the project is on the right track of making a difference in their lives — during monitoring processes — or if the project has indeed brought some changes in their lives — during the final evaluation phase.

6.2.4 Data Triangulation

In addition to primary beneficiaries of our advocacy project, monitoring and evaluation should also take in to consideration the views of other important stakeholders such as policy and decision makers, independent experts, civil society organizations and other relevant bodies depending on the nature of the advocacy project. Expanding the source of our information not only enriches our analysis but could also contribute to the quality and accuracy of our findings. One of the simplest methodologies of cross-checking the accuracy and validity of our data is “Data Triangulation”. In qualitative research, data triangulation refers to using evidence from different types of data sources to check and establish the validity and credibility of our information. Using data triangulation can help to obtain more comprehensive data, give more insights into a topic, minimizes inconsistencies usually found in one data source and generally eases the analyses process that in turn can help to draw sound conclusions and outcomes.

6.2.5 Develop an on-going reflection process throughout the project cycle

Finally, in advocacy, monitoring and evaluation should not be treated as an isolated step that has to take place formally at certain period of a project. There needs to be a process of continuous reflection throughout the project cycle to be prepared to adapt plans accordingly as the situation evolves. Since advocacy usually involves dynamic situations where changes happen often quite rapidly, monitoring and evaluation need to be continues process too rather than one-off exercise only to take place at a specific moment of the project. Hence monitoring and evaluation should be regarded as continuous self-reflection and as an opportunity for learning rather than an inspection or a judgement, and the learning needs to be fed back into the programme to improve future engagements.



UN office in Geneva.
Photo: LWF/C. Kästner

Further Reading

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