



Communications & Media Advocacy Action Guide

Eight Elements of
a Public Health
Communications
and Media Advocacy
Campaign



This document is
designed to be
used with GHAI's
**Advocacy
Action Guide.**



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About the Global Health Advocacy Incubator:

The [Global Health Advocacy Incubator](https://www.advocacyincubator.org) (GHAi) uses the power of advocacy to reduce preventable deaths and to improve health at scale by changing policies and strengthening systems. We support civil society organizations and advocacy movements to pass public health policies that save lives, reduce disease and prevent injuries, increase investments in public health and create a healthier and more equitable future for all. GHAi is an initiative of the [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](https://www.campaignfortobaccofreekids.org).

www.advocacyincubator.org

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**Global Health
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Changing Policies to Save Lives

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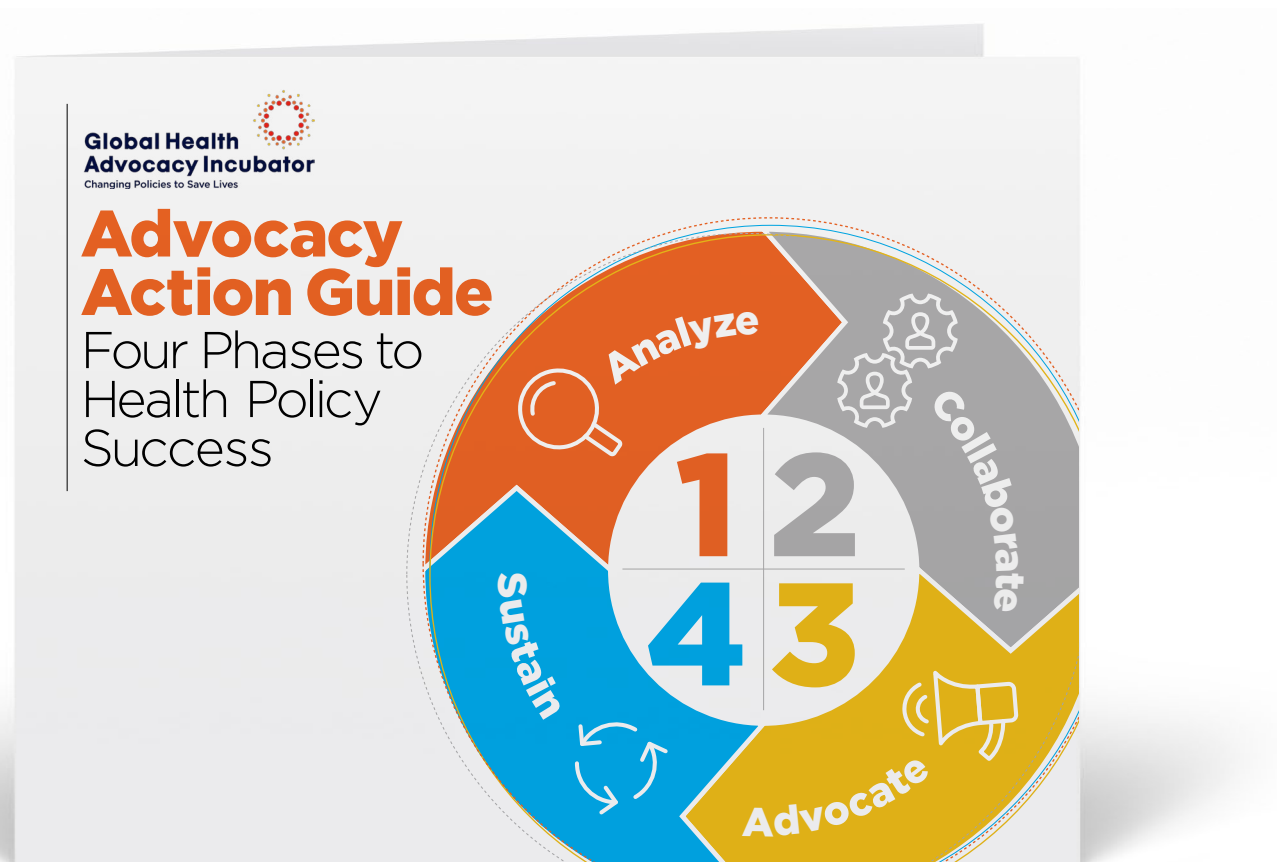
Introduction

Effective communications is key to successful policy advocacy outcomes. It is essential to advocacy, and can help mobilize supporters, motivate policymakers and turn ideas into successful advocacy.

What is this document?

GHAI has developed this guide as a resource for public health advocates to plan and implement effective communications and media advocacy campaigns. It documents the collective experience of GHAI, Tobacco-Free Kids and our local partners worldwide in using communications and media advocacy to achieve health policy outcomes on a range of public health issues.

This document should be used hand in hand with the [GHAI Advocacy Action Guide](#).



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How will this guide support your work as an advocate and how will you use it?

This Communications and Media Advocacy Action Guide outlines key steps when utilizing communications strategies to achieve health policy outcomes. Based on our experience with successful advocacy, this guide provides insights, templates and guidance on how to navigate each step successfully.

What is communications and media advocacy?

Communications and media advocacy efforts directly support policy change and implementation. This is different and distinct from behavior change activities, which just focus on individual level behavior change.

Both communications and media advocacy and behavior change are designed to be tailored and contextualized to specific country and policy contexts.

Communications and Media Advocacy Campaign Versus Behavior Change Campaign



Communications and Media Advocacy

Targeted, strategic & focused on a specific policy objective.

Tied specifically to influencing decision-makers, passing/defending legislation or regulations, supporting the allocation of resources and promoting the implementation of the policy.

Example: We support a law that directs the Ministry of Health to provide COVID vaccines in a timely manner.



Behavior Change

Focused on personal or individual level behavior change.

Aims to create greater understanding and awareness of a particular issue among the general public. Can include efforts to social and behavior change communication.

Example: It is important to wash your hands to stop the spread of COVID.

Why is communications and media advocacy important?

A strong communications and media advocacy campaign educates, raises awareness and influences its primary audience. Over time, communications campaigns can change narratives, create an enabling environment for change and serve as an accountability mechanism for policymakers.

When channeled strategically, communications and media advocacy campaigns can:

- Pressure decision-makers to prioritize specific actions that help advance policy change.
- Create awareness of and urgency around an issue to encourage action.
- Get the public to want to actively engage and pressure decision-makers.
- Expose evidence to policymakers and the public.
- Educate on solutions to policy challenges.
- Set up an overall environment for longer-term policy change.

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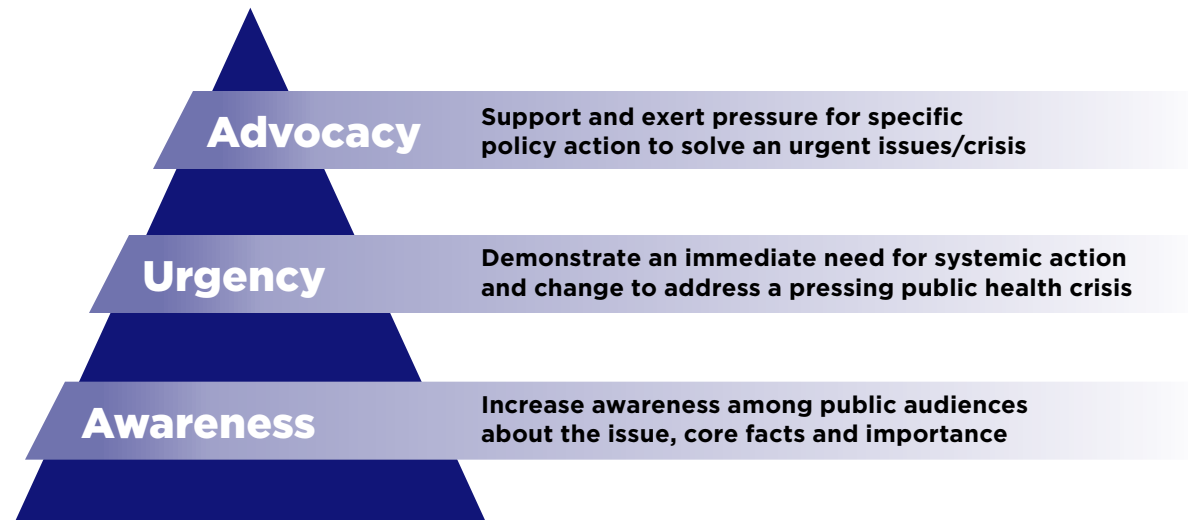
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When do we do it?

Communications and media advocacy campaigns are built on continuous messaging and communications about your issue — what we call the “drumbeat.” This helps build awareness, creates an enabling environment for change and keeps the issue top of mind with influential people when breakthrough moments arise. Breakthrough moments are windows of time when there is a focus on your issue and media and the public can influence the policy process and public opinion around an issue area.

Communications and Media Advocacy Messaging Stages



Communications and media advocacy typically has three stages, that build on each other.

STAGE 1 is public awareness, which is the foundation that every subsequent stage builds upon and includes an understanding among public audiences about the issue, core facts and importance. Your message will become more action-oriented as you move through your campaign.

STAGE 2 creates a sense of urgency, emphasizes the need for change through policy improvements. The focus is on the broad need for policy action, but the campaign is not yet in a key policy opportunity window where a call for immediate action is possible. That policy action could be legislative or regulatory change, protecting an already adopted policy, or promoting a policy’s implementation or the time when annual budgets are reviewed and approved. This phase helps lay the groundwork to build momentum and support for stage 3.

STAGE 3 is the key policy stage. All your work in phases 1 and 2 have built a foundation so you can activate your audience to participate in direct calls to action for policy change.

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Develop a Communications and Media Advocacy Plan

Why is this important?

Once you identify your goal, you can develop a communications and media advocacy plan to help achieve it. The communications and media advocacy plan defines your communications and media advocacy activities to support your broader advocacy plan (See Phase 2: Collaborate in the Advocacy Action Guide).

It helps plan and track key components, including identifying your primary audiences, messengers and activities. Building a communications and media advocacy plan also helps to clarify the resources needed to achieve results. By outlining your next steps, this plan helps identify what works and what doesn't, allowing for adjustments and improvements in future media strategies.

Outcome: *A communications and media advocacy plan, based on your strategy, that includes specific objectives and is linked to your overall advocacy efforts.*

The plan should always be in direct alignment with your advocacy plan and overall campaign. Before you start your communications and media advocacy plan, you should have the following elements in place:

- **Advocacy Strategy/Plan:** A clear understanding of the policy process and how you plan to influence it (this is the basis of the communications and media advocacy plan).
- **Political Map:** Understanding who the political players are and how coalitions or partner groups plan to engage with them. This helps define the primary audience of the communications and media advocacy efforts. This may include identifying opponents so that messages can be considered to counter opposing narratives.
- **Media Map and Media Landscape:** A media map will give you an understanding of the media that exists in your country and which are most critical for a primary audience and how to best leverage opportunities. Additionally, a media landscaping will give you a sense of which outlets have covered your topic, and how.
- **Resources Map:** Understanding the resources available to support your communications and media advocacy campaign. This guides the implementation plan for a communications and media advocacy strategy.

How to do this:

Each step of the action guide represents a key component that must be addressed to finalize your communications and media advocacy plan. As you develop these components, integrate them to create a comprehensive and cohesive plan.

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CASE STUDY: PHILIPPINES



Philippines Child Restraint System: The Congress of the Philippines passed the Child Safety in Motor Vehicles Act in 2018 with broad, multiparty support. One of the first such laws in Asia, it mandates the use of child restraint systems also known informally as car seats.

Based on the research, the coalition launched a robust earned media strategy. High-level spokespeople blanketed the airwaves, appearing on television and radio to share information about child restraints and road safety. The coalition developed a Facebook page called Buckle Up Kids PH, which generated more than 50,000 engagements per month. The coalition also used paid advertising in print, television and radio campaigns calling for passage of a child restraint law with an audience reach of 95 million – almost the entire population of the Philippines.

Demonstrating public support to policymakers for a child restraint law was a critical element of the campaign plan. The Philippines Road Safety Coalition collectively developed a persuasive, positive message and supported qualitative and quantitative research and message testing to measure effectiveness.

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Communications Plan Template

Communications Plan

Policy Goal:

Objectives:

Communications Objectives

Primary Audience	Key Messages	Preferred Messengers	Communication Channel	Materials	Gaps/Resources Needed

Communications Activities

Activity	Responsible Person	Resources (including Budget)	Timeframe

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Setting Communications Objectives:

A communications objective is a specific, measurable goal that outlines what you aim to achieve through your communication efforts within a given timeframe. These objectives are crucial for guiding the development and execution of communication strategies and tactics, ensuring that all efforts are aligned with the overall goals of your organization or campaign.

Effective Communications Objectives Must Be SMART

1. **Specific:** Clearly defines what you want to achieve.
2. **Measurable:** Includes criteria to track progress and measure success.
3. **Achievable:** Realistic and attainable within the given resources and constraints.
4. **Relevant:** Directly supports the broader goals and objectives of the organization or campaign.
5. **Time-bound:** Specifies a timeframe for achieving the objective.

Examples of communication objectives:

1. *In 2024, create public awareness in x community of importance of immunizations and call for the government to ensure vaccines are available for all children.*
2. *By 2026, build public support for regulations that promote no-smoking areas in x town through engagement of social media influencers.*
3. *By the end of 2025, change the public narrative to support calls for all children to be buckled up in cars.*

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STEP 2

Identify Your Primary Audiences

Why is this important?

We all view the world from a slightly different lens. Everyone's unique history, background, experiences, faith, family, work and environment shape them. When considering your audience, it is critical to take the time to view the world from the perspective of that audiences. What keeps them up at night? What are their fears, priorities, major concerns, hopes, wishes, problems and dreams? Gaining an understanding of your audience will greatly help build the groundwork for the development of an effective message.

It is not enough to just identify the primary audiences. It is also important to do a deeper dive to identify their motivations in order to better understand how to influence them and what key messages will resonate.

How to do this:

Identify your audience: Remember that your audiences can be an individual, group, committee, organization or segmented population. These groups can then be segmented into primary and secondary audiences.

Primary Audiences

Primary audiences are those you want to directly impact and are critical in achieving your policy objectives. They should always have dedicated communications activities that specifically aim to engage them in the issue.

Primary audiences (or simply “key players”) in communications and media advocacy campaigns can include:

- Prime Minister
- Ministers of Health, Treasury or the relevant department leading your issue
- Members of Parliament or Congress
- Senior government officials with decision making power

Secondary Audiences

Secondary audiences (or simply “context setters”) are individuals and groups that have the potential to influence your primary audiences, who can capture the attention of your primary audiences and inspire them to address your issue.

Secondary audiences in media advocacy campaigns can include:

- Parliamentary staff
- Key opinion leaders, such as public figures, and respected media figures
- Victim groups / main beneficiary communities
- Opposition

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Template: Selecting your Primary Audiences Tool (based on image below)

Selecting Your Primary Audiences Tool

This tool allows you to list all of the audiences you wish to target through your media advocacy. It also includes sections to list their interest in your issue, whether they oppose or support, what action you would like them to take, any key messages specifically tailored to them, and the preferred media channels and messengers through which to target them. You may want to start with who you know are your primary audiences and then move on to secondary.

Primary Audiences Name	Primary or Secondary	Interest in the Issue	Level of Opposition/Support	Action Desired	Key Message(s)	Preferred Media Channel(s)	Preferred Messenger

Why is this important?

Identifying the audiences is the starting point for developing your communications and media advocacy plan. Your audience can change as you move through phases of your advocacy campaign.

As part of your advocacy planning, you should have conducted a stakeholder mapping. This mapping should directly inform the identification of your audiences. Knowing who is linked to/related to achieving the policy/legislation change or driving implementation you are targeting and what action is required from each is a critical first step in communications and media advocacy before deciding on channels and tools.

A tool to help you answer questions in this template is the “What’s In It For Me” (WIIFM) analysis.

The general public encompasses a vast and diverse group with varying interests, beliefs and levels of awareness about any specific issue. This makes it challenging to create a focused, compelling message. Instead, communications and media advocacy campaigns are most successful when they specifically target the audiences who have a vested interest in the issue, are more likely to be influenced by the message, or have decision-making authority. By concentrating efforts on these primary groups, the communication and media advocacy campaign will be more effective.

Not all campaigns are meant for the general public. Sometimes, focusing on the general public in an advocacy campaign can dilute the message, making it harder to engage and mobilize the specific decision-makers on your specific issue.

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STEP 3

Develop Key Messages

Why is this important?

Key messages are crucial to a communications and media advocacy campaign: they ensure clarity, consistency and focus. They help pull out the most important information and points you want to share, making complex issues more understandable and engaging for audiences. The messages that resonate are the ones that are remembered with your intended audience.

Consistent messages create a unified voice. This unified message is essential for keeping the audience's attention, influencing their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors and ensuring that they remember the core points of your campaign. Overall, strong key messages enhance the effectiveness of communication efforts, making advocacy campaigns more coherent, impactful and successful. Especially, when faced with opposition or criticism from opponents it is important to stay on message and not diverge.



How to do this:

Developing key messages starts with creating a top-line message that outlines the policy change needed, the campaign's objective and the importance of the issue.

Effective messages should be clear, concise and straightforward. Defining three top-line key messages at the start of your advocacy is recommended. All messages should be supported by data and evidence such as statistics, testimonials, examples and stories. Consider how your audience thinks of the issue at that moment and what is happening in the broader political space that to include in your messaging.

Defining the importance of the issue involves understanding how your audience views it. Key messages should be simple and adaptable based on the audience's needs, such as for social media or talking points. To create these messages, you can break it down by discussing the problem, why it's relevant, the evidence and the call to action. The questions on the next page can be prompts as you draft your messages.

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Problem:	What is the problem and its national relevance? Who is responsible for the issue, and how have they contributed?
Relevance:	Why does the issue matter locally? What values make it relevant?
Evidence:	What evidence is needed to support the messages, and who can provide it? Will the message resonate with the primary audience, and how can it be adapted for different groups?
Call to Action:	What is the proposed solution and who can implement it? What actions should the public take and when?

Example:

Message Component 1: Define the problem and relevance.	Message Component 2: Policy-specific messaging, and evidence	Message Component 3: Advocacy messaging -> call to action
Each year, India endures thousands of tragic deaths and injuries on the road that are preventable through policy change.	The Motor Vehicle Amendment Act is a comprehensive act focusing on reducing road accidents in India; it has already been instrumental in saving [x number] of lives within one year of enforcement.	The central government has the opportunity to save more lives by mandating child restraints and helmets — but has yet to do so. Pass the child restraint and helmet act by [X DATE] to protect India's citizens.

Formal message testing is also a best practice, although it can be resource intensive and costly. Informal message testing can be conducted by circulating messages to coalition members, partners and the community you work with to get feedback and to ensure that messages are on target.

Re-evaluating your messages from time to time is good practice during any campaign. Does it still make sense? Do people understand it? Does it need to change? Do you have new information?

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STEP 4**Select Effective Messengers****Why is this important?**

When delivering an advocacy message, consider who will be the most credible person to give the message to your primary audience. If people don't trust the person who delivers a message, the actual message will not get through effectively.

It is also important to have diversity in who delivers the messages. Combining different voices together can show widespread support for your issue. For instance, combining two messengers who complement each other, one who is knowledgeable about the subject matter and the other knowledgeable about the primary audience, can have a greater impact on your activity.

**How to do this:**

Sometimes policy skills are important, but at other times first-hand knowledge of the problem, technical expertise, relationship with your audience or seniority within an organization matter more. Celebrities, influencers and popular public figures may play an important role as a messenger for specific audiences.

Some questions you can ask include:

- Who is known and trusted by or will appeal to your primary audiences?
- Who can demonstrate knowledge and insight on the issue?
- Whose opinion will your primary audience value?
- Is there a clear link between the messenger and the groups affected by the issue?
- Will the messengers refrain from political comments unrelated to the issue?
- Does the benefit of utilizing the messenger outweigh the political risk?
- When are prominent spokespeople a hindrance to your cause?

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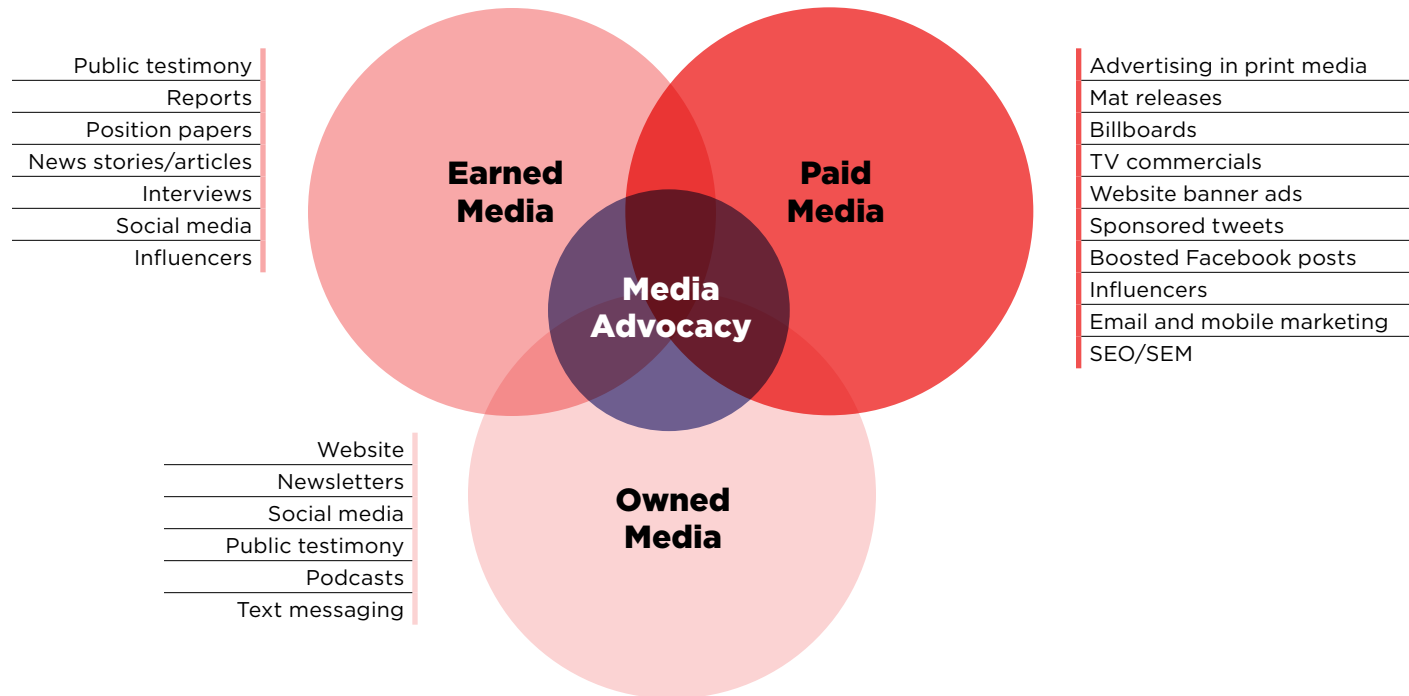
Choose Relevant Media Channels

Why is this important?

Once you have your key messages, messengers and primary audience identified, it is time to consider which channels will work best to engage them. You want to ensure your media activities are going to reach the right audience and meet your objectives.

Strategically selecting your communication channels will ensure that you have a diversification of channels.

Types of Media Channels:



As digital media platforms have developed, lines have blurred. Digital channels can be thought of in terms of owned channels (i.e., @AdvocacyIncubator); earned media (i.e., when a minister tweets about @RoadSafetyNetwk); or paid media (i.e., Facebook ads).

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All of these channels can play an important role. One of the most important considerations is identifying the different channels that are consumed by the relevant audiences. But there are other factors to consider as well, such as return on investment, cost, security and reputational risk.

How to do this:

The best way to analyze the media options for your primary audience is to conduct media mapping and/or media monitoring to see what channels are available and who is consuming them.

For example, if you want to build public awareness of your campaign and your research indicates that most people listen to a popular radio station, you should select this as one channel. This could then be supplemented with owned media support, so you might post a status update on Facebook indicating that the radio show is coming up and will focus on your advocacy issue.

Media monitoring is the process of systematically tracking and analyzing media content, including news articles, broadcast media, social media platforms, blogs and other forms of media, to gather information relevant to a specific topic, organization, brand or individual.

Media mapping consists of identifying, categorizing and analyzing various media outlets and platforms that are relevant to a specific topic, audience or campaign.

If you do not have the resources to conduct media mapping or monitoring, you can conduct small scale research, such as asking other organizations or people who have engaged with your audiences which types of media they consume. For instance, if a staff member of a parliamentarian indicates that they read a certain newspaper each day, then you should assign this channel for media activities targeting that individual.

Media Mapping: Understanding the media landscape in your country will help better guide and target media activities in a variety of manners, including knowing what media outlets are most critical for your primary audience and how to best leverage opportunities in terms of outreach and messaging.

Guidance for your media mapping:

- Analysis of how news in general is covered (letters to the editor, opinion pieces, drive time interviews, feature articles) in top media outlets for each country.
- Review the current coverage on your issue and analyze how often it is currently covered in top media outlets.
- Identify top reporters and well-known media personalities that may have influence on public opinion and legislators as well as key journalists that cover the issue.
- Understand what international media is consumed and which has the most influence.
- Identify media channels available and used in-country and identify which channels your audiences (including policymakers) consume, engage and use or pay the most attention to.

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- Research audience segments and circulation numbers for all media outlets; online, print, radio and broadcast. Main sources of news for different demographics.
- Research whether there is a network of journalists in your country that covers health issues or your issue specifically.
- Understand which languages the population prefers to receive news in and how media outlets serve populations that communicate in various languages.
- Understand the importance of rural versus urban media, and the reach urban media has in rural areas.
- Understand the nature of media ownership (state-owned or privately owned) and the role of state-owned media versus private media.
- Determine whether there is freedom of the press or if there are restrictions.
- Determine whether ownership groups have an impact on media coverage, particularly as it relates to syndication.
- Determine if investigative stories are typically run in media outlets, which outlets conduct investigative pieces.

Paid Media

Paid media consists of media coverage that is paid for. The purpose of paid media is to provide more attention to your advocacy activities to ensure they gain further amplification and influence your audiences to act.

Paid media can include:

- An editorial in a newspaper or magazine
- Television or radio advertisements or commercials
- Social media advertising 'boost' options, such as sponsored tweets and boosted Facebook post, LinkedIn Ads and other digital advertising, like google ads, display ads (such as banner ads) on specific websites, influencer ads, etc.
- Out-of-home advertising, such as billboards
- Email and mobile marketing
- Search engine marketing

Pros:

- Can control the message
- Can ensure when and how your messages are presented
- Can reach very focused/specific groups
- Can have a large reach

Cons:

- Not considered to be genuine coverage of your issue, perceived to be advertisement
- Does not engender buy-in from media organizations, which can lead to more opportunities
- Requires repetition to have significant impact, which can be cost prohibitive

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Earned Media

Earned media is non-paid publicity or exposure that results from your advocacy activities, including activities such as press conferences and media events.

Earned media can include:

- Newspaper articles on your activities (digital & print)
- TV and radio coverage, including traditional media, video streaming, digital news programs, etc.
- Social media posts from traditional media and key opinion leaders
- Editorials and opinion articles
- Press releases, press conferences and publicity activities
- Public testimony
- Reports and position papers
- Organic social media activities

Pros

- Appears legitimate as it is from the voice of the media, not your organization
- Potential for wide reach
- Potential for further engagement, i.e. with journalists interested in your campaign
- Can be leveraged in future owned/paid media as well as in advocacy activities
- Opportunity to engage influential journalists in the debate

Cons

- Cannot control the message
- Unpredictable
- Can be difficult to gain the attention of media to obtain earned media opportunities

Warning: Some reporters expect “pay for play” or payment made in order to publicize or feature a story. This is routinely done without disclosing that there was payment involved and it is widely considered unethical and misleading to audiences. It can also put an organization’s reputation and audience trust at risk.

Owned Media

Owned media is content that is fully under your control. These outputs are designed, developed and disseminated through your communication channels, allowing you full control of the editorial stance and advocacy messaging.

Owned media can include:

- Organizational social media channels
- Newsletters
- Organization website, blog or podcast
- Organization YouTube channel
- Organization owned podcasts and streaming video
- SMS platform and email distribution platforms

Pros

- Full control of messaging, timing and editorial process
- Can include organizational branding
- Can easily track and monitor reach

Cons

- Can have limited exposure if organization’s media channels do not have wide reach
- May not be accessed/consumed by key stakeholders

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Digital Advocacy

Digital advocacy is a critical piece within communications and media advocacy campaigns and can:

1. Provide the ability to communicate with a wider audience to build awareness and urgency for your issue. Using mediums such as graphics and videos offers the opportunity to communicate directly with public audiences as well as provide the ability for supporters to share your message and issue themes with their peers.
2. Beyond public awareness, digital advocacy also offers the opportunity to drive meaningful interactions and mobilizations that advocates can take online and offline. Tactics such as promoting discussions, tagging decision-makers in social posts, signing online petitions and writing letters directly to members of the legislature all are efficiently and effectively organized via digital channels.

Every organization, regardless of their capacity and resources, can find valuable strategies, tools and tactics in digital advocacy. Organizations may find that paid activities on social media channels (such as boosted posts or paid ads) are much less expensive than traditional media paid advertising, have a better return on investment (ROI) and are necessary to grow and reach their audiences.

The digital landscape is constantly changing and evolving as new technologies and channels emerge, it's important to stay up to date with the latest digital trends. Adapting your digital strategy involves actively monitoring market trends, analyzing online conversations surrounding your issue, embracing continuous learning, engaging with relevant communities and experimenting with new technologies.

Digital strategies won't win a campaign on their own, but they are an important tool. Digital campaigns are most impactful when they are tightly woven into an overall advocacy and communications plan.

CASE STUDY: CARIBBEAN



Youth Advocacy Caribbean Food Policy:

Youth advocates in the Caribbean supported a branded day of action by calling on policymakers to drive change complete with media outreach, social media content, influencer engagement, live/offline events and more.



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CASE STUDY: MEXICO

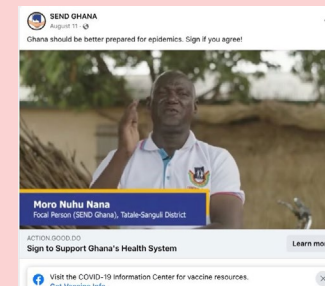


Road Safety Coalition: In Mexico, the road safety coalition advocated to pass the General Mobility and Road Safety Law. They engaged Congress online by developing social cards for each member of Congress, tagged them from the organizational handles, and used a rotating click-to-tweet tool. They complemented their online campaign by creating offline events to seek support from Congress while raising awareness on mobility and road safety issues.

CASE STUDY: GHANA



Prevent Epidemics in Ghana: GHAI worked with partner SEND Ghana to initiate an online petition to highlight the importance of epidemic preparedness and to support a public health emergency fund in Ghana, aiming to build a strong base of support among key stakeholders for robust policies and sustainable investments in epidemic preparedness and the COVID-19 response. A social media toolkit for influencers and civil society was developed to promote the petition. Influencers who were strong voices in public health were utilized to express public support for maintaining the budget levels recommended by the President and resulted in 575 signatures.



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Finalize Media Tactics

Why is this important?

Planning your communications and media advocacy tactics strategically is important to ensure you maximize the impact of your work. Understanding the different tactics available and choosing those that will most effectively engage the audiences you require is critical.

You must evaluate each potential opportunity and tactic as it relates to the audience and your objective. Some media tactics will be proactive, while others may be reactive and responding to policymakers, opponents. Your available funding and resources are also important considerations as you plan your tactics

How to do this:

Planning should take into consideration your advocacy objective, the audience(s) you are trying to target and what is media worthy. Timing your activities to continuously work toward a select few key advocacy events is a good approach to ensure that stakeholders remain informed, and then are effectively engaged at important moments.

Once you're clear on how you want media to support your advocacy, gather the following resources:

- The results from your media mapping and media monitoring exercise, which can help you select which channels to target.
- Primary audiences list. All the tactics should target these people.
- Key dates calendar, which includes any important high-profile events or milestones in your campaign. For example, if there is a particular budget session of Parliament that you would like to leverage, you might select an op-ed focusing on economic impact.

Examples of tactics:

Journalism trainings and workshops	News stories, articles
Journalism fellowships	Reports, position papers
Journalism media awards	Influencer engagement/activation
Digital advocacy campaigns	Print ads, TV and radio commercials
Podcasts	Website banners and online advertising
Webinars	Boosted social media posts
Website blog posts	Press events/briefings
Public broadcasting/loudspeakers	Press releases, op-eds
Public events	

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CASE STUDY: BANGLADESH



Creating a Journalist Network to Prioritize Drowning Prevention Effort:

Bangladesh has one of the highest drowning rates in the world among children under five. But a review of media coverage in 2019 found only 31 stories about the issue. In 2020, GHAI initiated a campaign to build the capacity of Bangladesh media to increase the quality of information and strengthening the media professionals' understanding of the issue. Through training, workshops and fellowships, GHAI sensitized the media on child drowning, its impact on families and the national economy and solutions. An active network of journalists was formed to engage with one another, hear stories from spokespersons, discuss potential stories, answer questions and provide guidance on drowning prevention angles through quarterly workshops and a dedicated Facebook group. Workshops included field trips to remote rural sites to meet with community members, local government representatives and victims' family members to better understand the impact on the community. This work created 269 committed journalists published 356 articles to influence community and policymakers to adopt a project to address child drowning.

CASE STUDY: NIGERIA



The Prevent Epidemics Naija Journalism Awards: The fourth edition of the #PreventEpidemicsNaija Journalism Awards (PEJA) in Nigeria exemplifies the vital collaboration between GHAI and Nigeria Health Watch (NHW), reinforcing the critical role of journalism in health security. Organized in conjunction with the Nigerian Healthcare Excellence Award (NHEA), the award ceremony, highlighted exceptional reporting on epidemic preparedness and response. These winning journalists had benefited from GHAI/NHW capacity strengthening on reporting and media advocacy on epidemic preparedness and response. The initiative not only celebrates the journalists' significant contributions but also aims to inspire continued excellence and increased coverage of epidemic preparedness in Nigerian media. By fostering a culture of rigorous and impactful journalism, the awards contribute to a more informed public and a more resilient health system capable of responding to future epidemics.

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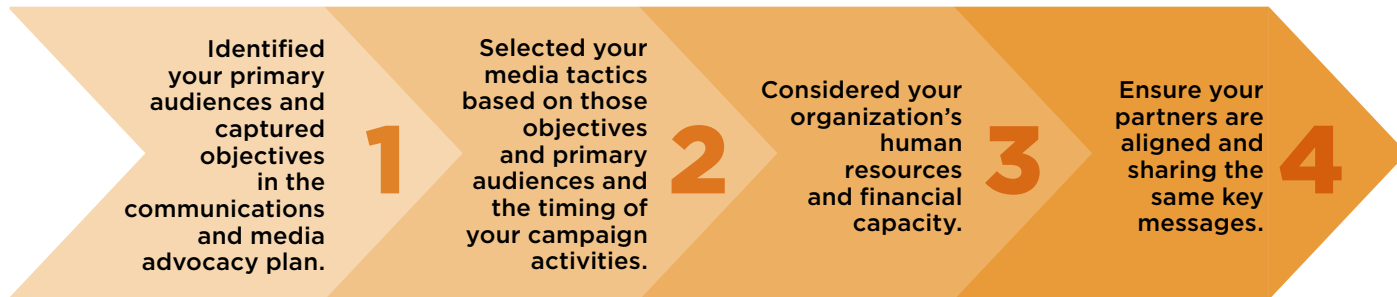
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Why is this important?

A strong communications and media advocacy campaign can play a major role in whether you achieve your advocacy objectives. Consistent media coverage that positions your issue appropriately to your primary audiences can raise visibility, build support and drive people to action. The impact of your campaign is greatly enhanced when your media activities create a continuous presence, keeping the issue top of mind for both the public and policymakers. This sustained attention can shift public perception, generate widespread awareness and build a strong foundation of support that is crucial for advancing your advocacy goals.

How to do this:

To be successful, your activities must be aligned with your campaign's advocacy goals, timing and primary audiences. By now, you should have:



This alignment ensures that every activity is purposeful and strategic, maximizing the effectiveness of your resources and efforts. By integrating these elements, you can move forward in executing your campaign that will effectively mobilize stakeholders, influence public opinion and create the momentum needed to achieve meaningful policy changes.

1. Ensure everyone involved in delivering and contributing towards your plan is on board.
2. Check that your resources and inputs are allocated at the right time to the responsible person.
3. Set up regular (weekly) calls with everyone involved to ensure you are tracking both implementation and feedback on how the plan is working or not.
4. Share the results of your regular calls with the broader advocacy team who may be working on other components of the overall advocacy plan.
5. Support partners media and communication platform (reposting, commenting on etc.).

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6. Constantly look out for opportunities to share your message, track all media and see where you can share related information or address misinformation.
7. Stay in touch with journalists, influencers and messengers you have relationships with, giving them progress updates and sharing any new information. This will help develop or deepen relationships and allow you to become the go-to-source of information on your issue with reporters, which may make them more open to hearing story ideas.
8. Consider any follow ups needed with decision makers, messengers and the communities that you are working with.

CASE STUDY: MEXICO



Senator Patricia Mercado's post on social media endorsing the bill

Mexico Tobacco Control: Amendment of the Tobacco Control Law: In 2022, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico enacted an amendment to the country's General Law on Tobacco Control. This reform prohibits smoking, including e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products, in all indoor public spaces and select outdoor areas such as bus stations, parks, concerts, and sports events. Additionally, the law imposes a ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, making Mexico the ninth country in Latin America to adopt such a policy.

This comprehensive reform was achieved through persistent advocacy by a coalition of public health organizations, supported by international partners. The coalition used focus groups, surveys, and interviews to develop targeted messages for parliament members and the public. Key to the campaign were earned media efforts, including press conferences and regular engagement with journalists. Paid advertising, such as newspaper ads, billboards near the national Congress, and social media campaigns, exposed tobacco industry interference and built legislative support.

In a pivotal moment, a journalist, encouraged by advocacy groups, asked President López Obrador during a press conference "if he supported the bill". This interaction, led the President to publicly express his support, significantly boosting the campaign. Additionally, personalized materials were created for legislators, with some, like Senator Patricia Mercado, publicly endorsing the bill on social media. During the congressional vote, many legislators carried banners with campaign images and mentioned the campaign in their speeches. These efforts led to the bill's overwhelming approval by Mexico's Chamber of Deputies and unanimous approval in the Senate, culminating in President López Obrador signing the amendment in February 2022.

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Monitor and Evaluate

Why is this important?

Consistently monitoring and evaluating your communications and media advocacy work is essential for ensuring its effectiveness and adaptability. It is an essential part of any policy advocacy campaign and ensures that planned actions are taking place at the correct time. It also helps you know whether you are gaining support over the course of what may be a long campaign, or whether your strategies and tactics may need to be adjusted.

Assessing the impact of the campaign on the media environment and the level of support of the public and policymakers represents one of the key indicators of progress in an advocacy campaign. A good monitoring plan can tell you which of your strategies are working best to meet your objectives and help you pivot to the most impactful approaches.

For example, if you need to change your channels because information is not reaching your primary audience. Or an evaluation could show that your information is being framed in a way that is not helping you advance your policy objective. Successful strategies are informed by evaluation and should be a continual process of adjustment based on the findings of your monitoring and evaluation.

How to do this:

Media Monitoring: Sample categories to use/information to look for when keeping track of media coverage on your issue:

Date	Article Topic	Sentiment	Journalist Name	Headline	URL	Media Outlet	Circulation

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Evaluating your communications and media advocacy activities focuses on whether your activities have had an impact and are contributing to the realization of your advocacy campaign objectives. One of the best ways you can do this is through media monitoring and social listening (tracking conversation, engagement, and response on social media). Ensure that monitoring and evaluation is planned and executed at regular intervals throughout your campaign. Ensure that the results are incorporated into your advocacy plans. Be sure to include partners in this process. It strengthens relationships and may add a diversity of perspectives to the evaluation.

Questions you can ask include:

- Have you developed and delivered effective advocacy messages to the primary audiences?
- Do you use different channels to deliver your message?
- Have you proactively built relationships with journalists and become their go-to resource for your public health issue?
- Has there been increased coverage of your issue?
- Is the public actively supporting the policy through social media?
- Are your media activities resulting in more active participation in campaign events?

Dealing with Opposition

- Though media outreach is a great way to inspire change, it can also draw out negative responses from those opposed to your issue. Sometimes, proactively engaging the media can put a spotlight on your organization and make you a target.
- Actively monitor for reactions or attacks from opposition spokespeople and influencers to determine whether a response is needed.
- There are a range of approaches to deal with opposition, including adjusting your tactics or responding. And sometimes not responding to their claims may be your best approach.
- ***HINT:*** if adversaries introduce false or inaccurate information to counter your campaign, be ready to respond with objective data.

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Advocacy: A set of strategic, focused actions directed at decision-makers in support of a specific policy issue.

Communication Channels: The medium through which a message is delivered to an audience. Channels can include print (newspapers), broadcast (TV or radio) or social (X or Facebook) media; paid advertising (newspaper ads or billboards); meetings or roundtables; public events; petitions; email; and more. All media channels are communication channels, but not all communication channels are media channels.

Communications Objective: A specific, measurable goal that outlines what you aim to achieve through your communication efforts within a given timeframe.

Digital Advocacy: Digital advocacy is the use of technology to create, promote and mobilize support for a particular cause or campaign. Digital advocacy may include sending out emails or text messages, creating social media campaigns, holding virtual events and more.

Digital Media: Any medium of communication which uses a digital format, such as text, audio, images, website, video, online newspapers, and streaming services.

Earned Media: Publicity or exposure gained through non-paid means, such as word of mouth, social media sharing, news coverage or online mentions.

Goal: The overall, long-term intended impact of the advocacy effort, usually the result of achieving one or several interrelated objectives.

Indicator: A metric that gives you concrete data on how you are progressing towards your goal.

Influencer: Individual who has built a substantial following on one or more social media platforms and has the power to affect the decisions, opinions, or behaviors of their audience.

Key Messages: The core ideas or statements that an organization wants to communicate to its target audience. These messages are designed to convey what the organization seeks to change achieve.

Media Advocacy: Conducting strategic, targeted activities with and across media platforms to advance policy objectives.

Media Channels: Specific platform through which content is distributed to an audience. Examples include television, print, radio, websites, social media platforms, etc.

Media Map: A media map identifies the landscape of media outlets, their relationships, and their influence. It helps in understanding the reach and impact of various media channels.

Media Tactics: Media tactics are specific actions and methods used to implement a media strategy effectively. These tactics are designed to reach your primary audience, convey key messages, and achieve the organization's communication goals.

Media Strategy: A comprehensive plan that outlines how an organization will use various media channels to achieve its communication objectives.

Messengers: The person or organization delivering content to the target audience. Ideally, the messenger is credible and able to influence the primary audience.

Owned Media: Content that is fully under your control. These outputs are designed, developed and disseminated through your internal communication channels, allowing you full control of the editorial stance and advocacy messaging.

Paid Media: Media opportunities that are purchased through known media channels. The purpose of paid media is to provide further attention to your advocacy activities to ensure they gain further amplification and influence your primary audiences to take action.

Policy: Policies are governments' main tools for guiding action, and are typically expressed in laws/ regulations, official policy statements or guidelines, and institutions which then result in programs and specific initiatives financed and/or conducted by government organizations to address these challenges.

Political Mapping: A structured approach to examining and presenting the power dynamics and social forces that influence the government.

Policy Objective: The result you want to achieve within a foreseeable timeframe and with available resources. Achieving a policy goal usually requires meeting a series of strategic and interrelated policy objectives.

Primary Audience: Individuals and groups that you want to directly impact and are critical in the achievement of your policy objectives.

Secondary Audience: Individuals and groups that have the potential to influence your primary audience, who can capture the attention of your primary audiences and inspire them to address your issue.

Social Media: Type of digital advocacy, but specific to online platforms (such as Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, etc.)

Target Audience: Also known as the primary audience, this is the groups and individuals media advocacy should reach to achieve the desired objective.

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