

# Advocacy Toolkit for **Civil Society**



A toolkit for DPOs, NGOs, and others committed to disability rights advocacy, or human rights advocacy in general. Published October 2022, based on the Global Disability Summit version from September 2021

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## **PREAMBLE BY SAFOD AND THE ATLAS ALLIANCE**

This goal-oriented Advocacy Toolkit is produced by the Southern African Federation of the Disabled (SAFOD) and the Atlas Alliance, with the support of our affiliated organizations and the members of the Norwegian Global Disability Summit (GDS) Reference Group. The Toolkit is intended for organizations and others dedicated to advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities. The original version was published and distributed in September, 2021, prior to the GDS 2022 (14-17 February, 2022). The idea was that these modules and tools could help civil society start their planning for advocacy that would bring impactful commitments at the GDS.

The same methods we describe in the "GDS version" can be used in human rights advocacy generally. You do not need an occasion like the GDS to advocate, but it can be useful to provide decision makers with a framework and a timeline. This second edition of the Advocacy Toolkit is our contribution to intensify the global advocacy for CRPD implementation, disability inclusion and equality.

With this revised toolkit, we aim to make our advocacy not only more goal-oriented but also action-oriented, whereby DPOs, CSOs and other stakeholders / coalitions are better empowered to set the legislative and policy agenda on inclusion rather than simply monitoring or reacting to government policy making processes.

We hope it will be widely used and shared, and that it helps bring about positive and lasting results for persons with disabilities and their communities at large.

# Glossary of terms

**Advocacy:** Active engagement by civil society actors, such as DPOs and NGOs, to influence policy makers and other duty bearers to make changes. Changes can include creating supportive policies for persons with disabilities, reforms of harmful traditions affecting the rights of persons with disabilities or ensuring the funding and implementation of supportive policies and programs.

If executed well, advocacy can achieve the following:

- **Policy change.** For example, the Millennium Development Goals did not include persons with disabilities; after a strong advocacy campaign by disability activists, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now include persons with disabilities.
- **Change in practice.** For example, a local school does not have classrooms ramps, advocacy by students with disabilities and their families results in the construction of ramps.
- **Change in social, behavioral, or political attitudes** that will benefit interest groups — for instance, carrying out an advocacy campaign to ban or regulate certain cultural practices that inhibit disability inclusion or carrying out an awareness campaign that positively changes people's attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

**The Atlas Alliance:** The Atlas Alliance is an umbrella organisation for disabled persons' organisations working to promote the rights and living conditions of persons with disabilities in the Global South.

**Civil society:** Is made up of citizens and organizations outside of Government and business. NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) are part of civil society. CSOs and INGOs are also considered to be part of civil society.

**COSP:** Conference of State Parties to the United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

**CSOs:** Civil Society Organizations.

**DPOs:** Disabled Persons' Organizations. The term refers to the social model used to define disability, implying that persons are disabled by the barriers in society, not their impairments. Some in the disability movement have chosen to use the term OPD (see below) as they see this as the more legitimate term, placing 'person' before the disability part of their identity. The Atlas Alliance counties to use DPO in an attempt to reclaim language and based on the conviction that 'disability' is not a 'bad word'. DPO and OPD mean the same.

**Duty-bearers:** 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.

**GDS:** Stands for Global Disability Summit. The first two Summits took place in 2018 and 2022, and brought together global leaders to galvanize the efforts to address disability inclusion in development, through new international and national commitments.

**Gender:** The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys; it also refers to the relations between women and those between men. While "sex" refers to biologically determined differences, gender refers to differences in social roles and relations.

**IDA:** International Disability Alliance. Created in 1999, this umbrella organization of DPOs focuses on improving awareness and rights for individuals with disabilities around the globe.

**INGOs:** International Non-Governmental Organizations





Photo: Save the Children Zimbabwe.

**NGOs:** Non-Governmental Organizations.

**OPDs:** Organizations of Persons with Disabilities. OPDs are the legitimate representative organizations of persons with disabilities and work to fulfill the human rights of disabled people. Persons with disabilities or their families must make up the majority of members and board members.

**Policy:** A course of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual. It can include a plan, strategy, program, human rights instrument, budget decision, piece of legislation, or set of regulations/protocols issued by a government, multinational entity, or institution.

**Policymakers:** Typically, government officials or people with formal political power (e.g., parliamentarians, ministers, local council personnel, etc.).

**Rights-holders:** Rights-holders are individuals or social groups 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.

**PWDs:** Persons with Disabilities. You you might encounter this abbreviation; however, we do not use abbreviations when speaking or writing about human beings.

**SAFOD:** Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled. It is a federation of Organizations of Persons with disabilities in the Southern Africa region. Since 1986, SAFOD has established itself as the only credible regional network engaged in coordinating activities of affiliated national federations currently working in all the 16 member states of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). In each of these countries, SAFOD's focus is mainly to strengthen the capacity of its national affiliates so that they can effectively advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities in line with the UNCRPD.

**SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals. They are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all." The SDGs were set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly intended to be achieved by 2030. The SDGs are underpinned by the principle "Leave no one behind", which has long been a popular slogan for disability rights movement as well.





Photo: FAMOD, Mozambique

**SRHR:** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

**Stigma:** This is a multi-faceted process of devaluation that considerably demeans an individual in the eyes of others. Within cultures or settings, specific attributes are seized upon and defined by others as discreditable or unworthy. The consequence of stigma is often discrimination and exclusion. Discrimination is a form of human rights violation against, for example, persons with disabilities.

**TOFI:** Together for Inclusion. This is a ground-breaking partnership where 15 Norwegian OPDs and NGOs have joined forces to implement an innovative program with their local partners in six African countries. The overarching goal of the program is that the rights of persons with disabilities in the project countries are fulfilled. TOFI is a direct result of the advocacy work coming out of the 2018 GDS, as well as continued policy work from Norwegian DPOs and NGOs. TOFI is funded by Norad and started operating in late 2019, with the Atlas Alliance as the consortium lead.

**UN:** United Nations. The UN has 193 Member States, and the Secretary-General oversees it.

**UN CRPD:** UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is an international human rights instrument to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and promote respect for their inherent dignity.

**UN CRC:** UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. An international UN treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years.

### STRUCTURE OF THE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

The Toolkit is divided into two main chapters, with Chapter 1 focused on how to use this document for the best possible results. Chapter 2 is focused on the advocacy strategy development process divided into six main modules.

The Advocacy Toolkit provides guidelines and advice for advocacy in general. However, as a point of departure, it uses the Global Disability Summit as a vehicle for CRPD implementation on country level.



Photo: FAMOD, Mozambique



# 1 How to use the advocacy toolkit

## WHO IS THE ADVOCACY TOOLKIT DESIGNED FOR?

The goals and objectives of this Advocacy Toolkit are to:

- Empower DPOs and other stakeholders at all levels to hold duty bearers accountable to their obligations and commitments (i.e. under national and international law, or that they may have committed to at the Global Disability Summit).
- Provide helpful strategies for disability rights advocacy.
- Help stakeholders develop advocacy strategies and actions to influence policies at different levels – subnational (local), national, regional, and international.
- Encourage DPOs and NGOs to cooperate to promote inclusion and equality for persons with disabilities, and to help them engage with the media to reach their goals.

As such, the Advocacy Toolkit targets DPOs and other stakeholders working for the realization of disability rights at any level.

## HOW CAN STAKEHOLDERS EFFECTIVELY USE THIS ADVOCACY PACKAGE?

To maximize the benefits of using this Advocacy Toolkit, we recommend that all stakeholders consider the following guiding principles throughout the advocacy process:

### Identify the issues and select your priorities:

The first thing to do is to agree on issues and define your main objectives. What specific objectives do you want to reach in your context?

### Work together:

The best way to use this Toolkit is to begin in small groups. As you identify allies and advocates who could be helpful for your cause you can gradually expand the group. The modules could be run in workshop settings.

### Plan your time:

It may be tempting to rush through the first half of the Toolkit if much is already done, i.e. listing your priorities or targeting communities, partners, or authorities. We also acknowledge that some may require more time to undertake some preliminary research or secure buy-in from partners. What is most important is to use this Toolkit not just once. It is meant to be a reference resource throughout your advocacy cycle. So, take your time!

### Be flexible:

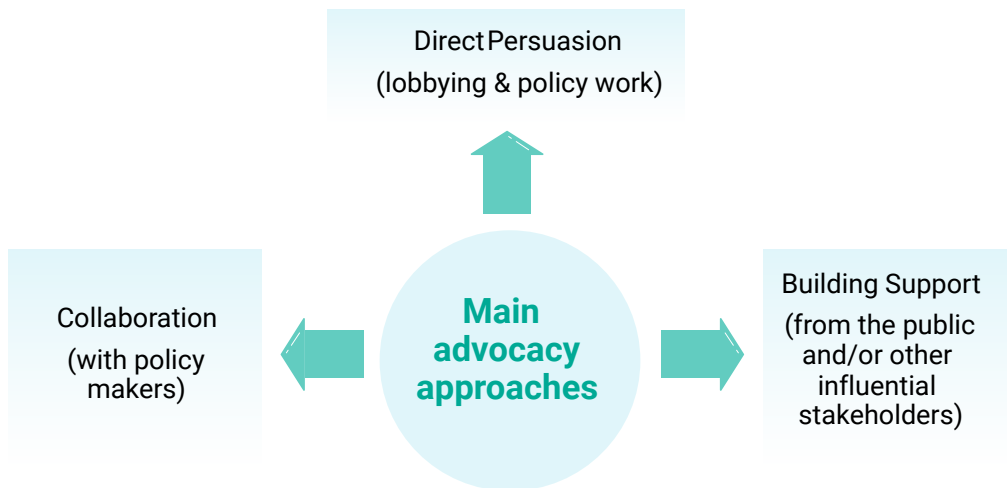
From the design phase to the implementation and evaluation phases, advocacy strategies are seldom linear or prescriptive. What looks like a well-crafted advocacy message one day, may require modification or rewording the next day. Similarly, what appears to be a valuable partnership with a decision-maker today may take a completely different trajectory tomorrow. Always be flexible in your approaches.

### Tools to create and implement an advocacy strategy:

The users of this Toolkit have access to three planning templates from the appendices section. After printing, they can complete the templates as they advance through developing and implementing their advocacy strategy.

## MAIN APPROACHES TO ADVOCACY

Most advocacy work would benefit from one or more of the three **broad approaches**, as illustrated in the diagram below. However, these approaches are not written in stone, as reflected in the upcoming modules. You will need to plan carefully and thoughtfully, follow national laws and prioritize the safety of all involved in your advocacy efforts.



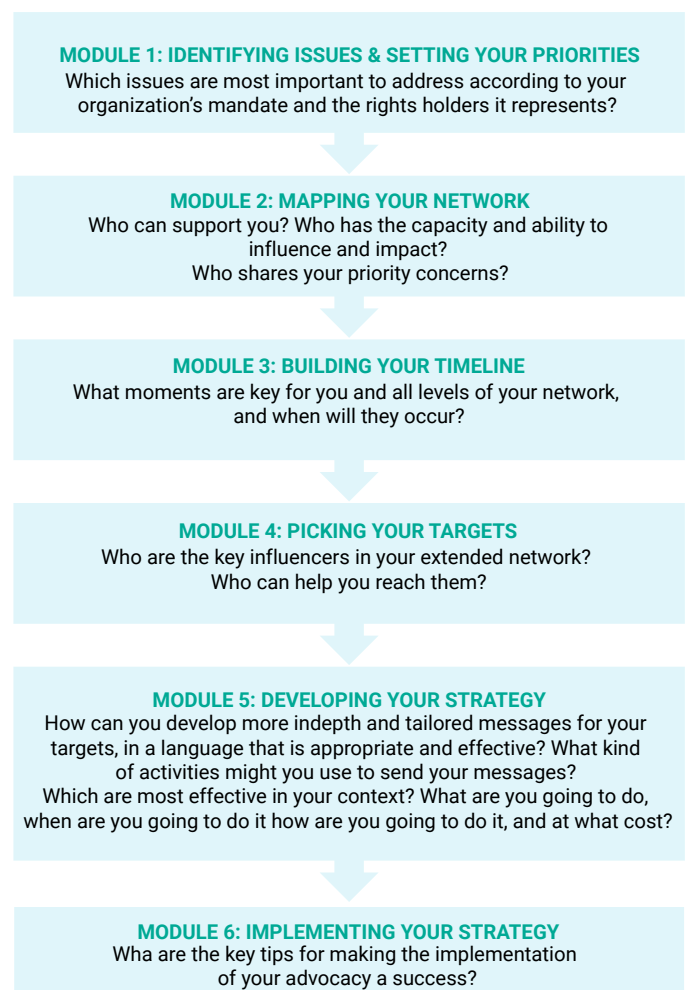
Adopting a mixture of **Direct Persuasion, Collaboration with Policy Makers, and Building Support** tends to be most successful.

In addition to the three main approaches, there are also other approaches that rights holders and their representative organizations may use, but in very extraordinary circumstances. These are:

1. Coercive Pressure (strikes, boycotts & direct action). For instance, in situations where an employer terminates the contract of an employee with disabilities on grounds that the employer is not interested to put in place accessibility accommodations within the workplace. Should negotiations (collaborations and lobbying) fail to resolve the matter, to show solidarity other employees could decide to use coercive pressure (boycotts, etc).
2. Litigation (suing the policymakers in the courts). For example, in a scenario where a person with disabilities cannot access certain social services despite the existence of relevant national laws and policies to protect him/her from such violations as well as the relevant international legal instruments to which the country has ratified, the rights holder may opt to take legal action, especially where collaboration and lobbying have failed.

## SIX MODULAR STEPS TO ADVOCACY

It is essential to follow some structured steps to reach the advocacy goal(s). In this context, we outline the following modular steps:



This Toolkit describes these modules in detail, which can help stakeholders achieve success in their human rights advocacy.



# 2 Developing your advocacy strategy

## AN EXAMPLE – THE GLOBAL DISABILITY SUMMIT

The Global Disability Summit is a top-level international conference about disability inclusive development and humanitarian action. The GDS is hosted by one Southern and one Northern government in partnership with the International Disability Alliance. The first one took place in London in 2018, the second was online (due to the COVID pandemic) and the third is being planned for Berlin in 2025. The GDS brings global attention to the disability rights movement and encourages governments to pledge commitments to improve the levels of disability inclusion and CRPD implementation in their countries. The time leading up to the summits is thus a great opportunity for civil society to advocate for any specific issue in their national contexts.

You can make use of the Toolkit to hold governments accountable for the commitments made in connection with GDS 2018 or 2022, or to influence their commitments in future summits. There will also likely be many occasions to promote disability rights at the national level every year, such as state budget processes, the COSP, etc.

*Cooperation on human rights advocacy between DPOs and NGOs is often effective in reaching wide audiences and exchanging important learnings. There are good experiences in such partnerships in the African consortium Together for Inclusion (TOFI), of 15 organizations – DPOs and NGOs – working together to promote Disability Rights, inclusive education, and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities, in their respective countries. Establishing similar consortia, where DPOs are in the lead, could be a commitment worth advocating for.*

### The role of DPOs and other Civil Society actors:

Among the primary responsibilities of DPOs and civil society in general are:

1. To raise public awareness of their most burning issues
2. To hold governments and policymakers to account for their obligations. Commitments made at events such as the Global Disability Summit are examples of obligations that DPOs should be monitoring the implementation of. Another example is monitoring of how the governments that have ratified CRPD are implementing the Convention, and holding them to account.

Combining these two points, DPOs and Civil Society thus play an important role with their advocacy and campaigning ahead of the events like GDS, COSP, the United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF), state budget process, etc. With their expertise and lived experience they can influence decision makers to prioritize the most needed commitments, budgetary changes, and policy priorities that truly speak to the challenges faced by persons with disabilities.



Photo: Signo

After commitments have been pledged or promises made official, a natural role for DPOs / CSOs to assume, as experts in their field, is to guide and support duty bearers in the implementation. The duty bearers may also need to be challenged and reminded to follow up on the pledges they have made. This Advocacy Toolkit can be useful both for the purposes of influencing decision-making, monitoring, and holding authorities to account.

Feel free to make use of what your organization needs and skip past the parts that are less relevant to your work and particular situation.

*If your advocacy is using the Global Disability Summit as an avenue to achieve your goals, it's smart to read up on the key outcomes of the former summits. In this link you will find information and summary reports from involved stakeholders and organizers: The GDS secretariat: Global Disability Summit*

## MODULE 1:

### IDENTIFYING ISSUES & SETTING YOUR PRIORITIES

This Advocacy toolkit recommends that the very first step in human rights advocacy should be to identify jointly as a team the main objectives the organization wants to achieve and the main challenges to achieving them. Thus, the first step is to identify issues in your community, country, or region, and to have a participatory and inclusive democratic process to decide these priorities and issues.

The main question to ask is: What are the issues that your organization wants the politicians to change?

When identifying your issue(s), consider the following:

- What are the specific problems that the rights holders your team is representing wish to see addressed by the duty bearers in your context?
- What do they say are the barriers (causes) to solving them; and
- What do they think could be the policy-related solutions?



Make a list, putting all the issues, barriers, and solutions down on paper. Whether your organization is advocating for the implementation of GDS commitments, policy documents, international treaties, or domestic law, this collectively developed list can be used to back up your arguments.

*Are you using GDS as a point of departure? The first step for the team is then to choose the issues in your community, country, or region that were addressed in one or more of the GDS commitments, GDS policy documents, or speeches, or that you believe should be tackled by commitments in GDS 2025. The choice of focus issues can also be done in consultation with the wider community, i.e. through meetings, social media interactions, or simple surveys.*

### Prioritization:

To help you prioritize, the team should now start examining and analyzing the selected issues, critically and carefully. Using the list as a starting point, all team members/exercise participants should rate each issue on your list with “high”, “medium” or “low”.

### Next Step under this Module:

Now, review the ratings (high, medium, or low) that were allocated to each issue. Note that each issue should be worked on in its own table.

- *If an issue has a lot of lows and mediums, it is probably not a good issue for advocacy (at least for now!)*
- *If an issue has a lot of highs and mediums, it is probably a better issue for advocacy.*

Advocacy efforts are more likely to be effective if you prioritize specific issue(s) within your community, country, or region. It is particularly important to prioritize when you want to achieve results in an upcoming situation or event, that you choose issues that this situation can have an impact on.

### Example:

**Issue:** No state budget funding is allocated to inclusive education. In practice, this means children with disabilities are kept at home and not enrolled in school.

**Barrier(s):** Not mentioned in policy documents, nor prioritized in the state budget. Thus, children with disabilities are forgotten and left behind to become a burden rather than a resource, and stigma and discrimination remain.

**Solution(s):** Change policies to make it mandatory for schools to include pupils with disabilities and for parents to enroll them, showcasing the ambitions with a GDS commitment, then stipulating the plan in policies and state budgets, ensuring implementation.

Your organization may advocate for one or more possible avenues to change. Some possible paths are outlined below:

- **Policy:** An advocacy campaign for putting in place or improving policies granting access to assistive technology for persons with disabilities with reference to the relevant GDS commitment your government pledged.
- **Budgets:** An analysis of the inclusiveness of national budgets and a campaign to promote inclusive and participatory budgeting.
- **Practice:** A campaign to ask local health facilities to provide health information in accessible formats.
- **Skills:** Lobbying for the capacitation of strategic local government offices to collect and distribute disability-disaggregated data.
- **Knowledge:** Carrying out an awareness raising campaign targeted at girls with disabilities to learn about their sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) services.
- **Attitude and Behavior:** A campaign to change certain societal attitudes, promoting the elimination of stigma and discrimination towards persons with disabilities.

Whatever the goal(s) of your advocacy project, the first step is to identify the problem(s) and analyze the causes and effects. Then prioritize the issue(s) related to the problem(s). When time is limited, i.e. if the GDS is drawing close, the need to prioritize is even bigger.



Suppose your team is satisfied with the s prioritized advocacy issues and has some ideas regarding what goal(s) you want to achieve. In that case, you can proceed to the next module, which will help you identify who else you can partner with.

*Once you have identified the advocacy issue(s), it should be expressed in terms of a problem faced by persons with disabilities, rather than as a policy problem. Examples of problems / issues to address are:*

- *Many children with disabilities in rural areas are failing to complete primary education.*
- *Persons with disabilities are unable to cast secret votes in national and local elections.*
- *Women with disabilities hardly access their local health clinics.*
- *People with psychosocial disabilities face stigma and isolation.*

## MODULE 2:

### MAPPING YOUR NETWORK

Everything you have done thus far before reaching this module could be achieved by a small team within an organization, working to identify, analyze, and prioritize issues for advocacy. However, even if advocacy does not have to start with a large group, it is vital to ensure more buy-in from various stakeholders to gain more credibility. If you want to gain momentum before the next GDS, you know the timeframe you have to map and mobilize a broad network. The same is true if you are aiming for a different event or want to achieve the desired results by a certain time.

Now that you have identified the change you want to achieve (and by when), by identifying and prioritizing specific issues affecting persons with disabilities, it's time to bring more peers, partners, and allies into your planning.

A network is a group of people or organizations that can share information, opportunities, skills, and resources, all of which can help to build collective synergy. Networks can help you to:

- Develop new ideas and ways of thinking about your issue(s).
- Access knowledge and experience.

- Gain support for your initiative, helping to build your power base.
- Work more directly with marginalized communities and those most affected by the challenges you are trying to address.

This, in turn, will help you to develop a deeper understanding of the issues for which you are advocating, and build a more representative network—or even a movement. To work effectively in a coalition, network, or movement, you need to develop trust, collective leadership, and sustainable ways of working that can yield advocacy results.

You will now create a map of potential partners and allies for your advocacy.

#### 1. Begin Your Brainstorming

- Identify who is in your local network – your own organization, other DPOs / NGOs, academic institutions, local businesses, or volunteers – might be interested, passionate, or already engaged in the issue(s) you have prioritized. Note them all down with the same-colored ink / markers, or on post-it notes.
- Next, try to identify other DPOs and disability champions in your country or region, and ensure that they are all noted down using a pen / marker of a different color, or post-it notes.
- Now identify other CSOs who are – or who could become – sympathetic to your cause in your country. Write them down using yet another color of ink or post-it notes.
- Next, think about community resources (i.e. places such as libraries or donor organizations where you could access funding, materials, meeting space, technology, printing services, knowledge resources, etc.). Then, add them to the map, using a different color or post-it notes.
- Finally, try to identify the key decision-makers and influencers in your country who would be interested in working with, or supporting your organization in addressing the issue(s). Think about leaders in Government, the private sector, leading INGOs, and public figures/celebrities. Add them to your map, using a different colored pen / marker, or post-it notes.



Photo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## 2. Dig Deeper

Add the following details to the different post-it notes (where relevant).

- What are their opinions about the issues that you prioritized in Module 1? What activities have they taken concerning the issues so far?
- What are their primary skillsets and strengths?
- Do they have a good record of working with persons with disabilities or issues affecting persons with disabilities?
- Have they been involved in the GDS discourse or thematic discussions on disability inclusion recently, or ever?
- Do they have existing relationships with key decision-makers?
- Do you have an existing relationship with them? If not, how could you connect with them?

## 3. Identify Potential Partners

To narrow down who might support your team in your advocacy, further identify with a tick individuals and groups on your map, that fit the following criteria:

- They are supportive of persons with disabilities and the issues that matter to them.
- They have a specific focus on the issues that you identified as priorities in Module 1.
- They have a critical strength that should benefit your team.

Feel free to add any additional criteria that you think would help you to identify your potential partners!

After you are done, you can now use the network / stakeholder matrix template that you find in Appendix 3. You can print it out to fill the list of stakeholders and the corresponding information, or you can sketch it out on a flip chart during your brainstorming sessions.

*The best way to approach this exercise is to look at the number of ticks you have given each one of potential partners, and determine:*

- *Who has the most ticks?*
- *Who has access to decision-makers?*
- *Who could work with your organization in a way that is beneficial for both parties?*

## MODULE 3:

### PICKING YOUR TARGET GROUPS

#### Step 1: Analyze the target groups – the groups that can make the changes

Now you know who your organization's allies are, but the network mapping exercise in module 2 would be incomplete if you do not fully understand who your targets are.

A "target" refers to decision makers such as individuals or groups who can decide policies and programs. This could be the president, the cabinet, parliamentarians, funding agencies, UN offices, community leaders, etc.

In comparison, influencers, also known as the "secondary audience", are the individuals or groups who have access to the decision makers and who may be able to influence them. Influencers can act as both your partners (within your network) and your primary target at the same time. So, what's important really is to be clear on the specific role or reason for which you have chosen a particular stakeholder as a target.

*Determine the relevance of each potential target within the "Spectrum-of-allies" (see explanation below), since not all targets may have similar institutional mandates. This will help your organization to figure out how influential / effective your choice of primary targets might be. The more their mandates relate to the specific issues your advocacy projects aim to tackle the greater the potential as your primary target.*

To build a broad picture of these different groups, we recommend creating what is known as a "Spectrum-of-allies." Analyzing your Spectrum-of-allies can help you deepen your understanding of the map you created in Module 2 and identify key targets in your context that can have a real impact.

As illustrated below, you place different individuals, groups, or institutions in the Spectrum-of-allies tool from left to right by considering the following:

1. **Your active allies:** It includes decision-makers and influencers who agree with you and are advocating alongside you.
2. **Your passive allies:** This refers to those who agree with you but aren't doing anything about it.
3. **Neutrals:** They are those who are neither for nor against your issue and are often unengaged.
4. **Passive opposition:** These are those who disagree with you but who aren't trying to stop you.
5. **Active opposition:** It comprises those who work to oppose or undermine you.

Below is an example of how you may map your potential targets using the tool.

#### ACTIVE ALLIES

Those who agree and are advocating alongside us

#### PASSIVE ALLIES

Those who agree but are not doing anything

#### NEUTRAL

Those who are neither for nor against us; unengaged

#### PASSIVE OPPONENTS

Those who disagree but are not stopping us

#### ACTIVE OPPONENTS

Those who are actively working against us.

### Example of Targets

#### PRIMARY TARGET

The Minister of Disability Affairs (or a similar portfolio in countries without a dedicated ministerial portfolio on disability). The targeted minister might currently be neutral. No direct contact yet.

#### SECONDARY TARGET

A highly respected columnist who writes on social issues in a high-selling newspaper. The newspaper does not normally tend to support your cause, but they have an avenue to reach the minister through the influential column. So it would help if you plan how to build a relationship with the columnist.



## Step 2: Prioritizing Our Targets

*It's better not to focus all your energy on your opponents when undertaking the prioritization exercise, as this can drain your energy. Instead, it can be more strategic and practical to turn neutral and passive allies into active ones.*

Your organization's advocacy will focus on your primary and secondary targets for the next few months. That is why the team must ultimately decide what is the reasonable number of targets to focus on. In other words, it is time to start prioritizing, and making your plan realistic.

## MODULE 4:

### BUILDING YOUR TIMELINE

To effectively influence the disability inclusion discourse in your country, it is crucial to know when key advocacy meetings and other defining moments and events are happening.

#### Step 1: Identify Relevant National, Regional and International Moments

- Let's say you're aiming to influence your government's commitments regarding your chosen issue(s) at the next Global Disability Summit. In that case, it will be very relevant to find out what has happened in your country on this topic since the last GDS.

#### Looking back:

- In light of your priority issue(s), what were the main activities, if any, your target group(s) engaged in to address this in the last years?
- Were there any significant decisions or processes related to your issue in recent years?

#### Looking ahead:

- What are the upcoming events at the local, national, and international levels related to your priority issue(s), e.g. GDS, African Union Summit, High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), other national / regional conferences, etc.?
- It's essential to know your government's fiscal year and when the different discussions take place – know who and when to target in order to get your issues into the state budget. Coordinate with your network to ensure the same issue is raised by

several actors (at the right and opportune time).

- Research whether there are any significant global events (e.g., the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the White Cane Day, etc.) coming up where you can seize the opportunity to elevate advocacy issues and shine a light on your issue(s)? Perhaps such events provide you with a chance or platform for promoting possible paths to addressing the issue(s)?

#### Step 2: Prioritize the Key Moments, Decisions, and Events

- From your network's experience, where can you have the most influence moving forward?
- Can you see any direct links between national moments and regional or global events?
- Is it clear how your network might be able to access or participate in upcoming moments, processes and events?
- As a network, always share opportunities and spread your collective energy by delegating tasks appropriately.

## MODULE 5:

### DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY

#### Step 1: Identifying Your Communication Approaches

At this stage, you have identified and prioritized your issues, mapped your network / allies, and identified your primary and secondary targets. Next, it is time to develop your strategy. In this process, the first step is to agree on the most effective communication approach for making your case to your targets. To do this, consider starting by reverting to the Spectrum-of-allies exercise that you accomplished in Module 4. However, this time, your main focus will be on understanding how you can use your Spectrum-of-allies to construct an advocacy communication strategy.

Here are the key activities you must undertake:

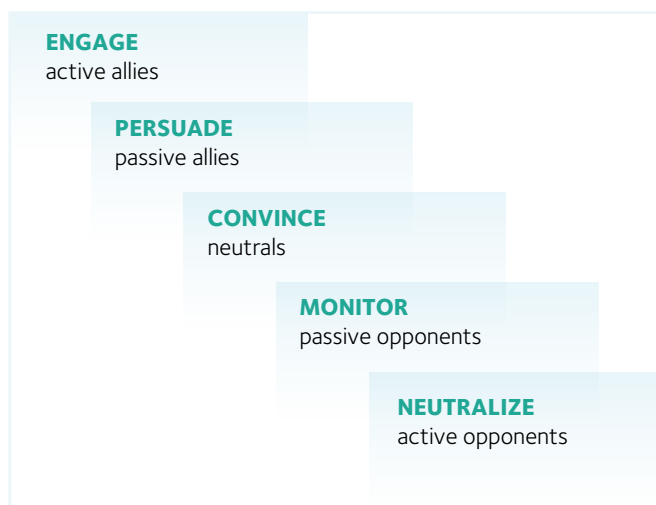
1. Identify your targets in each of the different sections of the Spectrum-of-allies.
2. Then, brainstorm how you can use your advocacy to move the identified targets in each section at least one step / section upward to the right – for instance, shifting passive opponents to the neutral area or moving passive allies to the active allies' section.
3. Finally, recreate the Spectrum-of-allies diagram by incorporating the appropriate communication



Photo: The Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted

approach(es) that you could use to formulate your advocacy messages. These communication approaches will help shift your targets towards allies at the far right as you move upward.

4. Now, this is what our new re-modeled Spectrum-of-allies will look like:



Now, let us summarize what the diagram means:

- **ENGAGE** – if your target is entirely supporting your advocacy goals and is highly interested in the issue, you should seek to include them in your advocacy network at all costs.
- **PERSUADE** – if your target is interested and somewhat agrees with your advocacy goals, you should try to persuade them by increasing their knowledge and showing them that your advocacy objectives are the appropriate solution.
- **CONVINCE** – if your target shows medium-to-little interest in your advocacy goals, you should try to convince them by justifying why other stakeholders or relevant institutions already support your cause.
- **MONITOR** – if your target is against your position but has little interest in the issue, you might want to devote some energy to monitoring them, especially if they are powerful or influential. But, on the other hand, they may suddenly choose to move towards different sections of the spectrum, meaning you will need to re-strategize your approach from time to time.
- **NEUTRALIZE** – if your target is against your position, has a lot of power, and is interested in your issue, you may need to neutralize their influence. While this can be difficult, it is vital to avoid unethical practices that put you (or others) at risk.

## Step 2: Formulating Your Advocacy Message

At this stage, you have identified both your targets and what you consider your appropriate generic communication approach (engage, persuade, etc.). As a result, you should now feel confident moving forward to formulating matching advocacy messages for each of your prioritized targets.

In this context, you will try to directly align each advocacy message with the identified corresponding communication approach above.

One method commonly used for effectively formulating such messages is called the “CAR” model, outlined here:

### C for **CHALLENGE**:

Package our advocacy issue and what you are doing to address it, in a way that will appeal to your specific target(s). Present it as a challenge worth taking.

### A for **ACTION**:

Convey your most important message to the specific target(s). What are you asking them to do in support of your advocacy goals?

### R for **RESULT**:

Explain why this specific action will lead to a positive result for those most affected by your advocacy issue.

Here is an example of formulating advocacy messages concerning the GDS 2018 Commitment under the theme “Harnessing Technology and Innovation” made by the Government of Nepal through the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/commitments?f%5B0%5D=field\\_commitment\\_theme%3A307&f%5B1%5D=field\\_commitment\\_stakeholder%3A2886](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/commitments?f%5B0%5D=field_commitment_theme%3A307&f%5B1%5D=field_commitment_stakeholder%3A2886)

TARGET	APPROACH	MESSAGES
The Minister of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens in Nepal	CONVINCE	<p><b>CHALLENGE:</b> Despite Nepal publishing the Priority Assistive Product List to enhance access to Assistive Technology, research shows that lack of accessibility, eligibility, reachability, and affordability remain barriers to accessing AT services for persons with disabilities in Nepal.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Ask the Minister of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens in Nepal to fulfil Nepal's commitment to the GDS 2018 by agreeing upon national standards / guidelines and working with other line ministries to introduce new policies that enhance the reachability and affordability of AT in the country.</p> <p><b>RESULT:</b> The Minister is sensitized and convinced, and the new policies help increase access to affordable AT by persons with disabilities in Nepal.</p>





Photo: Marianne Knudsen

The Nepalese Government committed in the GDS 2018 “to agree on national standards/guidelines”, and did eventually publish the Priority Assistive Product List to enhance access to Assistive Technology<sup>2</sup>. However, fulfilling this pledge did not address the problem in Nepal, as the action has not improved access to AT. The barriers to accessing AT for persons with disabilities in Nepal continue to be evident (Karki et al., 2021).

The purpose of our advocacy is not only to take stock of whether our duty bearers have done what they promised they would do. It is also to offer suggestions or solutions on what else they need to do beyond what they promised to do, to ensure that they address the problem at hand in your community, country, or region. So, the fact that the Nepalese Government published the Priority Assistive Product List may not prove to address the problem of access to AT in the country.

You can add three or more messages per target or per communication approach, whichever makes sense to the group. After completing this exercise, re-evaluate

the messages and make any changes you think will strengthen the advocacy messages.

### Step 3: Identifying Your Activities and Tactics

Under this step, the first thing to do is to outline different potential advocacy activities and tactics to use in your advocacy. What is important is to relate each activity or tactic with the listed communication approaches for each identified advocacy message – the processes you have already accomplished in the steps above.

You should consider questions such as: To what extent will the activity help to engage (if the goal of the communication approach for the particular message is to *engage* your target(s)); or to what extent will the activity help *convince* your target(s) (if the goal of the communication approach for the particular message is to *convince*); and so forth.

Below is an example of a list of potential activities. You should add as many activities as you can think of.

<sup>2</sup> Nepal Published Priority Assistive Product List to Enhance access to Assistive Technology. – ABILITY TO CHANGE TOGETHER – NEPAL (wordpress.com)

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Research and planning	Identify the most useful months to do budgetary advocacy in your country. When are state budgets being revised and adopted? Plan your influencing actions accordingly (fiscal years vary from context to context).
Public outreach events	Organizing different types of public outreach events (e.g. community dialogues, etc.) can help attract media coverage and public attention to the importance of funds for disability mainstreaming programs. If there are any GDS commitments given on this or there are unfulfilled plans for disability mainstreaming this can be brought up and used to put pressure on the duty bearers.
Phone-in radio program	Get the public – including disabled people – to voice their concerns about the issues affecting persons with disabilities in the communities, targeting policy makers. If there are any, refer to GDS commitments or plans that are yet to be implemented.
Issue petitions	From the list of your key advocacy messages, develop a petition (or more) with a clear recipient (a specific decision-maker) and a clear call to the public and stakeholders. If applicable, refer to relevant GDS commitments, other official promises made, or lack thereof, and - of course - why they should sign the petition.
Lobby meeting with Parliamentarians	Bring together your Parliamentarians to educate them on the benefits of increasing the budget for disability mainstreaming programs.
Use social media	Communicate your issue(s) and their importance through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to reach those who might not know much about the topic in question.

#### Step 4: Selecting Your Activities

In step 3, you came up with a list of activities and tactics. After that, you categorized them according to the specific communication approach. Finally, the next step is to remove the activities and tactics you feel may be less effective or less appropriate. To be more focused and organized, you need to revisit the list of activities and tactics, evaluate the corresponding message, review the communication approach, and select those activities or tactics you think you could use to help you achieve your objectives or goals. In undertaking this process, try to consider whether any of them could be impactful, effective, and suitable.

Consider the following questions:

- What activities and tactics are most appropriate to reach your targets?
- Does this activity fit with your chosen communication approach (engage, persuade, convince, monitor, or neutralize)?
- Are you acting safely in your current political environment and national context?
- Are you realistic about the number of activities you are undertaking?

#### Step 5: Activity Plan: Scheduling and Resourcing of Activities

To make the most out of your advocacy plan, it is important to schedule key activities, commemorative days and events, etc. Then you plan actions and what it might mean in required costs, materials, and the number of people involved.

Here is an example of an Activity Plan that DPOs and relevant stakeholders in Namibia could use. At the GDS 2018, the Namibia Disability Affairs in the Presidency committed to “enhancing access of women with disabilities to participate in the developmental agenda and enforcement of rights for women and girls with disabilities as guaranteed by international, regional, and national instruments, on an annual basis”.

DPOs and other stakeholders working at the national level can deliver an advocacy project around this GDS commitment at the national level (i.e. targeted at the Minister for Disability Affairs in the Presidency). However, the example below illustrates that it is also possible for DPOs and other stakeholders working in a specific district or community in Namibia to execute an advocacy project at that level.

ACTIVITY/TACTIC	DATE(S)	RESOURCES
<p>TARGET: District Commissioner (DC).</p> <p>APPROACH: Convince</p> <p>ACTIVITY: Deliver a signed petition to the DC asking them to put in place deliberate measures that ensure enhanced participation of women with disabilities on an equal basis with their male counterparts in all local projects within the district.</p> <p>RATIONALE: By petitioning the DC while exposing their failure to adhere to the commitments pledged by the Minister for Disability Affairs in the Presidency, it will likely help to elevate the urgency of the issue at the district level.</p>	To deliver the petition on December 2 (on the eve of the Day of Persons with Disabilities)	<p>Stationery and printing costs for the petition signatures: (a partner may offer to print them at their office for free)</p> <p>Food and drinks</p> <p>Hire costs for the police escort as the petitioners walk to the DC's office</p>
Add as many rows as necessary		

## MODULE 6:

### IMPLEMENTING YOUR ADVOCACY STRATEGY

You now have a complete advocacy strategy in place. You have come a long way. Congratulations! Next steps? It's time to begin implementing it. Here are a few tips to keep in mind while implementing your advocacy strategy.

- Establish a steering group to guide and monitor the implementation of the advocacy strategy.
- Divide the tasks within the team.
- Ensure that all activities are inclusive, such as accessible venues, materials and documents when organizing community workshops. Always consider the wide variety among persons with disabilities, especially under-represented groups.
- Value division of labor, leveraging the diverse skills of the team, rather than leaving most tasks and responsibilities to one person.
- Be transparent in all decision-making processes, enabling each network member to provide input throughout the implementation phase.
- Keep updated and seek out new developments regarding opportunities for advocacy, including the preparations for the next Global Disability Summit.

- Set up communications and update mechanism within the team, i.e. weekly meetings or other ways of sharing progress and developments as the team prefers.
- Consider the need for establishing smaller sub-teams that report back to the network for specific tasks and responsibilities (depending on their respective skillsets / expertise).
- Ensure that you have an effective communication system, utilizing different communication methods such as virtual tools, i.e. Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, e-mails, and newsletters, to mention a few.
- Constantly monitor and periodically evaluate your advocacy work and adjust accordingly where necessary.
- As implementation is in motion, identify opportunities for training, learning, sharing, and celebrating success.

If you can adhere to all or at least most of the tips suggested above, your advocacy campaign will certainly have a powerful impact. Feel free to add to the list whatever you think would make your advocacy triumph. Good luck!





Photo: FAMOD, Mozambique





Photo: Norwegian Association of the Disabled

# 3 References

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*Global Disability Summit 2022 Report*, by International Disability Alliance, which will be published on the "resources" page of the GDS website

*"Nothing without us", Global Disability Summit Oslo 2022*, by the Atlas Alliance, available on the Atlas Alliance website, under Reports





Photo: Norwegian Association of the Disabled



Photo: FAMOD, Mozambique

# 4 Appendices

We have created some of key templates that you can use in your advocacy planning processes. Print these three basic templates out to complete as you

work through the Advocacy Toolkit whether at the community, national, or even regional level. Re-visit this throughout your Advocacy project to add updates.

## APPENDIX 1: ISSUE OPTIONS TEMPLATE

### ADVOCACY ISSUE OPTION 1

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### ADVOCACY ISSUE OPTION 2

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### ADVOCACY ISSUE OPTION 3

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### ADVOCACY ISSUE OPTION 4

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APPENDIX 2: ADVOCACY GOAL FRAMEWORK TEMPLATE

GOAL	
OBJECTIVES	<div>OBJECTIVE-1:</div> <div>OBJECTIVE-2:</div> <div>OBJECTIVE-3:</div>
INDICATORS & EVIDENCE NEEDED	<div>** Re-visit this throughout your project to add updates **</div>



## APPENDIX 3: NETWORK/STAKEHOLDER MATRIX TEMPLATE

Stakeholder	Stake in the issue	How can they help the project be successful	How should they be engaged
Write the names & their brief descriptions in this column.	Consider the following: ✍ What is of interest to them, ✍ What do they want to see happen, ✍ How are they affected, ✍ How motivated are they, Add more considerations of your own.	✍ What skills and other attributes do they have to bring to the project? ✍ What track record do they have? Add more considerations of your own.	✍ What processes and level of engagement do you need to consider ✍ For example, are there conflicts amongst some stakeholders? Add more considerations of your own.

Add more rows (stakeholders) as necessary.



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