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Introduction

Government officials, legislators, and their staff hold tremendous power over the success of advocacy campaigns. Their support or opposition can influence the direction of an advocacy campaign considerably. The purpose of this book, the second in our Advocacy Expert Series, is to examine how our Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) can build strong relationships with members of the government and persuade them to implement our advocacy goal.

Communicating our Advocacy Campaign to Government

The success of our advocacy campaign depends on our ability to persuade people in power to adopt our advocacy goal. In order to persuade people in power, we must understand how to communicate effectively and how power works.

$$\text{Communicating effectively} + \text{Understanding Power} = \text{Ability to Persuade}$$

What is Communication?

Communication is a method of transferring ideas to other people. These ideas can be simple such as, "We are poor" or "We are hungry". The ideas behind advocacy campaigns demand action: "Hire more teachers" or "Preserve our forests by enforcing the community forestry law."

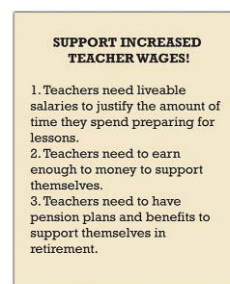
Communicating effectively is the foundation of our advocacy campaign. Through effective communication we can mobilize our supporters and persuade people in power to change or implement policy.

How do we communicate effectively?

We often communicate through speaking or writing. Though both are very good methods of communication, they are not always the most effective. Sometimes a single picture can convey a message as powerfully as 1,000 words. Or more relevant to our advocacy campaign, a rally of 1,000 people can be more effective than 1,000 words.



A protest communicates through **action**



A flyer communicates through **writing**

To become good communicators we must first become good **listeners.**

What is Active Listening?

All successful advocacy campaigns begin with actively listening to people in affected communities in order to understand their problems. Active listening is the process of truly hearing someone else's ideas and opinions. Active listening respects the person we are communicating with by showing that we are genuinely trying to understand their ideas and opinions. When we respect others' ideas and opinions we can expect them to actively listen to us. Active listening also:

- Affirms our understanding of what has been said to us.
- Shows us what part of our message was not clear or not understood.
- Assists in building a good working relationship. Everyone wants to know that their ideas and opinions are being heard and respected.

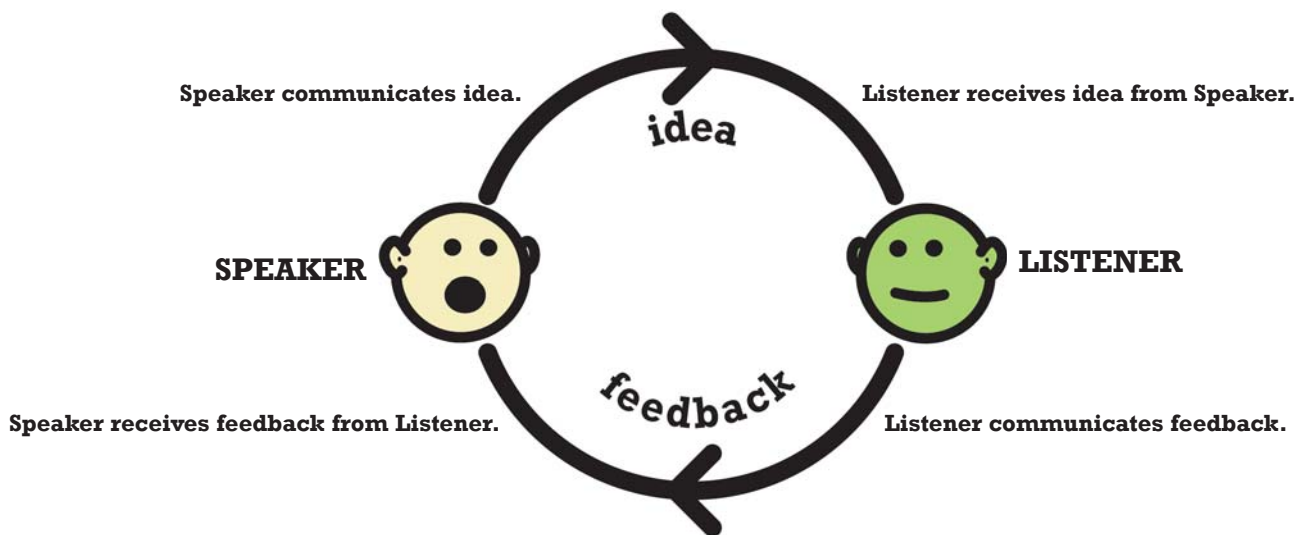
How can we actively listen?

To actively listen we need to:

- Ask questions if we do not understand.
- Restate what the other speaker has said, then ask if we restated it correctly.
- Use eye contact and body language, such as nodding, to show that we are listening carefully.
- Be patient so that the speaker has a chance to express themselves.

During our campaign we will need to actively listen to anyone who receives our advocacy messages.

ACTIVE LISTENING LOOP



Giving and receiving feedback
is the key to active listening.

Advocacy Message Development

Everyday, we receive many messages from many sources - radio, television, newspapers, advertisements, classes, workshops, meetings, even our friends and family - but we can only process a limited amount of information at a time. The targets of our advocacy campaign ("stakeholders" with high influence over the goal of our advocacy campaign) are no different.

To communicate our advocacy messages effectively we need to carefully select the **content**, **language**, and **brand** of our messages.

Content What is our campaign about? What arguments will we use to convince our targets?

The content of our advocacy messages must be:

SIMPLE

Our advocacy campaign should have one main message and no more than three supporting messages. If we have any more, we will lose the attention of our targets.

SHORT

Messages are ideas that can be explained in a sentence or two. If we need to use a paragraph or more, we should shorten our message.

RELEVANT

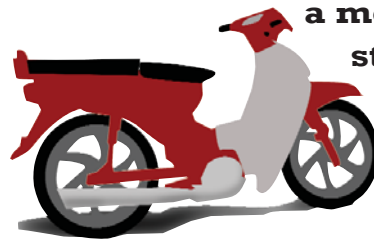
Our message should always support our organization's main advocacy goal.

CLEAR

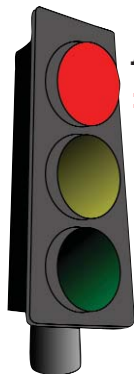
The most effective methods of communication are those that cannot be misinterpreted. For example:



**a baby might cry
because the baby is
tired or hungry...**



**a moto might not
start because it
is out of gas, or
the battery has
died...**



A red traffic light, however, can **only
mean stop - it cannot be misinterpreted.
Our advocacy message should be as clear
as a traffic light.**

Language

What keywords will we use to reach our targets? What words must we avoid?

The language in our advocacy messages must be:

STATEMENTS OF IDEAS

A message should be a complete thought capable of being understood quickly and easily. We can also use imagery, colorful language, and vivid details to increase the impact of our message.

CONSISTENT

Messages will need to be repeated over and over again before they are heard and understood. We should use similar language in all of our messages if we want our targets to associate the words with our campaign.

FOCUSED

Our messages should be focused on specific targets and tailored to respect their preferences. This does not mean changing the content of our message but rather changing the way we present it. Never use harmful or offensive language.

ORIGINAL MESSAGE	IMPROVED MESSAGE
"End discrimination against the 2.6% of adults in Cambodia who are HIV positive."	"Imagine if every single person in Kompong Som province had HIV/AIDS. We cannot afford the economic costs of discriminating against 170,000 people."
"35,000 children die every day from malnutrition. We must work to end the global malnutrition crisis."	" 100 jumbo jets crash with 350 children aboard every day. Help stop the malnutrition crisis."*

* from UNICEF's "silent emergency" campaign.

Brand

What kind of visual statement can we make to communicate our ideas?

Not all messages must be communicated with language. "Branding" our advocacy campaign by using graphic images (like symbols and logos) can communicate our advocacy messages quickly and clearly. Like the language of our advocacy messages, brands must be used over and over again for them to be recognized.



The most successful advocacy messages inspire people to **take action.**

Advocacy Message Delivery

Once we have chosen the content, language, and brand for our main and supporting messages we need to decide how to deliver our messages.

All messages must have a **messenger**. A messenger speaks on behalf of our advocacy campaign. Often the best messenger for our advocacy message is someone who is personally affected by the problem. In certain situations, however, some messengers are more effective than others. A representative from our NGO is an effective messenger when we want to closely control our message and need to show credibility. A famous spokesperson such as a popular singer or television actor is an effective messenger when we want to increase our messages' appeal to a broader audience.

NOTE:

If we choose a messenger who is famous it is important to consider their political affiliation. Their political affiliation may affect the acceptability of our message with our target audience.

MESSENGERS



Beneficiaries

Members of the affected group (called "beneficiaries") are excellent messengers because they can provide personal stories and firsthand accounts of the problem.



NGO Employee

NGO Employees are appropriate messengers when we want to convey credibility and control our advocacy messages carefully.



Mascots

Mascots are excellent messengers when we want to communicate to children or if our message deals with a culturally sensitive problem.

(PHOTO: PSI's Number One Condom.)



Celebrity

Celebrities are excellent messengers when we want to broaden the appeal of our message or appeal to different sectors of society.

(PHOTO: Neay Koy, a popular Cambodian Comedian, gets his blood tested to support HIV/AIDS awareness.)

It is our responsibility to educate our messengers about the proper **format**, **time**, and **place** to deliver our advocacy message.

Format **How will we disseminate our message?**

When choosing the format for our advocacy message, we must look at the preferences of the targets of our advocacy campaign. It is important to use language and images that our targets will recognize and understand. For example, when communicating to illiterate adults, radio broadcasts or illustration books might be the most effective message formats. When communicating to the members of government we need to prepare professional looking briefing papers (see page 17.)

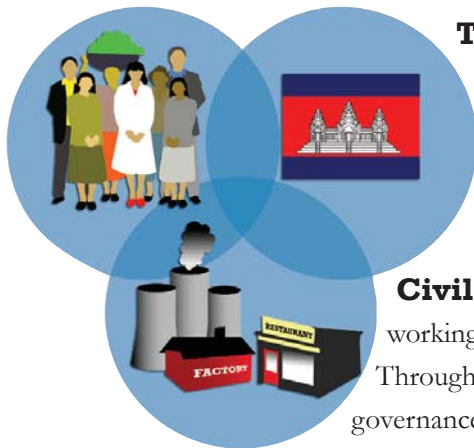
Time and Place **When and where should we disseminate our message?**

We should disseminate our messages at a time and place that best matches the lives our targets. If we want to communicate to factory workers, for example, we should meet employees outside the factory gates at closing time or shift changes. To communicate to members of government, we should plan face to face meetings in their office or constituency where we can have their full attention (see page 17.) These meetings should be scheduled during a calm period, not during a major political crisis.

Understanding Power in Society

Power is the ability to control or influence someone or something. We need to understand power because successful advocacy campaigns lead to changes in power relationships in society.

The three spheres of society, the state, private sector, and civil society, share power although not always equally.



The State: The state is made up of public entities working to advance public interests. **Source of Power:** Law

Private sector: The private sector consists of private people and organizations working to advance private interests. **Source of Power:** Money

Civil society: Civil society is made up of private citizens and organizations working together to advance public interests. An NGO is a part of civil society. Through our advocacy campaign we are helping to build the power of civil society in governance. **Source of Power:** Community

As advocates, we will use power to influence different people within the three spheres of society to address problems in our communities.

Finding Power

Everyone wants to feel powerful. Understanding what makes us feel powerful will help us understand how to influence other people.

When we feel disrespected, isolated, or that a problem is beyond our control, we have a better chance of regaining power if we find other people or organizations, form a relationship with them, and address the problem together.

What makes us feel...

<p>Powerful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having control Being treated with respect Solving difficult problems Working with others Causing others to fear us Having others support us 		<p>Powerless?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of control Being disrespected Inability to fix problems Feeling isolated Feeling afraid Lack of resources
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Power through Community Mobilization

Community mobilization means gathering people together to take a joint action. Strikes, marches, petition drives, forums and rallies are some common forms of community mobilization. NGOs assist communities to mobilize in order to change feelings of powerlessness into feelings of power.

NOTE:
Expressing our message on billboards, banners, etc. is called "raising awareness." "**Community mobilization**" requires that people act.

Six Steps for a Successful Protest

1. Create a message that clearly states the issue we are protesting.
2. Inform the authorities about the protest and secure legal permission.
3. Invite our friends, champions, and other allies and make sure they show up.
4. Set a time to start and stop the protest. Select a clear route for protesters to follow.
5. Keep the attention of the crowd and the media with signs, chants, songs and entertainment.
6. Have a security plan to make sure the participants will be safe and peaceful.



Government Power

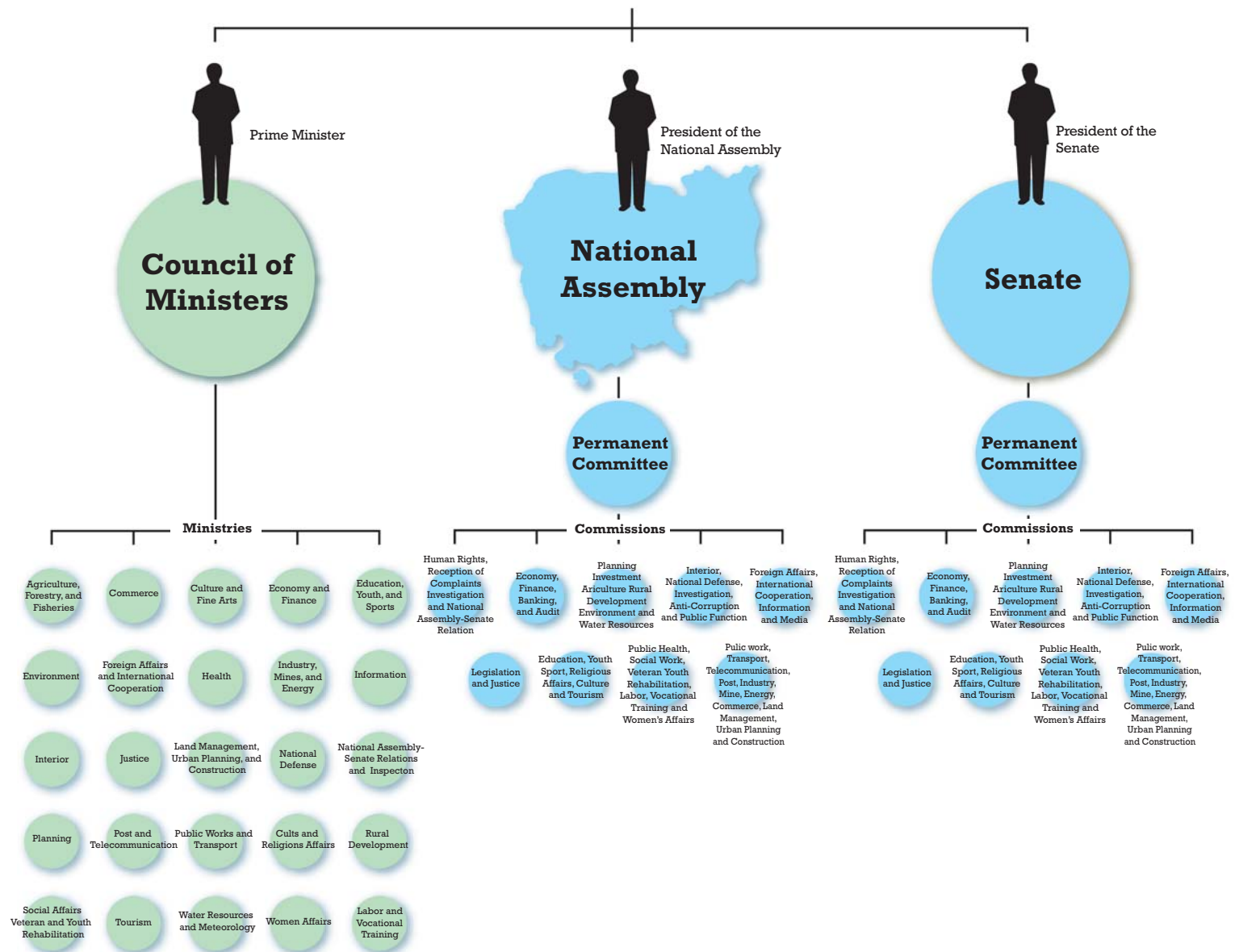
In order to use our power to persuade the members of government, we need to understand the structure of government and the legislative process. Cambodia is a democratic constitutional monarchy. This means that the King holds the ultimate power over the three other parts of the Government: the Council of Ministers, National Assembly, and Senate.

Government Structure of CAMBODIA

Council of the Crown



King



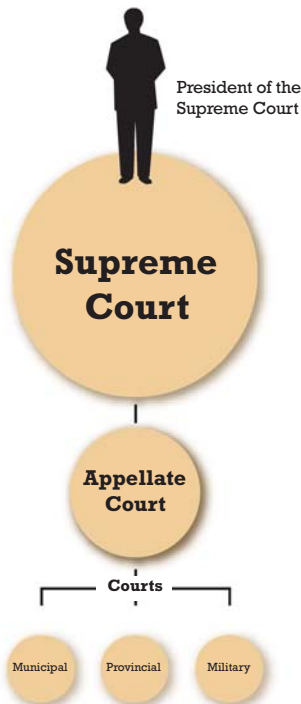
What is democracy?

Democracy is a system of governance where the people, either directly or through elected representatives, have the right and power to change policies or practices to improve society.

In a democracy, members of civil society have the right and duty to tell government officials how a government is functioning. It is the role of civil society to encourage fair legislative and election processes and monitor them both closely.

Constitutional Council

Supreme Council of Magistracy



Executive Branch

The **King** of Cambodia is the head of state for life. “The King reigns but does not govern.”

The **Council of the Crown's** primary function is to determine the succession of the crown. Unlike other monarchies, the royal line does not automatically descend through the eldest child of the King. The Council consists of two Buddhist patriarchs and seven of the highest ranking politicians.

The **Council of Minister's**, also known as the Royal Government of Cambodia, primary function is to implement laws and policies that will govern Cambodia. Its members include the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister(s), Senior Ministers, the Minister of each Ministry, and the Secretaries of State.

Legislative Branch

The **National Assembly's** primary function is to adopt laws that will govern Cambodia and to elect the Prime Minister. The members of the National Assembly are elected by the citizens of Cambodia and serve 5 year terms.

The **Permanent Committee** of the National Assembly's primary function is to set the legislative agenda for the National Assembly. The Committee consists of the Presidents of each Commission.

The **Senate's** primary function is to review all laws passed by the National Assembly and to propose its own legislation. Some of Senators shall be appointed and some others shall be elected by non-universal election.

The **Permanent Committee** of the Senate's primary function is to set the legislative agenda for the Senate. The Committee consists of the Presidents of each Commission.

Judicial Branch

The **Supreme Court** is the highest court of appeals in the country. Its jurisdiction covers the whole territory of Cambodia.

The **Appellate Court** hears all cases appealed from the municipal, provincial, and military courts.

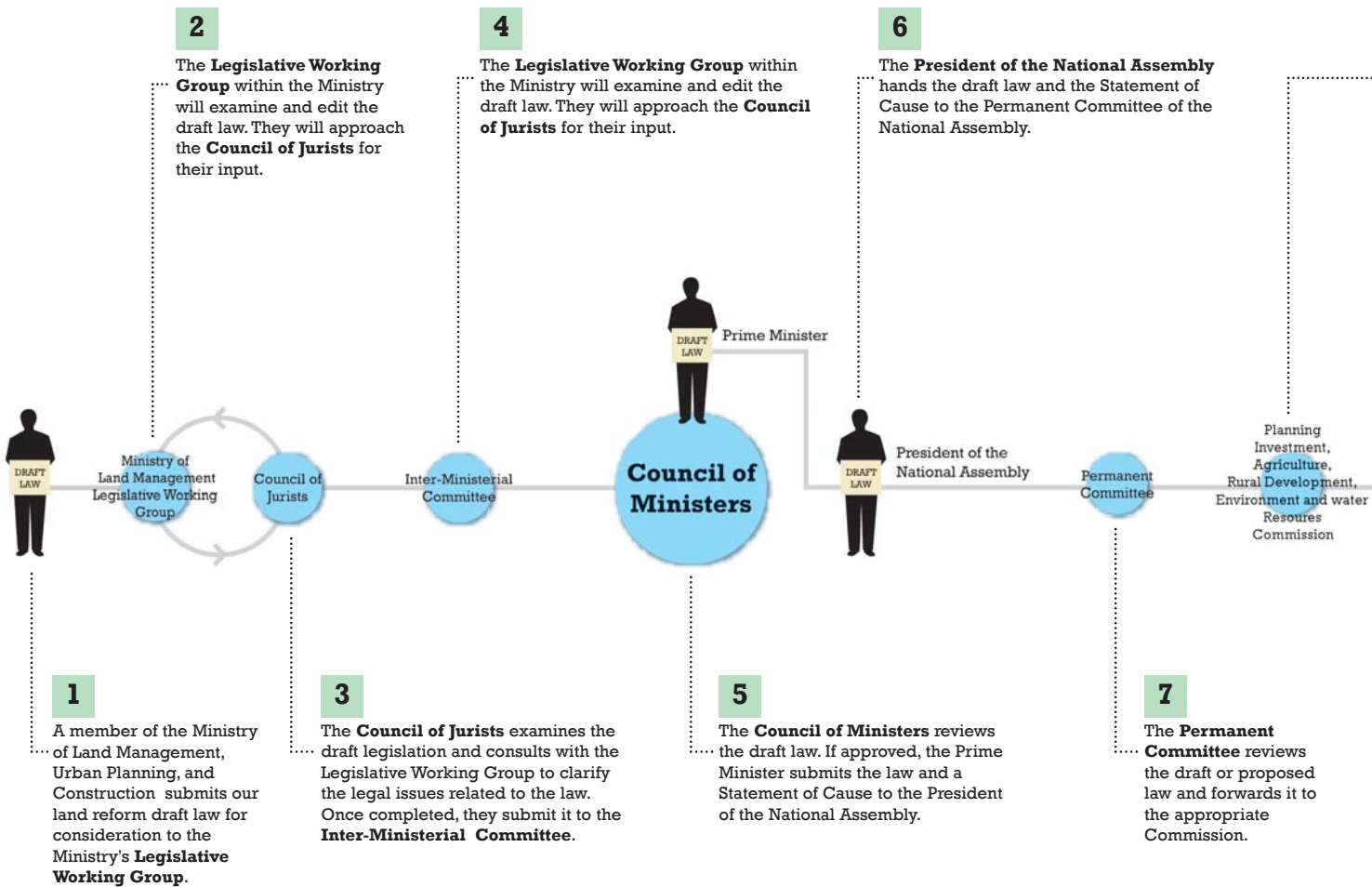
The **Supreme Council of the Magistracy's** primary function is to ensure the smooth functioning of the judiciary. Its 9 members include:

- the King
- the Minister of Justice
- the President of the Supreme Court
- the Prosecutor-General of Supreme Court
- the President of the Appellate Court
- the Prosecutor-General of Appellate Court
- Judges elected by the Judges themselves.

The **Constitutional Council's** primary function is to determine the constitutionality of laws and it shall have the right to examine and decide on contested cases involving the election of Assembly and Senate members. Its nine members are chosen by the National Assembly, the King, and the Supreme Council of the Magistracy.

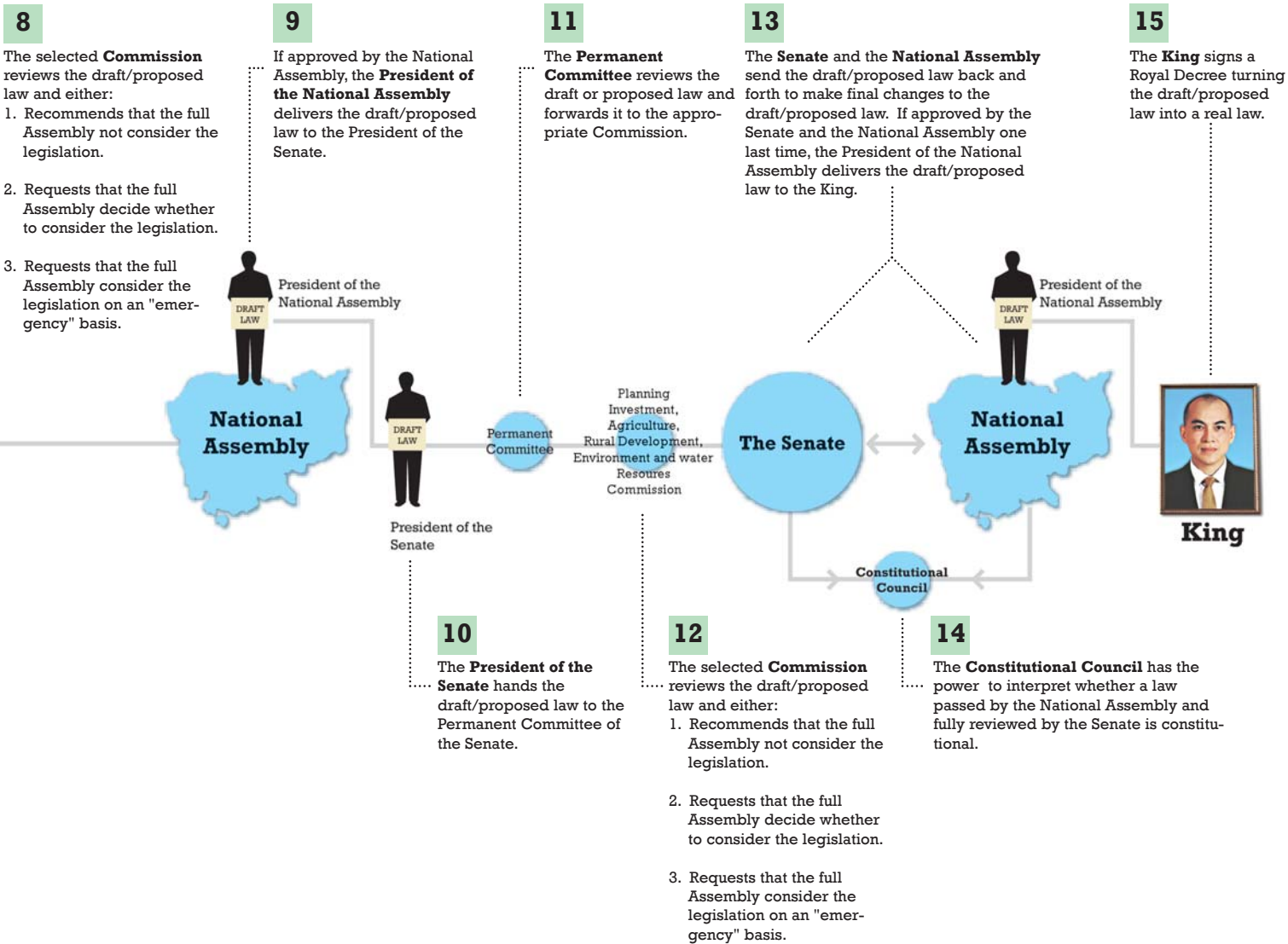
The Legislative Process

The legislative process describes how a draft proposal becomes a law. All democratic nations have their own legislative process. Imagine that we want to pass a law about land reform in Cambodia. This is how the draft would proceed:



Civil Society plays an important role in fighting injustice and inequality by using the legislative process by **Drafting Legislation** and **Lobbying** government officials.

How a Draft bill becomes law in CAMBODIA



Effective laws change people's behavior and have a real impact on people's lives. A law - or the lack of law - can cause injustice and inequality in three ways:

Words

The law or policy explicitly denies fundamental rights or is discriminatory.

Example: Women are not allowed to vote.

Behavior

The law or policy is not enforced or the law is implemented in a way that unfairly favors some people over others.

Example: Everyone must pay taxes except government officials.

Custom

The public may be unaware of the law or customs, traditions, common practice make it difficult to enforce.

Example: Families of murder victims accept payment from the criminals instead of cooperating with prosecutors.

Drafting Legislation

Drafting legislation requires that we first define whose behavior is causing the problem. We can start by listing all of the people involved in creating the problem. The most important question to ask ourselves is, "**Whose behavior needs to change in order for the problem to end?**"

For example, domestic violence legislation could mandate punishment for the abusers. But, we must also examine how behavior of police, judges, government officials, prosecutors, hospitals, or anyone else who may be involved with the problem needs to change.

After we have defined whose behavior we need to change, we can then explore all possible legislative solutions. Start by researching all relevant laws, drafts and reports. Government departments at the national, regional, and local level are obvious resources for information. Below is a list of some others:

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH RESOURCES

Universities	Legal Journals	Journalists
Research Institutions	Media Articles	International Donors
Libraries	Other NGOs	Internet

When conducting research on legislation it is often helpful to look to other governments for an international perspective on the problem. Other governments may have more experience or expertise in regards to the problem and therefore may have already incorporated international best practices into their legislation. However, it is important to remember that although other countries may have already implemented a legislative solution for a problem like ours, laws and culture interact closely. What works for one group of people or society may not work for another. Our draft legislation must be more than just a translation of another law - it must reflect the needs of our community.

The best way to find out the needs of our community is to ask them! For example, is there general consensus among the community and the general public that the law needs to be changed? How might our proposed changes to the law affect different segments of society? Many research methods (surveys, interviews, observations, etc.) can be used to help educate us about how people perceive the current law and our proposed solution.

Once we have conducted a thorough investigation of all possible options we can begin to develop our own legislative solution. We must involve key stakeholders, politicians and political party members early in the process to incorporate their ideas and gain their support. Our draft legislation does not need to be perfect. It will be revised by experienced legislators and legal advisors many times throughout the legislative process.

NOTE:

As we conduct our research we must consider the reliability and accuracy of the information we discover. The credibility of our draft law will depend on thorough research, objective analysis, and proper documentation.

As the draft law passes through the legislative process it is important to track the progress and ensure that any changes or amendments support our original advocacy goals. If the changes to the draft law are extreme, we may decide to withdraw our support for the law. By lobbying key decision makers in government we can promote the passage of our draft law.

Lobbying






Lobbying is the art of persuading public officials to support or oppose a law and the enforcement of that law. In an advocacy campaign that seeks legislative change, lobbying is a critical part of our advocacy activities.

How do I lobby effectively?

To lobby government officials, we must prepare our messages and messengers carefully. We must also identify the different types of legislators in positions of power.

Legislators can be divided up into five types. Each type requires a different communication strategy:

5 TYPES OF LEGISLATORS

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
	<p>Champions are legislators who believe in our advocacy campaign and actively support it. They will deliver our advocacy messages to other legislators and be visible spokespersons for the campaign.</p>	<p>Provide Champions with reliable information that they can use to convince other legislators to join our cause.</p>
	<p>Friends are legislators who support our advocacy campaign but who have not yet participated or contributed very much.</p>	<p>Try to convince Friends to get more involved in our campaign.</p>
	<p>Fence sitters are legislators who are neutral and uncommitted to either side of our issue.</p>	<p>Fence Sitters are the main targets of our lobbying efforts. We need to use our Friends and Champions to win them over to our side.</p>
	<p>Opponents are legislators who will definitely vote against us but do not have the time, resources or desire to work against us.</p>	<p>Try to prevent Opponents of our advocacy campaign from becoming more active and vocal.</p>
	<p>Enemies are the people actively opposed to our advocacy goal.</p>	<p>We must give clear reasons why other legislators should not join our Enemies.</p>

Who are our **champions** and **friends** within the government?

NOTE:

Advocates sometimes confuse the words "lobbying" and "advocacy." Successful advocacy campaigns use many activities such as workshops, demonstrations, marches, and meeting with government officials to achieve their advocacy goals. Only meetings with government officials is called lobbying. Lobbying is just one of the methods we will use to accomplish our advocacy goal.

Lobbying

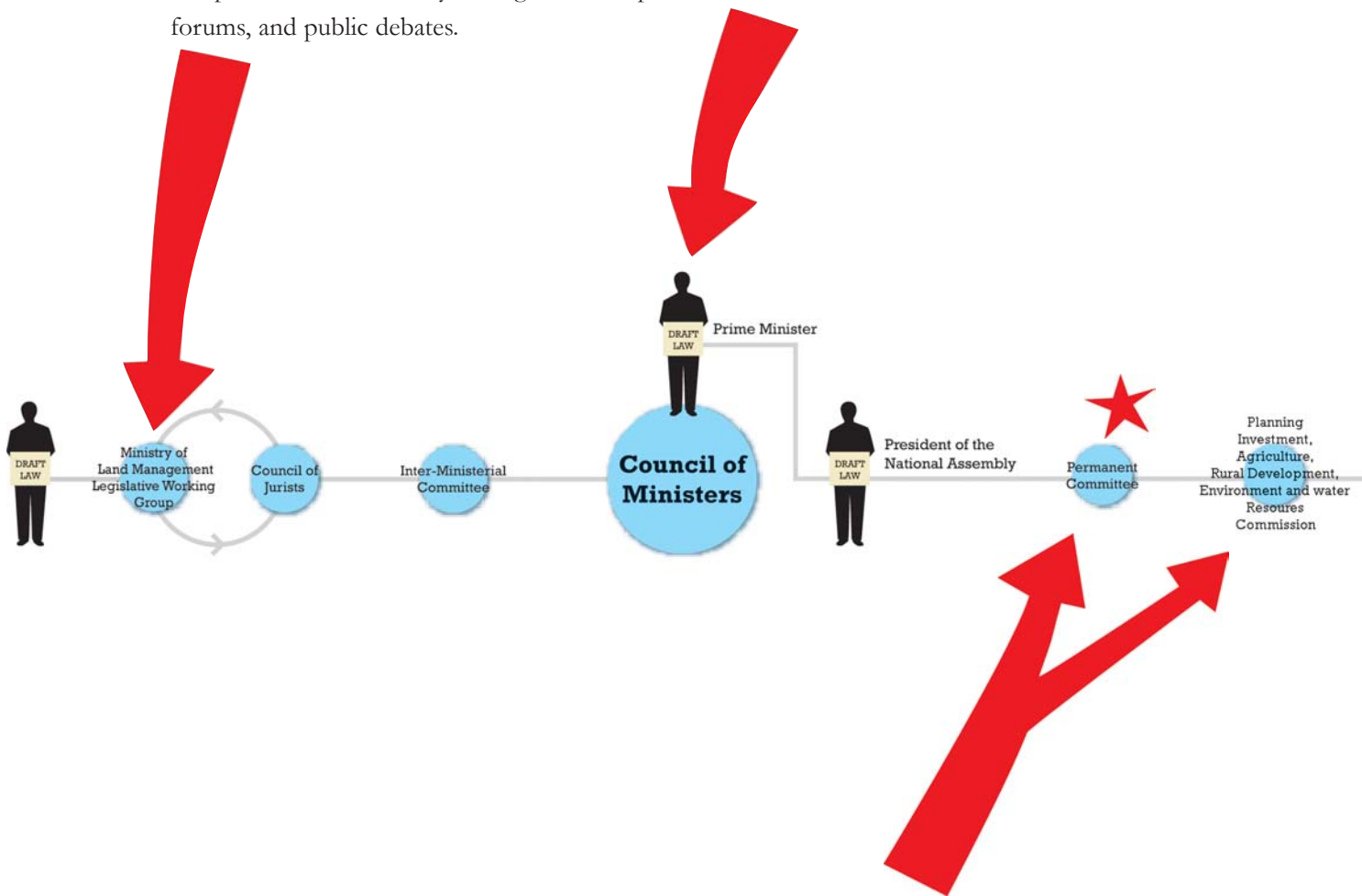
Various communication strategies should be used in our lobbying activities. The chart below describes various points in the legislative process when members of government are more likely to listen to our views on draft legislation.

LOBBY HERE!

Members of the Ministries and their staff begin drafting a law. The Ministry may open the legislative process to civil society through workshops, forums, and public debates.

LOBBY HERE!

The Prime Minister is one of the most powerful people in Government. If we can convince the Prime Minister that our draft law is important, other members of Government will follow.



LOBBY HERE!

The Permanent Committee of the National Assembly and any commission within the National Assembly can initiate the legislative process. Like the Ministries, the Commissions may open the legislative process to civil society through workshops, forums, and public debates.

★ Legislation does not have to begin in a Ministry. Any member of the National Assembly or Senator can propose legislation. When a member of the National Assembly or a Senator proposes legislation it is called a **“Proposed Law”** NOT a **“Draft Law.”** The Proposed Law follows the exact same steps as a Draft Law except that it is first introduced to a Commission within the National Assembly.



How do I pressure government officials?

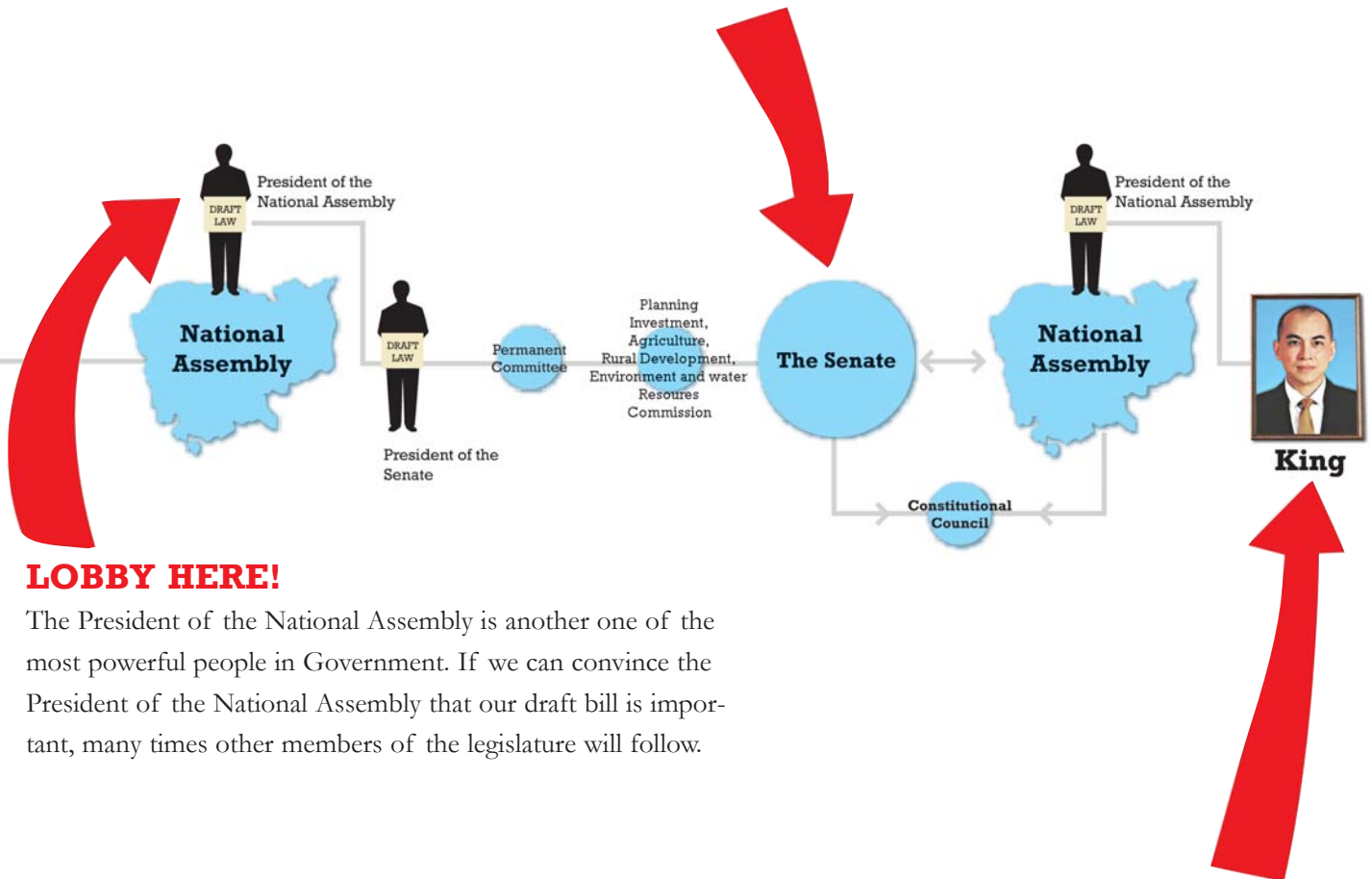


- Write letters or emails
- Make phone calls
- Schedule face to face meetings
- Sign petitions
- Hold rallies or marches

- Invite them to public debates
- Involve international stakeholders
- Start a media campaign
- Invite government officials to visit the affected group

LOBBY HERE!

Senators have the power to debate and vote on legislation. Contact them and persuade them to adopt your position.



LOBBY HERE!

The President of the National Assembly is another one of the most powerful people in Government. If we can convince the President of the National Assembly that our draft bill is important, many times other members of the legislature will follow.

LOBBY HERE!

Although the King “reigns but does not govern” he plays an important role in Cambodian politics and society.

Strategic Government Relations Plan

Once we have identified the different types of legislators involved in our advocacy effort we can create a Strategic Government Relations Plan.

A Strategic Government Relations Plan details our methods for persuading government officials to address our advocacy campaign. It will be integrated with our Advocacy Action Plan to keep our advocacy campaign activities focused and on track.



SAMPLE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PLAN

Objective: Adoption and implementation of a Domestic Violence Law within five years.

LAW, POLICY, OR PRACTICE TO BE CHANGED	DECISION MAKERS TO BE TARGETED	PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE LAW	ACTIVITIES TO INFLUENCE TARGETED DECISION MAKERS	CHAMPION
<p>YEAR 1-2</p> <p>A law making domestic violence a crime is adopted</p>	<p>National Assembly</p> <p>Senate</p> <p>King</p>	<p>Public has basic understanding of the problem of domestic violence but little awareness of their legal rights.</p> <p>Media has greater knowledge.</p>	<p>Review current draft law. In consultation with stakeholders, develop suggestions to improve Draft Law, including removal of marital rape exception.</p> <p>Prepare briefing paper. Meet with chairs of Legislation and Health Care, Social Affairs, Work and Women's Affairs Commissions in Senate and National Assembly.</p> <p>Organize tour of domestic violence shelters to allow legislators to observe and meet beneficiaries.</p> <p>Meet with Prime Minister, Council of Ministers and King.</p> <p>Organize candlelight vigils against violence in each province during 16-day campaign and invite legislators to speak.</p>	<p>Ms. Mu Sochua, Minister of Women's and Veteran's Affairs</p>
<p>YEAR 3-5</p> <p>Domestic Violence Law is properly implemented</p>	<p>Minister of Interior</p> <p>Minster of Justice</p>	<p>Law has not been passed</p>	<p>Conduct comparative analysis to examine how other countries implement their Domestic Violence laws.</p> <p>In consultation with Cambodian Bar Association and other stakeholders, develop draft Guidelines that will detail the best practices that police, prosecutors, and courts should follow when investigating and bringing cases to court.</p> <p>Meet with Ministers or Secretaries of State in Interior and Justice to lobby for adoption of Guidelines by the Ministries.</p> <p>Help design training curriculum on Guidelines for use in the police academy, School of Magistrates, and law schools.</p>	<p>Ms. Khim Chamrouen</p>

Meeting with Members of Government

The members of government have the power to influence the legislative process but they may not be familiar with our advocacy campaign. We should think creatively about how to keep them informed of our advocacy efforts. One of the best ways to communicate our advocacy messages to our targeted decision makers is through personal meetings.

How do I have an effective meeting with a member of the government?

Meeting with a member of the government can be intimidating, so it is wise to prepare thoroughly in order to make ourselves more confident. Here are four important steps to having an effective meeting:



Advocates from several Election Monitoring Organizations meet with the Cambodian Minister of the Interior, H.E. Sar Kheng.

Choose an **APPROPRIATE TIME**

Timing is important when requesting a meeting with a member of government or their staff. We can request a meeting by writing letters, making phone calls, or having a mutual friend or acquaintance make a request on our behalf. However, a member of the government will be more likely to agree to a meeting if there has been recent media attention or if we have assembled an diverse group of organizations who support our advocacy campaign.

Understand their **INTERESTS**

Before meeting with a member of government we must try to understand how the problem from their perspective. Why should they support our advocacy campaign? How can they benefit from taking the action we are requesting? How are their constituents affected? What is a reasonable request to ask of someone in their position? If we understand their interests, we can better persuade them to support our campaign.

Prepare a **BRIEFING PAPER**

A briefing paper is a short document that summarizes our advocacy goal. It should be one page long and contain five elements:

1. A short background of the problem
2. A few personal stories related to the problem
3. Our recommended solution to the problem
4. Our requested action that the legislator should take to address the problem
5. Our contact information (names, phone numbers and email addresses)

NOTE:

All of our advocacy campaign messengers should practice reciting (ideally even memorize!) the five elements of our briefing paper so that they can express themselves naturally and confidently when meeting with a member of government.

expect **ACTION**

There are many ways a member of government can support our advocacy campaign. We may want their vote in support of our draft legislation. We may want their leadership and guidance or perhaps we simply want to build a stronger relationship. Whatever our expectations, don't be satisfied with vague expressions of support. End the meeting by clearly asking the member of government to take a specific action.

While in the meeting don't forget to listen actively and speak with authority. Before leaving, give the member of government a copy of the briefing paper and express gratitude for the opportunity to meet. Afterwards, send a follow-up letter restating what was discussed and which actions they have agreed to take in the future. Remember to hold them to those agreements.

Conclusion

Understanding communication, power, and lobbying are all important steps in developing a strong relationship with members of government. With these skills we can form relationships and persuade people in power to support our advocacy campaign and, ultimately, implement our advocacy goals.

In our next book, "**Working with the Media**", we will explore how to use the media to communicate our advocacy message and gain support for our advocacy campaign.



"There is always time
to make **right** what is **wrong**."

Susan Griffin

Glossary

Affirms

To support, confirm, or declare positively.

Brand

A distinctive visual mark, category, or name distinguishing a particular thing.

Beneficiary

Someone who receives assistance, money, property, gifts, or other benefit.

Champion

A legislator who uses his or her position, profile or influence to promote a cause or issue.

Constituent

A resident of a district or member of a group represented by an elected official. People who authorize another person to act as their representative.

Disseminate

To spread widely, scatter, circulate or disperse.

Lobby

To try to convince legislators or other public officials to support or oppose a specific cause.

Stakeholder

Anyone with a direct interest in the outcome of our advocacy campaign.

Target

Stakeholders with the greatest ability to influence the success or failure of our advocacy campaign.



Resources

For more information on these topics:

An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide

Ritu Sharma (SARA Project), USAID Office of Sustainable Development.

Advocacy: Building Skills for NGO Leaders

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) (1999).

A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation

Lisa VeneKlasen with Valerie Miller, World Neighbors (2002).

Cambodia Government Websites

[Http://www.cambodia.gov.kh](http://www.cambodia.gov.kh)

[Http://www.khmersenate.org](http://www.khmersenate.org)

Introduction to the Cambodian Judicial Process

Koy Neam, The Asia Foundation (1998).

Advocacy in Action: A Toolkit to Support NGOs and CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS

International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003).

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