

This toolkit was published in 2018 as part of the Refugee Education Initiatives (REIS) project, funded by the Erasmus+program of the European Commission.

The purpose of the project is to facilitate the social and economic integration of newly arrived migrants and foster their inclusion into higher education as currently disadvantaged learners. The Refugee Education Initiatives (REIs) achieve this by upscaling to the European level an existing project, the Open Learning Initiative (OLIve, now called OLIve Weekend Program, OLIve-WP) running at Central European University since January 2016, and by taking what we have learnt from OLIve-WP and extending its scope and rationale into a university preparatory programme, the one-year Refugee Access Initiative (RAI - but now called OLIve University Preparatory Program, OLIve-UP).

Both OLIve-WP and OLIve-UP are implemented through REIs at the European level in three different countries - Hungary at CEU, in the United Kingdom at the University of East London and in Austria at the University of Vienna.

The Refugee Education Initiatives is a partnership between three universities, Central European University (Hungary), University of Vienna (Austria) and University of East London (UK), and the European Network Against Racism, based in Brussels (Belgium).

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The contents of this publication can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.

Design and layout: Crossmark

Advocacy Handbook

Why this manual?

"If the structure does not permit dialogue, the structure must be changed"
- Paulo Freire

This manual is first of all for anyone who passionately believes that equal access to higher education based on merit is a force for good. Secondly, it is specifically designed for refugee students taking part in a preparatory course for university access (designed under the implementation of the Refugee Education Initiatives project).

This manual uses the term 'refugee(s)' as an umbrella term and intends to include all people under international protection with different legal statuses according to different regulations across EU Member States.

The methodology of this toolkit is based on two main community organising and mobilising schools: Saul Alinksy and Paulo Freire. The American community organiser and writer Saul Alinsky studied the different nature of communities and how their organic structures could lead to the best strategies and tatics for base-led actions. His theories have an institutional approach to mobilisation and through this guide, Alinsky's techniques are included to address horizontal challenges with different stakeholders.

The Brazilian Educator Paulo Freire has used critical pedagogy as a tool to reframe the concept of creative power. By understanding the dynamics of oppression, his methods challenge communities to understand how minorities can change systems from within.

We hope this manual will support you in your own advocacy effort. It seeks to do so by explaining what advocacy is about, how to plan and start your own advocacy initiative, which tools are there to help you and what to keep in mind to make best use of your time and energy. You can use this manual from start to finish if you just started thinking about getting active. You can also pick out single parts that are most relevant for you.

This manual includes examples of successful projects advocating for education for all and supporting refugees in their access to higher education. We hope they inspire and encourage you.

Enjoy it!

Uhy participate? Why be active?

As a member of society, we are often faced with various challenges regarding work, housing, education, access to services and our roles in society, which can prevent us from following our aspirations and dreams. These barriers are often created by problematic policies, practices or attitudes, which not only affect us as individuals, but also our neighbours and members of our communities.

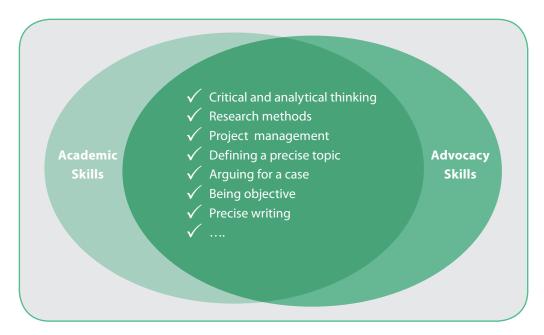
Being active and participating enables us to address our concerns and help improve not only our own lives, but lives of the people in our community. Participation, whether at local, national, international or global level, is a human right. It allows us to make our voice heard, influence decision-makers, achieve change, develop social cohesion and ultimately be a key player of our own lives.

One way to participate is to engage in advocacy. Advocacy is a tool we can use to achieve change in those policies, practices or attitudes that act as barriers in our own life and in our community's lives.

Being active and engaging in advocacy is not something we have to do on our own. We can start the process, inspire, and mobilise members of our communities to take a stand and advocate. We can also become members of an existing group or organisation. There is a community out there waiting for your participation, you just need to take the initiative and join.

Engaging in advocacy develops skills usually acquired when studying at university. By engaging in advocacy, we can apply these skills and further develop them in practice. We simultaneously become a change-maker, acquire valuable skills and better the community.

Finally, being active and doing advocacy can be a very enriching personal experience, as we learn new skills, gain valuable knowledge, overcome challenges and meet new people. The experiences and skills we gain when engaging in advocacy are also interesting for many future employers and can be useful in our professional life.



Graphic 1: Academic and advocacy skills are intertwined

2 What is advocacy? Advocacy is a **strategic and creative process** to influence policies, practices and attitudes that affect people's lives.

Three words of this definition are of particular importance to understanding advocacy:

1. Strategic

Being strategic means to prepare advocacy efforts well before investing time and effort in activities, going public and meeting stakeholders. This is to ensure that you make best use of your limited resources and that your activities have a clear objective to help achieve your overall goal. It allows you to have a greater impact and prevent frustration for you and your team.

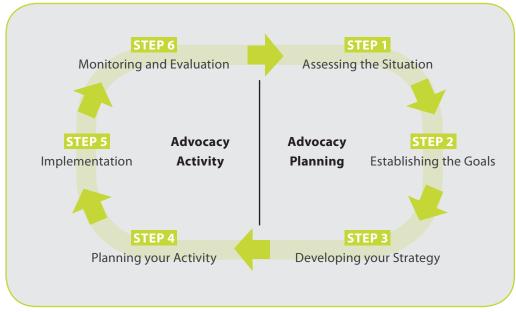
2. Creative

When you try to influence people and policy processes, you are confronted with highly dynamic targets. As they are subject to change, you need to be flexible and able to adapt your plan to your changing environment. Each plan must be embedded in the social and political context, there is no special formula for all advocacy efforts – you need to be inventive.

3. Process

Following a process of advocacy means that you need to take time. The changes you advocate for are not likely to be achieved overnight. Most of the issues are deeply rooted within society. To make a sustainable change you will need to develop a comprehensive plan, implement it and follow through. This process will take time.

An advocacy process can be roughly divided into a planning phase, in which you set your objectives, and an implementation phase, in which you carry out advocacy activities:



Graphic 2: Advocacy is a process¹

¹ Source: http://www.c-r.org/downloads/AdvocacyCapacityBuildigToolkit_201110.pdf

Before we look at the structures and tools that can support your advocacy efforts, it is important to remember that the guiding principle of any advocacy activity is achieving positive social change in our societies. Advocacy is meant to ensure that those who are most vulnerable in society can raise their voices and claim their rights.

2.1. Advocacy is about:



Giving people a voice

There are no voiceless people, but there are people whose voices are not heard. Making the voices of the most vulnerable heard is advocacy.



Building evidence

Convincing people and decision-makers requires evidence about the problem, its effects and solutions to it. Conducting research and presenting the results is advocacy.



Positive change in society

Achieving greater social justice and equality in society requires joint efforts. Having a vision and inspiring others to take action is advocacy.



Influencing people with power

The change we want to see can often not be implemented by ourselves. Changing the way decision-makers act is advocacy.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI – ADVOCATING FOR GIRLS' ACCESS TO EDUCATION²

1. How did it start?

- ✓ Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani student and education activist who began speaking out for girls' education at the age of 11
- ✓ After surviving an assassination attempt by the Taliban at 15, she

2. What makes it special?

- ✓ Malala Fund works in regions where most girls miss out on secondary education for example: Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and countries housing Syrian refugees (Lebanon and Jordan)
- ✓ Held over a dozen meetings with presidents and prime ministers urging them to invest in girls' education and increased attention to the issue

3. Solutions proposed?

- \checkmark Promote education and health for girls to benefit society
 - · Girl's education strengthens economies and creates jobs
 - Communities are more stable and can recover faster after conflict, when girls are educated
 - Each additional year of school a girl completes cuts both infant mortality and child marriage rates
- ✓ Amplifu girls' first person stories

4. Advocacy activities

- \checkmark Malala gives speeches promoting her cause around the world
- \checkmark Malala Fund champions every airl's right to 12 years of free, safe, auglity education.

Find more on www.malala.org

² Photo: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/253257179021701194/

3 How to get started When we are confronted with inequality, discrimination, poverty and injustice, we tend to be overwhelmed by the complexity and magnitude of the problem. As mentioned earlier, we do not have to fight alone, we can rely on the help of our community and individuals who believe in the same cause.

Structural problems are indeed complex and huge in scale. Nonetheless, we do not have to solve these problems all at once. We can contribute to addressing them by focusing on what we can do best with the resources at hand. Advocacy is not a sprint, it is a relay race.

The following methods and tools provided will help ensure that the major problem you face becomes manageable. These methods and tools help to break the problem down and in turn ensure you and your team work efficiently and effectively.

Below you will find the first steps of any advocacy attempt that can help you to get started and structure your first steps. The ranking of these steps is indicative and should of course be adapted to your context. Remember, you have to be inventive.

Choose your issue

What are you passionate about? What is a pressing problem your community faces?

- Define your objective(s)
 Imagine you are successful in your advocacy, what should be different by then?
- Find who can implement your demand(s)

 Who is really interested and influential? Who can make the change you want to see happen
- Choose your advocacy methods

 How can you best reach your objectives? What are you and your team members good at?
- Draft your message(s)
 How can you convince your target audience? What do you need to tell them to take action?
- 6 Seek allies and partners
 Who else is working on your issue? Are there other communities facing the same problem?

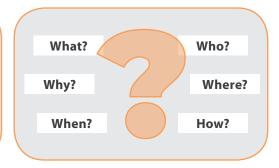
Graphic 3: The first steps

Not sure if you are going in the right direction?

While you are in the process, you can check if your advocacy planning is sufficient, by testing how well and thoroughly you can answer the 5 Ws and How:

Community mobilisation:

- Definition of communities (interest, geographical, identity)
- Mapping your community/defining a team/recruiting
- How to create trust
- How to define a common goal
- Drivers and blockers
- Leadership



Graphic 4: Planning questions



To help you succeed in the six planning steps outlined above, this chapter introduces you to tools and tips you can use throughout the process. These tools will be introduced in the order of the planning steps.

4.1. Choose your issue

What are you passionate about? What makes you mad? Can you make a difference?

The beginning of an advocacy attempt is usually the fact that things are not the way they should be. In other words, you face a societal challenge that hinders you and members of your community from achieving your goals. For example, you cannot continue or take up studies at university, access the health system or language courses.

Regardless of whether you already know which issue you want to tackle or you are seeking to define it, answering the questions above is a good start:

- √ Choose an issue you are passionate about, because the advocacy process will take time
 and is demanding. An issue you are passionate about will help you to keep the motivation and inspire others.
- ✓ Choose an issue you are **mad** about, because it shows that it is a pressing problem that needs to be addressed. Keep in mind that you are not advocating for a change for yourself, but for your community and others in society.
- ✓ Choose an issue where you are **confident** that you can make a difference, because you want to spend your time and energy effectively. It also ensures that you and your team do not end up frustrated.

What do you already know about the issue?

Before moving to the next planning step, it is crucial to conduct research on your issue. The more you can find out at this point, the easier the next steps will be. You can start with a mind map or a list of what you and your team already know about the issue. To structure your research, you can use the 5 Ws introduced above.

Based on what you know already, you can decide on what to focus in building up evidence. To convince others, knowledge about the issue will not be sufficient. You will need evidence about the problem, its causes and effects. There are different methods you can use to gather facts and information to support your advocacy message:

Desk research

Desk research aims at collecting existing information and research findings. It usually involves an online search or a library consultation. Research, reports, surveys, consultations, statistics, policies or testimonies can help you build up your argument.

Speak to people, gather ideas

Often questions remain unanswered or new questions emerge after a first desk research. To learn more, speak to those affected by the problem you seek to address and who would benefit if the advocacy were successful. It also makes sense to speak to those working towards

the same change as you or those that already have successfully advocated for change. You could also ask the people you want to influence: 'what would influence your decision-making process on this issue?'

Interviews

Interviews can be used to gather personal stories and testimonies. They can help to show the impact the problem has on individuals and how they cope with it. You can also use expert interviews to have the assessment of a professional dealing with the issue. When you conduct the interview, make sure that you come prepared with a set of questions and background information on the interviewee. Always be transparent about the use of the interview results, respect privacy and confidentiality if interviewees do not want parts of their statement to be shared publicly and avoid questions that suggest a certain response.

Documentation of incidents

In some cases it can be helpful to map incidents that are part of the problem you seek to address. For example, when members of a community are discriminated against and you seek to advocate for their rights. You can collect evidence of incidents through media reports, visuals, testimonies or audio recordings. Make sure to answer the 5 Ws in your documentation and that your cases are based on verifiable facts. Ensure a safe communication with those who provide you with information and the anonymity of sources when required.



LISBON RECOGNITION CONVENTION

During your research you might come across the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This Council of Europe Convention is meant to facilitate the recognition of higher education qualifications held by individuals staying in another than their home country. It states that requests shall be processed in a fair manner and within a reasonable time. Additionally, the duty lies with educational institutions of the host country to prove that the qualification is substantially different from that of the host country if the request is refused.

The Convention also contains an article on qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. In practice, this article means that "refugees who have prior education, both formal and non-formal, even if not documented, should have the right to have their qualifications assessed and recognised in a fair and transparent manner in all the countries that have signed and ratified the document."

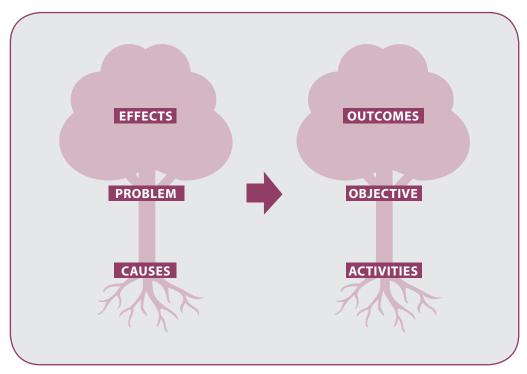
Policy documents like this Convention are an important resource to know and have at your disposal. They allow you to make reference to official commitments by states and resulting duties for public authorities, service providers or universities. You can use them to hold officials accountable to commitments they have made, make use of the language to adapt your messages, compare the performance of your host country to others and connect to organisations or campaigns around certain policy frameworks.

The Council of Europe (CoE) has 47 member states and is the continent's leading human rights organisation. Find more on: https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_en.asp

4.2. Define your objective

Let's assume that you chose limited access to higher education for refugees as the issue you seek to address with an advocacy approach. Based on your research findings, it is now time to decide what you want to do in particular to tackle this problem.

This step is crucial for the process – it is the foundation for your actions. At the same time, it can be very challenging due to the complexity and scale of the problem. You can use the problem to solution tree to define the problem, its effects and solutions to it. This tool helps you 1) to structure the causes and the effects of the problem and 2) to formulate activities to tackle the problem and outcomes:



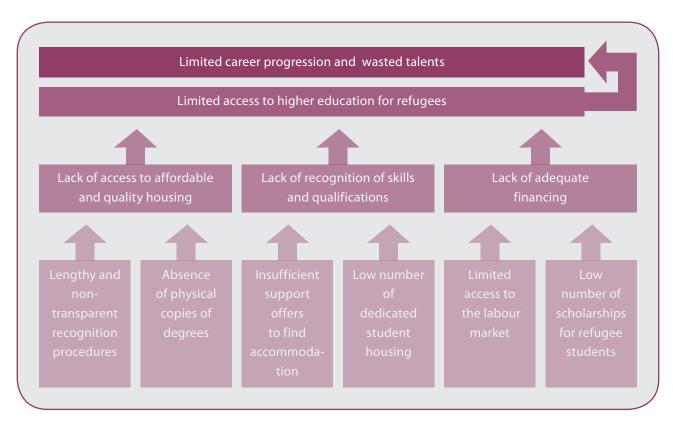
Graphic 5: Problem to solution tree

Step 1: Define the core problem

In this case "Limited access to higher education for refugees" is the core problem. Note that your problem should not be too broad, e.g. "lack of inclusion of refugees in host societies". The more specific the problem is, the higher the chance of developing an effective and meaningful approach to tackle it.

Step 2: Identify the causes and effects

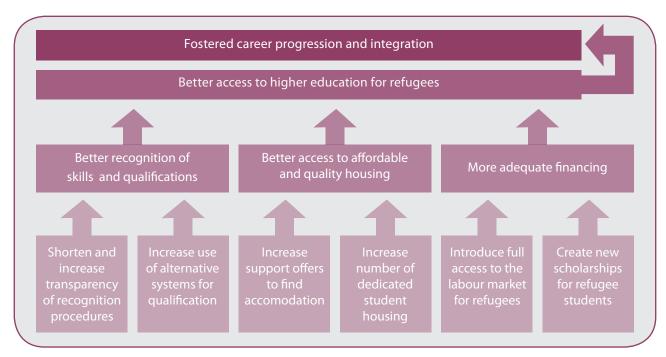
In this step, note down the immediate causes of the problem in negative terms. You can then identify secondary causes that lead to the immediate causes. Following this logic, you can break the causes down until no one in the team knows any more sub-causes. Make sure that the relation between the immediate and secondary causes is logical, i.e. the latter clearly lead to the former. Next, identify the effects of the problem. This can for example be the problem's impact on individuals and society.



Graphic 6: Example of problem tree

Step 3: Reverse the problem into a solution tree

Now, the core problem is divided into various causes that you can tackle more specifically. At the same time, achieving change seems reasonable when looking at the secondary causes. In this step, you change the negative wording of the secondary and immediate causes, the problem and its effects into positive wording. Causes become activities, the problem becomes a specific objective and the effects turn into outcomes:



Graphic 7: Example of solution tree

Step 4: Choose the best way forward

After having identified activities that contribute to achieving the objective, you can choose which branch of the tree you use as your approach. It makes sense to consider which branch is most important, but also where your expertise lies, what you are passionate about and where you can realistically make a difference with the resources you have at hand.

Based on the solution tree, you can formulate the demands you want to put forward. Let's assume you chose better access to affordable and quality housing. You can use the SMART tool to formulate a clear demand:

SMART Demand



Specific

Clearly state the change you want to see. Who, what, where and when?



Measurable

How to measure success? Provide indicators that allow you to evaluate. It allows you to remind those you are asking for change to act if the goal has not yet been achieved.



Achievable

The demand must be realistic and attainable, i.e. you must be able to achieve your goal with the amount of resources and time available.



Relevant

The demand should benefit a wider group in society and respond to a pressing issue. Does it fit to the specific objective defined in the solution tree?



Time bound

By when will the change occur? A deadline helps to establish a sense of urgency and need for action.

Example for a SMART Demand:

The university will increase low-cost university-owned accommodation for students with a minority background by 10% in the next 5 years.

√ Specific

It becomes clear who should act and which type of housing should be increased for whom

✓ Measurable

We are asking for a 10% increase

✓ Achievable

In our fictional case, the increase we demand from the target audience is reasonable and realistic

✓ Relevant

There are many students who can be considered as vulnerable, for example due to their immigration status, family situation, health condition or financial status, and who do not find accommodation on the housing market. This is a problem with far-reaching consequences.

√ Time bound

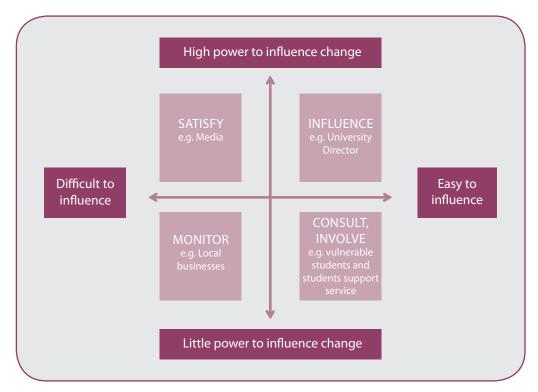
We want to see the change happen within five years.

4.3. Find who can implement your demand(s)

To identify who to address your demand and message to, you can start by listing the stake-holders relevant to your issue. Stakeholders are individuals or organisations who are either interested in or affected by the issue you seek to address. This can for example be vulnerable students, the university director for whom the university's success, image and management matters or a local newspaper which has an interest in the case as a news story.

Not all of the stakeholders on your list will care about your call for change, have the capacities to engage or an interest in changing the status quo. Some might even oppose your demand. It is important to also list your opponents and to have them on your map when you implement your advocacy activities.

To decide who will best be able to implement your demand and to use your time and energy effectively, you can use the grid below to categorise the stakeholders. This tool helps you to decide 1) which stakeholder has power to influence change and 2) which stakeholder is open



Graphic 8: Stakeholder analysis

to your demand and likely to be easily influenced. To use your likely limited resources best, it makes sense to focus your energy on those who have power to influence change and are open to your demands. Those who are on your side, but have little power are very important as well. Make sure that you involve this group in your activities, ask them for their opinions and keep them informed.

The grid below gives you an idea of how to work with the tool. Of course, this example is fictional and the priorities can be very different in your case, i.e. the media being open to your story or businesses having leverage to change in your case:

A report from the European Students' Union (ESU) on refugees' access to higher education found that both high-level actors (top-down approaches) and grassroots-level actors (bottom-up approaches) matter in facilitating access, depending on the issue. You might want to consider this, when deciding who to address with your demand:

"The top-down elements are important for tackling problems that need coherent implementation to limit inconsistencies in the application of rules. This includes questions concerning the legal status of refugees, social support, or the recognition of degrees. However, to tackle problems concerning language skills, social and cultural integration bottom-up initiatives are important as these issues need to be tailored to specific local needs."

4.4. Choose your advocacy activities

An effective advocacy strategy will reflect on the resources of the stakeholders involved. Communities and its members, stakeholders and partners have different profiles, expertise and experiences and these components are strong assets to be included in each planning and advocacy approach.

In your reflections, you might decide that the baseline of your approach will focus on a specific activity or a combination of different methods:

· Documentation, research and data collection

You may decide that evidence is the key element of your line of argumentation and it is required to better support your objectives.

· Policy analysis

In your strategy, your efforts are targeting a specific policy change and your approach will be based on a review of specific policies and programmes to better highlight their gaps, inconsistencies and violations.

Lobbying

Your community and partners may prefer to directly influence the decision making process of adoption or rejection of legal frameworks. This can also be an opportunity to shift public opinion about a specific topic of concern.

· Campaigning, Communication, media and information

Your actions and activities will aim to raise awareness on your issue of concern to build public support.

Demonstration

Claiming the public space to protest and demand specific changes can be an opportunity to gain a wider audience of support but also a platform gather solidarity of other communities to your cause.

What to keep in mind when you are conducting a meeting:

There is a high chance that at one point you will meet face-to-face with someone you want to convince to support you or take action for your cause. Whenever you have such a one-to-one meeting, five tips will help to make the most out of these meetings:

Prepare

Before you go into a meeting, make sure you know more than the persons' names. You can google your contacts to get more information on their positions, their allies, their interests and previous engagement. Try to relate to their interests to establish common ground at the beginning of the meeting – this can change the dynamics of the whole conversation. Make sure that you know what you are asking the person to do. How can they help you and which specific actions would you like them to take?

Divide tasks

It is always easier to go into a meeting with your team members or partners. You can take advantage of going together by dividing tasks. Before you enter the meeting, agree for example on who will take the lead at the beginning, who will convey which message, who will keep the time in mind and who will take minutes. Take experience, expertise and confidence into account when assigning roles.

Have a good pitch

To catch your conversation partners' attention and interest, you should have a good pitch. A pitch is a statement that convinces your conversation partners in no more than two or three minutes to listen to your statements and take your arguments seriously. A pitch can include personal stories, statistics or research findings and a precise description of what you want to address, its effects and which action to take. See below for tips on how to draft a good message.

Bring relevant materials

To underline your message, you can bring reports or other compilations of research findings. For a presentation of your initiative or organisation, you can bring a leaflet or flyer. In any case, it is helpful to hand out a one-pager at the end of the meeting. A one-pager is a summary of the most important messages you want to convey and includes your contact details. It makes it easier for your contacts to remember you and what you asked for, to contact you for questions and to forward your cause to others.

Follow-up

At the end of the meeting, try to agree with your contacts on what they will do and what you will do until you meet the next time or until a specific date. This will allow you to ask your contacts if they actually did what they promised. In general, do not expect your contacts to come back to you. You will have to follow-up on your meetings and be consistent in asking for progress made on your request.

4.5. Draft your message(s)

Communication is a key element of advocacy. Only if we communicate will we be able to give a voice to those most affected and convince others to join the change we want to see. Before you start working on your message(s), reflect on who you want to address, why and how. For example, addressing the university director or the university students requires both a different message and way of delivering it. When you address the university director or other decision-makers, face-to-face meetings or letters are effective means of communication. For this audience, detailed and evidence-based messages are important. They might also touch upon the advantages your request has for the university or other interests of the decision-maker (e.g. economic impacts).

When you address a large number of people, like students of your university, you can use flyers or a student newspaper to bring your message across. In this case, explain what you are calling for without going into too much detail and show what students can do about it. Do not forget to provide a reference for further information.

No matter who you address specifically, the order below is a helpful guide for drafting a good message:



Appeal to the heart!

Why should people care? Communicate the cause and what needs to change. You can use a personal story or emotional appeal.



Appeal to the head!

Inspire others with examples. Create a clear picture of what is wrong and how it can be different. You can refer to successful projects, provide statistics or cite research findings.



Appeal to the hand!

What are you asking for? What can they do for your cause? You can outline what specific actions are required to make change happen.

What to avoid when drafting and conveying your message:

- ✓ Formulating a demand that is wildly unrealistic
- ✓ Making it too complex and not solution focused
- ✓ Communicating too early in the process or being unprepared: presenting inadequate information can backlash on you and undermine your objective
- ✓ Convey your message(s) before having tested them in your team, among fellow students or professionals working in the field

4.6. Seek allies and partners

When building alliances to foster societal changes, potential partners and allies can come from different areas and bring multiple perspectives. By analysing your stakeholders for partnership, your community will also have the opportunity to reflect on: 1) which actions you want to lead and 2) which existing actions you would like to endorse.

In this brainstorming process, a power analysis of your close and distant partners is a useful tool to better define the purpose of your actions, which skills you want to develop and which results you want to achieve and with whom.

In the field of education at the academic level, student initiatives at universities, student unions and NGOs working in the field of youth, migration and/or education can be important players.

Alliances and coalition building are also a method to avoid duplication of existing agendas and to ensure that your community strategy has the DNA that represents the interests of your groups of concern.

4.7 Advocacy check list

- ✓ What are your reasons for taking a particular stand: What is your task?
- ✓ Do you have a reasonable chance of success?
- ✓ What is your legacy and what credibility do you have?
- ✓ Are you legitimate? Are you recognised as a representative of the people whose interests you are advocating? Do you have evidence from your research?
- ✓ What is the added-value of your request?
- ✓ On whose behalf are you speaking?
- ✓ What are the risks?
- ✓ Who and what are your resources?
- ✓ Are there external opportunities to foster your efforts?
- ✓ Do you demand something new or do you support an existing agenda?
- ✓ Do you understand the process and can you wait?

Now get started and make our societies better places to live in!

5

Links to further material

This toolkit drew inspiration from:

- ✓ Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESU), New Manual for School Students:
 - https://issuu.com/obessu/docs/manual_for_school_students_-_final_/3
- ✓ Plan International, Advocacy Education Toolkit: https://plan-international.org/publications/advocacy-toolkit
- ✓ Conciliation Resources and Safer World, Advocacy Capacity Building Toolkit: http://www.c-r.org/downloads/AdvocacyCapacityBuildigToolkit 201110.pdf
- ✓ Danish NGO Education Network, Advocacy for education a step by step guide: http://www.globaltfokus.dk/images/Pulje/Arkiv/Uddannelsesnetvaerket/Advocacy_for_education_guide_2udg.pdf
- ✓ Student Action for Refugees (STAR), Equal Access to Higher Education Toolkit: http://www.star-network.org.uk/images/uploads/documents/Equal_Access_ Toolkit_-_WEB.pdf
- ✓ European Students' Union (ESU), Refugees Welcome? Recognition of qualifications held by refugees and their access to higher education in Europe – country analyses: https://www.esu-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ESU-Are-Refugees-Welcome_-WEBSITE-1.compressed-1.pdf











