



Policy Advocacy Toolkit

Guiding information, tools and activities to educate and learn about and support policy advocacy activities related to sport and society



PASS

Policy Advocacy for
Sport and Society



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Imprint

Policy advocacy is crucial as it provides a bottom-up, civil society-led contribution to the formation of relevant policies and helps make vital, relevant information available to key stakeholders who may influence public policy. Despite these calls, there is limited understanding of or support for policy advocacy connecting sport and social development within Europe. The Policy Advocacy for Sport and Society (PASS) project seeks to address this gap by developing a comprehensive set of tools and resources to raise awareness and capacity for policy advocacy within the crucial and growing sport and social development sector. As such, the PASS project will support (European) sport and social development actors so that they can increase their participation and engagement in democratic life, and enable them to use that engagement to sustainably promote education and equality in and through sport. In other words, this project aims to improve civic participation and engagement in democratic life within the field of sport and social development, and in turn use this increased engagement to advocate for and support education, equality and shared values within European communities.

Consortium Partners

- German Sport University Cologne (Germany, Coordinator)
- Munster Technological University (Ireland)
- University of Applied Sciences Kufstein (Austria)
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (HQ, Switzerland)
- Fair Play Point (Czech Republic)
- Második Esély Sportegyesület (Hungary)
- International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)/SportandDev.org (Denmark)

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Introduction

This Policy Advocacy in Sport and Society Toolkit has been developed as part of a broader learning package designed to strengthen the capacity of organisations, educators, and youth workers to engage in effective policy advocacy through sport. It serves as both a practical resource and a learning companion for individuals and organisations who wish to influence policy processes and social change in and through sport.

The toolkit is intended for educators, organisation leaders and policymakers who wish to better understand how they can use advocacy strategies to support their sport program and environment. It brings together key concepts, examples, and tested tools that will help you move from awareness to action and from identifying an issue to designing and implementing a meaningful advocacy strategy.

Together with the Policy Advocacy Learning Curriculum, it provides the foundation for the digital e-learning course developed alongside this toolkit. While the curriculum outlines the learning goals, session structure, and pedagogical flow, the toolkit provides the hands-on materials, methods, and adaptable templates needed to implement and contextualise these sessions in practice.

You may choose to approach this toolkit as any of the following:

- A standalone reference for advocacy planning and facilitation in sport-related contexts
- A companion resource to the Policy Advocacy curriculum, offering concrete examples and participatory methods; and
- A bridge to the e-learning course¹, where many of the toolkit's elements are explored in an interactive, digital format.

Together, these resources create a coherent learning journey from understanding the concepts to using them in practical situations. Engagement with the e-learning course will help guide this learning for you. Whether you are a coach, facilitator, academic or organisation leader, this toolkit and course will better equip you to use sport to drive social and policy change.

How to use this Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to accompany the Policy Advocacy Learning Curriculum and e-learning course. It consists of a practical framework and adaptable tools for those wishing to plan, implement, or strengthen policy advocacy efforts in and through sport. It is structured into four main chapters, each focusing on a key stage of the advocacy learning journey, followed by annexes offering additional resources, templates, and reference materials.

You are encouraged to approach the toolkit as both a learning companion to the e-learning course, and a standalone practical guide: each chapter can be explored sequentially as part of a structured course, or individually according to specific needs and interests.

¹ The e-learning course will be available on [sportanddev](https://sportanddev.org) in the second half of 2026.

Chapter 1 – The Basics: Lay your advocacy groundwork

The first chapter lays the conceptual groundwork for understanding policy advocacy within the broader field of sport for development. It introduces key terms, frameworks, and relationships that define the policy environment and helps you to build your understanding of what advocacy means in practice.

In this chapter, you will:

- Explore the main learning goals and foundational concepts of policy advocacy;
- Understand how sport fits within wider social and policy systems (the sport for development ecosystem);
- Identify different spheres of influence and types of advocacy activities;
- Engage with tools, case studies, and reflective exercises to consolidate your learning.

This chapter provides the language, mindset, and conceptual clarity necessary to engage meaningfully with advocacy work.

Chapter 2 – The Setup: Get ready to advocate for policy change

The second chapter guides you in assessing your organisations or community's readiness to engage in policy advocacy. It invites you to reflect on current experience, available resources, and potential gaps.

In this section, you will:

- Assess your current experience and institutional readiness for policy advocacy;
- Map the resources and networks you have access to;
- Reflect through a self-assessment exercise to identify strengths and development areas.

This chapter prepares you to make informed decisions about where and how to begin your advocacy work.

Chapter 3 – The Approach: A choice of policy advocacy activities

Building on the foundational concepts, the third chapter focuses on the diversity of approaches that policy advocacy can take. It offers a structured overview of 6 key identified activities which sport-based actors can utilise to convey and influence change.

In this section, you will:

- Learn about specific types of advocacy activities and their practical application;
- Explore tools (e.g. matrices, planning templates) that support the design of advocacy strategies;
- Examine case studies that illustrate how each advocacy activity has been successfully implemented in different contexts.

This chapter helps practitioners identify which forms of advocacy best align with their goals, capacities, and local environments.

Chapter 4 – Doing advocacy: Plan your action

The final chapter moves from analysis to action. It guides you through the process of developing a concrete, context-specific policy advocacy plan that connects strategy with implementation.

In this section, you will:

- Define your focal problem and analyse the underlying causes and potential solutions;
- Design a communication strategy tailored to your audiences and objectives;
- Draft a policy advocacy action plan using provided templates and examples;
- Identify potential challenges, risks and mitigation strategies

This course enables you to translate learning into concrete advocacy initiatives that you can implement and monitor in their own context.

Appendix

The appendix provides:

- A comprehensive list of tools featured in the toolkit;
- Templates ready for adaptation and use in advocacy strategies and action plans;
- Additional sources of information for those wishing to deepen their understanding or expand their advocacy networks.

Using the Toolkit with the Learning Pathway

This toolkit is part of an integrated learning pathway that includes:

- The Policy Advocacy Learning Curriculum, which outlines content, session plans, and pedagogical approaches for effective policy advocacy action planning;
- This toolkit provides practical activities that can be used on their own, or alongside the e-learning course
- The E-learning Course, which offers a digital learning experience and interactive tasks that correspond to the toolkit's course and templates.

This Learning Pathway encourages you to move between those resources organically. For example, a concept introduced in the e-learning may be further explored through an activity in this toolkit, and vice versa. Together, they provide a holistic approach linking conceptual learning, reflective practice, and practical application.

Chapter 1 – The Basics: Lay your advocacy groundwork

Description

You will begin to understand policy advocacy within the broader field of sport for development. You will be introduced to key terms, frameworks, and relationships that define the policy environment and help you to build your understanding of what advocacy means in practice in sport and society.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, I will be able to...

- Understand what policy advocacy is
- Recognise why policy advocacy matters in the context of sport and society
- Know who the key actors and stakeholders are
- Understand how advocacy can be used as a tool to address social issues and influence decision making processes in sport policies

By having an understanding regarding the S4D ecosystem, you will reveal the underlying structures, power dynamics, and assumptions that shape how sport is used for social change.

Learning approach



Definitions



Explanations



Tools and Worksheets



Further Reading

Description of policy advocacy in general

The concept of policy advocacy is as multifaceted as sport for development itself. In short, it is a combination of efforts aimed at making changes. More specifically, these changes can be aimed at policies, public actions and the attitudes of organisations and individuals who are responsible for how decisions are made and carried out in specific areas such as sport, education and social work². Many S4D programmes and activities work at a practical, micro level without engaging with policymakers and other official bodies in the S4D field. Consequently, they may miss chances to collaborate with policymakers and align with and influence new policies and strategy documents. In contrast, bottom-up advocacy activities can help shift attention towards the community and the programmes' target groups' needs. Advocacy activities bring together various stakeholders and can identify mutual interests, supporting cooperation and communication within the relevant field³

There are many types of advocacy. In practice, most advocacy activities will use elements of more than one type:

- **Direct advocacy** – engagement of policy- and decision-makers, aiming at influencing specific topics or problematic areas
- **Indirect advocacy** – producing messages to a wider audience, communicating priorities, suggesting solutions and pointing out the desired strategies to influence policymakers².
- **Evidence based** – advocacy activities are based on data and outcomes from studies. They involve advising on actions or media campaigns, which draw on significant strength from the fact that they are based on 'hard' data.

² CYSDP (Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group). (2015). *Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit*. Commonwealth Secretariat.

<https://yourcommonwealth.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/02/SportforDevelopmentandPeaceYouthAdvocacyToolkit.pdf>

³ Moustakas, L., Craney, S., Fischer, S-AJ., Richardson, A., Petry, K., Svoboda, A., Hofmann, A. & Sanders, B. (2025). Playing for progress: policy advocacy in sport for development. *Frontiers in Sport and Active Living*, 7,1546222. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2025.1546222>

- **Value based** – personal lobbying, activism or even radical movements are examples of advocacy activities based on personal contacts, persuasive communication and strong and effective labels. They can be successful but may lack decisive arguments against the evidence-based negotiations.
- **Cooperative** - policy advocacy actions tend to involve cooperation and constructive debate. The strength is an established connection between the advocating subject and a policymaker.
- **Confrontational** - rather than supporting discussion, confrontational activities prefer the external pressure using public actions or media campaigns. The strength lies in the wider visibility and creation of public pressure on the policymakers⁴.

Organisations or individuals can also engage with advocacy with different intentions. Often, policy advocacy in sport and society is **self-interested**, meaning it is about ‘making a case for sport’, usually with the intention of securing funds for organisational activities. On the other hand, organisations can engage in **progressive advocacy**, which actively works with and for participants and challenges power relations by actively engaging with, or against policy making processes to support systemic change.

And what are the **benefits of advocacy**?



Figure 1 Benefits of Policy Advocacy²

The S4D Ecosystem

Before creating effective policy advocacy, it is crucial to familiarise yourself with all the actors and parts, and to build and shape the respective S4D field. In order to establish tangible and realistic policy goals and demands, it is essential to understand the S4D ecosystem, which encompasses a complex network of stakeholders, frequently with vested interests, as well as the broader social, political, and cultural context. As we will see, this involves linking our policy suggestions to our position and needs, as well as to the positions and needs of policymakers, target groups, and other stakeholders. Identifying the stakeholders is one of the most important steps in the policy advocacy process.

⁴ Young, E., & Quinn, L. (2012). *MAKING RESEARCH EVIDENCE MATTER. A Guide to Policy Advocacy in Transition Countries*. Open Society Foundations. <https://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org/>

As the social-ecological model informs us, the impact of the stakeholders (organisations, institutions, and other external and structural factors) is key to explaining the processes and motives within S4D. While individual-level behaviour and relationships also have an influence, our current focus is on the dynamics that influence processes building in the broader context of the S4D environment. According to the socio-ecological model, there are four main categories of **factors** in the S4D environment that help or hinder S4D activities.

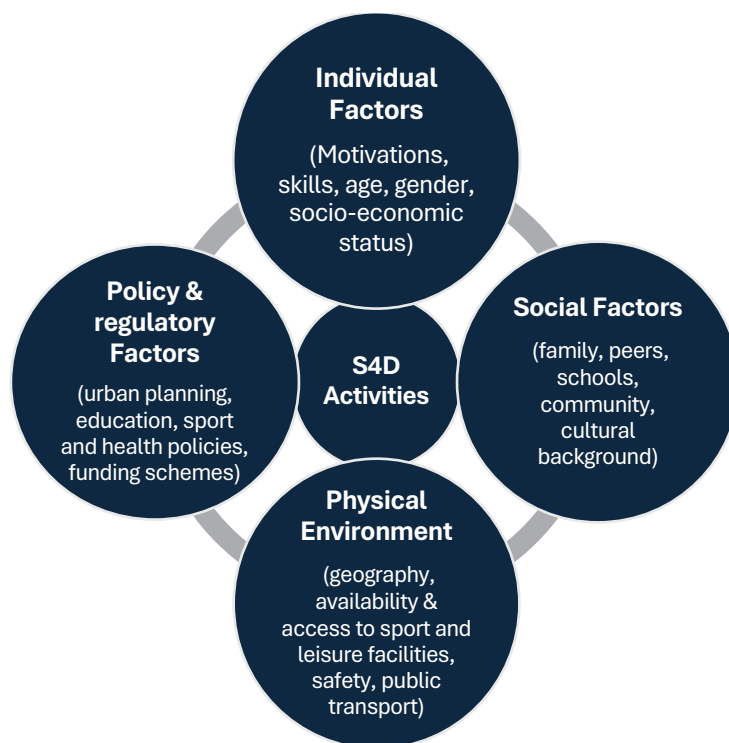


Figure 2 Effecting factors of S4D activities⁵

These helpers and blockers are important to consider, as they impact your organisation and the other stakeholders within the field. In the S4D field, you can find the following **types of stakeholders**:

Table 1 Type of Stakeholders

Programme Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Target groups ➤ Coaches and facilitators
Policy Makers/ Governmental Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Governments (local, regional, national) ➤ Government agencies ➤ Governmental, intergovernmental organisations ➤ Development departments and agencies ➤ Sport and education ministries

⁵ Rowe, K., Shilbury, D., Ferkins, L., & Hickinson, E. (2013). Sport development and physical activity promotion: An integrated model to enhance collaboration and understanding. *Sport Management Review*, 16(3), 364-377.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ International organisations and their bodies (EU, Commonwealth Secretariat, WHO...)
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local businesses ➤ Transnational corporations and their corporate social responsibility programmes ➤ Private funding institutions
Relevant organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Non-governmental organisations at local, national and international levels ➤ Religious organisations ➤ Movements ➤ S4D networks
Local Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New social movements ➤ Campaign groups ➤ Foundations - human, civil rights, democracy, environmental and transparency agenda
Community stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sport clubs and individuals (including the sport “celebrities”) ➤ Universities, schools ➤ Public

Furthermore, concerning the sport field, stakeholders can be addressed at **different levels**:

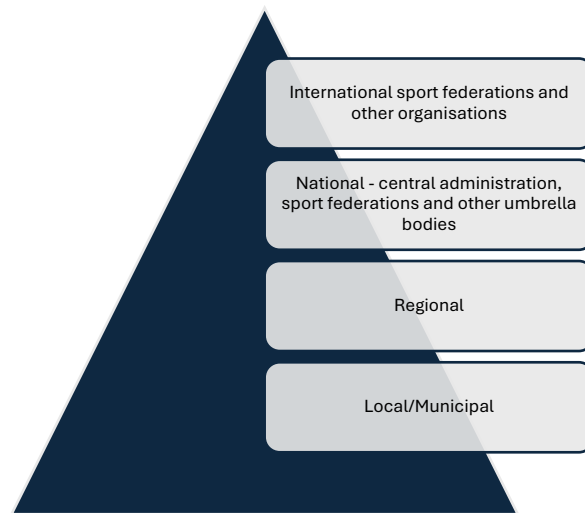


Figure 3 Levels of Stakeholders

Spheres of influence

Before you can carry out policy advocacy successfully, it is important to consider the power relations and influences specific stakeholders hold and how they use them. Not all stakeholders have the same amount of power and influence. Some are closer to the centre or the topic in question, while others are more peripheral or have a main area of influence elsewhere. Stakeholders fall into two categories. There are those who:

- are close to the target group of the advocacy activity
- directly affect the planned outcomes of the advocacy activity.

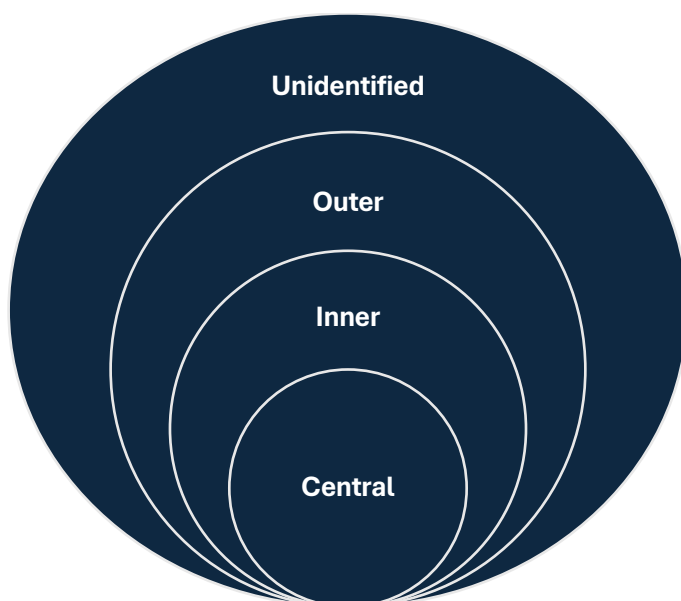


Figure 4 Spheres of Influence of Stakeholders

Furthermore, we distinguish between stakeholders based on the intensity and practical potential of their sphere of influence⁶:

Central – individuals and organisations who are in and around the core of the area or topic of interest. They can share the same goals and desires of the target group and will be personally involved in the implementation of the policy or the resulting practices (families, colleagues, class mates)

Inner – actors who are well informed about the reasons, target groups' needs and potential effects of the advocacy activities. They can be quickly involved and support (or block) the advocacy process (social workers and other service providers, experts, public administrative officials)

Outer – subjects who are potentially involved in the advocacy activities and implementation of their goals. We may not know them or be specifically aware of them but they possess a latent influence over the success of the policy advocacy activity (community members, to-be-elected policymakers)

Unidentified – these actors can be identified only by active research. They do not have a direct connection to the target group. They may not be seen or heard but may pose a potential opportunity or a threat to the advocacy activity

Identifying spheres of influence

There are several widely used tools to identify and visualise spheres of influence and positions of particular stakeholders. In this section you will find a short description of each tool and in the Annex you will find the tool itself with a more detailed description:

In the last columns, you will see references to the Power Grid tool:

- **Power grid:** When dealing with stakeholders, including identifying, mapping and approaching them, as well as maintaining regular communication and collaboration, you will sooner or later find out that not all of them are interested in the topic in question to the same degree. You will also realise that you need to distinguish between them based on the amount of power they possess and, therefore, their ability to effectively influence the respective topic. The power grid helps you visualise the current arrangement of stakeholders in terms of their level of interest and power. At the same time, the power grid suggests how to treat stakeholders in terms of the information they require and the level of engagement you want to have with them to support your aims. You can use it to rate the power and interest stakeholders:

⁶ Adapted from Woods, M. (2016). *Inclusive Sport Design*. <https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/spheres-of-influence-identifying-key-players-in-your-sport-program-networks>

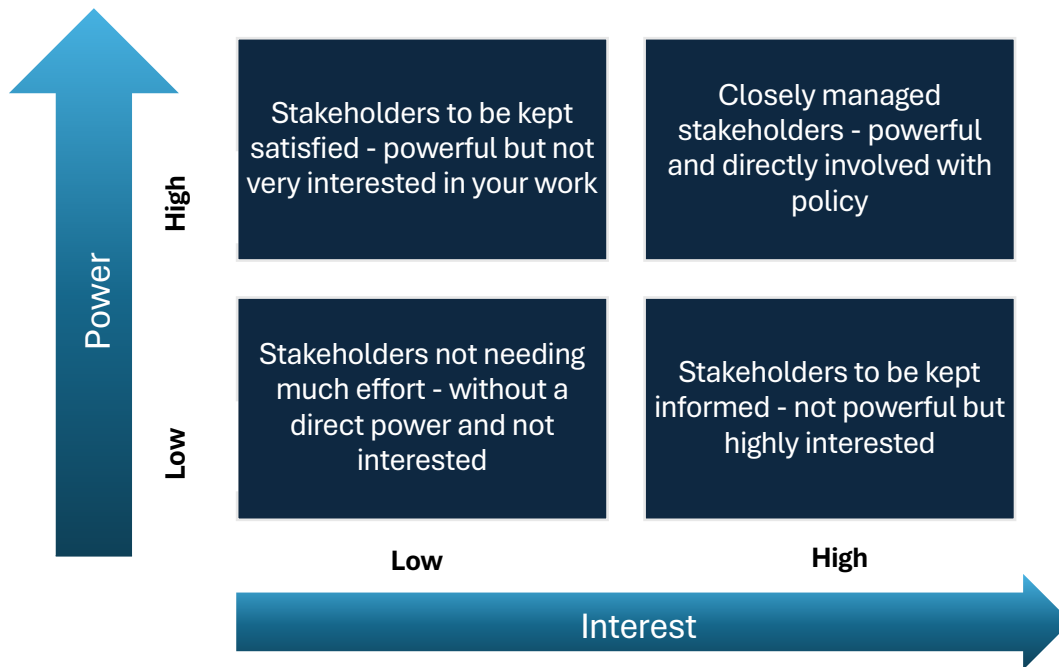


Figure 5 Power grid - position of stakeholders related to their level of power and interest in the policy area²

- **Pathway of influence:** This refers to the analysis of interconnected stakeholders with a special focus on which organisations or persons influence each other. This approach can be exceptionally useful in cases where we do not want (or cannot) approach a key decision-maker directly. Instead, we engage whoever shapes the decision maker’s opinions and strategy. An example summarising a goal of your advocacy, key decision maker and relevant channels on how to approach the decision maker is suggested in the Introductory Guide to Successful Advocacy by the Open Society Foundations⁷:

⁷ Open Society Foundations. (2010). An Introductory Guide to Successful Advocacy. Open Society Foundations. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/99ce7dec-9e89-40b1-ad88-7db45b4d68a5/guide-to-successful-advocacy-20100101.pdf>



Figure 6 Pathway of influence - identification of channels how to indirectly influence a key policymaker through the communication with other Stakeholders

Further resources, references, tools

- [Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group \(CYSDP\) \(2015\). Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#)

Chapter 2 - The Setup: Get ready to advocate for policy change

Description

You will reflect on your own strengths and experiences, and those of your organisation to decide whether you are prepared to take part in various forms of advocacy. You will be invited to consider your own advocacy experience, and gain a structured overview of the resources (inputs) you would need to do your advocacy.

Learning objectives

By the end of the chapter, you should be able to...

- Map the stakeholders impacting your work
- Understand the resources (inputs) you need to do policy advocacy
- Assess how ready you are to engage in policy advocacy, with reference to these inputs.
- Align your resources (inputs) and goals to determine if policy advocacy will help you to achieve your goals

Learning approach



Explanations



Tools and Worksheets



Self-Assessment



Further Reading

Where do I fit in the ecosystem?

As you now know, the S4D ecosystem is made up of stakeholders, individuals or organisations who can promote policy advocacy. A key step in developing your successful policy advocacy strategy is to describe the structures, people, partners and systems working alongside and around your organisation. With this context in mind you can position yourself relative to other stakeholders and consider which of these might help or hinder your efforts. It may be difficult to clearly identify your position and goals in contrast to those of other stakeholders due to complex cultural and political dynamics. The Commonwealth Secretariat suggests the following approach:

- Identify local, regional and national stakeholders affecting the topics and work you advocate for. Distinguish between the primary (with a direct effect on the respective policy) and secondary (having an indirect effect, such as civil society or the business sector) stakeholders.
- Familiarise yourself with the roles, powers and tasks of the identified stakeholders in your area of interest.
- Learn about the scope and level of influence and their relations to your organisation and policy in S4D²

In order to gain a better understanding of your position in the S4D ecosystem and assess whether your advocacy plans are realistic, you need to do some thorough research and analysis. Asking the following

questions can help you to better understand the links between your position, plans, goals and methods, and those of the other stakeholders:

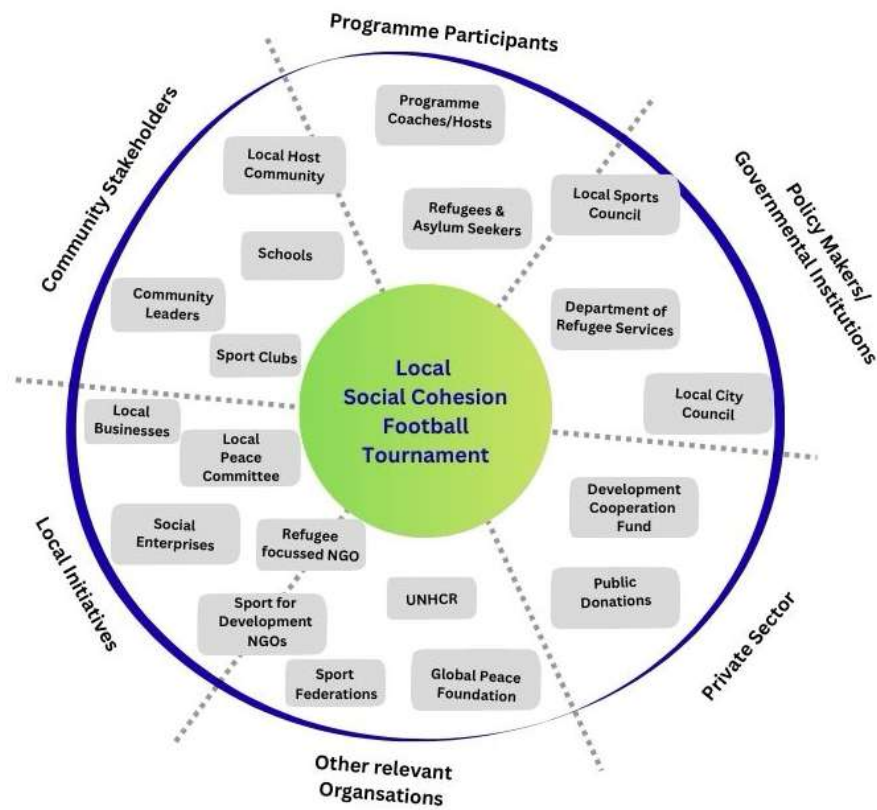
Table 2 Political Spheres of Power in the S4D Eco-System²

Political Spheres of Power	S4D eco-system
<p>What are the current political power relations? What are the centres of power?</p> <p>What are the current policy concerns and priorities? How are they related to my policy recommendations and goals?</p> <p>What are the opportunities to engage the policy- and decision-makers?</p>	<p>How is the S4D concept known in my municipality/region/country?</p> <p>Is your goal and the policy proposal immediately evident to all stakeholders?</p> <p>Who deals with the S4D issues and agendas?</p> <p>Who funds the S4D programmes and activities?</p> <p>Do your plans fit into a specific spot in the official agenda or does it fit across different portfolios?</p> <p>Do you expect a strong opposition to your policy recommendations? By whom? What are the reasons?</p> <p>What cultural norms or traditions can hinder your agenda? And what can support it?</p>

Who impacts my context?

To begin with, it is useful to map out all stakeholders involved in your project, as each policy advocacy activity will target different stakeholders and therefore require different approaches. Refer to table 1 in chapter 1 for other examples of which stakeholders fit in each category. The following Stakeholder Mapping example, is from a refugee led non-governmental organisation from West Africa.

NGO Stakeholder Mapping Example:



The example programme of this refugee led organisation is a locally hosted football tournament. It was introduced to foster communication and interactions between refugees and the host communities and advocate for new sport policies that enable refugees and asylum seekers to access sport clubs and facilities more easily. This example will be used throughout chapter 3, to provide an example of which activities may be most appropriate for each stakeholder group.

These categories can be used to create your own stakeholder map (blank version available in **Appendix a**). There are a few key questions to ask yourself as you map your context, to ensure you effectively map the stakeholders.

Why are they important to me?

Once you have identified any relevant stakeholders, it is important to consider how they might impact your work, or your policy related goals. The following questions can guide how you should consider the stakeholders.

- **Who** matters most?

- **What** matters to them?
- **Why** do they matter?
- **How** do I engage them strategically to advance my goals?

Table 3 Stakeholders and their Characteristics

Interest	Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who are the organisations or stakeholders that are generally of interest to you? ● Who are the actors they listen to? Can you reach them and possibly negotiate with them?
	What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What arguments will persuade the stakeholders?
	Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why are they relevant—do they share your mission, values, or target audiences?
	How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How might you initiate contact or explore opportunities for collaboration?
Influence	Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who is influencing or impacting your work externally?
	What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the stakeholders' background? What are their values and goals?
	Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why do they have an effect on your goals or operations (e.g., through policy, funding, public opinion)?
	How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can you respond to or leverage their influence effectively?
Current Collaboration	Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who are you already collaborating with?
	What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are your current collaborations?
	Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why are these partnerships important to your current work?

	How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do you engage or communicate with these collaborators to maintain strong relationships?
Potential Collaboration	Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who could be useful in realising your programme or event at the local, national, or international level?
	What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What obstacles do you need to overcome in order to persuade them?
	Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why would partnering with them strengthen your initiative or increase its reach and impact?
	How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can you build or formalise those relationships (e.g., through joint projects, advocacy, or resource sharing)? ● How should the arguments be presented? What are the expected channels and forms of communication?

After considering these questions, you can develop a more detailed network map. This can include information about the stakeholders, their priorities and position connected to your advocacy work, as well as how influential they might be.

- **Network mapping: Identification of key actors, networks and power centres:** The goal is to identify key actors, interest groups, links between them, decision processes, informal relationships and channels of communication (including the media)⁴
- In summary, you gather all the relevant information for planning and staging your policy advocacy. To gain a better picture of how to structure data from the network mapping, we present a table made by *Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit*²:

Name/ organisation	Contact Information	Stakeholder Type (Primary – decision makers, Secondary – linked to decision makers)	Roles / responsibilities	Priorities	Connectio n to your advocacy work	Position on your advocacy work	Level of influence (low, moderate or high)

Figure 7 Mapping Stakeholders - Initial List

What resources and inputs do I need?

Within non-profit settings, four key inputs are necessary for successful policy advocacy⁸: a sense of agency, people and relationships, specialised knowledge and skills, and material resources. This framework provides a useful lens for the sport for development sector, where advocacy efforts also often depend on partnerships, credibility as well as existing skills and resources. To better understand what these inputs represent and how they connect to SFD, we provide short definitions below.

Sense of agency refers to organisations having a sense of control and legitimacy enough to have an impact within public policymaking. For example, an NGO that has previously co-designed programmes with a local municipality may have developed credibility, confidence, and legitimacy that enable it to advocate for improved access to community sport facilities.

Knowledge and skills refer to the competencies required to engage in advocacy efforts. These include general areas such as strategy, research, media and public relations, or lobbying as well as an understanding of the field, organisations and policies within which advocacy is taking place. This could involve understanding national sport policies, knowing how sport relates to education or health priorities, and having the ability to produce advocacy briefs or position papers on inclusion or gender equality.

People and relationships are widely viewed as crucial inputs in advocacy processes. This refers to a dynamic mix between the quantity and quality of personal relationships an organisation can access. On the one hand, organisations should have close relationships with staff, fellow advocates and relevant community members. On the other hand, there should also be a broad network from diverse backgrounds, such as other sporting, youth, leisure or civil society organisations. In all cases, these relationships should be marked by trust, respect and reciprocity. Here, effective relationships might include collaborations with national sport federations, partnerships with youth groups, or alliances with public health agencies working toward shared goals. These networks expand the reach and legitimacy of advocacy efforts.

Material resources consider both tangible financial and material resources necessary for advocacy. These include the facilities or equipment of an organisation, the people working within said organisation, and the broader financial capital at its disposal. It is important to be mindful that resources can be combined with other actors who may be associated with a certain cause or social movement in order to maximise impact. For instance, a small community sport organisation may lack financial resources but could share facilities or staff with a partner NGO or use social media campaigns instead of paid advertising to advocate for a policy issue.

Specifically, within the sport for development sector³, research from this project has found numerous perceived gaps along those key inputs. Of the 116 organisations surveyed, over 70% noted a lack of material or temporal resources, while approximately 45% indicated having a lack of knowledge or skills to conduct advocacy. Though some did not view advocacy as effective or as a priority – perhaps

⁸ Gen, S., & Wright, A. C. (2013). Policy Advocacy Organizations: A Framework Linking Theory and Practice. *Journal of Policy Practice*, 12(3), 163-193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15588742.2013.795477>

indicating a certain perceived lack of agency – our results ultimately show that knowledge, skills and resources are the key factors missing in the sector.

It is important to understand your own inputs and resources in order to develop tailored, context-relevant advocacy activities. In the next section, we will discuss how to assess internal resources and then how to align them with advocacy activities.

What resources and inputs do I have?

Now that you understand the key inputs associated with policy advocacy, it is crucial that you have a clear sense of your own organisation’s capacities. This will then allow you to match your own capacities with advocacy activities that will work. In other words, it is critical that organisations engage in activities that suit their existing skills, resources and relationships.

The following table summarises the specific types of resources and inputs required for effective policy advocacy.

Table 4 Resources and Inputs required for Policy Advocacy

Sense of agency	Skills and knowledge	Relationships	Resources
Belief in ability to influence policy	Strategic planning and management	Staff and volunteers	Staff expertise
Confidence to engage policymakers	Media, Communications and Public Relations	Community members and participants	Staff availability (i.e. time)
Perceived legitimacy among policymakers and civil society	Public policy and policymaking (general)	Sport clubs and organisations	Facilities and equipment
Commitment of leadership and staff towards advocacy	Sport policy and policymaking	Government and Policymakers	Financial resources
Ability to take initiative and try new approaches	Advocacy planning and design	Civil society organisations	Technology and software
	Monitoring, evaluation/evidence gathering	Sport for development organisations	Access to data information and evidence
		Journalists and media figures	
		Other organisations related to health, education or social work	

We invite you to complete a self-assessment questionnaire concerning these different key areas, the self-assessment tool is included in the **Appendix a**. This is an important step, as understanding your organisation’s inputs is the foundation for effective advocacy. In the next section, you will explore

specific types of policy advocacy and each will provide examples of the types of resources and inputs that are needed. This should help you to understand a suitable mix of activities to accomplish your goals.

Further resources, references, tools

- [Moustakas et al. \(2025\) Playing for progress: policy advocacy in sport for development](#)
- [Gen and Wright \(2013\) Policy Advocacy Organizations: A framework Linking Theory and Practice](#)

Chapter 3 - The Approach: A choice of policy advocacy activities

Description

In this module you will familiarise yourself with the different policy advocacy activities identified in the [Evaluation Matrix](#), and understand how and under which circumstances to use them. This module is divided into units, each describing one specific activity. You should be able to understand your goals, context and policy ecosystem so that you can tailor your activities accordingly.

Learning objectives

By the end of this unit, I will be able to...

- Understand which policy advocacy activities exist
- Identify and categorise key policy advocacy activities
- Apply initial steps to carry out each activity
- Analyse goals and context to evaluate and select the most suitable policy advocacy activity
- Align my organisation's resources (inputs) and goals with policy advocacy activities and strategies

Learning approach



Definitions



Tools and Worksheets



Case studies



Further Reading

Policy Advocacy Activities

This table gives a summary of each policy advocacy activity. This is to help you have a general understanding so that you can dive deeper into the activities that you think would be useful for your context. This chapter includes detailed descriptions of each of the policy advocacy activities, with practical tools and exercises to help you understand how they might be useful in your context and which inputs you need to use them.

Table 5 Policy Advocacy Activities

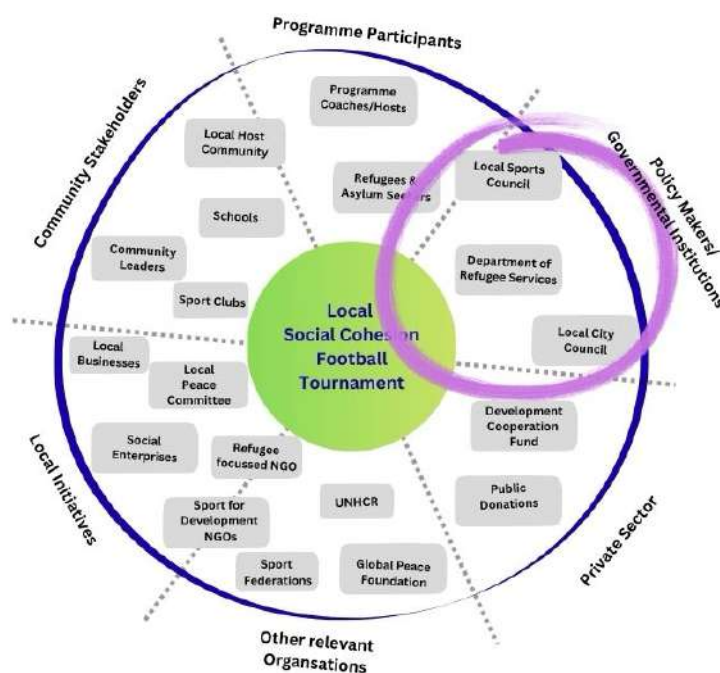
Policy Advocacy Activity	Description

<p>Activity 1 – Policy monitoring</p>	<p>Policy monitoring involves monitoring the implementation of policy to either support learning or apply pressure for continued policy change or implementation. The goal of policy monitoring is to ensure policy is being correctly implemented, as well as ensuring policies across a range of sectors are working harmoniously to achieve the desired outcome.</p>
<p>Activity 2 – Information campaigning</p>	<p>Information campaigning involves using research and rhetoric to persuade and support policy advocacy. Strategies may include meetings with policy makers, research to develop evidence of benefits, sharing briefing documents with policy makers and awareness raising campaigns targeting decision makers or the general public. The ideal result of information campaigning is for new policy to be adopted.</p>
<p>Activity 3 – Engaging the public</p>	<p>Engaging the public involves awareness-raising and mobilisation of citizens. Strategies may include engaging your members/the public to write letters, sign a petition, take part in a demonstration or take other actions. The ideal result of engaging the public is a change in public views.</p>
<p>Activity 4 – Engaging decision makers</p>	<p>Engaging decision makers involves engaging and building rapport with relevant decision makers. This can involve general networking with policy makers and setting up meetings to share information with policy makers. Ultimately, the aim is to change decision makers' views.</p>
<p>Activity 5 – Coalition building</p>	<p>Coalition building is about exchanging information and building relationships with like-minded organisations. Once a coalition is built, it could result in an improved democratic environment and stronger base to advocate from.</p>
<p>Activity 6 – Reform efforts</p>	<p>Reform efforts are attempts to change policy through pilots, demonstration or litigation. An advocate may take part in legal action or litigation to achieve policy changes. Alternatively, they may initiate pilot or demonstration projects to showcase alternative (policy) approaches. This results in adopted policy leading to changes in practical implementation.</p>

While presented as individual activities, best results often happen when multiple activities are used in conjunction with each other. This chapter will present each activity on its own, but they can and often should be used alongside each other.

Each activity will also present the necessary inputs to guide you to reflect on your own capacities, knowledge and experience. Through this, you will be able to align your organisation’s capacities with suitable advocacy activities. By aligning your organisational resources and inputs with appropriate activities, you can design advocacy strategies that are realistic and effective for your own individual context.

Activity 1 – Policy monitoring



Policy monitoring involves watching how policy is being applied to either support learning or apply pressure for a policy change to be made. The goal of policy monitoring is to make sure policy is being correctly implemented, as well as ensuring policies across a range of sectors are working harmoniously to achieve the desired outcome. For instance, an S4D organisation could track the implementation of national youth policies or monitor local commitments to safeguarding in sport. Policy monitoring can be useful to support learning or to apply pressure for improvement of policy outcomes.

Sport for development as a broad sector, can fall under many policy areas. Sport is often incorporated into the remits of other agencies and sport policies may be aligned with wider

development policies. Understanding which policies or policy makers influence your work is an important place to start.

Policy that influences your work may fall under any of the following areas (or others):

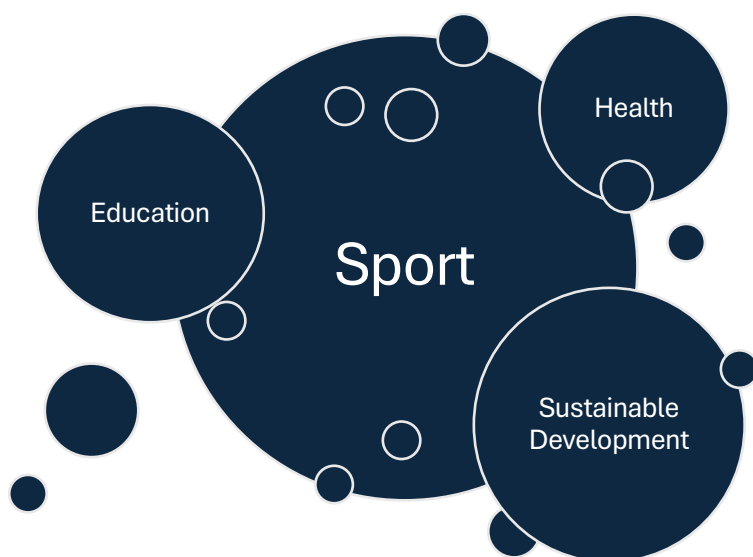


Figure 8 Sport for Development and associated Policies

Policies affecting your operations may be in a range of sectors (as presented above) and across a range of levels, such as international, national or local. There are specific policymakers at each level for general policy, as well as sport-specific policy.

International Policy: rules, conventions, treaties, action plans and similar that are made by countries, sport federations or other bodies in different locations working together to agree on their terms. They may or may not be legally binding.

Table 6 International Policy

	Global	Regional
Inter-Governmental	UN agencies <i>E.g. UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS)</i>	Other Intergovernmental Organisations <i>E.g. The Commonwealth Secretariat’s Sport for Development and Peace Unit</i>

Sport Specific	International Sport Federations <i>E.g. International Olympic Committee</i>	Regional Sport Organisations <i>E.g. African Union Sports Council</i>
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National Policy: policies that governments adopt in their own countries. Sport specific policies can also be implemented by organisations such as national sport federations at a national level.

Local Policy: policies can also be implemented at a more local level. These often come from local or municipality governments, or in a sport-specific sense may come from local or state sporting organisations.

Table 7 National & Local Policy

	National	Local
Governmental	National Government	Local/Municipality Government
Sport Specific	National Sport Federations	Local or State Sport Organisations

For further information on policy actors in sport for development, visit sportanddev.org.

Experts in the field mentioned that ‘the sector does not know where it belongs which makes it extremely difficult to advocate for anything at all because it is not clear who you need to speak to’.

What do I need to monitor policy?

Table 8 Requirements to monitor Policy

Critical Inputs		Secondary Inputs	
Knowledge and skills	Expertise in designing indicators, collecting and analysing data, and presenting findings is crucial to monitoring.	Material resources	Funding supports surveys, fieldwork, and data analysis that are often needed for reliable results.
		People and relationships	Access to institutions and communities supports data collection.
		Sense of agency	Legitimacy and credibility encourages evidence use for continued advocacy.

How can I get started with policy monitoring?

It is important to locate the relevant policies and policy makers who influence your work. This table can help you to identify them. This helps you to identify which areas you need to be advocating in and also how policy implementation is conducted or changes over time. This table shows examples of which actors might fall into each category, a blank table is included in the appendix for you to complete based on your own context. You will likely find that only one or two of these boxes are relevant for your work. This is important to define at the beginning, as all policy advocacy efforts should be targeted at a specific audience.

Table 9 Matching Policies with Policy Makers

	Global	National	Local

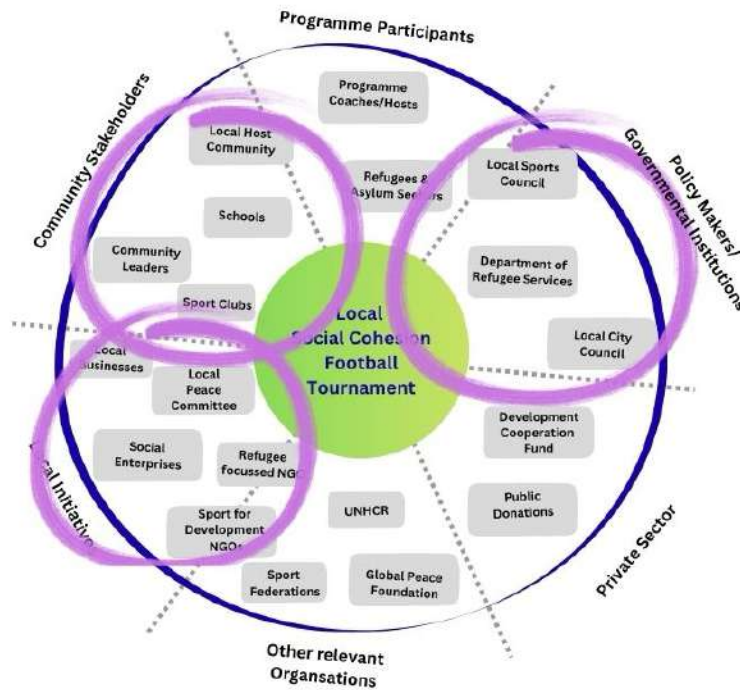
Sport	E.g. IOC and IPC policies	E.g. National Sport Ministry	E.g. Local sport policy
Sustainable Development	E.g. UN sustainable development agenda	E.g. National Development Ministry	E.g. Local development policy
Health	E.g. WHO physical activity guidelines	E.g. National Health Ministry	E.g. Local health policy
Education	E.g. <i>UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS)</i>	E.g. National Education Ministry	E.g. Local education policy
Areas relevant to target community	Target issue: gender equality E.g. UN women	Target issue: refugee inclusion E.g. National refugee policies	Target issues: employability E.g. local employment services

Monitoring your policy advocacy efforts

Another important part of policy monitoring is monitoring the implementation of policy you have advocated for. Policy advocacy does not end at policy change. Policy implementation is often out of your hands, despite your efforts in advocating for it. This can be challenging but it is important to continue to understand and challenge if policy is not being implemented correctly.

Experts in the field mentioned that 'it is crucial that the process of advocacy never ends and is sustainable as the issues you are usually advocating for do not require a simple, tangible solution but will require further changes in the long run to continue the advocacy and change'.

Activity 2 – Information campaigning



Information campaigning involves using research and communication to persuade and support policy advocacy. Strategies may include meetings with policy makers, research to develop evidence of benefits, sharing briefing documents with policy makers and awareness raising campaigns targeting decision makers or the general public. For instance, an organisation might publish data on how community programmes contribute to mental health and social cohesion. The ideal result of information campaigning is for new policy to be adopted.

When trying to advocate for your organisation or policy change, it is important to present information you have gathered that represents the benefit and impact of your work. A mixed methods approach to information collection is recommended, so that you can paint a comprehensive picture with both quantitative and qualitative data. Focusing on gathering diverse information also allows for you to tailor the information to the audience you are presenting it to (e.g. the public or decision makers).

The below focuses on a range of methods you can use to present data about the outputs and impacts of your programming. This is an overview only and is not an exhaustive list.

Table 10 Methods for Data Presentation

	Quantitative
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Outputs	<p>Participant Registration Forms</p> <p>As new participants join your programme, it is important to gather information on their demographics (such as age, gender, geographic location). This allows you to have information on who you are reaching.</p>
	<p>Track Attendance</p> <p>Tracking attendance is important to understand how many people you're reaching and if people are consistently accessing your program. This data can be used to adapt programs such as adapting times based on when is most attended.</p>
Outcomes	<p>Base/Endline Surveys</p> <p>It is useful to collect some data before a new participant joins or before a new activity or programme begins. The baseline survey can measure participants' knowledge or skills at the beginning of the intervention, which can be compared to after the intervention. If a programme has no specific end date, you can re-collect this data periodically.</p>
	<p>Qualitative</p>
	<p>Most Significant Change (MSC) Case Studies</p> <p>This method is about collecting stories of significant change from programme participants or other community stakeholders (e.g. parents or guardians). This is a participatory method which allows the person to share the change they have experienced in their own words.</p>
	<p>Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD)</p> <p>Interviews and FGD's can be held periodically or at the end of a programme, allowing participants to talk about what they have experienced. Interviews are typically one-on-one and FGD's can be with groups of varying sizes. Interviews can also be used with other community members, to gather information about their needs. These methods provide rich qualitative data that can demonstrate the outcomes and potential impact of your work. These methods are described in more detail below.</p>

While a diverse range of methods should be considered when monitoring your organisation's activities, you should consider your resources and who the information is for.

Broader Information Gathering

In addition to direct information from your project, you may consider collecting information about the sector more broadly. This can be useful in demonstrating your potential impact and advocating for the sector as a whole, rather than just for your own organisation. When presenting a policy brief, you can situate your project's information in a larger system. You can also use other studies to demonstrate the potential impact of your project.

Experts in the field mentioned that 'having "hard data" helps a lot when communicating with politicians. You can present to these politicians and show them here's the problem and we have it backed up with data. Then you can add individual stories to complete the picture and

What do I need for an Information Campaign?

Table 11 Requirements for Information Campaigning

Critical Inputs		Secondary Inputs	
Knowledge and skills	The ability to generate credible research, present findings in an accessible fashion, and tailor messages to audiences is essential.	People and relationships	Relationships with journalists or thematic networks support visibility and credibility.
Material resources	Producing research reports, infographics and videos requires staff time, equipment, and dissemination platforms.	Sense of agency	Confidence encourages organisations to present evidence publicly and take ownership of their message.

How can I get started with information campaigning?

Gather your information

Based on the information provided above, you should choose the methods that best fit your purpose and intended audience. For example, if you're **Activity 3 – Engaging the public**, you might use the stories and qualitative information you have gathered from MSC, FGD's or interviews. If you're **Activity 4 – Engaging decision makers**, you might rely more on the quantitative data.

Presenting your information

The way you present the information you have gathered is vital in the success of your advocacy. Information should be presented in different ways depending on your audience. For example, you may create a social media campaign if you are trying to engage the public or create a policy brief if you are trying to engage decision makers. The information and data you have collected can be used to develop the policy brief.

Creating a policy briefing document

A policy brief is a document that provides a summary of information, which presents research and recommendations about a particular issue. A policy brief can be a great tool to gather and present your data, that can be shared in multiple ways, e.g. posted on your organisational website or social media, used as a supporting document for meetings, lobbying or presenting publicly, or shared with other partners or stakeholders.

According to [An Essential Guide to Writing Policy Briefs](#) from the International Centre of Policy Advocacy, the purpose of producing a policy brief is:

‘To engage and convince your informed, non-specialist target audiences that your policy proposals are realistic, credible and relevant for the debate and decision on the target issue.’
(p. 11)

The guide offers the following guiding principles for writing a policy brief:

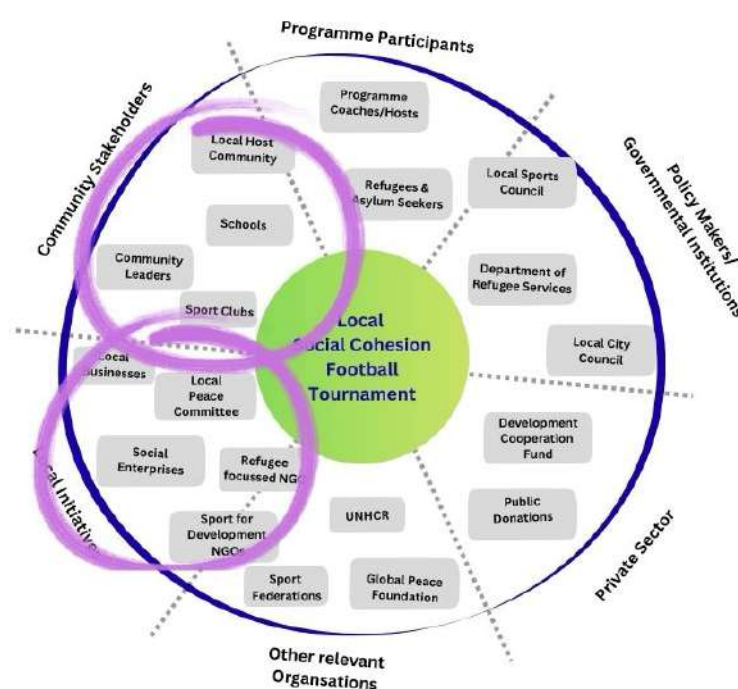
Table 12 How to write a Policy Brief

Engaging	Begin with something striking that is relevant for your target audience. This may be an engaging story, numbers or shocking fact from the information you have gathered.
Policy relevant and focused	Ensure that you understand the current policy discussion around your topic so that you can tailor your information to the relevant discussions of your target audience.
Professional, not academic	It is important to properly collect the data (such as using the above methods) but the policy brief should focus on the practical insights from your data collection, rather than the methodology.
Succinct	Policy briefs are typically 6-8 pages, so you should ensure that your work is succinct and the most relevant information is presented.
Limited	Information should be limited, in order to provide a targeted argument. While you might have a wealth of further information, only the key parts that are relevant to your issue should be presented in the policy brief.
Understandable	Your argument should be clear, easy to follow and presented with simple language. Your audience may be knowledgeable on your social issue and not sport, or vice versa, so it is important to ensure your argument is understandable for the target audience.
Accessible	Follow an accessible format, so that the reader can skim read and still find the main points. This can be highlighted through features such as the layout, use of subtitles, and visuals, tables or graphs.

Branded and promotional	Ensure it is clear which organisation (or coalition) created the briefing document. The policy brief can also be used for your own marketing.
Practical and feasible	The brief should ultimately be a practical tool. You should provide arguments that are based in your practice and propose recommendations that are realistic for the target audience.

These key factors should be considered when developing a policy brief. The actual structural elements of the brief are important too. You can find a table in the **Appendix b** to help you structure your paper, based on the information from the [guide](#). Please refer to the guide for more detailed guidance for developing a policy brief.

Activity 3 – Engaging the public



Engaging the public involves awareness-raising and mobilisation of citizens. Strategies may include engaging your members/the public to write letters, sign a petition, take part in a demonstration or take other actions. The goal is to shift public attitudes and build visible support that can influence decision makers. For example, an organisation might mobilise young athletes to demand equal access to community sport spaces or to campaign for disability-inclusive sport policies. The ideal result of engaging the public is a change in public views.

Public support can be enormously helpful in creating change for your community. Engaging the public to support your mission can create a stronger case to present to relevant decision makers. One recommended way to engage the public is to put together a call to action.

Before reaching out to the public, you should consider two key things:

Table 13 Considerations for writing a Policy Brief

1. How does your cause align with the needs and requirements of your community?	2. What communication methods and tools do your community work with?
<p>It is important to understand your community and gain their perception and attitudes towards the topic you want to advocate for. Interviews and focus group discussion, as described in</p> <p>Activity 2 – Information campaigning can be useful tools to gain such information. These can often be informal conversations that are used as a starting point to engage with your community.</p>	<p>When putting out a Call to Action, it is crucial to know how to best reach your intended audience and therefore it can be helpful to do some research on how your community prefers to communicate (e.g. social media platforms, radio, newsletters or another form of communication). As it can vary depending on your target audience, it can be helpful to use multiple communication tools.</p>

This chapter will focus on three forms of engaging the public that can be part of your call to action: writing letters to decision makers, petitions and taking part in demonstrations.

Writing letters to decision makers

If many members of the public write the same or similar letters to the decision maker, the decision maker is encouraged to respond in some way. You can provide a template to the public so that they know what to say. This makes it easy for the public to engage and also ensures consistent messaging.

Petitions

A petition is a statement created by a group or individual that is being signed by a number of people to urge governing institutions to take action on a particular matter. The signatures are key to represent how many people are supporting your call to action when you forward the document to the responsible policy maker.

Taking part in demonstrations

Demonstrations are a public or collective action designed to raise visibility, mobilise support, and create pressure for policy change. Demonstrations can be a way to engage the public to show up and support

your cause. Widespread public attendance and support can help to convey your message to the decision makers.

Experts in the field mentioned that 'it's important to create community driven advocacy campaigns to make them more sustainable'.

What do I need to engage the public?

Table 14 Requirements for Engaging the Public

Critical Inputs		Secondary Inputs	
Sense of agency	The organisation and its members must believe that their voice can make a difference.	Material resources	Modest funding can expand outreach, for instance by producing posters or providing transport for events.
People and relationships	Trust and credibility within communities are essential for participation.		
Knowledge and skills	Skills in framing messages, storytelling, and managing community events or online media ensure engagement.		

How can I get started with engaging the public?

Putting together a Call to Action

There are multiple ways you can encourage the public to take action and support your cause. To begin with, it is important to include enough information about the topic you are advocating for, so that everyone can make an informed decision. To continue, the Call to Action should be precise and as easily accessible as possible. This could include writing letters to decision makers, signing a petition, taking part in demonstrations, or simply to spread the word about your topic within their network. In any case, the most important information should be available in your Call to Action, such as date, time and place for a possible demonstration, link to a petition or an online letter, that just needs to be electronically submitted to the right office. A blank call to action planning table is included in the **Appendix b**.

Table 15 How to create a Call to Action

	Explanation	Example
Catchy Title	Provide a succinct, catchy title to capture the public's attention	<i>No Sidelines: Refugee Inclusion Starts on the Field</i>
Short background	Provide key information on the issue you are advocating for	<i>Refugees have consistently been sidelined in sport, making it more difficult to feel included in their new communities. We want to develop appropriate pathways within community sport so that refugees can be safe and included.</i>
Key information about activity	Writing a letter Template or key information to include in letter	<i>We have prepared a template for a letter that can be written to the local council sport representative.</i>
	Signing a Petition Link to the petition or instructions of how to sign	<i>The petition to implement specific measures for refugee inclusion can be accessed and signed here: (link or physical copy).</i>
	Attending a Demonstration Details of the demonstration such as date, time and place	<i>The demonstration will take place at the local sport club on (date) at (time).</i>
Call to action	Specific instruction of what you want someone to do	<i>You can help by (completing the action described above)!</i>

Activity 4 – Engaging decision makers



Engaging decision makers involves engaging and building rapport with relevant decision makers. This can involve general networking, direct communication or relationship-building with policy makers to

influence their perspectives and priorities. For instance, a sport-based employability programme could present recommendations to a parliamentary committee concerning youth access to the job market. Ultimately, the intended result is changing decision makers' views.

Networking

Networking can take many forms and is an important base for engaging decision makers. Building rapport with a decision maker is a good foundation so that you have an existing relationship when you want to come with a policy brief or more formal proposal. Networking opportunities may include:

- Attending existing events
- Inviting them to your events
- Sharing your policy brief
- Informal meetings
- Phone or email exchange

Engaging decision makers can take many forms and can be a multi-step process. While the ultimate result is a change in decision makers views, it may take a series of more informal interactions before this happens.

Experts in the field mentioned that 'usually the effect is that when we manage to convince an official to come and see how it works, they get very excited and try to do something for us. But getting that person to see it is very difficult'.

What do I need to engage decision makers?

Table 16 Requirements to Engage Decision Makers

Critical Inputs		Secondary Inputs	
Knowledge and skills	Understanding policy processes, generating evidence, and communicating effectively are essential for credibility.	Sense of agency	Confidence and perceived legitimacy enable advocates to engage on an 'eye-level' basis.
Material resources	Engaging officials requires time and travel, as well as well-	People and relationships	Existing connections or intermediaries can help open

	prepared briefing materials or consultation events.		doors to decision-making settings.
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How can I start to engage decision makers?

As presented in **Activity 1 – Policy monitoring**, there are a range of possible policy actors that can influence your work. It is important to consider who they are, what level they’re working at and how the policy(s) shape your work. You can use the table presented in policy monitoring section of the **Appendix b** to identify the policy actors most relevant to you. After that identification, it is important to further understand their priorities and interests. This helps to tailor your approach. A blank version of the following table can be found in the **Appendix b**.

Table 17 Identifying the Decision Maker

Relevant Decision Maker	Identify the relevant decision maker: e.g. local sport minister, head of a national sporting association
Contact options	Figure out if it is possible to get into contact with them and how. Some ministers may provide contact details for their staff, rather than them directly.
Interests & priorities	Get to know the decision maker better. This can be done through looking at any publicly available information, particularly related to past policy decisions and current policy priorities. If accessible, you can also interview them or their staff on the current interests and future directions, which should give you an indication of how to tailor your efforts.
Potential networking opportunities	After finding out more about the decision maker, brainstorm potential networking opportunities. These can be the above suggestions or any other means to network with the decision maker.

Activity 5 – Coalition building



Coalition building is about exchanging information and building relationships with like-minded organisations. It involves forming alliances with to share information, coordinate strategy, and take unified action. For example, this could mean a coalition of sport, youth, and health NGO’s jointly advocating for physical activity’s inclusion in a national development plan or for funding for accessible, community sport facilities. Once a coalition is formed, it could result in an improved democratic environment and stronger base to advocate from.

There are four key steps to creating a coalition:

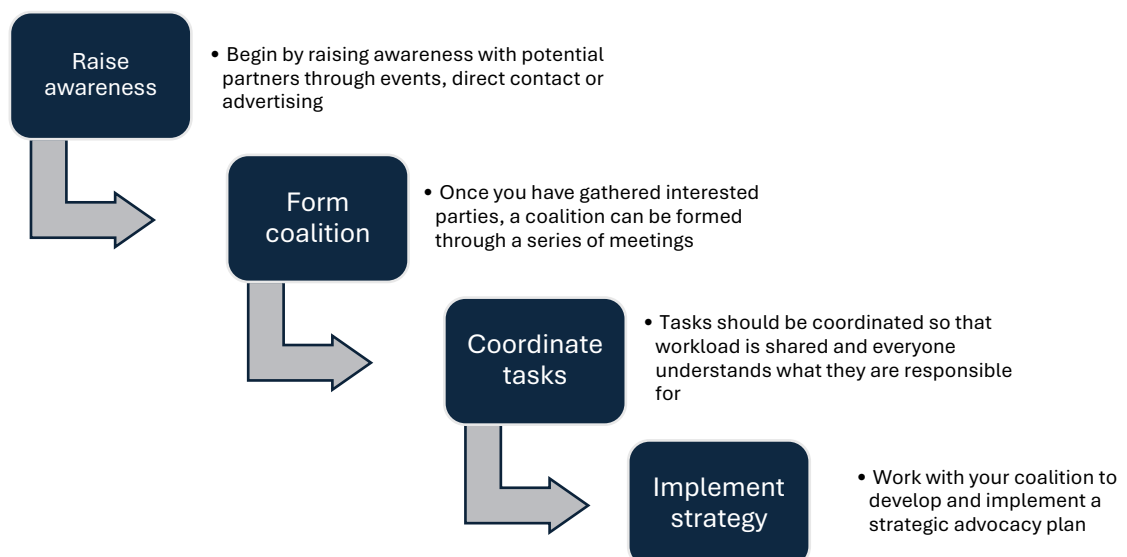


Figure 9 Four Steps to creating a Coalition

Experts in the field mentioned that ‘collaborating with big organisations is important for smaller NGO’s to address immediate issues as well as the bigger problems or other tasks such as advocacy’.

What do I need to build a coalition?

Table 18 Requirements for building a Coalition

Critical Inputs		Secondary Inputs	
Sense of agency	Coalition partners must believe their joint effort will have greater influence than individual action.	Material resources	Funds for meetings, communications, and shared staff time, to sustain collaboration.
People and relationships	Strong, trusting relationships underpin coalition effectiveness.		
Knowledge and skills	Skills in partnership management, facilitation, and conflict resolution help navigate differing agendas.		

How can I start building a coalition?

To decide which organisation or individual can be useful for a coalition, you must consider all the resources and benefits each stakeholder can offer. To do so, make a list of each relevant stakeholder and the resources they could provide for the coalition.

The below table should help to figure out what each stakeholder brings to the coalition and what can be shared between each of them. This table can be increased to include more stakeholders. To illustrate it, an example is given from a refugee focused NGO. A blank version of the table is included in the **Appendix b**.



Figure 10 Model of a Coalition

Table 19 Stakeholders within a Coalition

Shared policy objective: Engage with the sport council, with the aim of making sport more inclusive of refugees and displaced people	
Resources and Contributions to the Coalition	
Your organisation Refugee focused NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skill and knowledge about working with people who have fled or been displaced ● Familiar with local policies and regulations
Stakeholder 1 Social Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial resources ● Supply of material and resources
Stakeholder 2 Sport federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trained coaches ● Sporting facilities ● Necessary sport specific knowledge

Activity 6 – Reform efforts



Reform efforts are attempts to change policy through pilots, demonstration or litigation. An advocate may take part in legal action or litigation to achieve policy changes. Alternatively, they may initiate pilot or demonstration projects to showcase alternative (policy) approaches. For example, an organisation might develop, pilot, and propose a framework to recognise non-formal learning outcomes within education systems. Or an organisation could even take legal action to counter exclusionary practices within sporting facilities. The goal is tangible reform legally or in implementation practice.

Pilots: small-scale, practical implementation of an approach or intervention designed to demonstrate its effectiveness and generate credible evidence that can inform or influence policy decisions

Demonstrations: a public or collective action designed to raise visibility, mobilise support, and create pressure for policy change

Litigation (Legal Action): strategic use of legal action to challenge unjust policies, demand accountability, or enforce rights. It seeks policy change by compelling governments or institutions to uphold legal obligations or correct harmful practices.

The actions falling under reform efforts can be seen as more extreme than some others. In the [PASS project mapping survey](#), taking part in legal action or litigation was the least used method to achieve policy changes. Initiating pilots or demonstrations were also one of the least used methods. While it can be an important and useful step, reform efforts are unlikely to be the most suitable first step. Instead, it

often makes sense to focus on implementing (at least some of) the other policy advocacy activities first. As you've conducted the other activities, you will most likely build support to take further action towards policy reform.

Experts in the field mentioned that 'often policy development or reforms do not happen in the ministries but rather in the budget planning. It is important to know how much money is available and how much money would be needed for your intended change'.

What do I need to conduct reform efforts?

Table 20 Requirements for conducting Reform Efforts

Critical Inputs		Secondary Inputs	
Knowledge and skills	Technical expertise for designing pilot activities, analysing results, and transforming evidence into reform proposals or legal arguments are needed.	People and relationships	Support from government, academia, or the legal field lends legitimacy and supports adoption.
Material resources	Reform projects and legal actions are resource-intensive, requiring funding and professional support.	Sense of agency	Persistence and confidence help organisations navigate the oft-lengthy policy reform process.

How can I get started with reform efforts?

The type of reform effort to undertake is entirely dependent on your goal. The below table offers an example for each, again using the example of a refugee-focused NGO. A blank version of the table is included in the **Appendix b**.

Table 21 How to Reform Efforts

	Pilots (testing what works)	Demonstrations (Public Mobilisation)	Litigation (Legal Action)
Action	E.g. Run a community sport pilot for refugees and host communities together	E.g. public campaign or sport event for visibility of refugees in sport clubs	E.g. legal challenge to discriminatory policy against refugees
Goal/Outcome	Understand the best practices for creating sporting spaces that are inclusive for both refugees and host communities	Raise awareness of the achievements of refugees in sport through a social media campaign	Challenge policy that makes it difficult for refugees to find work in their host countries
Who to engage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refugees ● Host communities ● Local sporting clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refugees ● Host communities ● Sporting associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lawyers ● Law makers
Resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sporting facilities ● Advertising ● Language interpretation ● Data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social media expertise ● Advertising ● Language translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial resources ● Legal expertise
Risks / Challenges	Openly hostile experiences between the groups	The campaign does not reach the intended audience	Expensive process that does not result in the desired change
What success looks like	Evidence of the conditions required for peaceful, co-existing sporting spaces between refugee and host communities	The campaign reaches those from host communities and encourages them to celebrate refugees in sport	Policy is adapted to ensure greater opportunities for refugees to work in their host country

Conclusion

The above chapter has presented each policy advocacy activity on its own. This is to provide in-depth information on the method and when it might be appropriate to use it. It is important to remember that policy advocacy is multi-faceted and will likely require using multiple strategies at once. Strategies may also change over time, as relationships develop and policy changes. One of the most important parts is

that you adapt your strategies to your context. The following section will help you to develop your own policy advocacy action plan.

Further resources, references, tools

- [ChildFund Rugby, Barça Foundation, & War Child Holland. \(2021\). Playing the Game Toolkit: A guide for sport-for-development practitioners. In Playing the Game: A Framework for Successful Child-focused Sport for Development Programmes.](#)
- [CYS DP \(Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group\). \(2015\). Sport for Development and Peace Youth Advocacy Toolkit. Commonwealth Secretariat.](#)
- [Evaluation Matrix from Work Package 3 of the Policy Advocacy in Sport and Society project](#)
- [Promising Practice Report from Work Package 3 of the Policy Advocacy in Sport and Society project](#)
- [Soni, A., Krishnan, S., UNDP, Mayors for Economic Growth \(M4EG\) initiative, Gyumri Municipality \(Armenia\), Khirdalan Municipality \(Azerbaijan\), Rustavi Innovation Hub \(Georgia\), Municipality of Călărași \(Moldova\), Nizhyn Municipality \(Ukraine\), & Agirre L](#)
- For a different take on your policy readiness, you can try this [policy readiness questionnaire](#)

Chapter 4 - Doing Advocacy: Plan your action

Description

Building on the theoretical information and tools provided in the previous chapters, which have focussed on understanding the field of policy advocacy, types of activities and strategies, stakeholder mapping, institutional readiness and awareness, and policy monitoring and evaluation, this chapter will guide you through the development of a strategic policy advocacy action plan.

Importantly, it will support the identification of a **focal problem or social issue** that will anchor the **policy advocacy action plan**. You will further be guided through the development of a **communications strategy** resulting in creating a narrative that will play a critical role in developing a successful action plan.

Learning objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will:

- Define your focal problem and analyse the underlying causes and potential solutions;
- Draft a policy advocacy action plan using provided templates and examples;
- Design a Communication Strategy tailored to your audiences and objectives;
- Understand how to use action planning for your policy advocacy
- Complete an action plan for the Policy gap or problem you identified

Learning approach



Definitions



Tools and Worksheets



Case studies



Further Reading

What does a focal problem/social issue policy gap look like?

This is a real-world problem affecting an under-served or vulnerable group, described in a way that makes it **urgent and measurable**. When developing the statement of a focal problem/social issue, include: who is affected (target population), what is happening (barrier/inequality), why it matters (consequences), evidence/indicators (statistics, examples), and where it happens (global/region/country).

EXAMPLE: Refugees and asylum seekers face structural barriers to participating in organised sport, limiting their access to physical health benefits, social connection, language practice, and community

integration.

A policy gap is the **missing link or weak part of the system that allows the problem to persist**. A strong policy gap includes: what policy exists now (and why it is not enough), what is missing (no entitlement, clear responsibility, coordination, enforcement), who is responsible (sport federations, ministry, municipality), practical effects (exclusion, unequal access)

EXAMPLE: Sport membership and competition systems often require formal documentation (national identification number, proof of address, federation registration), which many refugees/asylum seekers do not have yet. Because sport policy rarely includes flexible registration pathways, fee waivers, or bridging insurance mechanisms, refugees are effectively excluded from clubs and competitions unless a special pathway is established.

SPOTLIGHT 1: Refugee Olympic and Paralympic Teams: The Refugee Olympic and Paralympic Teams were created to respond to a clear policy gap in elite sport: refugee athletes often cannot represent either their country of origin or their host country. Many do not wish to compete for the state they fled, and they usually cannot represent their host country because Olympic eligibility is tied to nationality/citizenship. As a result, without a refugee team mechanism, many athletes would be excluded from the Olympic pathway, not due to lack of talent but because of legal and administrative constraints. The Refugee Olympic Team therefore functions as an institutional workaround that enables participation and representation when conventional nationality-based systems leave no option.

SPOTLIGHT 2: Sport for Refugee Coalition: The Global Refugee Forum further galvanized support and commitment when UNHCR, the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF) brought together over 80 organizations – from governments to National Olympic Committees, international sport federations, clubs, associations and civil society organizations – behind a common pledge to support refugee protection and inclusion.

Tools:

- [Policy Problem Articulation Template \(Appendix c\)](#)
- [Choosing Which Policy Problem to Address](#)

What does a strategic action plan on policy advocacy look like?

A strategic action plan is basically how to engage with policy makers and influence positive policy change in favour of the most vulnerable step-by-step (think incremental).

It usually includes a goal, policy objectives (measurable), stakeholder map, understating the legal frameworks, advocacy tactics (coalition building, policy briefs, meetings, pilot projects, petitions/open letters, media), timeline, deliverables (2-page policy brief, stakeholder meeting deck, press kit),

monitoring and learning plan.

Experts in the field mentioned that it is important to 'break down the problem that is trying to be addressed into smaller parts. This allows you to be more precise and offer clear solutions, demands and activities. One solution can unlock the next'.

What does a communication strategy look like?

A communication strategy helps your action plan to convince your target audience. Through your communication, you will aim to frame the issue so that people's knowledge and understanding of the issue moves towards your position, so that they feel the issue is important and needs to be addressed and are persuaded to act and support calls for action.

This chapter helps you move from analysis to action. It guides you through the process of developing a concrete, context-specific Policy Advocacy Plan that connects strategy with implementation.

Self-reflective assessment question:

- What policy gap did you identify?

Policy advocacy action plan

Having chosen a policy advocacy approach in chapter 3s **Policy Advocacy Activities**, and confirmed your policy problem, you can now produce an Advocacy Action Plan. This plan will help you to decide on your tasks, timelines, roles and the resources you will need to reach your goals.

Note: If you have not decided on a policy problem, you can refer to the tools in part 1 of this chapter. This is an essential step before you can start your action plan.

Your Advocacy Action Plan helps you prioritise so you can get started with your Policy Advocacy with a clear roadmap in hand. Having a plan also helps you use your resources efficiently.

An Action Plan should be Complete, Clear and Current.

To develop an Advocacy Action plan, consider:

- Who needs to be influenced?
- What is the message that you want to promote?

- How is the message best communicated for the specific person or group you are addressing?
- How will you evaluate if your advocacy plan is working?
- What indicators will you use to measure whether the message has been understood and if people are supportive of your idea?

Tools:

- Advocacy Action Plan Template (**Appendix c**)

Participatory Approaches to Advocacy Action Planning

A participatory approach means involving the community and people who will be affected by your policy right from the beginning. This is especially important if the person leading the advocacy is not a member of the community it sets out to advocate for. Using a participatory approach means providing meaningful opportunities for the involved communities to contribute.

Table 22 Participatory Approaches

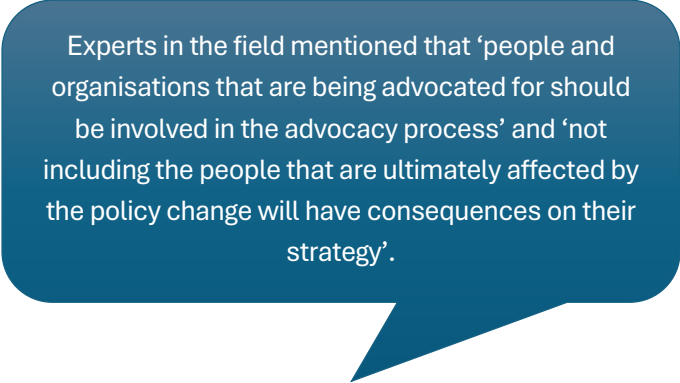
Just how participatory do you want to be?

David Wilcox, in "Guide to Effective Participation" sets out the following as a model of the different possible levels of participation:

- *Information* - The least you can do is tell people what is planned.
- *Consultation* - You offer a number of options and listen to the feedback you get.
- *Deciding together* - You encourage others to provide some additional ideas and options and join in deciding the best way forward.
- *Acting together* - Not only do different interests decide together what is best, but they form a partnership to carry it out.
- *Supporting independent community initiatives* - You help others do what they want - perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by the resource holder.

Each of these levels may be appropriate in different circumstances, or with different groups, although only at "deciding together" and above do they really begin to be fully participatory⁹.

⁹ [Community Toolbox - Participatory approaches to planning community interventions](#)



Experts in the field mentioned that ‘people and organisations that are being advocated for should be involved in the advocacy process’ and ‘not including the people that are ultimately affected by the policy change will have consequences on their strategy’.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to participatory approaches, but the advantages are important and typically outweigh the disadvantages.

Advantages to participatory approaches include:

- More accurate understanding of the problem
- Creative solutions
- More variety of voices and perspectives
- A space to challenge organiser assumptions
- Authentic stories to support the advocacy goal
- Community buy-in

Disadvantages include:

- Sometimes a lengthier process
- The challenge of managing conflicting viewpoints

An example of a participatory framework for consulting with children and youth is Laura Lundy’s Model for Meaningful Child Participation. The model describes the importance of creating room for children to be heard by people who care and can take action on the issues that are important to them. These principles can also apply to other underserved populations and groups.



Figure 11 Model for meaningful Participation¹⁰

Partnerships for Action Planning

Action Planning can be made stronger by collaborating with a partner organisation or individual who shares your goals and vision. Partners should be vetted and background checked to ensure compliance with safeguarding policies and sound financial procedures.

Table 23 Partnerships for Action Planning

Spotlight on partnerships

“The Sport for Community Development NGO from East Africa have found tournaments and the associated dialogue are useful spaces to bring together a range of stakeholders and build partnerships. Working in a similar context, the Sport for Refugees NGO, also located in East Africa, utilised tournaments with facilitated dialogue to engage their communities and important decision-making stakeholders. While not a policy outcome, the tournament and dialogue resulted in an offer from the sports council to access city facilities free of charge”

Source: PASS Selected Policy Advocacy Practices from Stakeholders in the Sport and Social Development Sector

¹⁰ Lundy's Voice Model for Meaningful Participation as included in Ireland's National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020

Self-reflective question:

- How will you know your advocacy is working?

Communication strategy

This section is about identifying the communication channels to engage people and raise awareness to make progress on your goal/advocacy activity, such as social media, engage high-profile individuals, Interview or podcast, peaceful protests, editorials, press releases, depending on the context.

Now that your action plan is defined, you can develop a communication strategy to reinforce it, supporting policy change, encouraging dialogue, and shaping public opinion. Begin by clarifying your main advocacy goal and the actions needed to achieve it. Then build your strategy around three overarching objectives: lead the narrative, generate empathy, and mobilize action.



Figure 12 Communications Objectives¹¹

Identify your own communication objectives

Follow this checklist when developing your communication strategy:

- Identify and understand your audience
- Identify a messenger and key allies.
- Determine the communication channels and advocacy method
- Craft the message
- Check readiness to deploy your communication strategy

1. Identify and understand your audience

A common mistake is defining the audience too broadly. Instead of targeting “the government,” specify which department, level (national/municipal), or even key individuals. Likewise, there is no general public, identify the specific population segments you want to reach. The more

¹¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). *Advocacy toolkit: Part I—How to advocate*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/984142865/UNHCR-Advocacy-Toolkit-1>

precise your audience is, the more relevant and effective your message will be, and the easier it is to choose the right messenger(s).

Next, identify how your audience views the issue. Understand what motivates them, how the outcome benefits them, and what might stop them from supporting it. Once you understand your audience's motivations, you can tailor your messages to match their views and priorities. You can use **the empathy map below** to help you frame your message, so your audience is more likely to think, feel, and act in ways that support your goal.

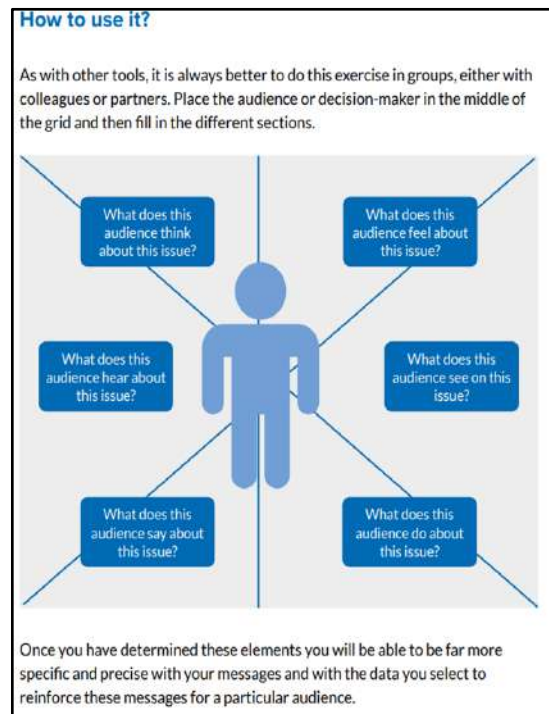


Figure 13 Identify your Audience¹¹

2. **Identify a messenger and key allies.** Consider which stakeholders are influential, which stakeholders are allies, and which stakeholders may have conflicting views. This will help you identify the most suitable messenger(s), as sometimes you might not be the most effective messenger. Use one of the tools below to do so.

Experience shows that people with lived-experiences of the issue at-hand are better placed to convey the message, as they can speak with authenticity, credibility and emotional impact.

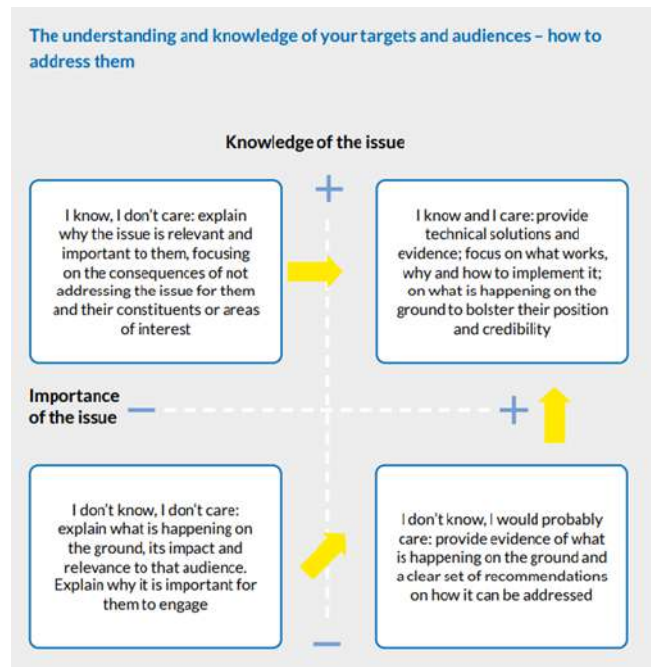


Figure 14 Understanding the Knowledge of the Audience¹¹

Table 24 Spotting High Level Profiles and Goodwill Ambassadors

Sporting High Level Profiles and Goodwill Ambassadors

You could consider tapping into the influence, visibility, and networks of high-profile personalities to increase attention, credibility and public support for your communication strategy. In sport, well-known athletes are particularly effective ambassadors because they attract large audiences, connect with young people, and can communicate messages in a simple and inspiring way. Because sport cuts across age, background, and political views, athlete ambassadors are often able to reach groups that advocacy organisations and policymakers struggle to engage through traditional communication channels.

Example of Partnering for Communication

I CAN South Sudan, a refugee-led organisation, had strong community networks and grassroots influence, but lacked experience in high-level policy advocacy engagement. In contrast, **ALIGHT International** had successfully contributed to policy reforms in many areas, such as GBV and livelihood, in three African countries (Uganda, South Sudan, and Sudan) through various strategies such as policy briefs, media framing, and parliamentary lobbying.

To enhance its policy advocacy initiatives, **I CAN South Sudan** has entered a strategic partnership with **ALIGHT International**. This collaboration aims to bolster **I CAN South Sudan's** influence and capabilities at the national level in Uganda on how to engage host communities.

3. Determine the communication channels and advocacy method

Often a combination of methods is needed to achieve objectives. You will need to engage people and raise awareness to make progress on your goal.

Communication methods include social media, directly engaging high-profile individuals through networking, interview or podcast, peaceful protests, editorials and press releases, depending on the context



Figure 15 Advocacy Methods¹²

4. Craft the message

Combine rational and emotional elements

A strong advocacy message should combine the rational and the emotional to make the message more convincing.

“Why is this important?” (impact, evidence, costs/benefits)

“Why should I care?” (fairness, human stories, shared community values)

Structure and layer the message

Before communicating, structure your message clearly:

- **Primary message:** the main point you want your audience to remember (1 sentence).

¹² Plan International. (2014). *The education we want: An advocacy toolkit*. https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/01/2014_an_advocacy_tool_kit_part_1_en.pdf

- **Secondary message(s):** supporting points that explain why it matters and what should be done (2–3 key points).

You can also **layer your message by difficulty level**, so it works for different audiences and it uses their language:

- **Simple version** (for the public / social media)
- **Medium detail** (for partners / stakeholders)
- **Technical version** (for experts / policymakers)

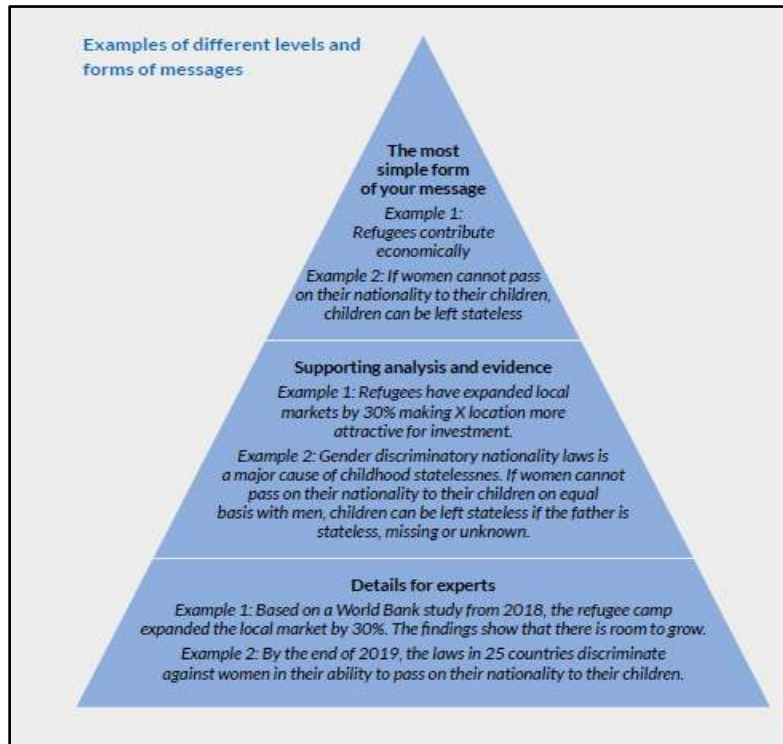


Figure 16 Different Levels and Forms of Messages¹¹

5. Deploy your Communication Strategy

To communicate successfully about your Policy Advocacy goal, you will need to make sure everyone within the team is aware of the plan and their role in it. You also need your resources and tools in place, such as subscriptions, timelines, and content. Use the due diligence tool to manage risks and do not worry about making it perfect. There will always be lessons learned that you can apply with your next action plan!

Once you are comfortable with your Communication Plan you are ready to go!

Self-reflective question: What's one communication step you'll take?

Conclusion

In this chapter you drew on the knowledge and skills gained in previous chapters. You were guided to clarify your policy problem. You learned about developing a Policy Advocacy Action Plan and consulting on the approach with those who would be affected by the issue and you created a communication strategy. With these final pieces in place you may be well equipped to advocate for policy change in sport in your own community...and beyond!

Further resources, references, tools

- [Community Toolbox - Participatory approaches to planning community interventions](#)
- [Kaufman, T., & Foundation, O. R. \(2025\). Cities, Sport and Inclusion: A Policy Plan to Support Displaced Communities.](#)
- [McLennan, N., & UNESCO. \(2021\). Making the case for inclusive quality physical education policy development: A Policy Brief. UNESCO Publishing](#)
- [Sport England Evaluation Framework: The Essentials](#)
- [Plan International. \(2014\). The education we want: An advocacy toolkit. \[https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/01/2014_an_advocacy_tool_kit_part_1_en.pdf\]\(https://plan-international.org/uploads/2022/01/2014_an_advocacy_tool_kit_part_1_en.pdf\)](#)
- [UNESCO \(2022\) Promoting Policy and Cooperation to Support Creativity. Peer-to-Peer learning Toolkit. UNESCO Publishing](#)
- [UNESCO \(2021\). How to influence the development of quality physical Education Policy: A Policy Advocacy Toolkit for Youth. UNESCO Publishing](#)
- [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. \(n.d.\). Advocacy toolkit: Part I—How to advocate. <https://www.scribd.com/document/984142865/UNHCR-Advocacy-Toolkit-1>](#)

Appendix

Chapter 2 Self-Assessment Tools

Appendix a

How would you rate your **sense of agency** in terms of...

	Very poor	Poor	Medium	Good	Very good
Belief in ability to influence policy					
Confidence to engage policymakers					
Perceived legitimacy among policymakers and civil society					
Commitment of leadership and staff towards advocacy					
Ability to take initiative and try new approaches					

How would you rate your **skills and knowledge** concerning....

	Very poor	Poor	Medium	Good	Very good
Strategic planning and management					
Media, Communications and Public Relations					
Public policy and policymaking (general)					
Sport policy and policymaking					
Advocacy planning and design					
Monitoring, evaluation/evidence gathering					

How would you rate your *relationships* with...

	Very poor	Poor	Medium	Good	Very good
Staff and volunteers					
Community members and participants					
Sport clubs and organisations					
Government and Policymakers					
Civil society organisations					
Sport for development organisations					
Journalists and media figures					
Other organisations related to health, education or social work					

How would you rate your **resources** in terms of...

	Very poor	Poor	Medium	Good	Very good
Staff expertise					
Staff availability (i.e. time)					
Facilities and equipment					
Financial resources					
Technology and software					
Access to data information and evidence					

Stakeholder Mapping



Chapter 3 Policy Advocacy Activities

Appendix b

1. Policy Map

	Global	National	Local
Sport			
Sustainable Development			
Health			
Education			
Areas relevant to target community			

2. Policy Brief

Title	
Executive Summary	
Rationale for action on the problem	
Proposed policy option(s)	
Policy recommendations	
Sources consulted or recommended Link to original research/analysis	
Contact details	

3. Call to action

Catchy Title	
Short background	
Key information about activity	
Call to action	

4. Engaging decision makers

Relevant Decision Maker	
Contact options	
Interests & priorities	
Potential networking opportunities	

5. Building a coalition

Shared policy objective:	
Resources and Contributions to the Coalition	
Your organisation	●
Stakeholder 1	●
Stakeholder 2	●

6. Reform efforts

	Pilots (testing what works)	Demonstrations (Public Mobilisation)	Litigation (Legal Action)
Action			
Goal/Outcome			
Who to engage?			
Resources needed			
Risks / Challenges			
What success looks like			

Chapter 4 Doing Advocacy

Appendix c

1. Policy Problem articulation template

Initiative name	<i>Give your Policy Advocacy Plan a title</i>
What needs to change?	<i>List 1 to 5 focus areas</i>
Overall Goal Statement	<i>Describe what success would look like.</i>
Who do we need to influence?	<i>List key people you need to reach.</i>

2. Choosing Which Policy Problem to Address

The following table can be used or adapted to help you decide which policy problem you want to try to solve if you have several on your plate at the same time. By answering each question, you can get a clearer idea of all of the aspects of solving a problem and should be able to choose more easily and effectively.

	Problem 1	Problem 2
How frequently does the problem occur?		
How many people are affected?		
For what amount of time are they affected?		
How severe is the effect?		
How important do group members perceive the problem to be?		

<p>How important is the problem perceived to be by others?</p>		
<p>How likely is it that we can solve/significantly improve the problem?</p>		
<p>Can we manage the risks of addressing this problem?</p>		

Adapted From Community Tool Box Section 3: Defining and Analyzing the Problem.

Policy Problem Definition Checklist:

You have decided to address a policy problem:

- It is important.**
- It is feasible.**
- You are the best people to address this problem.**
- You have weighed the potential negative impacts.**
- You have chosen among possible policy problems.**
- You are aware of your capacities and limitations to address the policy problem.**
- You understand the various policy advocacy approaches.**

Adapted From Community Tool Box Section 3: Defining and Analyzing the Problem.

3. Advocacy Action Plan Template

Focus Area 1:				
Objective(s):				
Strategy 1:				
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	<i>Person(s) responsible:</i>	<i>By when:</i>	<i>Resources needed:</i>	<i>Communication: (who should know what, by when):</i>
Strategy 2:				
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	<i>Person(s) responsible:</i>	<i>By when:</i>	<i>Resources needed:</i>	<i>Communication:</i>
Strategy 3:				
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	<i>Person(s) responsible:</i>	<i>By when:</i>	<i>Resources needed:</i>	<i>Communication:</i>

[Adapted from Community Tool Box Section 5: Developing an Action Plan](#)

4. Communication Plan

1. Identify and understand your audience	
2. Identify a messenger and key allies.	
3. Determine the communication channels and advocacy method	
4. Craft the message	
5. Check readiness to deploy your communication strategy	

5. Stakeholder Interest / Importance Matrix

Write stakeholder names in the white boxes.

Name of Initiative:						
Interest	6					
	5					
	4					
	3					
	2					
	1					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Importance/Influence					

Adapted from: sportanddev MOOC



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