

TRAINING ON LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY – ORGANISED BY GINKS: JULY 28-29, 2009.

This 2-day meeting started with Martine, the facilitator (IICD) asking participants to express their expectations from the training, where Ibrahim Inusah (co-ordinator of GINKS) added that lobbying and advocacy have become fundamental to the success of every organisation.

After this, Martine divided the participants into two groups, and these two groups subsisted as the teams that did the assignments that pertained to the training, while Martine served as the guide, making sure that every principle of lobbying and advocacy was properly understood.

Martine started the training by noting that advocacy must influence change to the point that policies are formulated to the effect of that change. Merely influencing change in behaviour is not advocacy. It must be directed at policy makers, and people that influence decision making. It also must influence the implementation of policies. There must be a target group whose interest is being protected and on whose behalf the advocacy is done, and a group which has the power to make laws to protect these interests.

She enunciated Advocacy Mechanisms to include,

- Research and analysis
- Lobbying – to achieve this, you need evidence with which you can convince the decision makers.
- Media
- Allies
- Popular Campaigning

She also recommended that items 1, 2 and 4 (above) on the advocacy mechanisms are much cheaper than the other two, and would be much cheaper for GINKS to engage in. There are however ways to engage allies to project popular campaigning, and suggested that it might also be an area that GINKS should explore

She noted that Advocacy campaigns are either medium or long term – change is not something that takes off immediately. So a lot of planning is required, in terms of cost, man power, operations, lobbying, etc. The following steps should thus help the planning:

1. Build/Draw A Problem Tree – Note, there is a difference between an issue and a problem. The problem must be identified and penned in one sentence. You have to think further and longer into making your advocacy stronger. This will require more research in order to get your facts correctly, thereby having evidence of problems that will get the policy makers to listen to you.
2. What do you want to achieve considering the cause and effects of the problem. Note that it is not every problem that is an advocacy issue. There are some you can easily provide solutions to. Thus in terms of advocacy, you need to draw a solution tree. – There are outcomes which are of a middle term

Advocacy Solution

- Problem
- Advocacy
- Information/evidence needed
- Where and how to get the information
- Is GINKS the most appropriate NGO to address the issue

3. Develop your aims and objectives – The advocacy aim is usually
 - Single
 - Simple to communicate
 - Agreeable in terms of priorities – This is where research into what the community actually needs is very necessary
 - Compelling
 - Consistent with your mission and ethics

Advocacy objectives could refer to a change in policy, change in practice, or/and can target individuals to change their behaviour in order to bring about a change in policy or practice

TARGET

There is usually one main target – could be the president or community leader (direct target) as the case may be. There is a main target and an indirect target (academic, religious), depending on the level where the issue should lie. For instance, in the case of a minister, a reference to what he has already said, his campaign promise, party manifesto, might be a good place to start when presenting the issues advocated for. She also mentioned that targets are very key to the success of lobbying and advocacy, such that you must know

- How to contact target
- Target's feeling about the issue
- How to influence target
- Target's way of decision making; and
- Who target listens to

DAY - 2

CREATING AN INFLUENCE MAP

Here she mentioned that the difference between a target and an ally must be kept in mind at this stage. Working as a coalition gives you leverage so that you do not have to do everything, when your allies can support. You might however not always be the most powerful in the coalition, so you must see the need to concede and make sacrifices in order to achieve your aims in advocacy. If your project is short-term you can decide to work alone, and if it is long-term, you must take time to influence people to work with you (if you want them to work with you on your terms). She added that if you can strike a balance between your allies and your competitors; and deal with those against the project in order to see that it succeeds, the projects might actually succeed.

ROUTE TO INFLUENCE - This refers to how far or how low one can go to get someone to influence the level of his advocacy project. It must not be from A to B. It could also be from E – D – B – C – A. Here, the TEA test is very helpful:

- T – Touch: Your presentation must touch the target/ally

- E – Enthuse: It must enthuse the target/ally
- A – Act: It must make the target/ally act.

To be able to achieve the TEA, you must be able to

- Analyse the audience
- Decide a communication tactics
- Form a message
- Plan and implement the communication strategy
- Speak to the idea, not the paper.

IDENTIFY YOUR RESOURCES – Resources could be internal and external, and you must be able to determine what you have, so that you can plan the project appropriately. This will help you organise your ACTION PLAN correctly.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Every advocacy project must have an M&E framework, because it is possible that there might not be implementation when a policy is formed. This anticipation must give rise to scheduled objectives, so that a plan will exist, which will take care of issues of M&E.

At the end of her 2-day presentation, Martine left a food for thought – “What are the steps GINKS should take to start with advocacy”. She then recommended that it is usually safer to start with issues that are urgent and cheap.