

ASSESSING OUR SITUATION: ADVOCACY STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOLS¹

This part introduces a number of advocacy strategic analysis tools that should help you (as a group and/or coalition) do the following steps. It is important to note that the following steps are **not in any way linear**. Rather, they are organically related to one another. Any change in one or more of these points probably will almost inevitably lead to change in the other points.

“Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”

Sun Tzu (2010 April 7) In Wikimedia the work is released under CC-BY-SA

Before we review some of the budget advocacy strategic planning tools in this module, we would like to draw your attention to the following points:

- There are several strategic analysis tools that are either widely known, such as the SWOT Analysis, or the Forcefield Analysis; or others that you might have used or developed in your organization. You might also be already familiar with the tools we discuss in this part, or they might be new to you. Please feel free to pick and choose the ones you are already familiar with, while being open to new ones that may give you new perspectives into analyzing your situation.
- Building on the above point, each tool, and model will give you a part of the picture and help you better understand the situation. *No one tool will*

Always use more than one analytical tool. Each one will give you a bit of the whole story!

¹ Adapted from “Advocacy: People’s Power and Participation” by Nader Tadros, People’s Advocacy, Virginia, USA. All rights reserved – 2010 ©.

give you a full analysis of the issue and the situation. For this reason we strongly encourage you to use more than one strategic analysis tool to get a better handle on the situation. It also means that certain tools will help you understand the situation from a specific angle.

Analysis from using one tool for a specific part of the plan may change all of the other parts of the plan. Therefore, a careful review of your different analyses to keep synchronized is critical.

What to Analyze in the Environment?

Before jumping onto crafting a budget advocacy strategy we need to understand the situation from two main sides: 1) *the surrounding environment*, and 2) *problem/issue related aspects*.

The Surrounding Environment

First: the environment in which we will be working. Although budget advocacy might happen through local groups, these groups should exert efforts to have a clear reading of the environment they are working in. This reading of the environment might cover areas that are not directly related to the budget issue at hand. Some of the questions we will need to understand cover areas including:

- The political system
- The constitution and legislations
- The official decision-making processes at both national and local levels
- The power balance between the different bodies participating in the decision making processes
- The socio-economic situation nationwide, and in the different localities
- Used language(s)
- Prevailing culture(s) and values
- The population make up (majority and minority groups, men and women, age groups, education level for each group, etc.)
- Degree of freedom of expression (the political space)
- Degree of transparency including budget documents
- Any animosity or war between the country and other countries

UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Advocacy Strategic Analysis Tools

The following strategic analysis tools are examples of the tools you can use to understand the environment you are working in without getting into any significant level of details about the budget issue you are planning to work on.

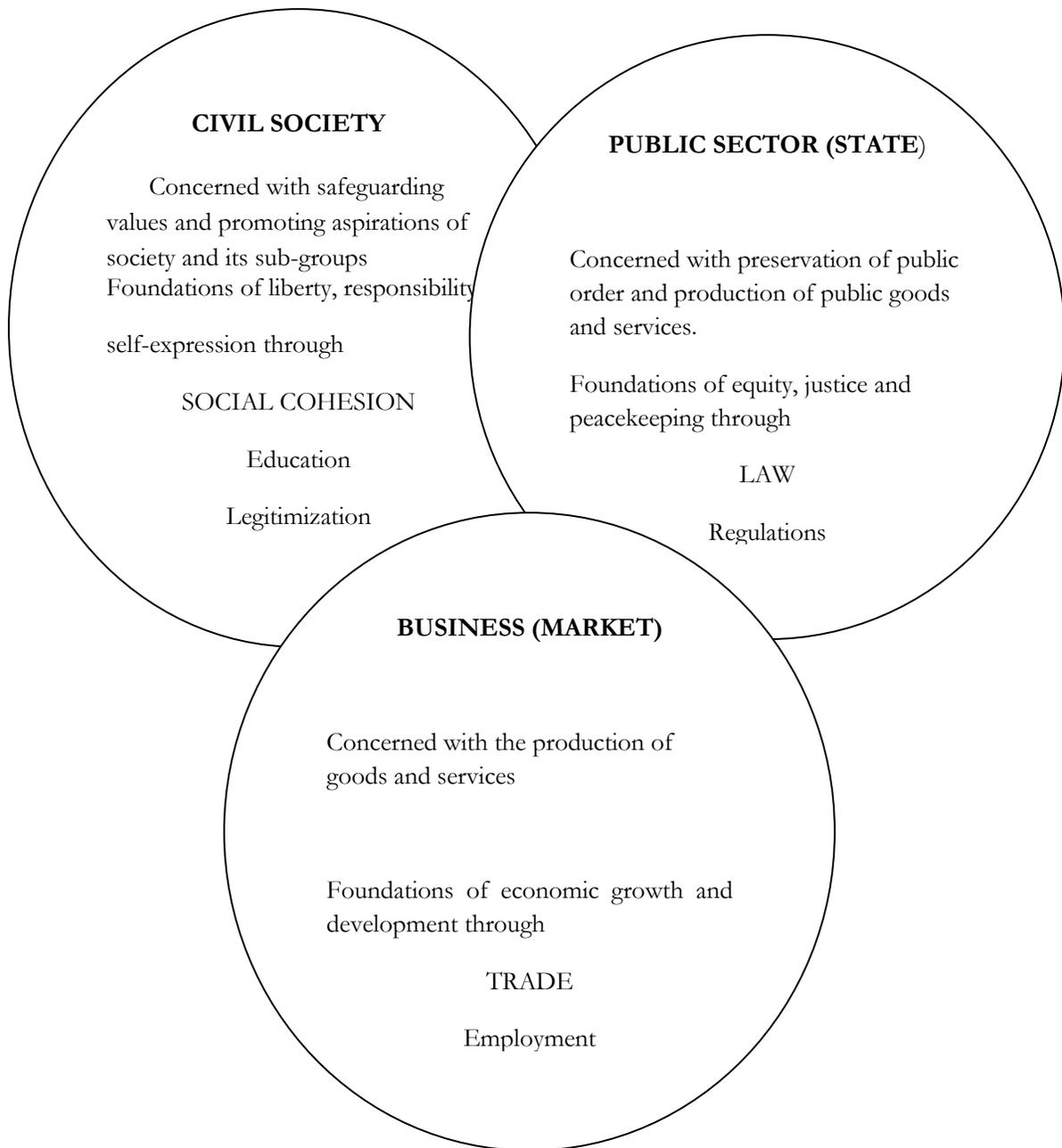
ADVOCACY AND THE THREE MAIN SECTORS: STATE, MARKET & CIVIL SOCIETY²

A common impression people have is that advocacy is only done by civil society groups and organizations. We argue that this is not necessarily the case. Going back to the examples we used, we probably discussed examples of when advocacy is used to give voice to the voiceless, or those who do not have the power to make the decision. No matter where you are, your efforts can be a just advocacy campaign if they include the basic advocacy elements discussed earlier. To further understand the political arena where decisions are made, we need to see how advocacy is played in the three main sectors: *State*, *Market*, and *Civil Society*. It is helpful to think of these sectors as independent functions – and not people – in any society. Thinking about these sectors as functions is essential as each one of us contributes to and plays a role in the three sectors. One person could be a trader who also does non-business related shopping in the weekend (*market functions*); works with the government to acquire special permits and also votes for the local and national elections (*state functions*); and is an active founding member of a business association and a regular volunteer in her children’s schools (*civil society*).

Which of these sectors has the biggest influence in dictating budget decision? Why?

² Miller, Valerie; 1997. Advocacy Sourcebook: Frameworks for Planning, Action, and Reflection. Chapter III. Institute for Development Research (IDR), Boston, USA.

SECTORAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT³



³ Gladkikh, Olga, 2005. Advocacy and Networking Manual. Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University. Nova Scotia, Canada.

POWER ANALYSIS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

The following tool is adapted from Joseanthony Joseph⁴ with the aim of assessing and analyzing power in 23 different relationships.

Tools for Analyzing Power Relationships

This exercise helps participants to analyze the power relationships at a range of levels from the local to the national. It helps those involved in advocacy to understand the significance of power (and thus of politics) in all aspects of society. This analysis then forms an important foundation for their advocacy strategy and informs the planning and implementation of their advocacy work.

Part 1: Using the Table below, participants are asked to tick whether each relationship is equal; unequal but free competition; unequal not expected to be equal but can improve; or unequal and unjust.

Part 2: Using the same 23 relationships from the table, participants are then asked to score each relationship from 1 to 10, according to how powerful they feel their organization is to change that power relationship.

Part 3: The results are then analyzed by the group of participants. This analysis may include highlighting relationships which stand out as unequal and examining the causes; considering which relationships have an impact on the organization's activities; and understanding where the organization's strengths may lie. Linkages can be made between relationships that are considered unequal and unjust, which also have a high score in the second exercise; these may form potential areas for organization's efforts in the future. Even if an organization is powerless in a key area, the understanding of that powerlessness is an important feature of the organization's planning to ensure that plans are based on a realistic assessment of the situation.

⁴ Joseanthony, Joseph of NCAS/Christian Aid; 1999; from: Advocacy Sourcebook: A guide to advocacy for WSSCC co-ordinators working on the WASH campaign P. 27 & 28. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), Geneva, Switzerland; WaterAid, London, UK; 2003.

Analyzing Power Relationships Exercise

	Equal	Unequal, but Free Competition	Unequal, Not Expected To Be Equal, But Can Improve	Unequal And Unjust
Family				
1. Husband-wife				
2. Parent-child				
3. Male-female				
Community				
4. Urban-rural				
5. Educated-illiterate				
6. Race/ethnic/caste/tribal/language groups				
7. Clerics-non clerics				
8. Civil society organization-groups they work with				
9. Funding agency-partner group				
10. Male-female				
11. Tribes/clans-non-tribal groups				
12. Religious institutions-secular institutions				
Market				
13. Transnational corporations-consumer				
14. Large local company-consumer				
15. Small neighbourhood store-consumer				
16. Mass media-consumer				
State				
17. 'Govt'. in power-citizen				
18. Bureaucrat-citizen				
19. Judiciary-citizen				
20. Enforcement authorities-citizen				
International				
21. Another state – your state				
22. Coalition of states – your state				

	Equal	Unequal, but Free Competition	Unequal, Not Expected To Be Equal, But Can Improve	Unequal And Unjust
23. Regional or global Intergovernmental bodies – your state				
24. International financial institutions – your state				
25. Other bodies (specify) – your state				

Follow up Questions

As described earlier, this tool gives you a quantitative assessment of these power relationships. The group needs to take these numbers and do an in-depth qualitative analysis. Possible question could include:

- *Are there surprises that began to surface as the group went through this analysis?*
- *What are the most significant power relationships that the group needs to take into account?*
- *Why are these identified relationships shaped in the way they are?*
- *How does this analysis impact the work of the group to address the skewed power relationships and the issues it addresses?*
- *Other points that the group needs to take into consideration as it crafts the advocacy strategy.*

Analyzing the Political Space and Its Impact on Your Advocacy Strategy⁵

One of the strategic analyses that advocacy strategy planning teams often use is an assessment of the external environment and how open it is for advocacy work. This assessment is of great importance as it helps advocacy organizations and groups explicitly articulate and assess their political fears (risks) and hopes as a team before taking any serious actions.

An important advocacy dimension that groups should assess in the environment where they are working is the available political space. By political space we mean both the ability to express one's opinion about the prevailing political system and political leadership, and the availability of effective channels to influence the political system. Naturally, some political societies and systems are more open and tolerant to criticism than others. In some countries, for instance, it is acceptable to criticize the prime minister and cabinet ministers, than to criticize the president. In others, it is very sensitive to criticize prevailing ideologies, such as secularism in Turkey, or religious institutions, such as Al-Azhar in Egypt, or the Catholic Church in some Latin American countries. In addition, often it is much tougher to criticize the "Ministry of Defense", or the "intelligence agency" than to criticize many other authorities.

In terms of political space, we can divide countries into three main categories: closed, narrow, and open. The following table provides a brief comparison among the different political space (PS) categories:

⁵ Tadros, Nader; 2006. Advocacy Concepts And Practices Handbook: A Practical Guide to Advocacy Groups. People's Advocacy, Virginia, USA.

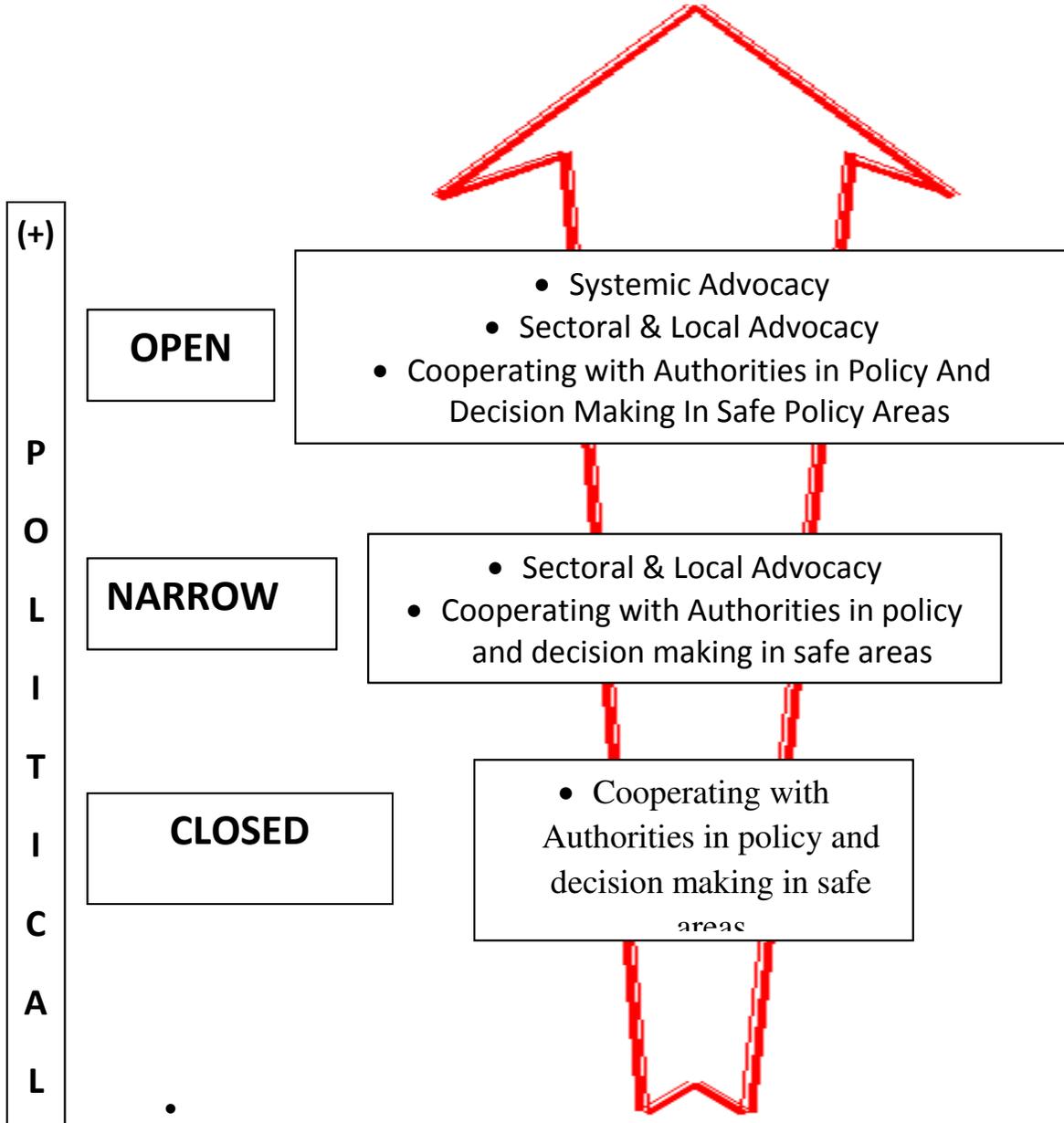
POLITICAL SPACE (PS) ANALYSIS

PS Category	Illustrative Characteristics	Advocacy Objectives	Advocacy Strategies
Closed (e.g. North Korea, Myanmar, Belarus & Syria.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single party rule • Disagreement with the government is punished • Media is controlled by the state • Interaction with foreigners is risky 	Provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the decision-making processes in relatively safe areas that authorities support.	Cooperate with the authorities in making policies and systems, and providing services in areas accepted by authorities, such as getting ready for natural disasters, or organizing a campaign to address a health crisis, e.g. HIV/AIDS.
Narrow (e.g. Egypt, Thailand, and Iran.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-party system • One party prevails • A mix of state-owned and private-owned media • Citizens and media can criticize cabinet ministers and provincial governors • Criticizing heads of state is risky and relatively rare 	Build up ordinary people's self-confidence and ability to effectively participate in the policy making processes in several areas that are relatively safe, and establish the principles of participation, transparency and accountability in the decision-making processes.	Use legitimate different advocacy strategies, including cooperation with, and confronting authorities as much as people are willing to go. Focus will be on sectoral (health, education, housing, etc.) areas, and/or local areas (e.g. provincial and local levels.)
Open (e.g. France, India, and Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-party system • Parties rotate power • Citizens and media can openly criticize the authorities and any official at any level including the head of state. 	Exercise people's rights, especially marginalized and disadvantaged ones, in effectively participating in making and monitoring policies at all levels	Use all known legitimate and peaceful advocacy strategies that both broaden the space for participation of marginalized groups, and enhancing the democratic and just environment.

The examples provided above are based on current available reports. Closed political space does not only exist at national levels. It sometimes exists in very traditional societies within a given country. Women, for instance, are often not allowed to participate in the decision making processes in many societies even if the national political space is narrow or, to go farther, an open one. Some reports came from Iraq that, even though the country is currently in a narrow or even open political space, women in some areas cannot participate in the decision making process at any level in their communities. When dealing with such cases, advocacy work should use the strategies that apply to this specific group. In the case of women in traditional societies, just encouraging women to address commonly accepted areas in which women can cooperate with the current leadership to address could count as an achievement.

Indicated strategies are only illustrative of what advocacy might do. Some groups might still legitimately take some high-risk measures against closed or narrow political space environments if they accept to take such risks.

POLITICAL SPACE



An important part of the advocacy strategy planning should help the organization(s) or groups determine the type of advocacy they need to engage in based on the assessment of the external environment in which they work.

PROBLEM/ISSUE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOLS

Together with assessing the environment in which our advocacy will take place, we need to analyze the problem we are dealing with and the issues associated with it. *Again, we strongly recommend that you do not use a single analytical tool to analyze the problem and issues.*

What to Analyze?

Many factors are important to note and take into consideration in your analysis of the problem and the issues associated with it. These factors include, but not limited to:

- What are the root-causes of the problem
- What is the problem? What are the issues associated with it?
- Who is affected?
- How widely the problem affect people/
- How deeply does it affect people?
- What are the existing (or lacking) positive or negative regulations and policies; application and enforcement mechanisms; and cultural norms and attitudes that influence the status quo?
- How can we adequately and precisely describe the problem?
- Who are the stakeholders that are (or should be) playing a role in the problem?

The following analytical tools help you analyze the problem itself and the issues associated with it.

Problem Tree

Analyzing the Problem, Root-Causes and Consequences

Rottenly, we confuse between the problem, its root causes and its consequences. The problem is expressed in how people see it, whereas the root-causes are what cause this problem to happen, and the cons.

To elaborate on these distinctions, please examine the following cartoon.

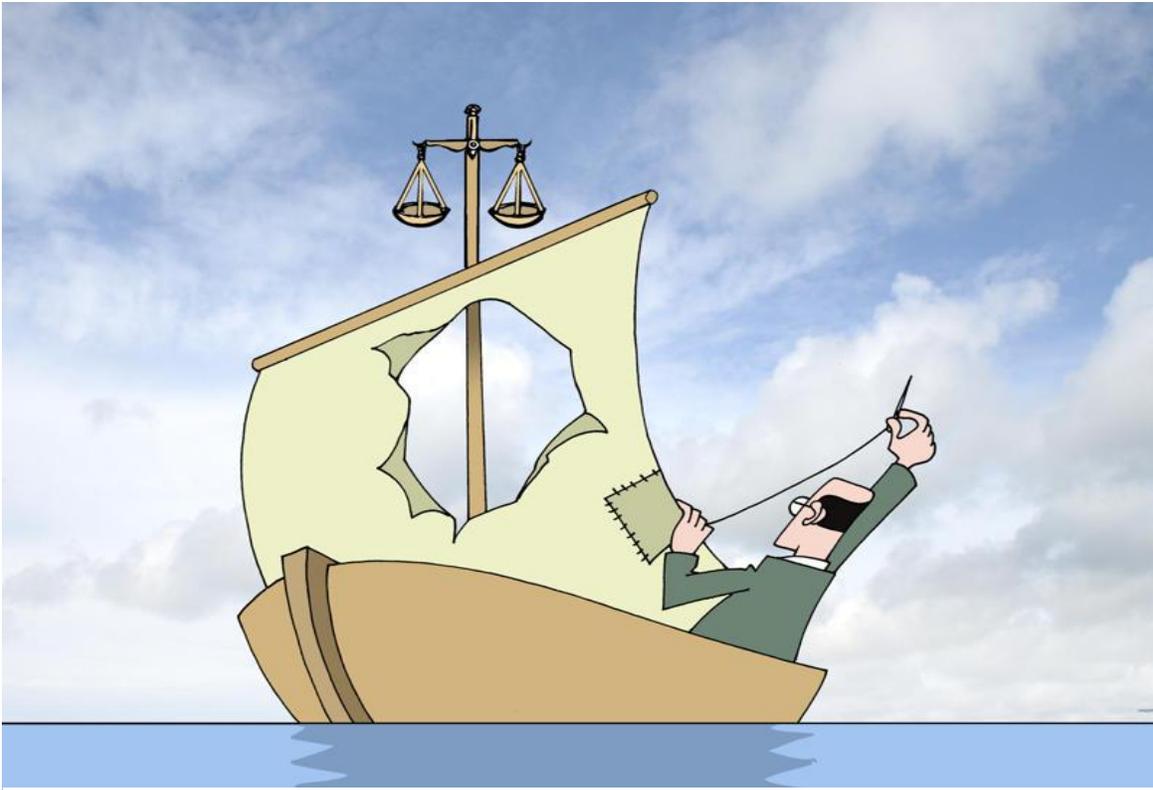


Figure 1: Ignoring the Root Cause Is a Sure Path to Failure!

Cartoon contributed by Transparency Morocco

Like in the cartoon above, quite often we work on a side issue that will not address the root cause of the problem promising the problem to get worse, and we get exhausted.

The **Problem Tree**, which many of you are likely familiar with, is a useful tool that helps us distinguish between these three distinct aspects: the problem, root causes and consequences.

The following diagram of the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Egypt Problem Tree⁶ illustrates how **Problem Trees** can be used to identify the problem, root causes, and consequences.

⁶ Nader Tadros, 1997. A report on FGM Coalition Building in Beni-Suef and Fayoum, Egypt.

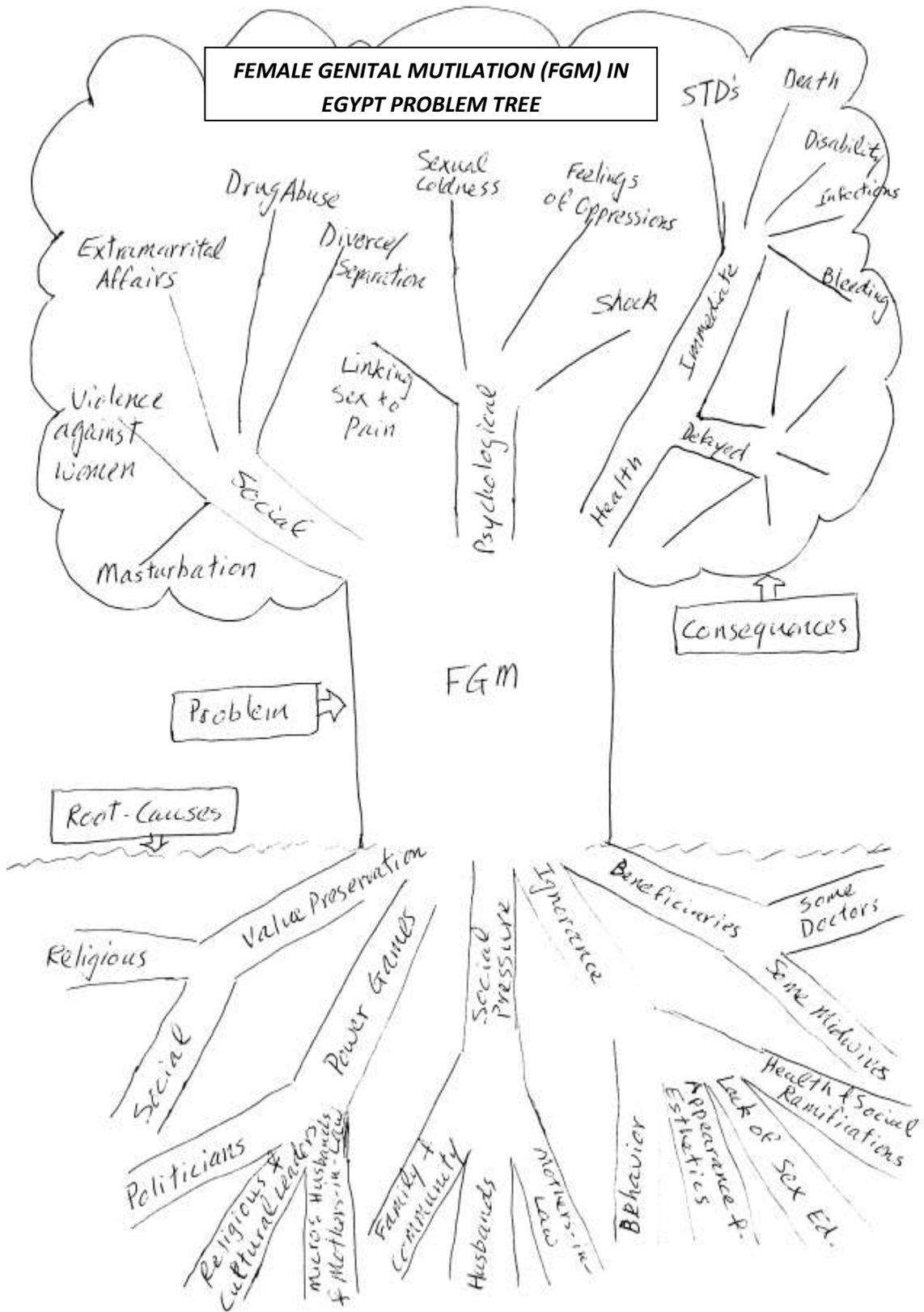


Figure 2:FGM in Egypt Problem Tree. Nader Tadros, 1997.

From Problems to Budget Advocacy Issues

Advocacy organizations and groups are often faced with many problems. Problems are what people see in the first place whereas issues are related to the root causes of the problem. Issues are more related to the root causes of the problem. Identified issues are the beginning of solutions.

For instance, seeing a significant hike in the number of people with cholera cases reported in a community is a problem. Reporting that only four out of ten kids finish 6th grade in a specific province is another problem. With each of these problems there are several issues associated with that problem that can explain why such a problem exists. Identifying these issues is the first step towards solving the problem. Take the example of the increase in cholera cases. Potential issues may include:

- Lack of effective health education programs
- Inadequate personal hygiene habits
- Medical facilities are too distant from rural communities
- Clean potable water is not available
- Recent cuts in the health budget reduced health services including the number of available mobile clinics
- Prevailing poverty prevents people from having water pipes extended to their homes
- Overall hygienic conditions of the rural communities is much below acceptable standards

There are probably more issues associated with the cholera example above, but let us take the above list. Each of the mentioned issues could provide a partial or a full solution to the problem of people dying of cholera. Needless to say, one organization, or even one coalition, is hardly able to tackle all such issues simultaneously. They need to exercise judgment on which issue to start with.

In working on your advocacy efforts, you need to keep the image of the problem alive in your campaign as this is the image that ordinary people see in the first place. If you lose this image and start talking only about the issues, ordinary citizens may perceive your talk as too abstract and, even worse, detached from the problem as they see it in their daily lives. A combination of keeping the problem image alive and talking about doing something about the important issues associated with this problem should help you keep the process going. Continuing with the cholera example, keeping the image of the suffering people will help your efforts to build and involve a bigger constituency for your efforts, and identifying some of the issues will help you provide a clear path for solving this problem.

If one of the key issues you identify has to do with the health budget, you will need to do budget advocacy.

To illustrate the distinction between *problems* and *issues*, please examine the following cartoon and write a problem statement, and issues associated with the problem.



Figure 3: Problem & Associated Issues.

Technical Idea: Iman Mandour & Nader Tadros; Artistic Idea: Golo

The Problem Statement

The basement is flooded with water.

Possible Associated Issues

- Quality of education issue: those men are not well trained on critical thinking and on addressing root causes.
- Being busy with treating the symptoms issue: as we do in many of our organizations and programs, we often address the symptoms of a problem rather than its root causes.
- Waste of precious resources issue: Water, which is likely a dear resource, is wasted.
- A construction code issue: Installing a water connection to a building with the lack of or inadequate sewage system.

- Unenforced construction code issue: Maybe there is a good construction code that was not enforced.
- Shifting the problem issue: Those men are dumping the water on other neighbors.
- Other issues

Developing Criteria for Selecting Your Issue

Remember that you are doing this exercise after considering the overall environment you are working on and initially assessing the risks and the opportunities in that environment.

Brainstorming all possible issues associated with a problem could be an overwhelming exercise. The question for us is how to select the issues that you will be working on. To do that you will first need to work with your colleagues to develop a set of issue selection criteria. Usually these criteria appear in the following two categories. Please remember that these criteria are

Problem-Related Criteria	Organization/Coalition-Related Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will addressing this issue solve, or contribute in a significant way to solving, the problem? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this issue fit within the organization/coalition mission?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we build a constituency around this issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization/Coalition have the expertise to tackle this issue?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will addressing this issue help in addressing other problems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If needed, does the organization/coalition have the needed geographical outreach?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we actually do something about this issue at the present time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your organization/coalition have needed financial and non-financial resources to tackle this issue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will addressing this issue help ordinary citizens realize their power, and encourage them to tackle tougher problems? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you build a consensus around this issue in your organization/coalition?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will addressing this issue be <i>widely</i> felt? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the organization considered the risk that could be associated with this problem?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will addressing this issue be <i>deeply</i> felt? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a natural and organic link to the <i>budget</i>? 	

Following is another example of a tool adapted from the Mid West Academy that some groups have used to select the issues to tackle.

CHECKLIST FOR CHOOSING A PROBLEM AND ISSUE⁷

A good choice is one that matches most of these criteria. Use this checklist to compare issues or develop your own criteria. A “yes” answer scores “1”. A “no” answer scores “0”. Problems/issues with higher scores have the potential for multiple positive results. (Adapted from Midwest Academy)

Problem/Issue A	Problem/Issue B	Problem/Issue C	Will resolving the problem/ issue?
			1. Result in a real improvement in people’s lives?
			2. Give people a sense of their own power?
			3. Build strong lasting organizations and alter the relations of power?
			4. Raise awareness about power relations and democratic rights?
			5. Be winnable?
			6. Be widely felt?
			7. Be deeply felt?
			8. Be easy to communicate and understand?
			9. Provide opportunities for people to learn about and be involved in policies?
			10. Have clear advocacy targets?
			11. Have a clear time frame?
			12. Be non-divisive among your potential constituency?
			13. Build accountable leadership?
			14. Be consistent with your values and vision?
			15. Provide potential for raising funds?
			16. Link local issues to global issues and macro policy context?

⁷ Adapted from the Mid West Academy. <http://www.midwestacademy.com/>

Exercise

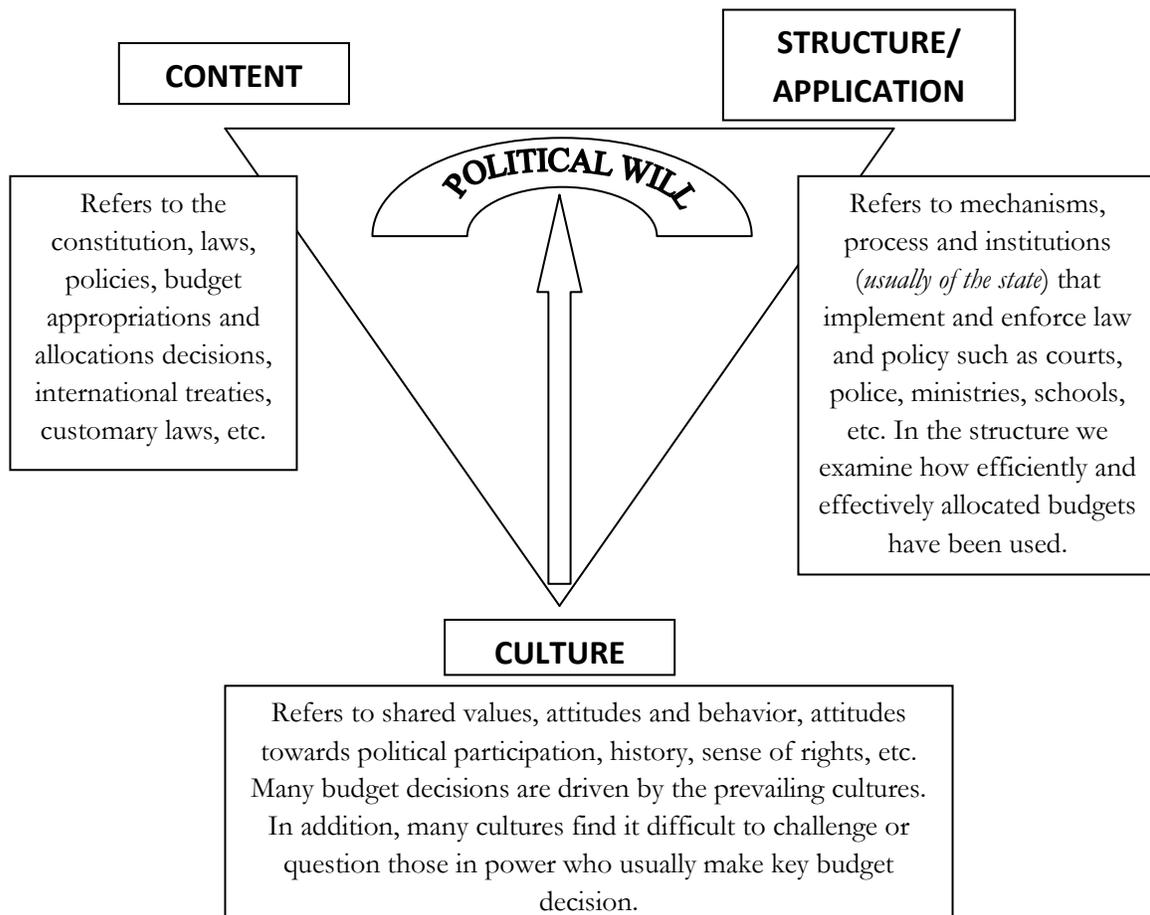
In your circle of advocacy colleagues, perform the following tasks:

- *Brainstorm the problems/issues you would like to tackle.*
- *Make a short list (3 to 4 problems/issues only) of the ones you think you can tackle.*
- *Answer the questions you have in the above Checklist For Choosing A Problem And Issue.*
- *Does the outcome appeal to your team? Do you feel comfortable tackling the winning issue? If not, eliminate this issue from the brainstormed list and run the same steps again until you reach an issue that you are comfortable addressing.*

Triangular Analysis: An Advocacy Strategic Analysis Tool⁸

The Triangular Analysis is a tool that Margaret Schuler (1986) developed to help people working in advocacy in performing a strategic analysis of the issues they are working on (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). We consider the Triangle Analysis one of the most important strategic analysis tools to use throughout our advocacy campaigns.

The Triangle Analysis looks at three different aspects of the issue we are advocating for: *content, structure, and culture*.



Budgets do not exist in a vacuum. They are influenced by the dynamics between several factors. In the Triangle Analysis, we look at the budget process from three angles:

⁸ Adapted from “Advocacy: People’s Power and Participation” by Nader Tadros, PEOPLE’S ADVOCACY, 2010; Virginia, USA. All rights reserved.

Content – Regulations

When your community or group is challenged with a problem, you first need to examine the regulations (or what is referred to here as *Content*) around this problem/issue. This content may include existing laws, policies, decisions, court sentences, international law, constitution, etc. Budget laws and allocation decisions come under this angle.

Careful study of all of these elements is wise before making a hasty judgment on them. Sometimes you will find contradictions between two or more of these elements. In addition, many laws, or decisions that exist actually address the issue, but they may have serious loopholes through which the law becomes ineffective or favoring the powerful over the powerless. A close examination of the budget law might reveal that the budget scheme might be favoring a small influential minority, or do not reflect what politicians have promised the people. Question if you can live with these loopholes or exceptions, or whether they are unjustly used against the poor and disadvantaged, or not. Sometimes, the law or decision is so much out of context, or so unrealistically tough that it is almost impossible to apply. Studying this part of the triangle will likely give you one of three choices for your strategy:

- The content is adequate and you ought to make sure that it is not touched in your campaign. You will also need to examine the other two angles as described below.
- The content is serious flawed and you need to have it overhauled or amended.
- The content is good in general, but has one or two serious elements that are critically necessary to address the problem/issue. Your efforts should include something about introducing this new content without affecting the other good parts of the existing law.

A word of warning should be mentioned here. There is almost an instinctive, yet faulty, assumption that the content analysis is exclusively done by lawyers, and budget analysis is done by economists. This assumption is faulty because it undermines lay people's ability to analyze and criticize legislative, legal, and budget processes and documents that affect their livelihood. In real life, we are always almost surprised at the ability of the ordinary citizens to analyze such processes and documents with fresh and important perspectives especially when their lives are directly affected by these laws and legislations. Some of the consequences that might happen if we go with the assumption that it is exclusively a lawyers' and economists' job include the following:

- Further excluding people from participating in the process, and consequently, diminishing their power further;
- Emphasizing the image that disadvantaged and marginalized people cannot understand and criticize legal, and legislative, and budget processes;
- Continuing the same old message that the legislators, economists, and lawyers do not need to involve citizens in the legislative, and budget making matters; and

- Depriving the process from valuable insights that those people can bring to the advocacy and empowering process.

Structure/Application

We can always think of content (laws, decision, or policies) that was never applied, or has been idle for so many years. A simple example could be the parents who made a rule that the children can only watch one hour of television a day. Whether this rule (content) is applied or not is another thing. In addition, laws, decisions, or policies – including budget ones – may not be applied for many reasons. For instance, effective application of these laws (etc.) needs trained personnel or funds that are not available; or maybe those who are responsible for applying the law are not really interested in doing so, and no one holds them accountable. You need to examine if the laws (etc.) are not applied, and the reason(s) why they are not.

Political Will

Political will is needed both to create or amend a good content, as well as to implement this content. Obviously, much of the political is created by pressure from elites and powerholders. The *Advocacy for People’s Power* model seeks to have ordinary citizens create the pressure for the needed political will at the expense of the pressure created by elites and power holders.

As noted in the Selective Political Will case study, political will existed to amend the legislation, but not to really apply the new legislation. Surprisingly there was common agreement that these laws are *not for actual application*.

Selective Political Will

A Case of a Country Applying to Join the European Union

In one of the European countries seeking to join the European Union, an expatriate advocacy consultant noticed that, in discussing the existing legal framework to address specific issues, community members would sometimes use phrases like “This is an EU legislation, and we should not pay much attention to it!” in a dismissive manner. At that time, extensive efforts to join the European Union were underway in this country with much support from the public. When said more than once by different community groups, the consultant asked for further elaboration on what such phrases actually meant. To the consultant’s surprise, he learnt that such legislations were required by the EU as prerequisites to accept the country’s application to join the EU. Apparently, communities – and possibly the government – understood that these legislations are not for application but rather for getting the EU to accept their application. The consultant inferred that there was political will to change the content (laws), but not necessarily to apply this content (laws). Almost everyone was in a tacit agreement about that.

Culture

This is a critical piece of the analysis that is often forgotten or undermined. The culture is where most of the people are. You are actually affecting the public opinion and perspectives when you deal with the culture. This is why the Culture dimension adds much depth to the advocacy process rather than only limiting the changes to the content and structure. In fact, working on the cultural part, where you are dealing with the beliefs and traditions of people is often harder than changing laws and policies, but definitely more lasting. This is why governments and power holders pay much attention to the socialization process that takes place through regular education and the media.

Taking the Bigger Challenge of Going Beyond Legislation

India's Growing Dowry and Dowry Abuse in India Even with a Half Century of Rigorous Anti-Dowry Legislation

India passed a series of rigorous anti-dowry and dowry abuse legislations almost since 1961. Even with such rigorous legislations, the practice of dowry¹ and dowry abuse has been on the increase as reported by many groups in India (http://www.indianchild.com/dowry_in_india.htm, Retrieved April 09, 2010). Some research indicated that it is at 80% among Indian marriages. Clearly the problem is mainly a cultural, and not a legislative one. Although legislations is important and necessary, but the main advocacy work should address the culture in such a problem!

In examining the *culture* angle, you will need to answer difficult questions such as, “*What is in the culture that helps perpetuate the problem?*” “*What belief systems support the status quo?*” “*Where in the culture can we find support for the change we need to achieve?*” “*In a traditional society, how much can ordinary citizens question the decisions of those in power, including their budget decisions?*” Examining these questions should help us link this analysis to the Invisible Power discussed in the Third Chapter.



Figure 4: Examine the Content, Structure & Culture in This Cartoon!
Technical Idea: Iman Mandour & Nader Tadros; Artistic Idea: Golo.

The Triangle Analysis is very useful for our advocacy work for many reasons including:

- It helps us sharpen our advocacy strategy to identify where you need to work most. For instance, if we have good content (policies and laws), we do not need to spend our efforts calling for having a law that already exists but is seldom applied. We would rather spend our efforts in advocating for the authorities to apply this good content. Using the same logic, the more the issue is organically related to prevailing beliefs, the more our advocacy interventions will be directed towards public opinion leaders more than legislatures (content) and executives (structure).
- It shows us that advocacy is not always done towards the official decision-makers. Very often the thrust of your advocacy work will be directed at some strong public opinion leaders or cultural leaders who can change people's attitudes towards your issues.
- It reminds us of the importance of involving the people (culture) in your advocacy work to ensure an effective application of legislations and policies.
- It broadens our horizons by liberating us from thinking of advocacy as only addressing the official decision makers, or public executives.

Exercise

In your circle of advocacy colleagues, do the following:

- *Take the issue you have identified in the previous exercise and apply the Triangular Analysis to it.*

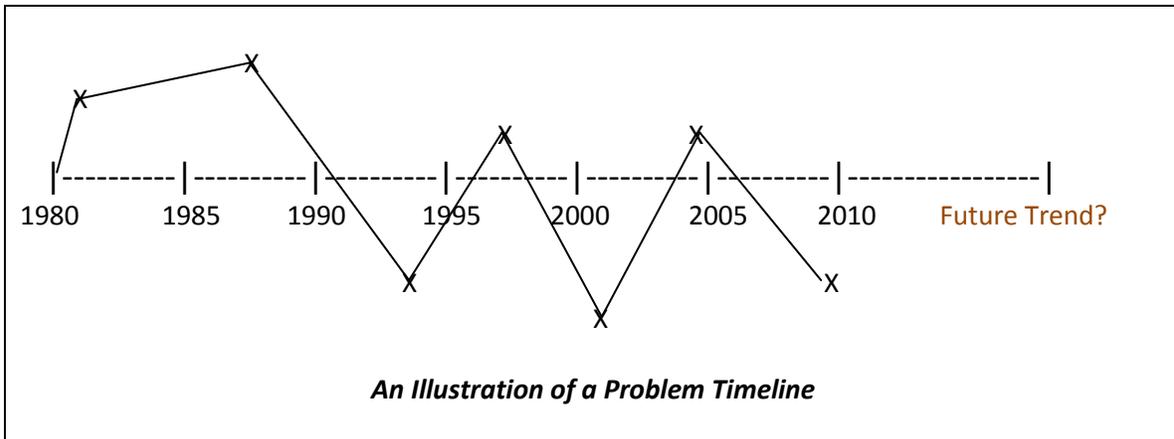
- *No one angle should all be either negative or positive. Think of both good and bad points in each angle, and mark them as (+) or (-). If applicable, identify the pros and cons with individual points and mark each of them as (+) or (-).*

- *Do this exercise in two rounds: the first should not include any solutions to the problem, but rather a snapshot of the current situation; and the second round includes possible interventions you would like to do with each of the angles.*

- *Some of the points that the team might mention cannot fit nicely in one of the angles. In this case, just take note of them as you will use them in other analytical tools.*

Naming the Moment – Drawing a Problem Timeline

Drawing **Timelines**, which is sometimes referred to as **Naming the Moments**⁹, is a useful tool to understand the history of a problem or issue and see where the trend might lead you to. In the **Timelines** tool, you draw an actual timeline usually covering the past 20 to 30 years. On this timeline, you identify the different times where you saw a change – positive or negative – happening to your problem/issue. With these points located on the timeline, you try to analyze what cause these changes to happen? And what you can do to repeat (or avoid if negative) this change? In addition, reading the timeline might help you identify the trend and how to best to deal with this anticipated trend in the future. For your budget advocacy work, the **timeline** could help you align budget changes to the development of the problem/issue you are working on.



Follow are the steps in creating such a time line:

1. Pick a base year for your analysis. Usually the base year would fall between 15 to 30 years, but this time range can vary from one case to the other. It is preferable to pick a base year that has no significant changes to be able to describe the situation before some significant events.
2. Brainstorm the changes that have affected the status quo of the issue you are working on that took place from the base year until the current year. .
3. Identify 5-7 significant turning points from the ones you generated Put the positive changes (the ones that gave boost to your issue) above the timeline, and the negative ones below the line.
4. Analyze each of these turning points by answering questions such as the following:
 - a. Why do you consider these incidents “turning points”?

⁹ Adapted from Barndt, Deborah, 1989, in VeneKlasen, Lisa and Miller, Valerie, 2002. A New Weave of Power, People & Politics: The Action Guide for Advocacy and Citizen Participation. World Neighbors, Oklahoma City, OK, USA.

- b. What are the factors that made them boosts or setbacks?
 - c. Reading the history, can you predict the trend where the problem and the situation with your issue are heading towards?
 - d. Reading the history over the past 15 to 30 years, how can you replicate the boosts, and avoid the setbacks?
5. If needed, replicate the above procedure over the last one or two years to get a closer look at the current dynamics.