# PROBLEM/ISSUE STRATEGIC ANALYSIS TOOLS[1]

NAMING THE MOMENT – DRAWING A PROBLEM TIMELINE

Drawing **Timelines**, which is sometimes referred to as **Naming the Moments[2]**, 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.

An Illustration of a Problem Timeline
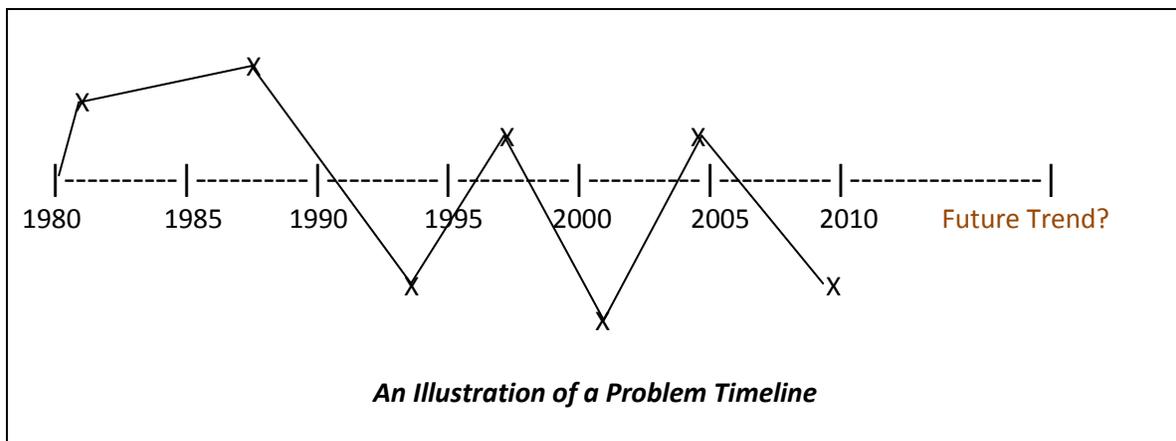
Follow are the steps in creating such a time line:

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. .

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[1] Excerpts from Nader Tadros, Advocacy: People's Power & Participation. People's Advocacy – All Right Reserved – 2010 ©.

[2] 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.

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"?
   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.