

TOOLKIT

# STEPS FOR AN ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
FOR SPINA BIFIDA  
AND HYDROCEPHALUS

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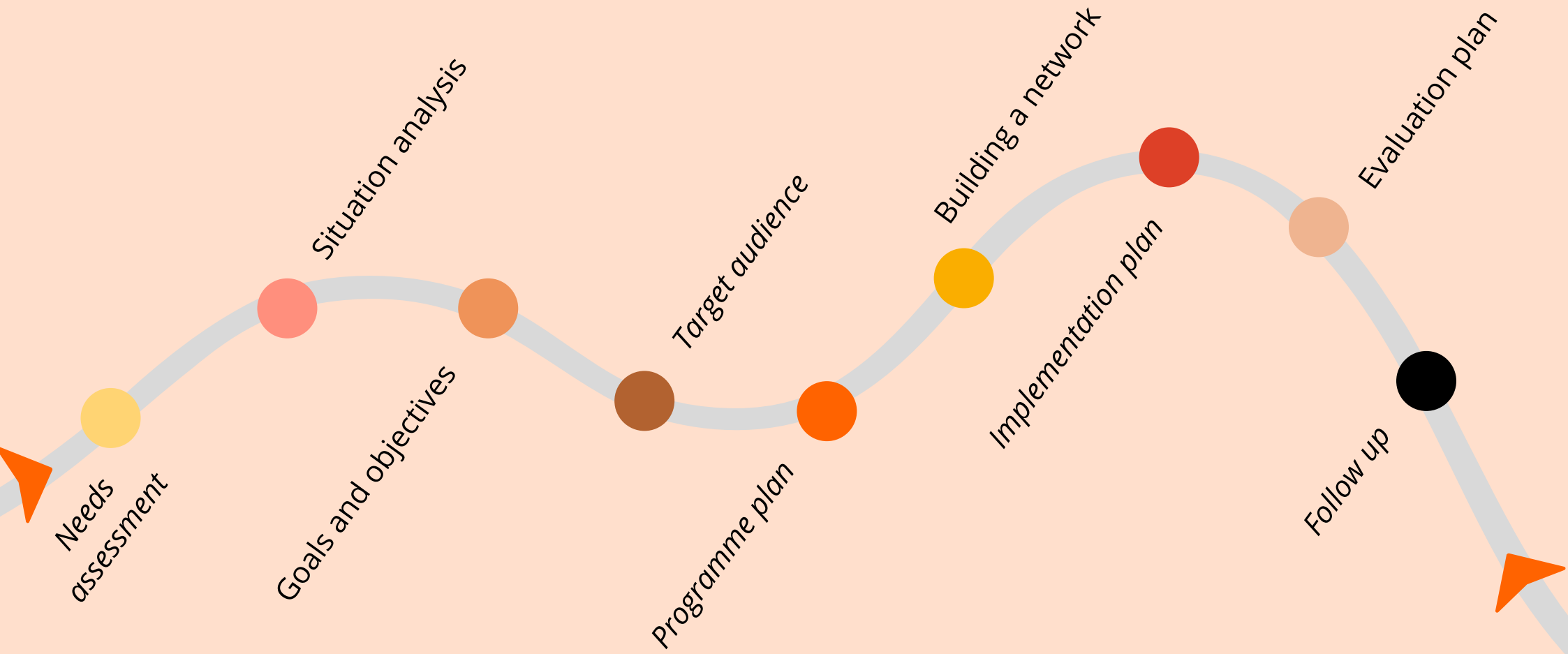
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# Advocacy is...



# Introduction



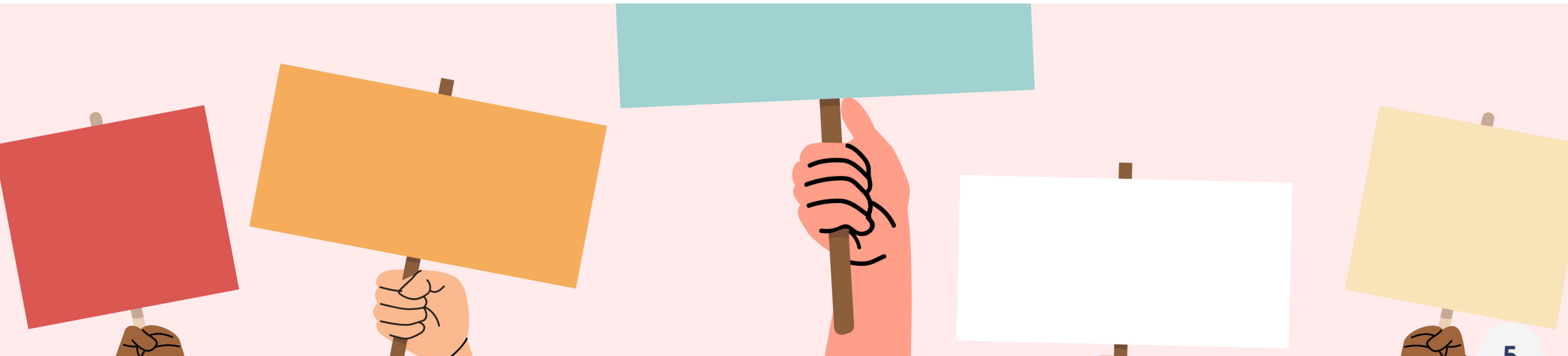
**This guideline addresses the creation, implementation, and evaluation of advocacy campaigns.**

Advocacy is where person or a group of persons and organisations seek to increase awareness and support among the general public, stakeholders and in particular policy makers to get them to support and implement reforms. This can include changes in policies and/or laws on the local, national, regional, or international level.

An advocacy campaign is a specifically designed one which is implemented within a designated time frame and with specific objectives in mind, to make visible the advocacy on a high priority issue. Whether you are an experienced advocate or not this guide will help you to break down the various processes that go into creating, implementing, and

evaluating an advocacy campaign to further your associations advocacy goals.

In this toolkit you will find a 9 step guide to designing and implementing an advocacy campaign.



# 1. Finding a focus through a needs assessment

The first step in creating an advocacy campaign is to find a strong focus which is derived from the needs and priorities of the community. This gives your association a strong foundation of knowledge, support from the community, and well-defined priorities which will enable the creation and implementation of a successful advocacy campaign.

This means identifying where the 'gaps' are.

A **'gap'** is the situation as it is now and the situation as to how you wish it were.

An **example** would be if persons with SBH struggle to access affordable catheters.

The situation is that affordable catheters are not available for persons with SBH and what you wish were the situation is for affordable catheters to be easily available to all persons with SBH.

Ask yourself, what are the main priorities or concerns of your community or group? Why and how is it happening and what has been done before.

A needs assessment is a systematic process for determining and assessing needs. For an advocacy campaign a needs assessment can be broken down to five elements:

- 1 Understand the needs of the community**
- 2 Researching past and current actions on the issue and clarifying the policy position of the SBH association**
- 3 Define the issue and its context**
- 4 Assess the capacity of the association**

How extensive your needs assessment is depends on the size and ambition of your advocacy campaign.

# 1.1. Understanding the needs of your community

**Understanding the needs of the community is the first and foremost important step for an association to take when designing an advocacy campaign.**

Consider, what is the gap between the community's current reality and what you would like the future to be? What would you like to change and where/among whom?

You can start this process by considering the following questions:

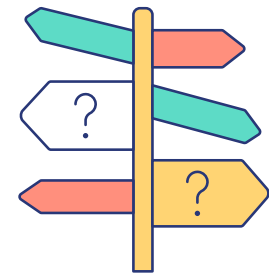
**What is the problem?**

**Who is experiencing this problem?**

**How common is this problem in your community?**

**What are the demographic characteristics of the people experiencing this problem?**

By conducting a needs assessment with the association's SBH community, the association gets a clear understanding of what the highest priorities are, and which issues are to be selected for a targeted advocacy campaign.



You may already have a good understanding of the key issues and priorities through the association's prior work and conversations with members. However, if further assessments are required you may want to consider surveys or meetings. This can be especially helpful if your association wants to create an advocacy campaign for a specific demographic, such as youth with SBH, as their priorities may differ from the other members of the association.

## 1.2. Researching past and current actions on the issue and clarify the policy position of the SBH association

**Clarifying the policy position of the SBH association ensures that the association has a common understanding of what the acceptable and unacceptable solutions to the issue are.**

The benefits of **creating clear policy positions** are:

- They ensure consistency in communications within and beyond your organisation
- They ensure that everyone in the community feels included and that stigmatising positions or terminologies are avoided
- They ensure and demonstrate to other people and organisations that the campaign is aware and responsive to related debates and controversies on your chosen topic.

Sometimes the association's position might be technical in nature.

### *Example*

The association does not accept the use of folic acid supplements as an adequate prevention initiative as the evidence demonstrates that fortification of staple foods with folic acid is more effective.

In other cases, the association might have to define a position which is responsive to issues such as controversies, historic discriminations and inequities, just to name a few.

### *Example*

That primary prevention of Neural Tube Defects including Spina Bifida is not a substitute for creating accessible and inclusive societies.



To clarify the policy position, the needs assessment of the community is combined with the definition of the issue and complemented with further research on the topic.

During this stage it is important to do research including sources which contradict the views of the SBH association. This research is to help the association to define the issue and understand the different viewpoints which the association might encounter when implementing the advocacy campaign. This is different from gathering resources to use in the campaign.

This research may include:

- Scientific literature
- Studies and reports published by national agencies, authorities or international organisations
- Past or current policies relevant to your chosen topic
- Legal analysis, including regulations, laws, EU legislation or international law relevant to your chosen topic
- Discussions in the media
- Publications and statements made by other relevant actors for example other organisations active on disability rights or health, companies, policy makers or other political actors and activists

Which materials the association focuses on depends on the issue. For example, if the association wants to start an advocacy campaign on making a certain medical procedure, service, or device available in their country, then scientific literature which explores the effectiveness of the procedure, service or device can be very helpful.

However, if the intended advocacy campaign is focused on policy areas where there are existing laws and policies, for example reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in employment, then familiarising yourself with what has been done already enables your association to fine tune how you wish to approach the issue. Using the previous example of employment, if the research would reveal that the current legal protections for employees with disabilities is inadequate, this might point the association into the direction of advocating for a legal change. However, if there is adequate legislation but that in practicality the law is not being implemented well, enforced the association might rather want to consider an advocacy campaign which focuses on improving the implementation of the current legislation.

## 1.3. Defining the issue

Once the needs of the community are understood, the next step is to define the issue which the community has chosen to address.

Focus on these three elements:



### On the situation in Africa:

*“Despite decades-old evidence that dietary supplementation with folic acid (FA) significantly decreases cases of NTDs and spina bifida, in particular, many African countries have not made fortification of basic foods with Folic Acid mandatory. Among children born with NTDs, mortality is over 75% before 5th birthday. Apart from the loss of life, the survivors are mostly left with permanent disability and high cost of medical care.”*



**Joline Owinga**

National Coordinator at  
Spina Bifida and  
Hydrocephalus Association  
Kenya (SHAK)

### Needs assessments and definitions

Defining an issue can be a very simple task with certain issues, especially where there is only one main ‘cause’ (e.g., reducing the rate of NTDs through food fortification with folic acid). Other issues, for example, equal access to employment, can be harder to define because there are various causes, multiple different factors which either enable or prevent persons with SBH from having equal access to employment. In those cases, your association's assessment may need to be more extensive, and it should address which specific causes are the most important for your members to address. In addition, it is important to make sure that words and definitions used are inclusive and that members agree on the words and terminology used to describe the issue, its causes and consequences.

## 1.4. Assess the capacity of the association

**When assessing the capacity of the association, consider what your association's strengths and weaknesses are.**

### Strengths might include

- ➔ Good connections with relevant stakeholders
- ➔ Dedicate team of staff and/or volunteers
- ➔ Good relations with the community
- ➔ Expert knowledge

### Weaknesses might include

- ➔ Difficulties in accessing resources such as funding
- ➔ Limited time capacity of volunteers
- ➔ Barriers in accessing key audiences such as policy makers

A good and realistic understanding of the association's strengths and weaknesses enables the creation of an advocacy campaign which reflects those abilities and is therefore more likely to succeed.

### A long term-strategy vs an advocacy campaign

A thorough needs assessment is also used for the creation of a long-term strategy. A long-term strategy is created to define and announce an organisation's strategic goals for a certain amount of time. How extensive your needs assessment should be depends on what you intend to use it for. The difference between a long-term strategy and an advocacy campaign is time: a long-term strategy has several different key focuses/strategic goals and intended to be implemented over a period of years. This requires a more extensive needs assessment. An advocacy campaign has one key focus, is designed to be implemented over a shorter period of time, and is more specific in its expected activities and outputs. An advocacy campaign is an excellent activity to include in a long-term strategy as a tool to achieve a strategic goal.

## 2. Situational analysis

A situational analysis is where you assess the opportunities for advocacy and barriers to success. This information will help you to plan ahead for likely challenges, to take full advantage of strengths and opportunities and plan the implementation of the advocacy campaign accordingly.

### *Example*

#### **Strengths:**

What are the strengths of your association?

#### **Weaknesses:**

What could make it harder for your association to achieve its advocacy objectives?

#### **Opportunities:**

What is happening in your community which you could take advantage of for your advocacy campaign?  
Opportunities might mean upcoming elections, during election campaigns policy makers are often easier to reach and they can be used to draw attention to your demands for policy changes.  
Opportunities for new funding, a change in political leadership on the national or local level to policy makers who are more likely to be open to your message?

#### **Threats:**

What external threats or barriers to your advocacy campaign could there be?  
These may include a change in political leadership to policy makers who are less likely to support your campaign.  
It could be that there are other competing priorities in your community, making it difficult to get attention by the public and the media and be prioritised for action by authorities.  
Are there any actors who might actively oppose your campaign and advocate against you?



## Lyall Thurston

Former National President  
New Zealand  
CCS Disability Action,  
Advocate and lobbyist for  
folic acid fortification

### Speaking about the successful advocacy campaign for mandatory fortification of folic acid in New Zealand:

*"Along the way we have had considerable advocacy challenges, it hasn't all been easy I can assure you - but never lose sight of the prize!"*

*Overall, we had widespread pro bono support and commitment from numerous individuals including epidemiologists, researchers, paediatricians, paediatric surgeons, geneticists, communication experts, politicians, and NGOs from both within New Zealand and overseas.*

*In terms of opposition to what we were proposing, our major opposition came from the millers and bakers of New Zealand, New Zealand Food and Grocery Council and the New Zealand baking industry generally. I could speak for a long time on the reasons why they chose to oppose mandatory fortification.*

*The millers and bakers had over many years been our staunchest opposition to what we were proposing, they continually said to the government, tell us (legislate) to fortify don't ask us to! Essentially, they felt that there was government interference in their industry and if they didn't hold the line on mandatory fortification there would be all sorts of other interference and mandatory regulations coming to them from government."*

### 3. Setting goals and objectives

Your goal is your main aim, your vision of the future when all your objectives have been attained. The goal is the big picture and it may take several advocacy campaigns, and several objectives to attain it. Your goal may also be a part of the organisation's long-term strategy.

Your objectives are the milestones which you and your association want to achieve in order to realise your goal.

When creating your objectives keep the following factors in mind:

- **Specific**  
(Be specific in what your desirable action is)
- **Measurable**  
(How are you going to evaluate your progress?)
- **Achievable**  
(Compare it with the needs assessment, does the association have the required capacity to achieve the objectives?)
- **Relevant**  
(Compare it with needs assessment, is the campaign relevant and on a high priority topic for the local SBH community?)
- **Time-bound**  
(State when you plan to implement the objectives)

#### *Example*

##### **Goal**

For your national government to implement mandatory fortification of staple foods with folic acid

##### **Objective**

Meet with the minister of health within the year to discuss the primary prevention of Neural Tube Defects such as Spina Bifida through fortification with folic acid.

In order to achieve a long-term goal it is important to keep up the momentum. This might require several advocacy campaigns. But consistent and persistent advocacy can have a big impact. Don't be afraid to be ambitious!

# Policy positions vs goals and objectives

## What is the difference between a policy position and goals and objectives?

A policy position can overlap with a **goal** or an **objective**.

For example advocating for mandatory fortification of staple foods with folic acid is both a policy position and a goal.

However, while a goal is the association's vision of a future and objectives the milestones to take to realise that future, a policy position encompasses both the association's visions and the options which the association deem to be unacceptable solutions.

For example, it might be both a policy position and a goal to ensure that every child with Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus has access to quality education. But it might be the association's policy position that segregated schooling for children with disabilities is not an acceptable solution to achieve that goal.

Policy positions of associations are not only relevant to individual advocacy campaigns. They are a declaration to the world on what the association stands for. Make sure that the goals and objectives created for each advocacy campaign align with the policy positions of the association.



**IF SBH** INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS

**IF Statement A call for a global action to reduce the prevalence of Neural Tube Defects worldwide**

**Introduction**  
The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF) is calling for urgent action demanding universal mandatory food fortification with vitamin B9 (folic acid) to reduce the risk of Spina Bifida, Anencephaly, or Encephalocele, also called Neural Tube Defects (NTDs). Decades of evidence have demonstrated that mandatory fortification of staple foods with Vitamin B9 is the most effective and cost-efficient method to reduce the prevalence of NTDs. While promotion of voluntary dietary changes has been shown to be ineffective, mandatory fortification of food staples with vitamin B9 has repeatedly been proven to be highly effective in reducing NTDs. Countries that have introduced mandatory fortification of vitamin B9 in staple foods have seen a drastic reduction in the rates of Spina Bifida and other NTDs <sup>(1)</sup>.

Vitamin B9 is a micronutrient. Micronutrients are vitamins and minerals available in different kinds of foods. Maternal intake of vitamin B9 before and during pregnancy reduces the risks of NTDs because vitamin B9 <sup>(2)</sup> is essential for a healthy periconceptional period, being the 14 weeks before and 10 weeks after conception.

This statement outlines (1) what NTDs are, (2) how NTDs are affected by the social determinants of health, (3) what food fortification is and how it reduces the prevalence of NTDs, (4) the economic benefits of food fortification, (5) the stakeholders that need to be involved to make mandatory fortification of staple foods with folic acid a global reality, (6) the primary prevention of NTDs in the context of disability rights, (7) the need for an effective rights-based approach for the primary prevention of Spina Bifida and other NTDs, (8) IF's recommendations on achieving a global reduction in the prevalence of NTDs through food fortification.

**Neural Tube Defects**  
Neural Tube Defects (NTDs) include Anencephaly, Iniencephaly, Encephalocele, Spina Bifida and their combinations, and secondary consequences. NTDs are birth defects affecting the brain and the spinal cord early in the pregnancy, often before the pregnancy is detected. They occur when the neural tube fails to close resulting in malformations of varying severity<sup>(3)</sup>. It is estimated that a minimum of 20 per 10,000 births are affected by NTDs worldwide. However, the prevalence of NTD-affected pregnancies is likely to be much higher since these numbers are based on live births and do not take into account miscarriages or termination of the pregnancy <sup>(4)</sup>. Spina Bifida is a result of the neural tube not closing correctly, resulting in damage to the spinal cord and nerves. The effects of this damage depend on the size and location of the opening in



## 4. Identify your target audience

**Your target audience are the people you want to reach with your advocacy campaign. Think about who has the power to achieve your goal.**

**Your target audience will depend on the nature of your goal and the objectives which you have set to achieve the goal.**

You may want to target potential decision makers if your objective is a specific policy or legal change.

Your target audience may not always be policy makers themselves. Sometimes in order to reach a wider goal one of the objectives might include building strong support networks with actors with similar interests as yours.

These can include:

- Government ministers
- Members of national or local legislatures (such as parliaments or city councils)
- Political parties
- Local or regional administrations
- Civil servants
- National representatives to international organisations such as permanent representations to the European Union, or national missions to the World Health Organization or the United Nations.

These may include:

- Civil society organisations
- Representative organisations of persons with disabilities
- Other patient organisations with similar interests
- Clinicians and the medical community
- Businesses
- Relevant professions and their organisations such as social care professionals, teachers or public health educators



Other target audiences may be individuals, organisations and other stakeholders who might be directly affected by your objectives or goal.

Those might be:

- Children and adults with SBH
- Women
- Maternal healthcare professionals
- Clinicians
- Millers
- Businesses and corporations

Not all target audiences are as important as others. Highly influential policy makers are of high priority.

Prioritise the most important target audiences and adjust your activities and contact with them accordingly.



In addition, your approach will differ depending on the specific nature of your audience. For example, you can use very technical language when communicating with the medical community, or even when interacting with an audience, such as policy makers or other civil society organisations which have been involved in your chosen topic before. In contrast, if your target audience are women of reproductive age, you may choose to have less technical and medical language.

Ask yourself:

? Has this person/organisation been involved in the topic that I am advocating on before?

? What is their background? For an individual look at their education, prior work experiences and actions taken in their current role. For organisations or businesses look at what their activities have been in the past five years.

? Does this person/organisation have active interests which contradict my objectives and goal which might make them likely to actively oppose them?



Based on this information create **concrete objectives for which target audiences you want to reach** and what you want these audiences to do once you reach them. For example, is there an organisation which you would like to collaborate with and join your advocacy campaign?

Do you want them to share your messages on social media or write a joint letter or request to a policy maker?

Do you want the policy maker or official to initiate or support a policy change?

**On the activities undertaken by APEBI in strategic alliances with actors in the private sector:**

*"We began advising legislators on specific laws for food fortification and free supply of folic acid and of course diffusion in mass communication. Advertising in the Annual Inclusive APEBI Marathon, publishing a magazine (with sponsorship from the private sector) and distribution of graphic material as a part of strategy alliances with the private sector."*



**Elena Záppoli**

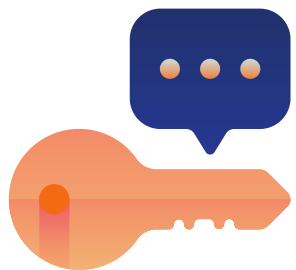
Chair of Latin American network RELAEBHI and former president of Asociación para Espina Bífida e Hidrocefalia (APEBI)

## 5. Programme plan

**A program plan consists of different components. This is where you and your association develop how you want your campaign to look like. One of these components can include key messages.**

**Key messages shape how your target audience perceives you and your argument. The association, or together with partners if the advocacy campaign is a collaborative effort, should think of key messages. These messages need to address and further the objectives and goals which you have set earlier.**

As a member of IF you regularly receive resources such as toolkits which include key messages. Using these resources helps to bring global attention to your association and the campaign which IF conducts with its member associations. Aligning key messages with international campaigns such as those that IF organises gives strength to your argument by demonstrating that there is a wider global community with the same demands.



However, depending on your objectives, goals and target audience you may also want to create your own key messages.



## For your key messages keep these things in mind:

- Clear, convincing, brief, consistent
- Easy to understand and straight
- Repeated and reinforced by different people and associations
- Crafted to your audiences rather than just simply communicating what you want to say

You should also consider creating different key messages for different target audiences if you have more than one target audience.



### *Example of key messages*

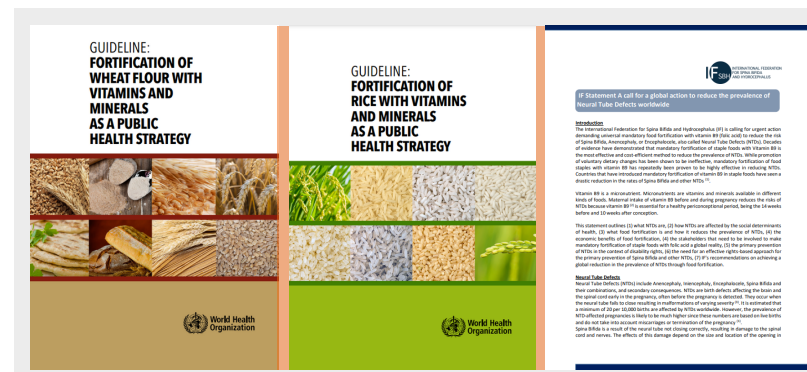
- The International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF) is calling for urgent action for the universal mandatory food fortification with folic acid to reduce the prevalence of Neural Tube Defects including Spina Bifida.
- Mandatory fortification with folic acid is the most effective and cost-efficient method to reduce the prevalence of Neural Tube Defects.
- The needs of individuals may change with age and changing circumstances but healthcare services need to be able to meet everyone's needs. The needs may change but the rights stay the same.
- To respect, protect, and fulfil the right to health of Persons with Disabilities, there needs to be available, affordable and accessible multidisciplinary care. Multidisciplinary care for all life stages is essential!



## 5.1. Gathering resources for your advocacy campaign

**Once the association has a clear vision of the issue and the position of the association you can begin to gather resources which support your position. You can use these resources when reaching out to partners and target audience.**

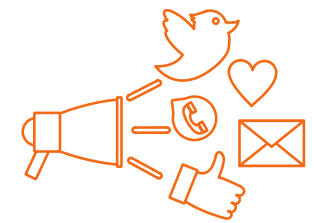
Having a variety of resources to share with your target audience helps to strengthen your message. IF shares with its members resources which can be shared with stakeholders. In addition, research and resources published by your target (for example a government agency or an international organisation) can be very powerful if the conclusion supports your message.



### Examples

- ➔ Policy statements, reports and other publications by IF
- ➔ Reports published by national governments or government agencies (such as guidelines recommending folic acid for a health pregnancy)
- ➔ The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ➔ Reports and documents published by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities such as concluding remarks and recommendations from the committee to your national government
- ➔ Reports, research, resolutions and recommendations by international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization or the European Union
- ➔ International and national law

## 5.2. Using social media



**If you are planning to advocate on social media, you will have to build a strong community of advocates, you can also call them champions or ambassadors, who will help you to reach your objective and make your voice heard by your target audience.**

These persons are committed individuals who potentially have connections with your target audience and or influence over them. These can also be partners working for the same or similar cause as you.

Before starting your advocacy campaign, it is important to think ahead about the content you will need to prepare to be shared online, who are the most powerful advocates you could work with, what social media channel(s) would be the most effective in helping you reach your objectives and what are the next steps once you would have reached your first objective and made your voice heard.

When planning your content, do not only focus on proactively posting your content on your social media channel. There might be plenty of opportunities for your cause out there where you could react to others content with your campaign. This is called the reactive approach.

Try to approach the closest representative(s) who could help in conveying your message to the head of state for instance.

### **Below some best practices for advocating on social media:**

- Prepare your content and use infographics: plan strategically, vary your materials, use cross-communication, etc.
- Think about crisis communication when creating your posts: what negative responses you might receive on social media and how would you react to them in a diplomatic way
- Engage your community to make your voice heard!
- Collaborate with strong partners and advocates
- Share updates of the evolution of your campaign, especially when reaching objectives and hitting milestones.

## 6. Building a network

**A good network is one of the most important aspects of an advocacy campaign. Finding allies and forming partnerships is instrumental to further your objectives. Once you know who you want to reach with your advocacy campaign, you can design a plan to enable adoption, implementation, and maintenance of your campaign.**

The ultimate impact of your advocacy campaign also depends on the existence, strength, and use of your network. It can also be one of the more challenging aspects of an advocacy campaign.



**Speaking about SHINE's successful campaign to introduce legislation in the UK on mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid:**

*"We set up an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for folic acid in Westminster, which gave us an opportunity to bring together a cross section of ministers from all parties for discussion and to share information, which they could then use to advocate the importance of mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid to their colleagues and key decision makers"*



**Kate Steele**

Chief Executive Officer at  
Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus  
Information Networking  
Equality (SHINE)

Once you have set your objectives and goals, identified your target audience and developed key messages it is time to reach out and make connections with persons and organisations whom you believe will be able to support your advocacy efforts.

Building a network of supporters might include:

- Experts in the topic you are advocating on
- Sympathetic individuals within political or governmental institutions
- Organisations with similar objectives as your campaign, such as other representative organisations of persons with disabilities or patient organisations

Networking is about building connections with people. This begins with an initial contact which you might be able to make through activities such as:

- Sending emails to the person or organisation which you want to connect with
- Attending events, meetings or conferences where your target audience is likely to also be
- Using existing contacts to connect with new contacts



It is important to only partner with organisations or persons who share your association's vision and ideals. Who have a good reputation, credibility and transparency. Being associated with organisations or persons who suffer a loss of reputation or credibility can reflect badly on your advocacy campaign and SBH association.



**Different elements of your network will have different purposes.** They may include individuals or organisations which the SBH association wishes to join in its advocacy campaign. For example, to share messages on social media or work together on a specific objective such as an event or an awareness campaign.

Other elements of a network might be stakeholders who have the potential to have a direct impact on your goals or objectives. As an example, an association might have a good relationship with a member of the national legislature who can work with the SBH association to develop desired policy changes and advocate towards other members of the legislature.

It is important that the association is mindful of the different roles of their network and when and how to utilise those connections.

## Talking to the opposition

It is likely that not everyone will be agreeable to the objectives of your association. Depending on the topic of your advocacy campaign the opposition might be weak or strong, come from a variety of directions or concentrated from one type of stakeholder, political party and/or ideology. Identifying who is likely to actively oppose your campaign can be as valuable as identifying potential allies for your network. Use the matrix demonstrated above to assess and categorise your potential opposition.

Sometimes you might want to engage with your opposition. Are there any which your association might be able to negotiate with and come to a common understanding or acceptable compromise? If the opposition is coming from within an otherwise valued ally, perhaps similar organisations in your community disagree with the approach of the advocacy campaign, it can be valuable to have conversations to see if the matter can be settled.

However, there might also be some oppositions which your association might not want to engage with at all due to the fact that this individual or organisation goes against the core policies and values of your association. In those instances it is nonetheless important to monitor their activities and be aware of any potential threats against the successful attainment of your associations objectives.

## 7. Implementation

**Following these steps will help your association to create and implement an advocacy campaign. Map out how and when you intend to implement your objectives and activities. This means combining all of the elements mentioned before to create a realistic and achievable plan for implementation.**

However, these are just guidelines or suggestions, there is room for creativity and innovation in advocacy. For example, social media provides new ways to raise awareness, connect with partners and stakeholders and raise funds. Sending letters to policy makers or other stakeholders can be very effective but often important connections are made more informally, by for example, attending conferences and events where relevant stakeholders are likely to be and use that opportunity to talk to them and build a network which in turn enables you and your association to achieve your objectives and goal.

An implementation plan is especially useful when the objectives are large or require several steps. For example, organising an event or a conference or a large awareness campaign with several components. In an implementation plan you and your association can break those components down into achievable tasks, delegate the tasks and achieve your objectives!

To ease both the implementation and the monitoring of your advocacy campaign make sure to document all activities. Especially where new contacts or networks are made. This enables good communications within the association and ensures continuity of tasks if responsibilities are transferred from one individual to another.

**Actionable and measurable objectives are very important for both the implementation and evaluation of your advocacy.**

However, it may take several objectives before you reach your ultimate goal. So be ambitious but patient!





## 8. Evaluation plan

**For the evaluation of the advocacy campaign go back to your goals and objectives.**

**Was your SBH association successful in reaching them?**

It depends on the nature of the objectives how your association evaluates whether or not they were reached. Having specific and measurable objectives helps with both the implementation and evaluation of the advocacy campaign.

If your SBH association has been unsuccessful in achieving all of the objectives, consider the reasons why?

What were the lessons learned in the process of the advocacy campaign?

What would your association want to do differently for the next advocacy campaign?

Breaking objectives down also helps with the evaluation.

For example, if your objective was to reach out to a policy maker, meet with the policy maker and convince them to table an amendment to a legislation. It might be that you and your organisation were successful in implementing activities to reach this key audience, the policy maker, but were unsuccessful in getting a meeting. Or, you were successful in getting a meeting but the policy maker did not implement the change you advocated for. Understanding where in the process the problem occurred can be very important to help you and your SBH association to adjust future advocacy campaigns accordingly.

If your SBH association was successful in reaching its objectives, evaluation is still very important. Consider the lessons learnt, what went well and what did not. Whether there are any target audiences which were not included but should be targeted in future advocacy campaigns? In the evaluation consider what the next steps are.

### *Example*

Most social media platforms provide their users with the possibility of accessing statistics on their activities. This can help your association to evaluate how many new followers, interactions, 'likes' and reach your social media activities resulted in if you chose to use social media for your advocacy campaign.

## 9. Follow up

**Advocacy campaigns do not exist in isolation. In fact, oftentimes they are merely the beginning of a longer advocacy progress and long-lasting partnerships.**

Include plans for follow up when your association evaluates the advocacy campaign. How is the association going to use the partnerships, awareness and networks created as a result of your advocacy campaign to further the association's overall goals and policy objectives?

**Your SBH association might want to consider the following points for follow up:**

- Maintaining contact with new partners and allies and explore future collaborations
- Monitor the implementation of policy changes achieved as a result of your advocacy campaign. Such as whether new legislation or amendments to legislation been proposed
- Whether another advocacy campaign is necessary to reach your wider goal
- Identifying opportunities for funding



# Resources to download and use for advocacy

- [IF Statement: A call for a global action to reduce the prevalence of Neural Tube Defects worldwide \(2022\)](#)
- [IF Information Package on the UNCRPD and the Reporting Cycle EN, IT](#)
- [IF Information Package on the European Union EN, IT](#)
- [IF Information Package on The European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [IF's Statement on the European Union Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [IF Statement on Covid-19](#)
- [IF Statement on EU Reporting to the CRPD](#)
- [IF Statement on Multidisciplinary Care for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus](#)
- [IF Statement on Ageing with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus](#)
- [IF Report: Mental Health Implications of COVID-19 on Youth with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus - An exploratory survey conducted by the IF International Youth Group with SBH](#)
- [IF Report on Ageing with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus - Findings from online focus group discussions](#)
- [IF Statement on Mental, Physical and Sexual Health for Youth with SBH](#)



# Resources to download and use to advocate for mandatory folic acid fortification

- [IF Statement: A call for a global action to reduce the prevalence of Neural Tube Defects worldwide \(2022\)](#)
- [IF Maternal Health and Prevention Video](#)
- [Smarter Futures 15 Years of Impact – An African way to Promote Food Fortification](#)
- IF Folic Acid Leaflet in [EN](#), [FR](#), [NL](#), [SP](#), [IT](#), [TR](#)
- [Infographic: A call for global action for prevention](#)
- [The Lancet Global Health: Preventing birth defects, saving lives, and promoting health equity: an urgent call to action for universal mandatory food fortification with folic acid](#)
- [WHO Guideline: Fortification of Wheat Flour with Vitamins and Minerals as a Public Health Strategy \(2022\)](#)
- [WHO Guideline: Fortification of Rice with Vitamins and Minerals as a Public Health Strategy \(2018\)](#)
- [WHO Guidelines on Food Fortification with Micronutrients \(2006\)](#)
- [Global Fortification Data Exchange \(GFDx\)](#)
- [Food Fortification Global Progress](#)
- [Milling and Grain Magazine: Addressing pandemic micronutrient deficiencies through flour fortification](#)
- [Milling and Grain Magazine: Is it time that Europe makes folic acid fortification mandatory?](#)



If you have any questions regarding the content of this advocacy package please don't hesitate to contact the IF team at **[info@ifglobal.org](mailto:info@ifglobal.org)**

IF is always happy to support its members in their advocacy efforts.

IF regularly organises training and capacity building activities for its members. Keep an eye on the IF Newsletters and social media platforms for news about upcoming IF events.

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