



# ADVOCACY

Advocacy aims to influence decisions within economic, political or social systems and institutions. It can be carried out by an individual or a group and might include activities such as media campaigns, public speaking or demonstrations.

## Advocacy for disability rights

Disability advocacy is acting, speaking or writing to promote, protect and defend the human rights of people with disability. Disability includes impairments of physical, sensory or mental functions that may affect undertaking activities, or participating in community life. The importance of advocacy for disability rights is outlined below:

### 1. Advocacy enables people to be heard

Advocacy allows individuals to have their voices heard in the public sphere, attracting attention from politicians, the media and high-profile individuals around the world. By advocating for a cause, individuals are able to spotlight their perspective to the wider community and act as a catalyst for change. Without advocacy many voices would remain silenced. If we didn't have advocates, we would miss out on critical support for many important issues.

### 2. Advocacy supports the protection of human rights

Issues that are advocated for are often based on protecting the rights of humans. Through advocacy, communities at large will have a greater awareness of their rights and societal entitlements and the infringement of rights marginalized groups in society face today. The promotion of the rights of women, education, and safety are all issues that pertain to the protection of human rights and are often discussed and negotiated in the societal sphere.

### 3. Advocacy influences laws and policies

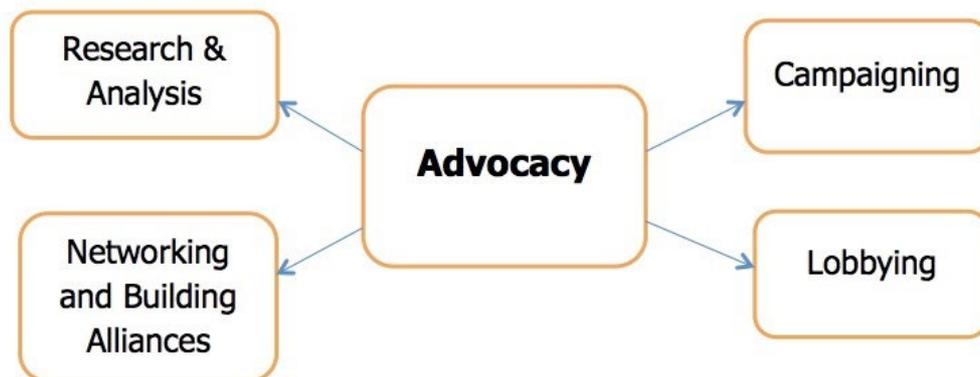
Similar to having the voices of individuals heard in the public sphere, advocacy can directly influence decisions in public policy. As communities advocate for a certain cause or issue, politicians and law makers alike will become increasingly aware of such issues and may consider including the perspectives of advocates into formal law or policy. This is crucial for social change and holding perpetrators to account.

### Disability rights, laws and policies in Zanzibar

- Disability Policy (2018), views disability as a human rights issue
- Zanzibar Labour Act 1997 (No. 3), lays down fundamental rights concerning the employment of people with disabilities
- Workmen's Compensation Act 1986 (No. 15)
- The Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and The Persons with Disabilities (Rights and Privileges) Act No. 9, 2006
- Labour Relations Act 2005 (No. 1), bars discrimination based on disability in the context of Trades Unions' constitution or activities
- Zanzibar Vision 2020-2050 envisions, among other aims, equal opportunities for orphans, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in every aspect of social, economic and cultural life
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 2006
- East Africa Disability Policy (2012).

## Activities that contribute to successful advocacy

There are a variety of activities that contribute to successful advocacy. Research and analysis can provide evidence to support advocacy. Building partnerships with other stakeholders can give advocacy efforts more strength. Campaigning can be used to raise interest and awareness. Lobbying is part of advocacy and is the act of attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of officials in their daily life.



Advocacy by an individual on behalf of him or herself is called **self-advocacy**. Self-advocacy is about knowing your rights and responsibilities and speaking up for yourself to influence things that affect your life. It is an important part of empowerment.

Persons with disabilities are frequently being told what to do and having their decisions made for them. Their opinions are routinely dismissed. Self-advocacy skills can enable someone with a disability to assert their rights and ensure they can make decisions for themselves. It may be simple decisions such as what to wear or eat, or more fundamental decisions such as where to live and who to socialize with.

In Zanzibar, many persons with disabilities are not used to 'having a voice' on issues that affect their lives. CBID programmes can help persons with disabilities to find their voice by building their confidence and capacity to participate and advocate, for example to:

- Educate communities about disability, including raising awareness, challenging beliefs, educating people on the causes and effects of disability, and how some disabilities can be managed.
- Raise awareness across society on the rights and responsibilities towards disability that people, organisations and institutions have under the law in Zanzibar.

## The Advocacy cycle

All stages of the advocacy cycle require the active involvement of persons with disabilities and/or their families. The advocacy cycle begins with identifying what you would like to **change**. For example, it could be the inaccessibility of a community recreation hall or an inaccessible village water borehole.

Identifying the best influencing **strategy** involves gathering and analyzing information to support your advocacy – such as the relevant article of the UN CRPD related to accessibility (Article 9) and relevant content of the Zanzibar Disability Act.

You will need to be clear on the causes and effects of the issue on which you are advocating and identifying possible solutions. For example, it could be the lack of knowledge of architects on how to design disability inclusive services and facilities, or the failure by the architect to adhere to legal requirements for accessibility.

The next step is to develop an advocacy **plan**: what you are going to do, when you are going to do it; and who will be responsible for what. The plan may involve arranging meetings with people of influence such as traditional leaders, parent support groups, members of area development committees, local representatives of government departments responsible for planning/building. The meetings would discuss the challenges and agree on ways to address them e.g. undertaking necessary modifications (such as construction of ramps).

The next step is to **implement** the activities to achieve the plan. Next you will **monitor** and evaluate your progress and make any necessary changes to your advocacy plan before going ahead, applying your learning from any successes and mistakes.



# Risks and challenges in advocacy

## Risks to people

People are at the heart of advocacy; it is important to consider all stakeholders when planning your advocacy. Stakeholders might include you, the people you are working with, the people you are targeting and the beneficiaries of your advocacy. You need also to plan how to mitigate against these risks.

## Risks to relationships

A lack of relationships or collaboration is also a risk. Acting without the knowledge of what your partners are doing can lead to duplicating or even damaging existing efforts.

## Risks to reputation

Reputational risk refers to how you are perceived by others. Reputational risk can arise when sharing information that is incorrect or misleading, or if others share information about you that is inaccurate. It can also be a risk by association

## Risk related to places

Advocating on a certain topic can be largely risk-free in one setting, but dangerous in another. Knowing your environment – including the attitudes, religious and cultural beliefs and legalities in relation to your advocacy – is critical when analysing risk.

## Financial risks

Ensure you have enough funding to facilitate your advocacy programme.

## Sources

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