



# Concept and importance of advocacy for policy change

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# Table of content

- Concept of advocacy – What is advocacy?
- Types of advocacy
- Why advocacy?
- What makes advocacy work?
- Advocacy Coalition
- Introduction to policy and process of policy change
- Discussion on concept of advocacy
- Framing and generating advocacy ideas – from problems, solutions and interests

# Concept of advocacy – What is advocacy?



A systematic approach to changing policies and programs to reflect the needs of individuals and communities



Advocacy is influencing decision makers



Is championing an issue, drawing attention to it and getting it on the agenda



Is building support for an issue

# What is Policy Advocacy



**Policy Advocacy is a strategy to**  
Build evidence based on  
analysis

Engage with development  
planning and policy debates

Influence policy makers,  
policy agencies and policy  
agenda



**With a view to create, reform  
and/or change policies, and  
to ensure that the policies  
are implemented properly**



**Policy advocacy is a  
coordinated effort to  
achieve meaningful change**

# Types of advocacy

## Self-advocacy

- Family and friends Community Systems-level change

## Individual professional advocacy –

- This is carried out by professionals, trained, paid or unpaid individuals who are independent of any service provider or agency.

## Citizen or Grassroot advocacy–

- The objective is to encourage ordinary people to become more involved with the welfare of those who might need support in their communities. Mobilizing the community and empowering individuals to pressure decision makers

## Collective or advocacy coalitions–

- When a group of people with common views on a particular subject or similar experiences join together to make their voices heard

## Reactive or Proactive advocacy

# Goals of advocacy

- Identify a problem eg Nigeria is among the 14 high burden countries for TB, TB/HIV and MDR-TB and ranked 6th among the 30 high TB burden countries and 1st in Africa accounting for 4.6% of the Global TB burden (WHO Global TB report 2021)
- Propose a solution
- Achieve policy, program, resource allocation changes that benefit TB population

# Why advocacy?

Advocacy has a key role to play in raising the sense of emergency in the context of MDR-TB

- to increase demand for services to tackle TB and Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB - more effective diagnostics, second-line drugs, infection control measures etc.)
- to ensure respect for human rights in the context of MDR-TB
- to accelerate action to deliver the Global Plan to Stop TB

Promote social inclusion and raises awareness of the obstacles faced by excluded and isolated individuals

Support and empower people to speak for themselves, speaking on behalf of people who are unable to speak for themselves

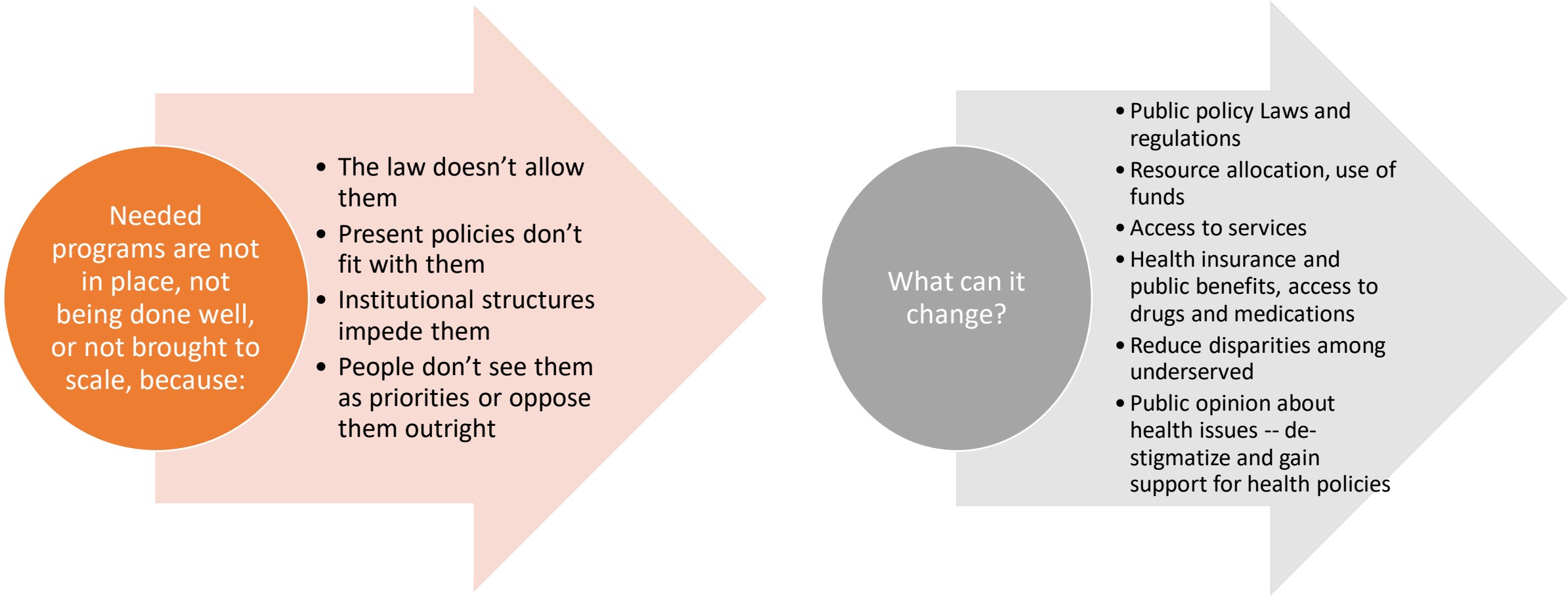
Help people to explore the range of options open to them and clarifying a particular course of action

A way of enabling and empowering people to make informed choices and to gain, and remain, in control of their own lives

It helps people to have access to the information or provision they need, become aware of the options open to them and make their views and wishes known

Advocacy safeguards people through encouraging good practice and preventing neglect or abuse

# When is Advocacy called for and What can it change?



Needed programs are not in place, not being done well, or not brought to scale, because:

- The law doesn't allow them
- Present policies don't fit with them
- Institutional structures impede them
- People don't see them as priorities or oppose them outright

What can it change?

- Public policy Laws and regulations
- Resource allocation, use of funds
- Access to services
- Health insurance and public benefits, access to drugs and medications
- Reduce disparities among underserved
- Public opinion about health issues -- de-stigmatize and gain support for health policies



# BASIC ELEMENTS OF ADVOCACY



# What makes advocacy work?

## key contextual determinants of effective advocacy

- political interests and cycle
- availability of evidence on the issue
- links with powerful and interested champions and their willingness to undertake advocacy on the matter

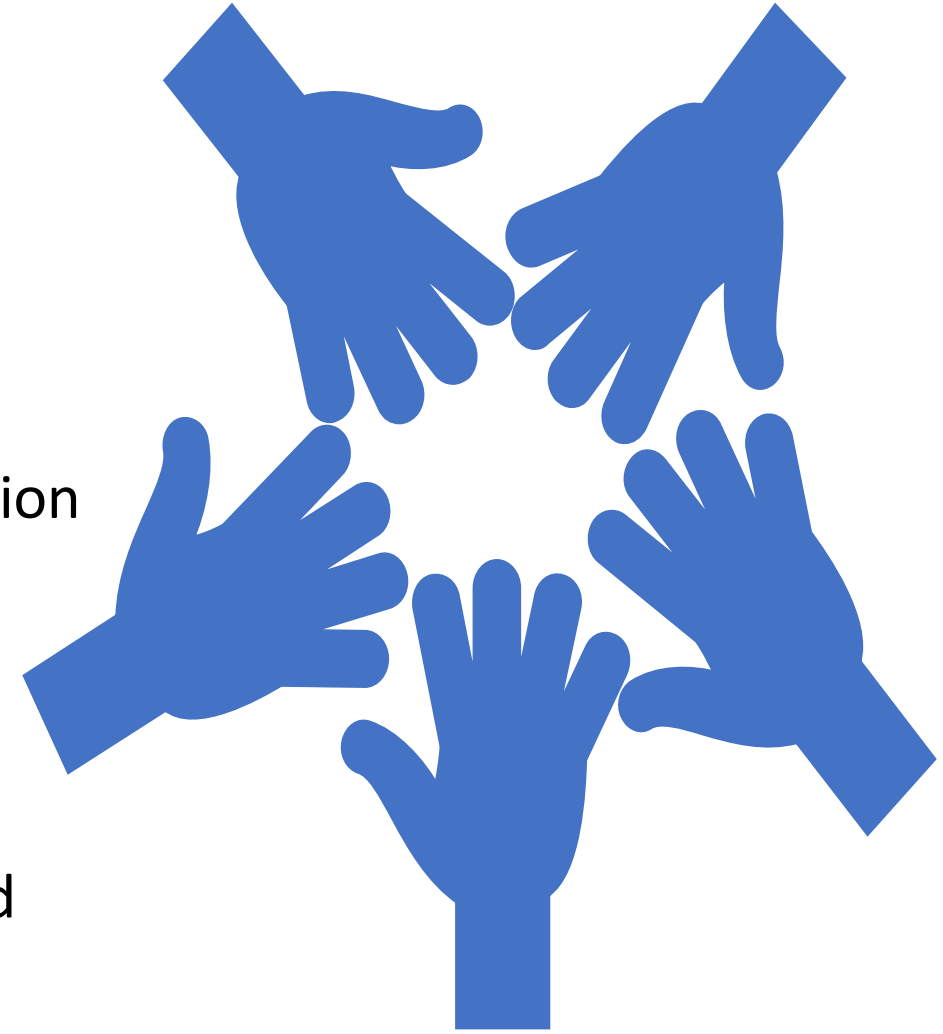
## Effective advocacy mechanism involves

- forming advocacy groups (to gain more influence and power and for possible diversification of advocacy agenda)
- building relations with media (for adequate dissemination of advocacy agenda and result)
- champions/influencers (to maximize result)
- implementers (ensuring the availability of services),
- effective mobilization of citizens (for demand creation)
- using relevant evidence

# Advocacy Coalition

## What Makes an Effective Coalition?

- Attributes of Effective Coalition Members
- Willingness and ability to work collaboratively
- Clear sense of what they bring to the table (e.g., time, relationships, reputation)
- Clear sense of what they want from coalition participation
- Willingness to share resources and power
- Willingness and ability to identify creative solutions to problems
- Ability to address conflict constructively
- Staffing sufficient to ensure timely decision-making and task completion
- Ability to connect the dots among their mission and activities, those of other coalition members, and those of the coalition



# Example from our maternal and child health advocacy

CONTEXT	ADVOCACY COALITIONS	PROCESS STEPS	Relationship to Existing Theories	EVIDENCE	OUTCOME
<p><b>Evidence of MCH, cultural and Health systems issues</b>  Eg: inadequate data, poor funding, multistakeholder issues which are constraints to policy process.  -Poorly equipped facilities  shortage of skilled staff  Inadequate funding due to poor and delayed release of budgetary allocation.  Eg. Chronic threat of Mat and child morbidity and mortality</p> <p>Various projects around MCH endorsement of global strategies and targets.  <b>Cultural context:</b>  Few number of empowered females  Ignorance  Poor health seeking behaviour  Low immunization uptake  poor access to health facilities  Poverty</p>	<p><b>LEVELS</b>  -National  -States eg SOGON  -Communities eg. Be glad foundation. rural women foundation and MEPWAN</p> <p><b>TYPES</b>  -Coalition of CSOs  -Coalition of Media houses  -Coalition of DPs  -Coalition of Implementers  -State level coalition for accountability</p>	<p>-Needs Identification  -Stakeholder identification  -Diverse team members such that areas of interest are covered by experts.  -Clearly stated objectives  -Task sharing  -Identification of a policy window  -Preparing evidence  -Use of policy influencers  -Information campaigns  -use of media</p>	<p>-Policy windows/Agenda setting  -Advocacy coalition framework  -Power politics  -Grassroots/ community organizing theory  -Messaging and frameworks/ prospect theory  -Diffusion theory  -Media Influence</p>	<p><b>Types:</b>  -Audiovisuals  -Diagrams, charts,  -Hand bills, posters and billboards.</p> <p><b>Sources:</b>  MICS, NDHS, SMART, from UNICEF,  <b>Tools:</b> Score cards;</p>	<p>-Different policies/programmes which have continued to prioritize maternal and child health.  - Bulk share of allocation of funds in State health goes to maternal and child health  - Increased political commitment a seen in new government initiatives to make M services free in the state  -Increased budgetary release.  -Improved awareness both the health workers and the beneficiaries  -Improved human and material resources provided at the facilities</p>
<p><b>POLITICAL CYCLE</b>  Change of govt. and power every 4 years</p>	<p><b>Characteristics</b>  - Policy formulation;  - Policy implementation;  - Budgetary allocation  -Budgetary release  -</p>			<p>Characteristics  -quality: Most were from reliable sources  -timeliness</p>	
<p><b>Relationship with Government</b>  Bilateral relationship between the national and subnational levels</p>	<p><b>Functions/Mandate</b>  -PMTCT funds and resources  -Awareness creation for  -Advocate for budget release</p>				
<p>- <b>Relationship with media</b></p>	<p><b>CHAMPIONS</b>  -FHI  -HERFON  -FMOH</p>				

# Introduction to policy and process of policy change (actors in policy change)

Policy is a set of principles that represent the end results of a decision as to how best to achieve the set objectives.

Health policy can be understood as “decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific [health and] health care goals within a society” (WHO, 2018)

It is about “process and power, it is concerned with who influences whom in the making of policy, and how that happens” (Walt, 1994)

“Policy change is inevitably political because it seeks to change who gets valued goods in society” and the inherent choices it reflects are always “value-laden” even when “presented as a technical decision” (Reich, 1995)

# Introduction (contd)

Policy itself can be seen as embracing three strands:

- a decision-making process;
- a set of decisions (the policy as represented in specific programmes of action);
- the political intentions and impacts of policy in terms of, for example, government legitimacy, electoral prospects and the broad values and directions of government (McConnell, 2010)

There is then a need to understand the following

- political conditions that influence the dynamics of policy change, including prevailing values, group competition, regime stability, timing (Reich, 1995)
- the role of policy actors in policy change, how they influence and are themselves influenced by contextual factors, why and how they react to policy design details, the processes contingent on developing and implementing policy and – centrally – how power plays out in these processes (Walt and Gilson, 1994).

# Introduction (contd)

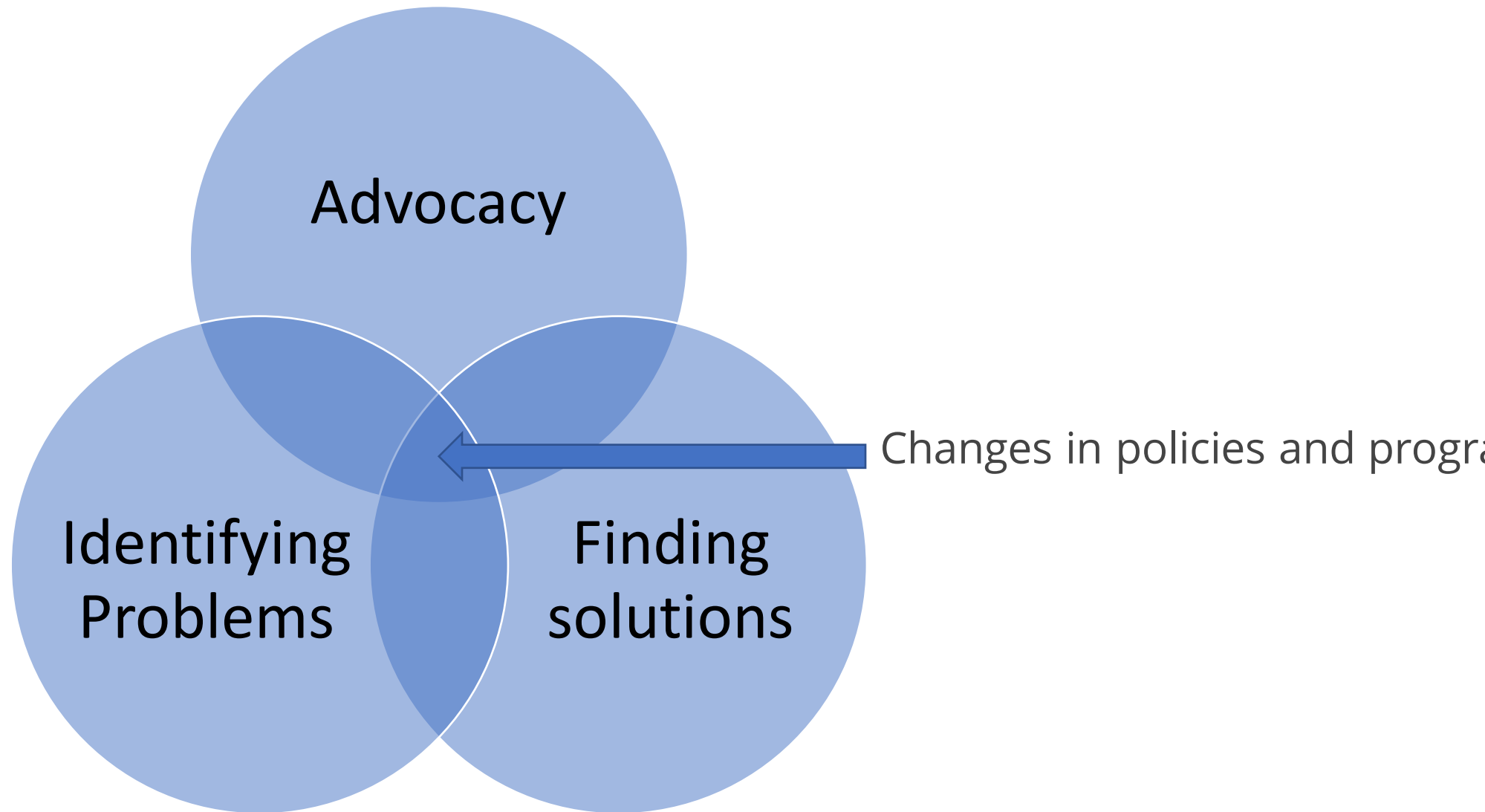
Taking action to improve health and to tackle health inequity demands an understanding of how politics and power influence policy and decision-making (CSDH, 2008)

Understanding policy and policy processes to be contested, involving multiple actors, with different concerns, interests and values, often in competition with each other and influenced by a range of contextual factors and also by, for example, the timing of policy change and the content – the forms and focus – of specific policies.

Health policy considers which policies are prioritized in policy agendas (agenda-setting); policy formulation; policy implementation and policy evaluation.

The interplay between ideas, interests and institutions in policy processes is to be considered, as well as the principal actors and political relations

# The Process of Policy Change



The advocacy process is critical in precipitating changes in policies and programs



# Policy process stages

- Agenda-setting – or how issues appear on governmental agendas for action –why do policy-makers pay attention to particular issues, out of all the range of issues that confront them? (Howlett and Ramesh, 1995; Kingdon, 1995)
- Policy formulation – Policy makers in the legislature and bureaucracy take up the issue, create legislative, regulatory strategies to address the problem
- Policy implementation - focused broadly on understanding what influences the translation of public policy goals and intentions into practices and, ultimately, societal gains. (Top-down implementation theory or Bottom-up theories of implementation)
- Policy evaluation – Analysts inside and outside government determine whether the policy is addressing the problem

# Actors in policy change

- It is important to acknowledge the influence of actors over national and local policy processes.
- The changing ideas, actors and power balances among health policy actors involved in international and global health policy as well as in national, sub-national and local policy (Birn, 2009; Brown et al., 2006, Buse and Walt, 2000; Lee et al., 1996)
- Effective advocacy is based on an audience-centered approach that targets institutions and people critical for success, rather than attempting to reach all actors or decision-makers.

# Policy audiences

## The audience-centered approach:

- Distinguishes the target audiences
- Analyzes their positions and interests
- Communicates policy messages to them
- Motivates them to take action

## Dividing audience into groups and develop a “message” to which each group will respond e.g.

- Development partners
- Government departments
- Communications regulators
- Sector associations
- Media organizations
- CSOs
- Academia



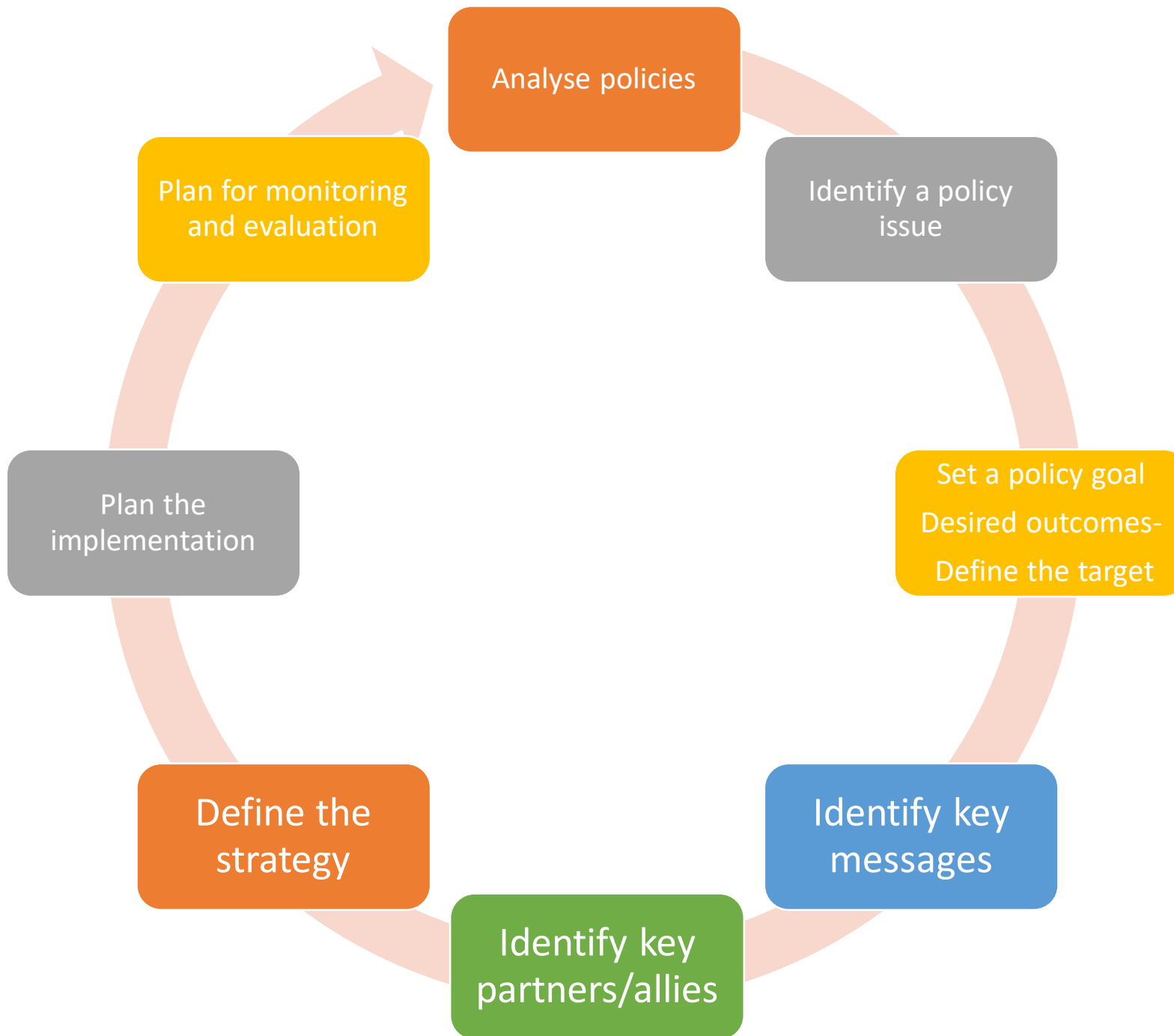
# Actors

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- Policy analysis “help us to understand the role and influence of different policy ‘actors’ within specific historical and institutional contexts” (Wuyts et al., 1992).
- “Actor-oriented perspective” focuses on understanding how policies are transformed in implementation and socially constructed through the language and meaning-making practices of political, bureaucratic and social actors (Long, 1992; 2001).
- Why do policies emerge and how do political actors seek to influence them? (John, 2018)
- Exploring how policy change results from the interaction of multiple factors, the way actors interpret and make meaning of their experience. Social constructivists focus on understanding people’s intentions, beliefs, values, reasons and the way they make meaning; through their own interpretation (Gilson, 2012).
- There is need to strengthen decision-making processes by integrating actors responsible for programme implementation more closely into policy decision-making processes.

# Contextual influences over policy change

Contextual features	Influences – for example
Sociopolitical pressures and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which interest groups have what level of power</li><li>• Policy elite perceptions of what is feasible</li><li>• Other actors' perceptions of their interests and concerns</li><li>• Use of State resources for patronage</li><li>• Timing of policy</li><li>• Implementation feasibility</li></ul>
Historical context e.g. legacy of colonialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Forms of governance</li><li>• Nature and functioning of civil service</li><li>• International alliances</li><li>• Collective memories – what public policy action is deemed appropriate</li><li>• Legitimizing values</li></ul>
The national political and legal system e.g. State governance structures, systems of accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policy elite perceptions of what is feasible</li><li>• Who participates in formal decision-making processes</li><li>• Which actors have which levels and forms of power</li><li>• Levels and forms of accountability</li><li>• Legitimacy of State action</li></ul>
National economic conditions and policy e.g. macroeconomic situation and state role in national economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timing of policy change</li><li>• Resource support for policies</li><li>• Social policy options</li></ul>
Administrative capacity (skills, structures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capacity to marshal the range of necessary resources to support implementation</li></ul>
International context e.g. international events, agreements, resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic conditions (and policy)</li><li>• Dependency relationships with external actors</li><li>• Norms driving policy change</li></ul>



# Policy Advocacy: Essential Steps

# A Message

A “message” is a concise and persuasive statement about your advocacy goal that captures what you want to achieve, why and how.

Since the underlying purpose of a message is to create action, your message should also include the specific action you would like the audience to take.

It should contain:

- What you want to achieve;
- Why you want to achieve it (the positive result of taking action and/or the negative consequence of inaction);
- How you propose to achieve it;
- What action you want the audience to take.

# Format

The format is the medium through which you deliver your message for maximum impact.



The format must be appropriate to your target audience, message, and messenger.

Formal or informal meetings	Informal conversations at social, religious, business, or political gatherings	Executive briefing packets	Pamphlets, brochures, or fact sheets	Posters and/or flyers	Computer and slide presentations	Newspaper articles or advertisements	Broadcast commentary or coverage	Public debate	Policy dialogues	Other Media ...
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# Time and Place

Timing is important. You may link the delivery of your message to other political events to draw more attention to your issue.

The place where you deliver your message is also as important. Is there a place to deliver the message that enhances its credibility or gives it more political impact?

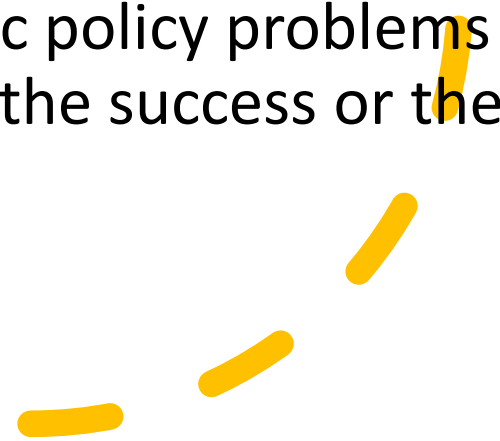
# Exercise



- Take a moment to introduce yourself to the person next to you
- Discuss an instance in your work where advocacy has occurred – or needs to occur.
- What does it change?
- Who does it target?
- What are indicators of its success?
- What lessons were learned?

# Framing and generating advocacy ideas – from problems, solutions and interests

- Frames are the ways actors make sense of the world
- Framing offers insights into the nature of political debate by providing an explanation of both structure and agency in the policy process
- Framing can help researchers, advocates and policy-makers to understand opaque and highly charged policy issues
- The ideas actors have about specific policy problems and solutions can help account for the success or the failure of this process



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# Thank you for Listening

