Methodologies and tools for effective advocacy

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TRAINING OF GLRA PROJECT STAFF ON EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE

PROJECT: CATALYZING IMPROVEMENTS IN DR-TB CARE IN NIGERIA: A SUSTAINABLE PATIENT-CENTERED APPROACH PROJECT

Recall,

Policy advocacy is the process of negotiating and mediating a dialogue through which influential networks, opinion leaders, and, ultimately, decision makers take ownership of your ideas, evidence, and proposals, and subsequently act upon them.

1. A strategy to affect policy change or action

2. Primary audience of decision (policy) makers

3. A deliberate process of persuasive communication

4. A process that normally requires building of momentum and support behind the proposed policy idea or recommendation

5. Conducted by groups of organized citizens

Recall,

Effective policy advocacy is underpinned by these principles:

1. It is a two-way process of negotiation and mediation towards the transfer of ownership of the research findings and recommendations to key policy makers

2. It is not a simple linear process. It takes time, commitment, and persistence.

3. The most likely outcome is policy influence, rather than direct impact.

4. It involves the "softening up" of specialist expert audiences and also more interest-based coalition-building and bargaining with more political audiences.

5. Context is key, as processes are always specific, evolving, and unpredictable

Methodologies for effective advocacy

STRATEGIES THAT CAN INCREASE THE INFLUENCE OF ADVOCATES IN THE POLICY PROCESS
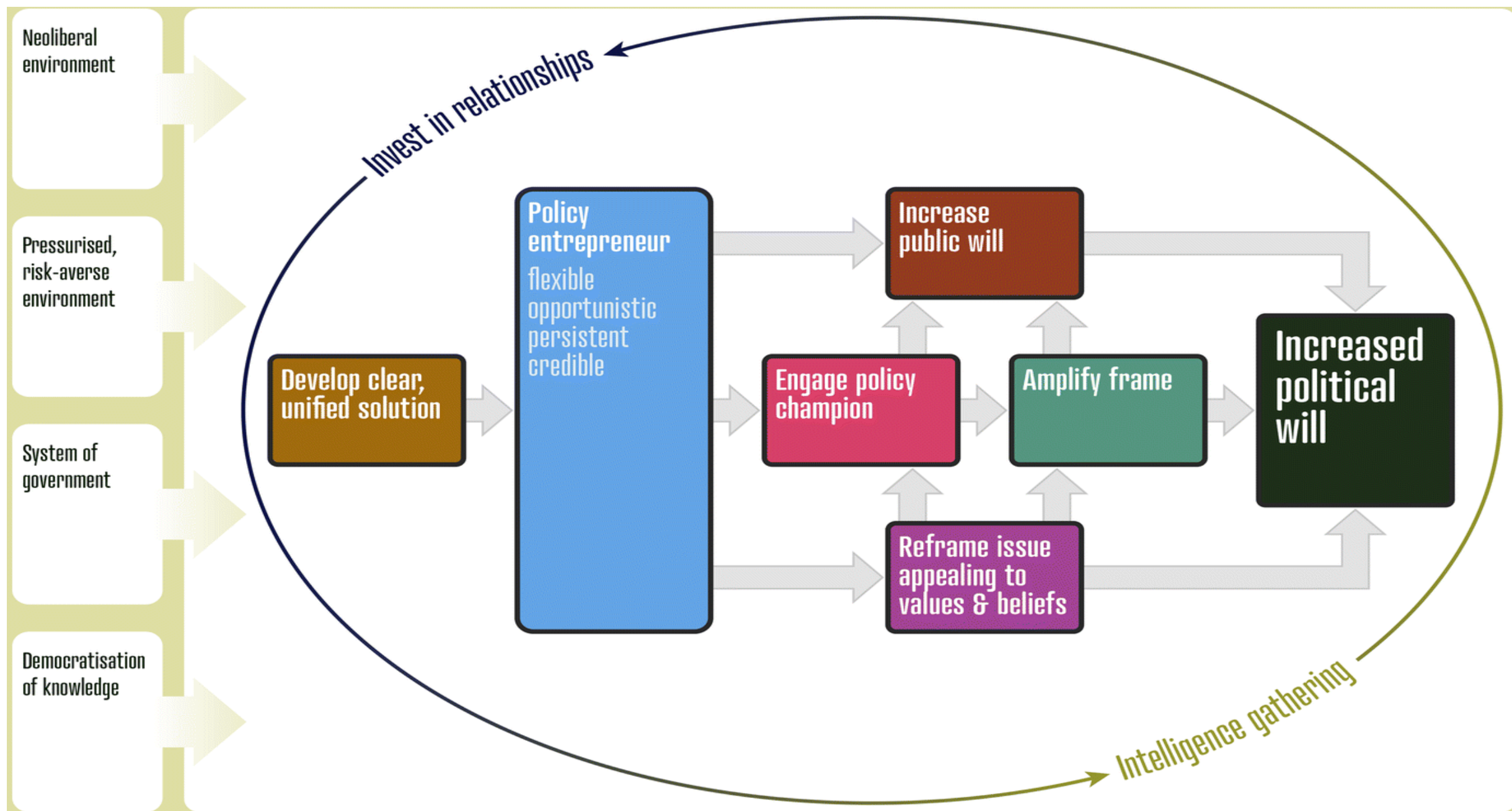
A conceptual model for influencing government nutrition policy (Cullerton et al., 2018)

1. Invest in relationships strategically

- Investing in diverse and strategic relationships with key stakeholders is vital
  - o Develops trusts and increases credibility with stakeholders; which may lead to coalitions and alliances
  - o Identify prospective policy champions
  - o Gather intelligence on policy opportunities (policy windows) and risks
  - o Gather intelligence on the values and beliefs of decision-makers and key influencers
  - o Gain understanding of the arguments of opponents

- Relationships cannot be developed with everyone, hence the requirement to be strategic and target those individuals with the greatest potential for quality intelligence and influence
  - o Stakeholder analysis and outcome mapping are helpful tools for identifying "*strategic*" individuals

Formation of advocacy coalition and alliances

- A deep understanding of the policymaking environment is essential for knowing who is influential in the policymaking process

- This knowledge can be gained by reading literature on the topic, experience in the policy sector, or through developing relationships and gathering intelligence with those involved in the policymaking process

- The formation of coalitions or alliances is supported by policy process theory

- Forming coalitions or alliances is a particularly useful strategy for poorly-resourced organizations – resource pooling and coordination of advocacy action

- When a variety of organizations are in agreement on an issue this signals to decision-makers that the issue has considerable support and increases your voice on the issue

- **Ensure that alliances cover a wide range of interests, skills and personal contacts**

2. Develop clear, unified solution

- Gaining the attention of policymakers is difficult with a complex issue

- When an issue is presented as complex and requiring complex solutions, policy change is unlikely to occur as it is considered too hard

- To overcome this process, the problem and solution being offered to policymakers requires simplification

- This may mean that small incremental policy actions are favoured, over radical changes to existing systems

2b. Develop clear, unified solution

- The requirement for clear, unified solutions raises the wider issue of competing agendas. Fragmented advocacy can deter policy change and result in 'attention fatigue' in policymakers

- When policymakers see the demands of individual interest groups not supported by others, they will avoid advocating for the issue

- This places greater emphasis on the **need for strategic alliances and networks of stakeholders** to coordinate similar policy agendas into a coherent message for decision makers to interpret.

3. Engage or develop skills of a policy entrepreneur

- Researchers have limited resources, time and skills to effectively influence policy change

- Considerable influence in the policymaking process can be gained by investing in developing 'entrepreneurial' skills of dedicated staff member, or employing a 'policy entrepreneur'

- Policy entrepreneurs are described as individuals who,

    "wait in and around government with their solutions at hand, waiting for problems to float by to which they can attach their solutions, waiting for a development in the political stream they can use to their advantage" (Kingdon, 1995)

- They could be bureaucrats or politicians operating as an 'insider', or they might be an 'outsider' from a non-government organization, academia or even a motivated member of the public

- They have varying levels of power and status, and therefore rely heavily on the 'art' of advocacy
    - Opportunistic, flexible, persistent, and credible nature and the priority they give to **investing in relationships and gathering evidence**

4. Engage policy champion

- A policy champion is an 'insider' in a position of formal authority with high status and power

- They could be very senior bureaucrats or powerful politicians e.g. Cabinet minister (Minister for Health), Member of Parliament (House Committee Chairman on Health) or Senator

- There are policy champions who are not 'insiders' (Examples & why)

- Securing a policy champion whether they were an 'insider' or an 'outsider' was seen to result in increased political will for an issue (How)

Strategies for securing a policy champion

1. The most efficient way an advocate can secure a policy champion is to **interrogate their networks for possible personal connections**

2. This strategy can be broadened by **mobilizing alliance members** and/or **members of professional associations** to specifically target their local Member of Parliament (MP) to become a champion

3. Or to **seek their recommendation for alternative MP's** who may be interested in the issue.

5. Reframe issues to appeal to values and beliefs

- In order for an idea (problems and solutions) to be considered by policymakers, it must be framed to appeal to their values and beliefs

- *Frames are cognitive shortcuts that everyone uses to understand complex information more efficiently*

- Framing involves **selecting and emphasizing attributes** that communicate **why an issue** might be a problem, **who is responsible** for it, and **what should be done** about it

- The most effective frames appeal to shared societal values that resonate with individuals and motivate them to act

Successful frames

- Determining the most effective frame to use requires **gathering intelligence** on the values of the target audience

- Once these values are known, the problem and solution can be framed effectively to ensure it resonates with the target audience

- Successful frames used previously include,
  o Protecting the health of [vulnerable group]
  o Fairness, equity and social justice
  o Highlighting potential economic and social losses related to policy inaction

Examples of goals that were framed for TB advocacy for people who use drugs

➢Defending the right of people who inject, or otherwise actively use drugs to access TB prevention, treatment and care and for active drug use or for continued injecting not to be used as a barrier for entry into TB services

➢Integration between TB, HIV and drugs services as a key to effective treatment outcomes and treatment compliance.

➢Fostering joint working between services at a policy and management level by flushing out service weaknesses and barriers to access through advocating for individual clients.

➢Developing models of peer support around compliance with TB treatment to increase access and retention in treatment.

6. Amplify the frame

- To stand out above the 'noise' surrounding policymakers advocates need to amplify their frame

- Amplification is intended to ensure the issue at hand and/or the advocate is clearly heard and becomes top-of-mind for policymakers

Practical strategies for amplifying the frame

1. **Media**. Most common strategy used. Engaging the media and ensuring they report on the issue using the new frame is often difficult

2. Identify as many **individuals** as possible (including the policy champion) who are strategically placed within the policy network and can uniformly advocate and amplify the frame in a more coordinated way

   o It is crucial that amplification efforts do not rely solely on one well-connected individual. This limits effectiveness and can make the advocacy network vulnerable.

Practical strategies for amplification contd

3. Partnering with a **citizen personally affected** by the issue at hand to present their story to decision-makers.

Personal stories could have a powerful effect on policy makers

- o Humans are able to cognitively process narratives or stories more efficiently than hard data or statistics
- o These narratives will usually evoke emotion, making the information more memorable and more dominant in cognitive processing
- o Once this emotional connection has been made, scientific evidence regarding the problem and solution can then be presented

6. Increase public will

- Gaining the support of the public for the issue at hand and demonstrating this level of support to policymakers is crucial for influencing policy change

- Decision-makers respond favorably to issues that have the support of their electorates, public officials and interest groups

- Conversely, failing to demonstrate public support for a policy issue has been identified as a key factor for a lack of policymakers' support

Methods for building public will

- Using an effective frame

- Amplifying the frame

- Investing in personal relationships – particularly with community groups

- Public perception of credibility and trust in advocacy organization

- Negotiate a unified consensus and prioritization of issues among advocates
  - Advocacy organizations should present a unified public voice on the issue
  - One factor leading to decreased credibility is the perception that the 'advocacy message' is always changing

Tools for effective advocacy

Tools for effective advocacy

TOOLS

- Presentations and slides
- Documents
- Images
- Social media
- Videos

ACTIVITIES

- Workshops
- Advocacy visits
- Policy dialogue
- Public-panel discussion
- Media campaign

	1. Presentations and slides	2. Documents
Advantages	Excellent tools for undertaking advocacy. They can provide text, images, and can tell a whole 'story'. They appeal to people who like images.	Documents are useful as supporting material for advocacy. Can be adapted to various audiences – published articles, policy briefs, leaflets, posters, fliers, brochure, etc.
Disadvantages	Audiences may focus too much on the actual slides rather than following your line of argument. Audiences will not appreciate long presentations, and complex slides that take a long time to read.	Require time for people to read and may not offer opportunities for you to provide follow-up to any questions or concerns.
Types of messages that can be delivered	Messages which have accompanying evidence in numbers, images, graphs, photos	Relevant facts, arguments and images, and whole concepts
Types of audiences to use with	Managers, technical specialists, general public	Senior policymakers and managers

	3. Images	4. Social media
Advantages	'A picture is worth a thousand words'. Images can convey messages, facts and situations in ways that influence people	Turn communication into interactive dialogue. Different channels that can be used to reach a wide variety of target groups. Multi-directional allows 'conversations' rather than just broadcast information and ideas.
Disadvantages	Images may be open to various interpretations if not accompanied by any text or spoken words	Certain target groups cannot yet be reached using social media because they are not using them. Effective use of social media requires investment of time and energy - its more than just posting statements.
Types of messages that can be delivered	Graphs, photos etc can be presented as part of the message in slides	Blogs – longer more substantial messages Twitter – shorter messages and links to resources
Types of audiences to use with	People who may not have the time or wish to read content	Certain parts of the general public, and technical people

5. Videos	
Advantages	Can be made available online and embedded into website, blogs and other platforms for people to access. Can also be used as part of presentations or events in the presence or absence of the advocate. Online videos could reach a global audience. Videos have the power to engage people at an emotional level. Can efficiently convey large amounts of information and depict scientific procedures that would otherwise require volumes of written text to achieve the same level of understanding.
Disadvantages	May not always capture a well balanced argument depending on their quality. Can also be very expensive to make in a high enough quality to produce desired the effect
Types of messages that can be delivered	All types of messages
Types of audiences to use with	Global audience

Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis

- A recognised method used by researchers and policy analysts for understanding actors in policy processes, both prospectively and retrospectively

- Stakeholder analyses generate knowledge about actors with a view to understanding the beliefs, behaviour, intentions, inter-relations and resources they bring to bear on decision-making or implementation processes

- It is used to facilitate institutional and policy reform processes by accounting for and often incorporating the needs of those who have a 'stake' in the reforms under consideration

- With information on stakeholders, their interests, and their capacity to oppose reform, reform advocates can choose how to best accommodate them, thus assuring policies adopted are politically realistic and sustainable

Stakeholder analysis assesses,

the nature of **actors' concerns** around a policy issue, given

1. their **beliefs, values and interests**
2. their levels of **knowledge and understanding** of an issue;
3. the **levels of impact** of the issue on the actor;

whether or not they are **likely to support or oppose** the policy; and

their **levels of power relative** to others

Major attributes to consider in SHA

- Four major attributes are important for Stakeholder Analysis

1. The **stakeholders' position** on the reform issue - whether or not they are likely to support or oppose the policy

2. The **level of influence (power)** they hold – this depends on the quantity and type of resources and power the stakeholder can marshal to promote its position on the reform

3. The **level of interest** they have in the specific reform – the priority and importance the stakeholder attaches to the reform area

4. The **group/coalition** to which they belong or can reasonably be associated with

- **These attributes signal the capability the stakeholder has to,**

1. block or promote reform,

2. join with others to form a coalition of support or opposition, and

3. lead the direction/discussion of the reform.

- **SHA therefore provides a detailed understanding of the**

1. political, economic, and social impact of reform on interested groups,

2. the hierarchy of authority and power among different groups and

3. the actual perceptions of the reform among different groups,

Sources of power…

- **Personal factors** include the actor's skills and knowledge, profession, personality (charisma, approach to others), reputation, and allegiances.

- **Organisational factors** include the actor's position or job within their organisation, their reputation, and the organisational norms about, for example, how decisions are made.

- **Factors within the policy process** include their formal role and position within the process, and their alliances and networks.

- **Contextual factors**, finally, include the political moment – the window of political opportunity to bring about change, for example, as well as traditions and cultural norms that influence an actor's societal status.

- The wider distribution of resources (wealth, political, education, knowledge) within a society is also a vital source of power ….

Data collection for SHA

A brief review of background literature and country studies can provide a useful understanding of the country's political economy

Brainstorming among team members (e.g. program or managers). They often hold extensive local knowledge and can provide a critical first hand understanding of which stakeholders are relevant to the reform area
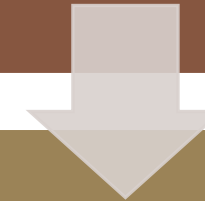
Conduct interviews directly with the stakeholders involved in the specific policy area

Interview local experts in the field who are knowledgeable about the issue and the important groups and individuals involved in the policy area

Data analysis

Cataloguing your results in Form 1 consider the following themes for each actor:

◦ What are the actor's interests and values relating to the policy issue?

◦ How is the actor likely to see the impact of the policy action?

◦ Is the actor likely to support or oppose the policy action?

◦ What power resources does the actor have?

◦ What capacity does the actor have to mobilise resources?

◦ What is the overall power level of actor?

FORM 1. CATALOGUING STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Actor	Interests, values & concerns		Forms and level of power to influence implementation	
	What are the actor's interests and values of relevance to this policy?	What are the actor's hopes or concerns in relation to this policy?	What forms of power could the actor mobilise in this policy story?	What power limits did the actor face in this policy story?

Data analysis

Charting actors' interests, relative power/influence and positions

◦ Prepare a **force field map** that predicts actor positions and power levels around the issue (Form 2). This allows you to judge what level of power the actors are likely to have around the particular policy issue ('very high to very low'); as well as whether the actor would see the impact of the policy on them as strongly positive, strongly negative or somewhere in between

◦ Prepare a **matrix** to map stakeholders' interest and influence on the axes. This matrix provides a shorthand categorization and analysis of which stakeholders will gain or lose from a proposed reform and whether they can significantly impact the process

FORM 2: ACTOR POWER & POSITION MAP (FORCE FIELD MAP)

Instruction: Locate your actors on this map of support and opposition for implementation, taking account of their power level

	High support << <<			Not mobilised/ neutral	>>		>> High opposition
	Enthusiastic	Helpful	Compliant	Hesitant/ Indifferent	Uncooperative	Opposed	Hostile
Power of actor							
Very High v v							
Medium							
v v Very Low							

Categorization of stakeholders

- To guide strategic responses, stakeholders are categorized by their power and salience in a grid according to the following attributes:

1. **Promoters:** Stakeholders who attach a high priority to the reform policy a priority and whose actions can have an impact on the implementation of the policy

2. **Defenders:** Stakeholders who attach a high priority to the reform policy but whose actions cannot have an impact on the implementation of the policy

3. **Latents:** Stakeholders whose actions can affect the implementation of the reform policy but who attach a low priority to this policy

4. **Apathetics:** Stakeholders whose actions cannot affect the implementation of the reform policy and who attach a low priority to this policy
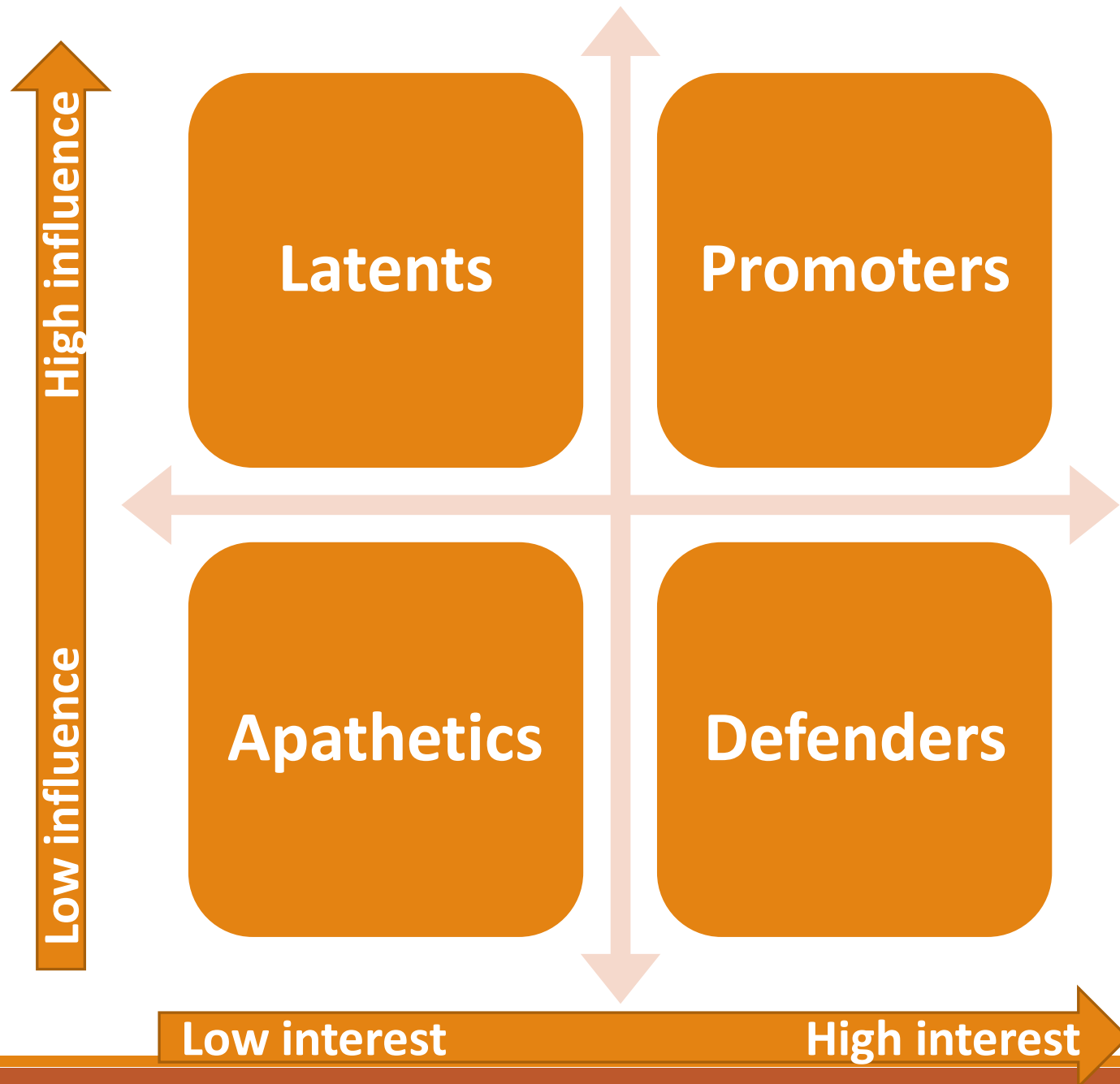
Key limitations of a stakeholder analysis

It reflects experience at only one point in time;

It may be difficult to make judgements about actors' positions and power, and to reconcile different interpretations of these;

It focusses on actors' interests, but these are not the only influences over policy change

Some of these limitations can be offset

Conduct stakeholder analyses at different time periods to examine changes in actors' positions and power over time

Conduct analyses in ways that draw on various views and perspectives, or which develop a collective judgement through brainstorming in a group on issues like, for example, actors' positions and power

Group work on SHA

Using Form 1 consider the following questions for each actor:
- What are the actor's interests and values relating to the policy issue?
- How is the actor likely to see the impact of the policy action?
- Is the actor likely to support or oppose the policy action?
- What power resources does the actor have?
- What capacity does the actor have to mobilise resources?
- What is the overall power level of actor?

Analyse the likely positions of key actors considering contextual influences and actors' interests and values.
- Prepare a force field map that predicts actor positions and power levels around the issue (complete form 2). This allows you to judge what level of power the actors are likely to have around the particular policy issue ('very high to very low'); as well as whether the actor would see the impact of the policy on them as strongly positive, strongly negative or somewhere in between.

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