

Project Performance Monitoring Unit and LGU Unit

Advocacy and Communication Framework

(DRAFT)

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ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK

Part I. BACKGROUND

Introduction

This document outlines the Advocacy and Communication Framework of the LEAD for Health Project. The document presents a single, integrated framework for both advocacy and communication so that Project advocacy and communication campaigns and activities proceed in concert and in accordance with a common set of goals and following a common process flow.

Advocacy and communication activities will occur at the national, regional, local levels. Key audiences will include government officials, government agencies, non-government organizations and private business organizations.

In keeping with the Project's special emphasis on the ARMM, the design of advocacy and communication activities in the region will be sensitive and responsive to the specific needs of ARMM's culture and religion. Other approaches include building on other projects' initiatives and successes, rather than starting anew or repeating what has been previously done; ensuring political and technical correctness, considering the arena is highly political; staying "under the radar" and proceeding in a low key manner.

Context

Where there is a need to speak up and draw attention to an important issue, there is a need for advocacy. Advocacy has as many meanings as there are organizations and coalitions advocating, but it is primarily a process directed towards influencing decision-making at the highest levels of public or private sector institutions.

Part of the advocacy process is mustering and strengthening support for a specific issue or set of issues and fostering a favorable environment toward the specific cause or issue.

Component 1 of the LEAD for Health Project seeks to **strengthen local level support for the management and provision of FP, TB and other selected health services. Two of the major tasks under this component have advocacy implications:**

Task A: Increase local level support for FP and other health services; and

Task C: Increase availability of LGU financial resources for health services.

Component 2 of the LEAD for Health Project seeks to **improve national level policies to facilitate efficient delivery of quality FP and selected health services by LGUs.** This breaks out into three major tasks:

Task A: Improve national and local policies for increasing financing of FP

Task B: Develop policies for mobilizing financing resources for services

Task C: Improve legal and regulatory policies for health service delivery

Accomplishing the above tasks will entail influencing policy makers and policy implementers both at the national and local levels. Appropriate legal and regulatory policies that will facilitate efficient delivery of quality FP and selected health services will have to be identified. Policy makers will then have to be influenced so that these policies (laws and regulations) are enacted and put in place. Advocacy work will target these policy makers to make them receptive to these recommended changes in policies.

With the appropriate policy changes identified and effected, the policy implementers will now have to be influenced, persuaded and/or trained to effectively implement these policies. Advocacy work will likewise be initiated to create the suitable environment for the implementation of the new policies or support the existing ones that enhance the LEAD Project's overall objectives.

Part of the task of mobilizing finances for these health services is the market transformation effort. This involves segmenting the market into the poor and non-poor. The general strategy is for the LGUs to focus their efforts and resources to meeting the needs of the poor and then tapping the private sector to take up the slack left by the public sector in servicing the non-poor users of FP and other services. Communication work is essential at this stage to encourage those who can pay for services they used to get for free to pay what they can and are willing to do so.

Advocacy Defined

Advocacy is primarily a process, occurring over an unspecified period of time. It is “a set of targeted actions directed at decision makers in support of a specific policy issue.”¹ It includes both single-issue, time-bound campaigns as well as continuing work undertaken around a range of issues

There are numerous advocacy efforts, both past and present, on family planning and reproductive health and quite a number on HIV/AIDS. It is important to determine current advocacy efforts on the Project's issue areas, build on their successes and address any gaps. It is the intention of the Project to support the advocacy efforts of national and local advocacy groups and help organize local advocacy groups, but not to engage in advocacy activities itself. In the Project's assessment of advocacy efforts, it will determine in which specific advocacy elements the locality requires assistance, what are

¹ Networking for Policy Change: An Advocacy Training Manual. The POLICY Project, The Futures Group International, October 1999, p.III-14.

the local group's particular needs for training or technical assistance and when the right timing is for the launching of advocacy campaigns.

Relationship between Advocacy and Communication

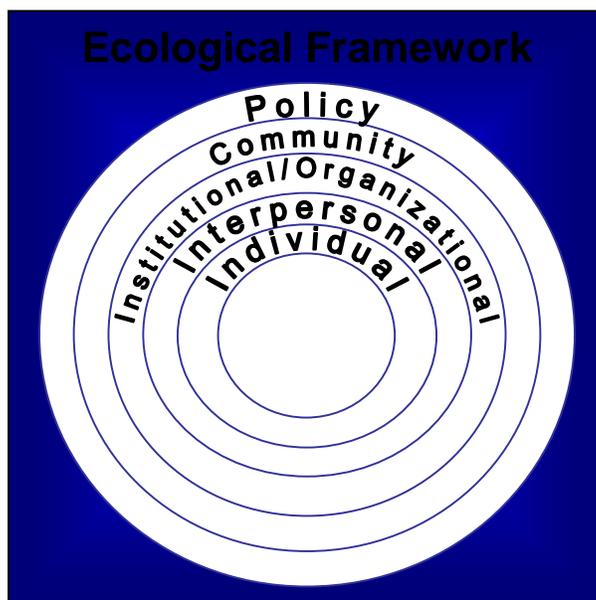
Advocacy and communication, while distinct from each other, complement and reinforce each other. The main distinction between the two lies not just in the goals and target audiences, but also in communication processes, channels and materials. While communication aims at individual changes in knowledge, attitudes and behavior, the outcome of advocacy is a change in a specific policy, law or program. Communication targets individuals and groups of individuals, while advocacy is directed at policy makers, leaders and decision-makers at different levels of management and administration.

The Role of Communication

Communication is essential to pushing a program as well as gaining and maintaining partnerships for its ultimate success. Effective communication fosters a sense of community, a sense of shared interests and responsibilities, and allows different sectors to come together for specific and general motives. Meanwhile, to help the community attain its goals and interests, effective communication is also crucial to giving key audiences informed and responsible choices and avenues for actions and decisions.

For LEAD for Health, communication is central to affirming local governments in their health and population management programs. It is also vital to steeling them with more information and data about their advocacies and their vast potential for networking with heretofore unknown or unappreciated partners.

Part II THE ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK DESIGN²



D. . Analyzing the current situation

The first step in the advocacy and communication planning processes is gaining an understanding of the issue or issues at hand. It is important to clearly define these issues, determine the factors contributing to it and assessing the prevailing trends.

For each of the four major areas of the LEAD Project (FP/Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, TB and Vitamin A supplementation), as well as the state of health service delivery and health financing, there is a need to gain a thorough understanding of the locality's situation in terms of the following:

- Current efforts and accomplishments: *What is being done by whom? What are the gains that can be celebrated? What are the gaps that need to be addressed?*
- Key lessons learned: *If the conditions are undesirable, what brought them about? If desirable, how can the program make them even more desirable? What brought about these desirable conditions?*
- Current challenges: *What particular obstacles or hurdles stand in the way of achieving the program's desired goals or targets?*

² **The Role of Communication in Comprehensive Anemia Control: A Framework for Planning and Implementing a Strategic Communication Plan.** International Nutritional Anemia Consultative Group, June 2003, p. 5-15

B. Selecting the strategies

It is often the case for many programs that relatively little time is spent formulating strategies for advocacy and communication. This is a common pitfall that must be avoided. It is critical that LEAD spend enough time to put together comprehensive and effective advocacy and communication strategies, as such strategies will be vital to the success of the overall program.

To identify and select the appropriate strategies, three issues must be addressed:

- *What needs to change? Or, what changes need to take place so we can move toward a solution or behavioral change?*
- *At which level must change occur? At the client level, the project level, policy level, or on all three levels?*
- *How can advocacy and communication be used to bring about these changes?*

For any advocacy or communication strategy to be considered effective and successful, it must increase a target audience's awareness, enhance that same audience's abilities/empowerment, encourage action, change attitudes/beliefs, and change behavior towards a direction favorable to the program's advocacy. At this, any adopted strategy must be sensitive to the culture, needs, sensibilities, and aspirations of the targeted audience, as communication is impossible where such sensitivity is absent.

C. Identifying key audiences

- *Who are the decision-makers who can make the program goals a reality?*
- *Who and what influences these decision-makers?*

Before strategies can be finalized, target audiences must be identified. But the task of identifying audiences itself must also take into consideration some crucial factors and issues.

First, the program must consider targeting groups that can actually hasten/facilitate the attainment of program objectives. Beyond this, the program must be aware of how it can gain and build access to these crucial audiences, given the program's available resources, time-, personnel-, and money-wise, for example.

Then the program must consider each audience's receptiveness towards the advocacy and the intended behavioral change. In this light, there is a need to gather more data in decision making—interviews, FGDs, surveys. Put simply, time, resources, and effort are wasted on audiences that are not prepared for or not receptive to change. The program must prioritize audiences that are already seeking change, and who are already in agreement with the program's advocacy.

D.1. Selecting behavior objectives

The program must have a clearly defined idea as to what actions or behaviors must be expected and sought from its target audiences. In other words, once the program's message is delivered effectively, *what actions and behaviors would we like to see in the target audience that will demonstrate not only the success of the communication and advocacy strategy, but also the commitment of the audience to become a partner and collaborator in the program?*

The mere passing on of knowledge is not enough to lead to a change in behavior. In defining and selecting behavior objectives, the program must also take into consideration:

1. the political, economic, social, and/or cultural motivations of the target audience.
2. the resources—money, people, and political support, for example—available to the audience.
3. the barriers and obstacles preventing audiences from acting.
4. the program's own ability to facilitate finding a solution for removing the said barriers and obstacles.

D.2. Selecting policy/program changes

- *How are issues generated for new or revised policies?*
- *How is a proposed issue introduced into the formal decision-making process?*
- *What is the process for discussing, debating and presenting proposals? Who are involved?*
- *How is a proposal approved or rejected?*
- *How do leaders perceive the issue or issues at hand?*

To advance the policy advocacy agenda, it is necessary to first understand the process of policy-making in the various issue areas of LEAD and the political climate in which this process occurs. Before starting to propose policy changes, advocacy planners need to analyze existing laws and policies. This understanding is the basis for determining the difficulties that confront efforts to change these policies.

E. Building support : organizing multi-sectoral advocacy teams and choosing collaborators

- *Who can be invited to join the cause?*
- *Who else can be an ally or champion?*

A successful strategy employed in several FP projects in the past is the creation of local advocacy teams who were able to solicit support and commitment from their local governments. Multi-sectoral advocacy teams to be organized should be

composed of advocates in the local government, adherents in non-government organizations, academe and the media.

To maximize the chances of success, advocacy and communication plans need to be implemented with selected individuals or organizations pursuing similar goals or interests. It works to the LEAD Project's advantage that other USAID projects also have advocacy components in the issue areas the LEAD is focused on—the Social Acceptance of Family Planning in the Philippines Project, the Philippine Tuberculosis Initiatives for the Private Sector Project and the Commercial Market Strategies Project. Working with these collaborators is of crucial importance especially at the local level where resources are often scarce. Key collaborators include those that can serve as “idea champions” who can lend their credibility in the effort to promote the advocacy cause and to diffuse the messages.

F. Defining the outcomes

As with every other advocacy or communication plan, it is important for LEAD to identify from the outset the behavioral or policy changes it would like to see in its target audience. This is important so that the success of the plans can be measured. At the same time—and at the very least—identifying intended behavioral or policy changes will allow the program to fine-tune itself mid-stride, or even as it continues with its work. It will give everyone from field workers to program leaders data and information necessary to adjust their work and provide more effective strategies.

The question now is, *how do we identify and/or define the outcomes we would like to see and measure?* First, we must lay down the current behaviors and practices of the target audiences that are measurable. *How many families practice family planning, for example, or how many families say they have nothing against it?*

Then we must identify behaviors that suggest receptivity to the program's advocacy. We must give realistic time frames by which behavioral changes will be allowed to set in. Attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding population management, for example, do not change overnight or even over a few months. *What would be a more realistic time frame for measuring behavioral changes in this issue?*

G. Mobilizing resources

- *How can the needed resources be gathered to carry out the advocacy and communication efforts?*

While the force of a good cause is often enough to bring people to work together, attracting resources to put into action an advocacy or communication plan requires effort and skill. Networking allows a program to share costs with allies and collaborators. Self-generated resources may be leveraged to obtain more resources from potential donors. There are many creative and innovative ways to fund

campaigns. What is important is to set goals that are realistic and based on the locality's particular environment and needs.

H. Developing the message/s

➤ *What message/s will get the selected audience to act in the program's behalf?*

Once crucial and receptive audiences are identified, the program must help to deepen their understanding of the issues and objectives they share with the program.

In this task of developing and deepening the program's message, therefore, it must be asked:

What do the audiences already know? What do they currently think? To be effective, a message must be sensitive to a community or target audience's sensibilities, culture, and aspiration, and must be contextualized accordingly.

So the program must also ask:

What do they think and what do they want to happen?

What are they willing to do to further the program's advocacy and effect change in their own community and own targeted audiences?

I. Selecting the media /channels of communication

Selecting the appropriate media or channel of communication for the program's developed message is crucial for effectiveness as well as efficiency. Communication and advocacy needs to be both effective as well as efficient as it is highly dependent on sophisticated audiences and limited resources.

Thus, any medium or channel of communication must satisfy the following considerations:

1. It must speak the "language" of the targeted audience. This does not only refer to English, Filipino, or any other local tongue as an actual medium, but more importantly refers to a channel's ability to speak to an audience's concerns, aspirations, sensibilities, and daily cultural references.
2. It must be most accessible to the target audience.
3. It must be affordable, money-wise and resources-wise.
4. It must be deployable, or deliverable, and—corollary to this—there must be clear, obvious, and realistic means by which the message and its packaging—e.g., a brochure, flier, poster, or any other collateral—can be brought directly to the audience.
5. The medium's/channel's ability to deliver the message must be tangible and measurable.

J. Formulating the monitoring and evaluation framework and conducting monitoring and evaluation

- *How does the program know if it has succeeded in reaching its advocacy and communication objectives?*
- *To what extent have the advocacy and communication efforts been effective? Efficient? What have been their impacts?*
- *How can the advocacy and communication strategies be improved?*

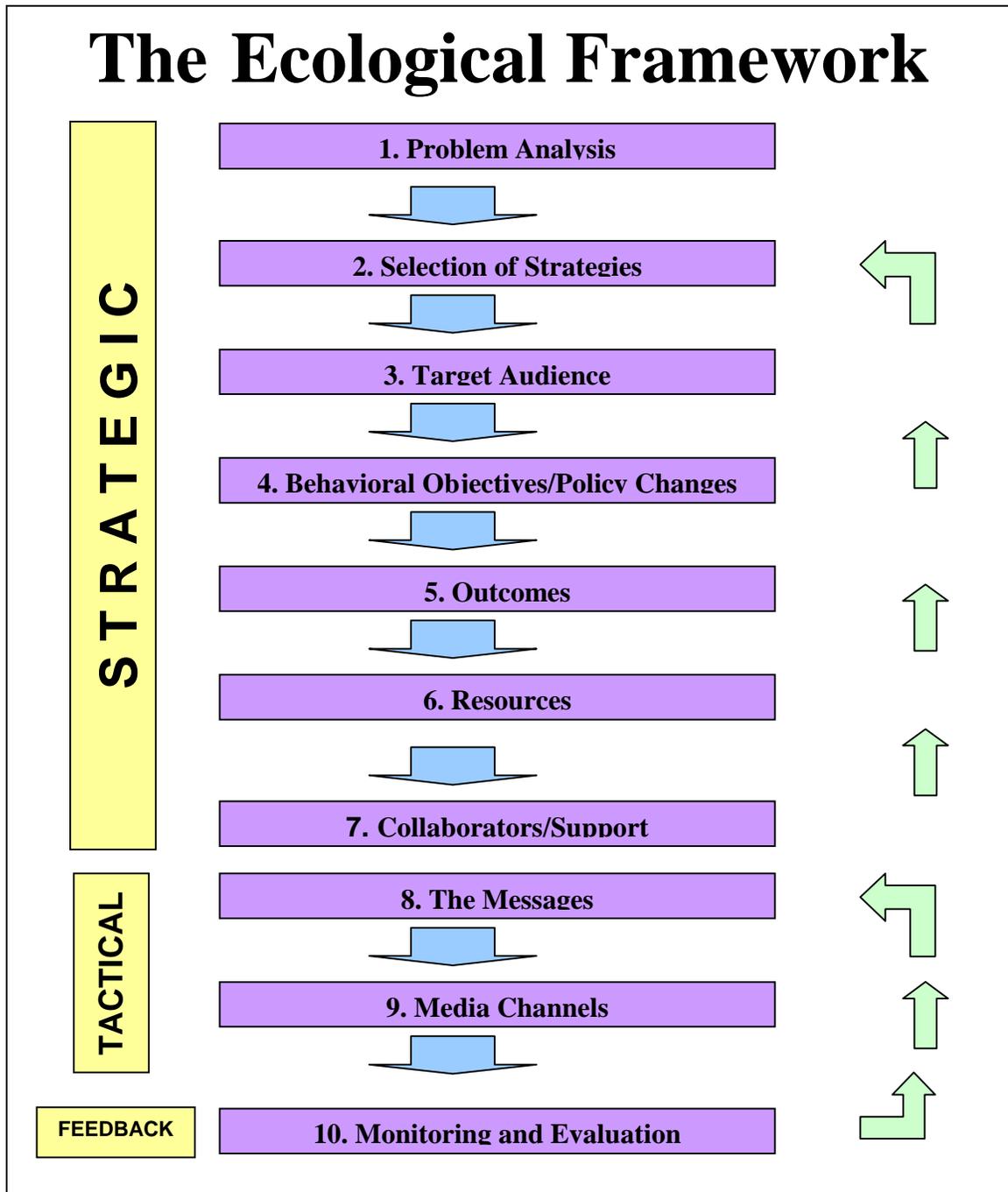
Implementing an advocacy or communication plan requires continuous feedback and evaluation of the campaign efforts. The program needs to demonstrate clearly the relationship between its objectives, strategies, activities and the outcomes.

Routine checking and feedback will enable the program to identify the strengths, weaknesses, gaps, issues and problems faced in the course of implementation. Improvements or changes can then be instituted to address these gaps and weaknesses.

Information needs to be collected and analyzed to determine if the program's objectives have been achieved. Evaluation of the advocacy and communication efforts requires investigation into the following aspects:

- The extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved;
- The effects and eventual impact of the advocacy or communication efforts; and
- The efficiency of the advocacy and communication efforts.

The Ecological Framework



The flowchart illustrates the steps involved in the ecological framework. It starts with a problem analysis and ends in monitoring and evaluation. The process also includes a feedback loop, that begins from the evaluation process, back to the strategies, and proceeds to the other elements.