



# Advocacy Toolkit for Women in Politics

## 3 Mobilising Resources for your Advocacy Activities

“ The best place to start is with you. Consider how much money you have that you could put in to start your campaign and see how far it will go by doing a budget.”

**W**e all know that “resources” doesn’t just mean money. It covers a whole range, including goods and services, networks and links and knowledge and information. It is often said that people are your greatest resource so there is no need to get stuck with your advocacy plan just because you may not have the financial resources.

As part of the process of planning for your advocacy activity, list all of the resources available to you.

### Networks and links

Consider what personal contacts you have that can help make your advocacy plan a success? Having a high profile contact publicly endorsing your advocacy work can give it a lot of status and make it more attractive for the media and potential contributors. Identify someone who supports the issue and possibly even to be the voice of the campaign. Be sure that this person is clear on the advocacy goals and is able to speak knowledgeably about the issue. The person should also be willing to be interviewed by the press and therefore, it should be someone who you know feels as passionately as you do about the issue you are campaigning on.

Networks and links also

include family members who may be willing to help with the actual work of the campaign. That would include volunteering to conduct research and gather information, organise events, write reports or design pamphlets or a website for your campaign.

Think about the skills set and the physical resources, for example transport, a venue to host events, which your family and friends have. Get them interested and excited about the issue and get them to come on board by helping out in small or big ways.

### Knowledge and information

What you know and the information you can get are critical resources in your advocacy work. Do your research and gather as much relevant infor-

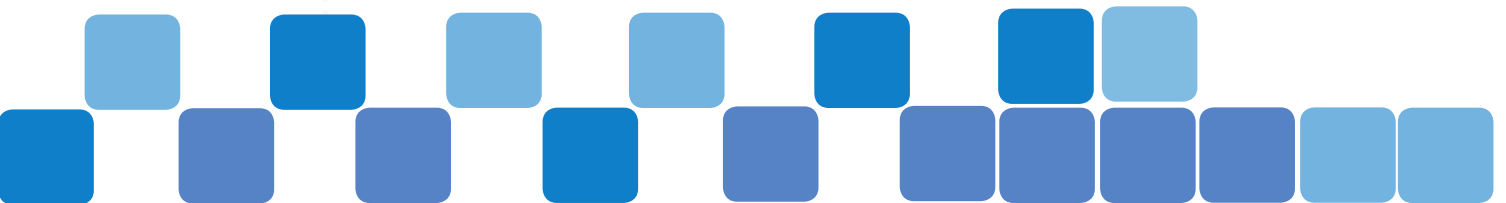
mation as you can. Know the sources of information, again remembering that your networks and links are often the best sources.

Make sure the information you gather is varied enough for you to put forward a convincing argument about the issue you are advocating on. This should include statistics and facts, background information and stories from ordinary people (case studies) on how this particular issue has affected them.

You also need to consider the media as an important source of information. Keep up to date with the news, read the whole newspaper and see if there are articles in there that relate to your advocacy issue. Clip and file these stories. They will come in handy when you want

When gathering your available resources together, consider the following:

- ✓ Personal financial resources available for the advocacy campaign;
- ✓ Budget for overhead costs – telephone, internet, travel, assistant, etc;
- ✓ Skills set among family and friends that could be volunteered
- ✓ Prominent persons and networks to support the campaign
- ✓ Research and information resources
- ✓ Physical resources – vehicle, venue, space for an office – to commit to campaign;
- ✓ Database of newspapers, their editors and journalists who write on issues related to your advocacy issue.
- ✓ Database of NGOs and donors who support similar issues



“ The journalists who write the stories you see, hear and read in the media are a critical resource. You need to develop a database of journalists and cultivate a relationship with them. ”

- to present your argument on the issue. Know your advocacy issue so well that you can easily speak about it and convincingly answer questions if you are approached by the media or others.

- The best way to get to know your area is to write about it often. If you find a news article in the media that relates to your issue, use this as an opportunity to respond and provide your views on it in a more in-depth manner by writing a commentary piece or even just a letter to the editor.

#### The media

- If you have the financial resources to place an advert in the paper or on radio or television, that is great. But it can be very expensive so try and get more mileage out of it by talking to the editor about getting some editorial space too to cover your issue in greater depth. You may suggest to be interviewed on the issue, a feature that focuses on affected persons or a news item covering a campaign event you are going to hold.

- If you don't have funds for advertising, there are other ways to get the media to cover your issues. The media houses compete for news and are always on the lookout for noteworthy issues to report on. But they also receive a lot of press releases and calls for news coverage so the competition for coverage in the news is tough.

- Get to know the editors of your local papers and producers at the radio and television stations. Make an appointment and meet with them face to face. By so doing you will be establishing a relationship and when they receive your call about doing a commentary piece or see your press release on the email they will be able to link it to a face and recall the issue. But before you make your appointment, get to understand how the media works.

Take note of which newspapers are open to coverage and more in-depth analysis of social issues. This will help direct you to the editors who are most likely to buy into and be more open to covering your issues. Similarly, listen to radio programmes and identify the ones that would be open to bringing you onto the show to discuss your campaign issue. Radio still remains the most accessed media type by the general public and reaches a much wider audience than newspapers and television.

The journalists who write the stories you see, hear and read in the media are a critical resource. It's not enough to just get to know the editor and producers. You need to develop a database of the journalists too and cultivate a relationship with them. Part of that involves sending them easily digestible information, facts and figures on your advocacy issue, linking them up with affected people who are willing to tell their story and being willing to be interviewed yourself.

Coverage on local television, especially prime time, will give prominence and prestige to your campaign issue so be sure to also do your research on the range of programmes that report on social issues and prime time news reporters who cover them.

#### Financing your advocacy

Certainly, some financial resources will be required for your advocacy campaign. You may need to print posters or flyers, hire a venue, make telephone/cell phone calls, access the Internet, buy fuel for travel or hire transport.

The best place to start is with you. Consider how much money you have that you could put in to start your campaign and see how far it will go by doing a budget. Think creatively by keeping in mind that you have at your disposal all the other resources discussed above and be sure

to only put monetary figures on those items that really require funds.

What you have may be enough for you to organise a fundraising event. It's a good way of getting family, friends and networks to not only contribute but also get to know the issue and feel a part of the campaign's success. You could organise a lunch, tea, dinner or cocktail. It may include an auction of a prize during the event.

Again, call on your non-financial resources – is there someone who could provide catering or venue as a contribution? Or perhaps you can put together a hamper or get a hotel to sponsor a weekend for two as a prize that will be auctioned at the event. Be sure to acknowledge their contribution in your speech or official remarks during the event.

Explore the possibility of getting financial support from your political party if you belong to one. Get the party decision makers to buy in to the issue and provide compelling evidence of how this can raise the party's profile.

Another avenue to explore is donor funding. Do your research and find out which donors, embassies and United Nations agencies, like UN Women or UN Population Fund (UNFPA) are working on issues related to your campaign area and approach them.

Donors are usually reluctant to support individuals so, if possible, gather together other like-minded women politicians who share your passion for the advocacy campaign and approach the donors as a group.

You may also consider approaching donors through an NGO that is supportive of the work you are doing and through which you can submit your proposal to donors. They may even have a budget to cover some of your advocacy needs within existing projects.

The “Women in Politics” Advocacy Series is the product of a partnership between IPS Africa and UN Women as part of a wide programme to strengthen the capacity for advocacy and transformative leadership of women in politics, support institutions and political parties. For more information, resources and training opportunities, go to:

[http://www.ipsnews.net/new\\_focus/polls/index.asp](http://www.ipsnews.net/new_focus/polls/index.asp)