

Analyzing two sides of the same coin: influencing decision- making through advocac...

[Politics](#)



ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Public relations researcher Ruth Edgett, (2017), defines advocacy as “ the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading target audiences to look favourably on—or accept the point of view of—the individual, the organization, or the idea.” Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Advocacy can be defined as the practical use of knowledge for purposes of social changes. Advocacy is therefore an act of supporting an issue and persuading the decision makers on how to act in order to support that issue. Lobbying can generally be defined as any attempt to influence a politician or public official on an issue. Lobbying is an attempt to influence specific legislation (federal tax law, 2017). Contacting or urging the public to contact policy makers for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation or by advocating the adoption or rejection of legislation. It involves three parts: communication with policy maker that takes that takes position on specific, pending legislation.

In the process of advocacy, its activities include the need to represent people in behalf of them. To speak on their own or in other’s name in public. When representing some group of people, it is important that users or beneficiaries are sharing information with advocates. Advocates are presenting the information received, and the advocates are contacting those persons who are in the focus of advocacy efforts. Well-planned advocacy is especially important when users will not be able to represent themselves or

when one person is in charge of representing the whole group of people, (Watson, G. 2001)). The person chosen to do so must be capable of properly expressing interests of those on whose behalf it advocates.

Also, advocacy include mobilization which is to encourage others to speak in public with you. Mobilization in fact means nothing more than the inclusion of others in your activities in a way that they are encouraged to support your struggle, and then take actions towards fulfilment of common goals.

Mobilization is actually, expanding the base of support, extending from those which are directly affected by the problems to convincing others that this issue is important for them as well. Sikkink, K. (1998), postulates that, mobilizing others is important because the number of people who advocate is important, especially if all the people are advocating for a common thing, working with others or other groups reduces the risk that the issue they advocate for is controversial and you can achieve social change by raising public awareness which changes public opinion even if the same change does not occur within the government and state system, (Eaton, M. 2010). In this process it is expected that users will share information with advocates.

Advocates or will mobilize other people and or support organizations.

Advocates are ones who are mobilizing other individuals and or organizations to join the advocacy action.

Representation and mobilization allow people to discover how they can be active as political figures. Advocacy helps people to find simple ways that can influence the policy and practice at the same time. Also, in the process advocates are collecting information on current positions of the government,

local government and other stakeholders. Empowerment is also another activity which took place during the process of advocacy. This process is also very liberating because in some way it relies on personal energy and the strength of each person who is involved in the process. Empowerment just means to let others know they have the right to speak in public and have the right to be heard, (Asbridge, M. 2004). Another important result of this process is that by encouraging individuals to participate and play an important role in the development of policy and practice, allows for the sense of ownership over changes achieved. People who are encouraged through this process, experience radical change about their place in the community and recognize that they have rights that can be actively used. Finally, these processes encourage people to challenge the traditional roles of government and society, and to convince them that they have both responsibility and rights in the society. All three activities can take place at the same time, since in normal circumstances, these activities are often intertwined.

Advocacy is generally defined as arguing in favour of a cause or idea, whether it's environmental protection, minority rights, or the myriad other issues that affect people every day. There is no limit to the amount of advocacy a person or organization can do, (Lampe, C. 2012). Models of advocacy include self-advocacy which individuals represent and speak up for themselves, with support, either individually or collectively. This where you decide what you want and you are responsible for your choices and one has to be realistic and kind to yourself, speak clearly and confidently, get some support. This is standing up for one's self. Anyone can act as his or her own

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advocate. It is when a person makes an informed decision about a matter of importance and then takes responsibility for bringing about the change necessary to make that choice a reality, (Gagne and Ray, 2000).

Systemic advocacy is not individual, though it can be undertaken by just one person advocating on behalf of a group. The aim of systemic advocacy is to make positive change for a whole group of people. While this kind of advocacy takes time, strategy and resources, in the medium or long term it is more effective than negotiating that systemic barrier person by person, over and over again. Seymour and Peter (2012), eludes that, systemic advocacy “lobbies for reform and change of social systems and structures that discriminate against, abuse and neglect people with disabilities”.

Systemic advocacy refers to advocacy that is required to bring about change(s) to an organization or system. Sikkink, K. (1998), postulates that, systemic advocacy focuses on representing the rights, interests and viewpoints of a group who are similarly affected by an issue(s) and seeks to identify potential solutions to the issue(s).

In addition, individual advocacy is about working to bring a change in a situation for another individual. Advocacy is 2 people = one voices (Hank, Jr. 2000). You are standing beside someone. Prompting and reinforcing the expressed views and interests of the person. Assisting to clarify goals and develop strategies and advocate the views and interests of the group or person. Griffiths, D. (2012), postulates that, when advocating for someone else, it is very important to keep the person at the centre of your efforts and

do not let your personal dislike for someone interfere with your efforts on behalf of the person who wants a change through advocacy.

Peer advocacy is when the advocate and the advocacy partner share similar experiences or environments. This happens for example between children who may live together in a children's home, those experiencing mental ill health and those with a learning disability, (Hank and Gagne, Ray 2000). It sometimes means that people who have experienced the same things feel they have a better understanding and can be more supportive. Leiter and Valerie (2004), eludes that, peer advocacy happened in the past between people with learning disabilities when they were separated from others and lived in isolated hospitals. They often only had each other for company and were away from others in the community. There was no one else to speak up for them other than their fellow residents. As people with learning disabilities began to learn more about the rights and obligations of citizenship, more of them are speaking up for each other. This is often like citizen advocacy with both partners having a learning disability and is mostly of an informal nature and this where the world motto is used, " nothing about us without us" which simply means people who share same experiences are those ones who can speak for themselves and their fellow partners.

In advocacy, having the aim and objectives, they have to be " SMART" which simply means they should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Advocacy is a process designed to affect social change. The process of change can sometimes be time consuming, requires sacrifices, patience, involvement, and often requires giving one hundred percent,

teamwork both within your organization and team work with partner or coalition organizations, communication and openness. Advocacy consists of a series of activities undertaken with the aim of changing policies, practices and attitudes. People who are engaged in advocacy and seeking to influence the changes in society need to accept the risk that change they are advocating for can come much later, or even that nothing.

Lobbying can generally be defined as any attempt to influence a politician or public official on an issue. Lobbying as defined by federal tax law, (2016). An attempt to influence specific legislation. Contacting or urging the public to contact policy makers for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation or by advocating the adoption or rejection of legislation. It involves three parts, communication with policy maker that takes that takes position on specific, pending legislation.

There are two types of lobbying which is direct and grassroots lobbying or indirect lobbying. Direct lobbying refers to attempts to influence a legislative body through communication with a member or employee of a legislative body, or with a government official who participates in formulating legislation. Grass roots lobbying refers to attempts to influence legislation by attempting to affect the opinion of the public with respect to the legislation and encouraging the audience to take action with respect to the legislation. In either case, the communications must refer to and reflect a view on the legislation, (Maskell and Jack, 2011)

Kate (2010), postulates that, grassroots lobbying is an approach that separates itself from direct lobbying through the act of asking the general

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public to contact legislators and government officials concerning the issue at hand, as opposed to conveying the message to the legislators directly.

Companies, associations and citizens are increasingly partaking in grassroots lobbying as an attempt to influence a change in legislation. Grassroots lobbying often implement the use of media to expand their outreach.

Campaigns are developed and are published in all forms of media ranging from television to magazines and internet. Baumgartner and Frank (2009), elucidate that, because grassroots lobbying is geared toward local organizations and communities, these types of media outlets are used mainly by large associations that can afford them. Smaller organizations tend to use free media on public television, radio and other smaller outlets. Other forms of free media that make a large impact are things like boycotting, protesting and demonstrations.

The most important point to make about grassroots lobbying is that generally, it occurs only when you state your position to the general public and ask the general public to contact legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation. The key to this liberal interpretation of grassroots lobbying is that you can state your opinion on legislation to the general public as strongly as you want and it is not lobbying as long as you don't issue a call to action to the general public to contact legislators and it is only when an organization reaches beyond its members to get action from the general public, that grassroots lobbying occurs. (Graziano and Luigi 2001).

Direct lobbying occurs when a representative of an interest group directly contacts members of government to try to get them to act in the way that the interest group prefers. Page and Susan (2010), postulates that, an organization is engaging in direct lobbying when you state your position on specific legislation to legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation, or urge your members to do so. For example, a charity staff person urging a city council member to vote for an ordinance would be an illustration of direct lobbying.

Milyo and Jeffrey, (2011), mentioned that, in general, an organization is engaging in direct lobbying when you state your position on specific legislation to legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation, or urge your members to do so. You are participating in grassroots lobbying when you state your position to the general public and ask the general public to contact legislators or other government employees who participate in the formulation of legislation. Grassroots lobbying is an approach that separates itself from direct lobbying through the act of asking the general public to contact legislators and government officials concerning the issue at hand, as opposed to conveying the message to the legislators directly and grassroots lobbying is different from the more commonly known direct lobbying, as it is naturally brought upon by the organization, (Morgan, Bryson B. 2009).

Advocacy often involves specific lobbying of decision makers while lobbying does not include advocacy and lobbying is a complex and sensitive task, one must approach very well prepared. There is no limit to the amount of non-

lobbying advocacy organization can do, while lobbying activities are restricted to a percentage of operating budget. Lobbying involves attempt to influence specific legislation at the local, state, or federal level while advocacy is focused on educating about specific issue. Lobbying makes up a small portion of the total amount of advocacy efforts by most non-profits. While the goals of advocacy may be similar to those of lobbying, the methods employed by the two groups are different and advocacy is a broader term while lobbying is a type of advocacy.

In summation, advocacy and lobbying are important strategies for ensuring that laws and rules support the programs and services that are your reason for existing and only strategies for achieving the goals are different as discussed above.