

Campaigning for Change – a practical manual

Your essential guide to starting or re-energising your campaign

Tried and tested around the world

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A. Background – my own development: instinct versus training.

This manual is my most recent attempt to distil my key learning from 25+ years of both campaigning myself and helping others to campaign around the world.

When I first ran a national campaign back in 2000, I did not have any methodology to guide me. But that didn't stop me working with others to develop a clear campaign message and build successful campaigning momentum. You can get a long way with enthusiasm and a sense of injustice! Yet with hindsight, I do now see that I would have benefited from some of the tools that I now present in my training.

I do appreciate that some people are instinctive campaigners. Whether or not there is an established training programme, such people will be able to run campaigns, they always have done, and I hope that they always will do. That was certainly the case with me!

Yet there are two critical issues at play here.

The first is that no matter how good or effective we are in our campaigning, we should all invite and welcome challenge to our own professional practice. I remember running a campaigning workshop in Prague for an international NGO with country directors from around the world. At the end of the workshop, the country director from Cambodia came up to me. He told me that he was very experienced in running campaigns in a very difficult environment, and had been initially very sceptical about going on a campaigning training course. But he went on to say that he had welcomed the chance to reflect on an established framework, which had encouraged him to think about his own professional practice and had challenged him.

The second is that no matter how good or effective we are in our campaigning, we should be able to help others to campaign. And a crucial element here is an ability to convey succinctly the steps that one needs to go through to build an effective campaign. After my first successful national campaign I stopped to think about what had happened and tried to distil how we had approached the

campaign. We had made many mistakes on the campaign, but had learnt lessons along the way. I started to set out a basic framework to help people campaign.

I wasn't able to produce the framework that I use today at the first go. Rather, I drafted my initial approach, which was incredibly simplistic and omitted many different factors, but it gave me something to work with, and I was able to build on this approach over the next few years. I would then come across different approaches and tools in other training or reading, and by engaging with various theories of campaigning myself, I was also able to develop my framework. In addition, by offering campaign training around the world, and reflecting on the feedback and challenges, I was also able to strengthen this approach. All of this experience has allowed me to develop and enhance this campaigning framework. If you are interested to know more about my experience, here is a link to my biography: <http://jonathanelliscampaigns.com/about-jonathan/>

To do campaigning you don't have to be a professional campaigner with the word campaigner in your job title. Rather you need to have passion to achieve change on a particular issue. *I will never forget the response from a Roma community leader at a workshop in Bulgaria, who came up to me at the end of the workshop, and told me that as a result of this training, she now realised that she had been doing campaigning all her life, she just would not have attached that description to her activities. I loved that feedback.*

And I am grateful to Olivia Field and Bernd Steimann, both colleagues with whom I have worked over many years and for whom I have great respect, for their advice and thoughts on my draft manual.

I hope this manual helps and inspires you if you are new to campaigning to start doing it yourself. And I also hope that it helps and inspires you if you are an experienced campaigner by making you stop and reflect on your own practice. But above all, I hope that you tell me what you think; what you think works; what doesn't work; and what is missing, so that I can in time revise this manual with even more helpful content for people looking to push for change. Enjoy the manual and I look forward to hearing from you:

<http://jonathanelliscampaigns.com/contact/>

B. Introduction: The Twelve Key Questions:

My course offers a simple and practical approach to campaigning and sets out the twelve questions that I think you need to be able to answer to start campaigning.

And it offers practical and tested tools, used around the world, to help in your campaigning. Section B runs you through these 12 questions that I have used over the last decade or so to help people understand campaigning, but also to begin to run their own campaigns, and is the core content on which I based my published book [*Campaigning for Change: an Essential Guide to Campaigning around the World.*](#)

Section C explores additional elements that I have built into my training reflecting upon feedback from my work around the world after the publication of my book back in 2017.

I have also sought to include practical examples from my work supporting people to campaign around the world to help bring these ideas to life – and this content is in green.

And you will also find suggestions for you to put each new piece of learning into action so that by the end of this manual you will have the beginning of a strategy for your campaign – and this content is in red.

So, before we go through each question, here is a summary of the twelve key questions that will help you to drive forward in your campaigning:

CAMPAIGNING CHECKLIST

1. What is campaigning and why is it important to you?

2. What is your problem? But why is it a problem?

3. Is there a common understanding of your external environment?

4. What evidence have you got or do you need?

5. Do you pass the TEA test with your solution?

6. Can you do the elevator pitch?

7. How credible are you and what are the risks to you?

8. Have you got an influence tree with a target and allies?

9. How are you using opposition to help you?

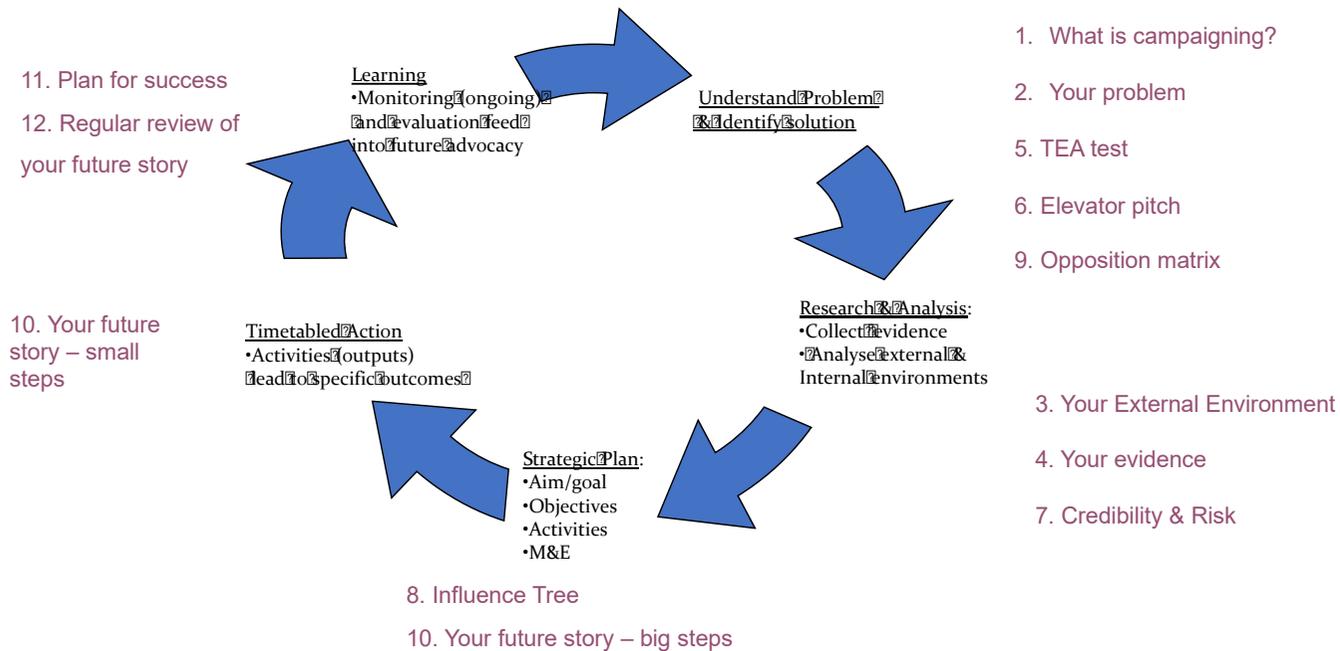
10. Have you got a theory of change?

11. Have you got a plan for success?

12. When are you next going to review progress?

And here are the 12 questions presented in the format of the campaigning cycle. This diagram shows how each of these questions fits into one of the five stages of the cycle and how none of these activities are one-off but should be done on a cyclical basis. I suggest you return to this diagram once you have gone through the manual as you might find it a helpful overview:

The Campaigning Cycle



1. What is campaigning?

When it comes to understanding the meaning of campaigning, I often think that children can help us as they can be the best at campaigning!

The cookie story

The best definition of campaigning that I have ever heard was given by a guy called Mark Latimer at a conference that I went to years ago, when he was asked if he could define campaigning. His answer was brilliant and has lived with me ever since. This is how I remember his answer, and what I have shared around the world:

He said, imagine, if you would, a small girl at home in her kitchen with her mother. The little girl has a problem: she is hungry. But she has a solution to her problem: there is a cookie jar on the top shelf in the kitchen, but she is unable to reach it. But she knows that the person who has the power to give her a cookie is her mum.

So, she tries the direct approach: she says “mum, mum can I have a cookie?”. And her mum says firmly no. She thinks, for a second, and then says “you gave me a cookie yesterday.” She’s a bright girl, this one using historic precedent. Again, her mother says no. She thinks again, and then says, “but you gave my little brother a cookie.” And again, her mother says no. She thinks again, and then runs next door into the lounge where her dad is watching TV, and you guessed it, she says to her dad, “mum won’t give me a cookie!”

And for me that beautifully simple story sums up the essence of campaigning. That little girl was crystal clear on identifying a clear problem together with a clear solution.

She was also very clear who had the power to make the change. She wanted to see, and she was committed to trying to do different things to influence that person to bring about the change that she wanted to see. And above all she was persistent and not prepared to give up.

I remember running a campaign workshop in Tanzania over a number of days many years ago, and at the end of the workshop, the group were unanimous in their summary that they really needed time out to go away and think about what their cookie was and who had the power to give it to them!

The point of campaigning

Campaigning is not just about complaining or protesting, rather, it is about promoting and supporting by argument, a particular policy or practice change.

Campaigning is about attempting to form or to reform the policy and practice of **institutions**. It seeks to influence the attitude, opinions and practices of **individuals in positions of power**. But most importantly of all, it aims to improve the lives of **significant numbers of people**. Campaigning is not just about getting a commitment to change; it is about **securing real tangible change** that makes a direct and tangible benefit to people's lives.

After helping to influence a change in the law on empty homes in England in 2004, giving local authorities new powers, I was invited onto an implementation committee within the relevant government department. As a result, together with my colleague we attended a number of meetings in Whitehall to discuss the roll-out of this new legislation. I will never forget at the end of one meeting, my colleague coming up to me and politely chastising me by saying "you're really enjoying these meetings, aren't you?" To which I replied yes. He then politely reminded me that despite having got a change in the law not a single empty property had actually been brought back into use. His chastisement was a timely reminder that we needed to sustain a sense of urgency to bring about real change on the ground and not be content with mere policy commitments and attendance at meetings.

Approaches to campaigning

I also think that it is important to be clear that campaigning as an activity can cover a wide array of activities, which can be summarised as either using an insider or an outsider route, or indeed a combination of both. The insider route involves activities such as discrete one-to-one conversations with key people behind the scenes; while the outsider route involves activities such as media work, mass letter writing, and demonstrations.

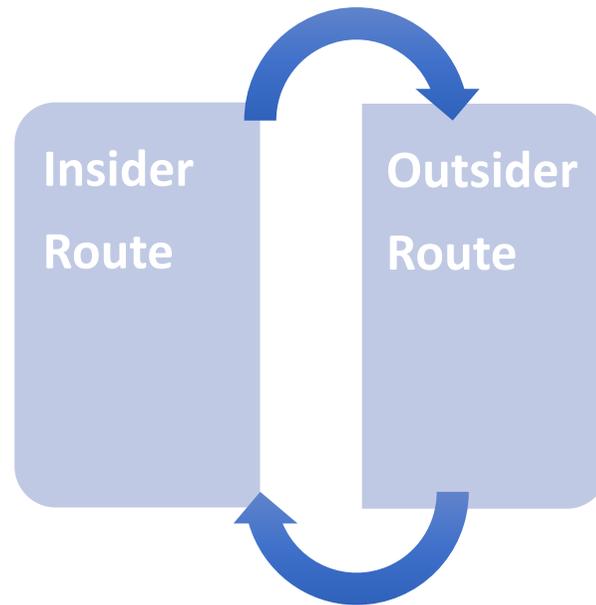
When I was at the Red Cross, I was repeatedly told by senior colleagues that we were not a campaigning organisation, yet in the role of head of advocacy, we were clearly about achieving and promoting change.

What I took them to mean was that they didn't want us to engage so much on the outsider track, as their preference was for pushing for change on the inside track.

Your choice of route for your campaigning will be determined by: your organisation's desired positioning; your own understanding of the external context; and your understanding of the influence potential of your target. You adopt the route that you think has the highest chance of success in pushing for your change. You don't adopt the route that you want to actually do yourself – it took me years to realise that simple but vital lesson! Your choice of actions is not about you; it is about what you can do to bring about change.

I remember being at a conference and the great campaigner, Kumi Naidoo being asked whether he preferred the insider or the outsider route for campaigning. And my recollection of his answer was powerful in that you should be open to using both routes, depending on the external context, but very importantly, your target should never be able to predict which route you are going to use. Sometimes organisations can be so set in their way of doing campaigning; they have one approach to campaigning regardless. I think an element of surprise in campaigning can often be a good thing.

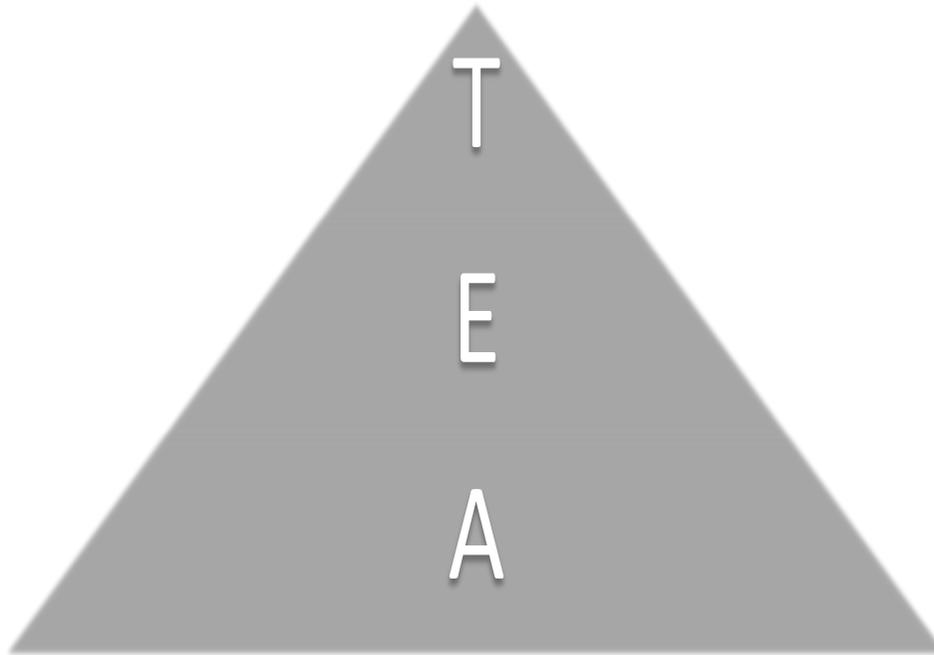
The graphic below does not mean that you need to keep constantly changing your approach, but rather, as my story from Kumi Naidoo above shows, that you should be open to using both approaches but as the situation demands. They can sometimes work in parallel; sometimes you might stop one and just use the other, but you are responding to how you are understanding your external context.



Yet I am also so conscious that there are locations around the world where an outsider route is just not possible or indeed safe, and there are other locations where an insider route is a waste of time, and you have to focus on the outsider route. The critical element in your choice of approach is that you reflect on the reality of your external context and base your decision on your reflection. We will explore this point in more detail in chapter 3.

The TEA Test

Another definition of campaigning that I have used over the years is what I have come to call the TEA test.



I remember being out in Senegal with Oxfam, and struggling to engage with some colleagues there around the concept of campaigning, which initially seemed very alien to them.

I found myself talking about the importance of following a basic three stage approach to campaigning. Firstly, you need to touch the person you are seeking to influence. No, I do not mean physically touch, but I mean find a way to connect with them to get them

interested in your problem. You then need to enthuse them that while there is a problem, there is also a solution to tackle this problem. Then finally, having touched and enthused them, you then ask them to take a particular action: **touch; enthuse; act.**

And this seemed to work with my colleagues in Senegal. They told me that they routinely worked like that in the course of their jobs; they just had never thought of it as campaigning.

At this point, it may be helpful for you to think about a campaign that has touched and enthused you and then got you to act. What made this campaign pass the TEA test with you? It can also be interesting to reflect on campaigns that did not pass the TEA test with you. Again, why did they fail with you? As a campaigner, it can be a great activity to apply the TEA test to other campaigns as you can learn so much about building an effective and motivating campaign.

What makes for a good campaign?

A good campaign needs a **clear and focused message**. It needs to focus on a simple **problem** and the **solution**. I think a degree of **outrage or injustice** is necessary to motivate a really good campaign. You don't just campaign because you are mildly irritated. A good campaign makes use of the **media**, but only when you consider that to be helpful - you should not consider media coverage to be a standard default setting for all campaigning. A good campaign requires **political support** very often, but across different parties and never owned by one particular party. Always try to keep as many options open as possible on your issue, and avoid 'putting all your eggs in one basket'. A good campaign requires **alliances**, and in particular, surprising allies can be very, very helpful. A good campaign needs an **action** to make it real - what can people do to get involved? And above all a good campaign needs **momentum**; change does not happen because you do one thing in isolation!

Over the years, I have come to realise that whatever you call this activity is not important. Is it campaigning or advocacy or influencing or indeed something else? What is important is your focus on your problem, your solution and how you can influence your target with

the power to make the change you want to see, and that you and your team all have same understanding of how you are going to push for change.

Campaigning mechanisms

And when I think about campaigning, I will think about the key campaigning mechanisms, and how I am going to use each of these at different times to drive my campaign forward:

- Research and analysis
- Lobbying - speaking directly to people
- Media
- Allies
- Public involvement

How does change happen?

It is also important as a campaigner to think about how change actually happens. Many years ago, my friend Chris Stalker shared an incredibly helpful pamphlet with me called [Pathways for Change: Six Theories about how Policy Change Happens](#). This brief document came from Organizational Research Services in the States, and the authors looked back over recent history to try and answer the question about how policy change actually happens, and as a campaigner, I was fascinated to read this simple structure to understand different approaches to pushing for change.

Their first theory is called the **large leap**, where large scale policy change is the goal. With this theory, something massive happens in society which causes a chain reaction leading to change. My favourite example of this theory is the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1991, which led to the first multi-party, multi-racial elections in South Africa and the end of apartheid.

Their second theory is called **coalition theory**, where co-ordinated activity amongst a range of individuals and organisations with the same core belief brings about change. My favourite example of this theory is a campaign that I will talk about later (page 46) when a coalition came together in the UK to campaign against the use of supermarket vouchers to support asylum seekers in the UK. Oxfam, an international development charity, the Refugee Council, a refugee charity, and the TGWU (now Unite the trade union) working with many others came together to push for a change in this policy.

Their third theory is called **policy windows**, where campaigners use a window of opportunity to push for a particular policy solution. With this theory, something happens in the outside world, and campaigners use this as an opportunity to promote their desired change. My favourite example of this theory is when the UK government announced that they would no longer be detaining children for immigration reasons, and campaigners used this as a window of opportunity to make the case that no adult should be locked up because of their immigration status.

Their fourth theory is called **messaging and frameworks**, where the key issue for influence is how issues are framed and presented. My favourite example of this theory are the campaigns to ban smoking in public. Campaigners were able to change the framing for their message to ban public smoking by re-presenting it as a health and safety at work issue, and to argue that stopping smoking would enhance the health of staff working in bars and restaurants.

Their fifth and penultimate theory is called **power politics**, where policy change is achieved by working directly with those with power. My favourite example of this theory is when I was campaigning to bring in a new power to bring empty homes back into use in England. The civil service had been remarkably reluctant to move on this issue, but it took half an hour with the then Housing Minister to put action on empty homes firmly on the government agenda.

Their final theory is called **community organising**, where policy change happens through the collective action of members of a community, who work together on changing problems affecting their lives. I was really pleased to see this theory included in their article, as sometimes campaigning at community or grassroots level can be seen as something different when it comes to campaigning for change. But I loved the fact that the authors included this theory as a really important alternative or complementary route to making change happen. My favourite example of this theory is the excellent work undertaken by London Citizens with groups across London working at the level of individual companies to promote the need for a real living wage.

As campaigners, I think this short pamphlet is incredibly helpful to us in setting out these six very different approaches to achieving change. And as we begin to think about our campaign and the best way to bring about change, it can be really helpful to reflect upon which of these approaches you might use. It may be that you use just one, you may choose to use several, or indeed, you may change your approach as your campaign develops and your own understanding of your external environment also evolves.

Yet, you should also be very wary of picking one approach, achieving some success with it, and then always looking to run a campaign using this approach. Just because an approach worked once does not mean it will work again! The great thing about this pamphlet on the six theories is that it encourages you to think, it challenges you to think about what is the best approach, or indeed approaches, for you to adopt to push for change.

It could be interesting for you to reflect on these six theories. Can you think of your own examples of these theories? And as you begin to develop your thinking about a campaign on your issue, don't forget these theories. In particular, it will be good to come back to them in chapter 10, when we explore the idea of a future story for your campaign.

Key qualities

Finally, in my introduction to campaigning, I have always liked to cover what I think are the key qualities that you need as a campaigner:

- **Passion** – whilst as campaigners we do need to be professional and organised, we should never lose sight of our passion or indeed seek to hide it. It is our passion that initially motivated us and will keep motivating us. Your sustained passion should be at the core of your campaigning.
- **Persistence** – as campaigners, we need to be persistent; we don't just do something once and stop doing it when change doesn't happen. If you remember back to the cookie story, one of the most powerful elements for me about that story, is that

the little girl knows what she wants to achieve, but she is persistent, she keeps trying, and doesn't give up. As campaigners, we should adopt the same approach.

- **Vision** – as campaigners, we need to have a clear vision of what the world looks like when we have achieved our change. You need to be able to explain that clearly and visibly to build momentum and energy around your campaign.
- **Flexibility** – as campaigners, whilst we do need to have a plan and a clear sense of direction (and we will cover much more about this later), it is so important that we are also flexible and can respond to changes in the outside world that could present opportunities for us to promote our case for change.
- **Creative use of the campaigning tools** – as campaigners, we need to be ready to make creative and imaginative use of the campaigning tools outlined above of research and analysis; allies; lobbying; media and communications; and public involvement.
- **Curiosity about power and influence** – as campaigners, we need to maintain our sense of curiosity, in an almost childlike manner, to be asking questions about who has the power and what influences them. We should never stop asking questions, and in particular asking the question **but why?**
- **A burning desire for change** – as campaigners, we don't start our campaigning because we are mildly irritated, or slightly put out; we start campaigning because we have burning desire for change, and it is that burning desire, which will enthuse and motivate other people in support of your campaign.
- And finally, **a sense of enjoyment** – as campaigners, we do need to have a sense of enjoyment, a certain *joie de vie*. I have come across some campaigners, who are working on challenging issues, but they come across as just being so miserable and depressed; whilst that is understandable, it is not good and it will not help build momentum, support and energy around your campaign. If you are trying to build a better world, you should be enjoying the process and encouraging others to do enjoy it to be part of the dynamic momentum for change! But you will also need your own reservoir of motivation (see page 81)

So much for introducing campaigning, let's now begin to move through the key questions that you need to be able to answer before you launch your campaign.

2. What is your problem?

Campaigning focus

A fundamental part of effective campaigning is being focused on your objective. The enemy of effective campaigning is a lack of focus. I remember years ago running a training workshop in Warsaw, Poland, and being told by the group very proudly that they had 27 campaigning priorities. They then got annoyed with me when I suggested to them that having so many priorities was not the best way to achieve impact!

Now, I can barely remember 27 things let alone run with 27 campaigning priorities. When you are campaigning, I think that clarity around your objective is just so important.

How to decide on your priority

But how do you decide your priority issue? I've come across some groups around the world who have become completely paralysed at this stage, being confronted with a multiplicity of options, on which they could possibly focus their campaigning energy.

I have often heard myself say to them that I don't mind what they choose, but it is so important that you are clear and transparent about your selection criteria. Whichever campaigning priority you choose, I guarantee that you will receive criticism for it. Guaranteed! What I think is important is being able to be very clear about how you reached your decision on your campaigning priority.

Your selection criteria could include things like:

- Your experience and evidence
- Having a clear solution
- 'Winnability'
- Views of people with lived experience

- Your own credibility and legitimacy on the issue
- Interest from your target
- Will your involvement add to what already might be happening?

Having decided your own key selection criteria, you could then apply them to your shortlist of possible campaign priorities to see which gets the highest score to help you decide on your priority and then later to explain your choice.

Deciding on your solution

Over the years, as I have run this training course and developed it in different locations across the world, I have never been keen to push too hard on what people should promote as their desired solution which would address their problem. Whilst I was keen to offer people potential selection criteria to help them choose and prioritise their problem, I was always very keen that people had the freedom to focus on a solution that felt right to them.

Yet in more recent years I have been challenged by colleagues, who have suggested to me that it might be helpful to give people a bit of help to think through how they might focus on a solution to complement the problem that their campaign seeks to address.

After reflecting on these challenges, I'm still of the view that it would be wrong to offer too much guidance on how people should select their solution; I do feel that it is important in terms of authenticity of the campaign that you really own and believe in the solution that you are promoting.

Nevertheless, I think there are two important things to think about:

Firstly, I think it can be helpful distinguish between what might be an immediate goal that you want to achieve quickly, which will then give you momentum towards that long-term goal that you want to see. Particularly when you are dealing with a complex issue, it can be really helpful to hold both the immediate change you want to see and the ultimate change together at the same time.

With my work in the UK tackling the use of immigration detention, as a network we have historically promoted a time limit for immigration detention as the immediate goal that we want to see, whilst still having the ultimate ambition of ending the practice of immigration detention.

If you are running with an immediate goal, it is also so important not to lose sight of the ultimate goal and it can become so easy for your immediate goal to become all that you talk about. An effective campaigner is able both to combine a message around immediate action whilst still promoting inspiring rhetoric about the ultimate change you want to see.

Furthermore, it can also be helpful to think about the key milestones that you want to achieve on the way to achieving your ultimate goal. We will come back to this point about how your campaign might develop when we discuss the idea of a future story for your campaign in chapter B10.

And secondly, I think it is so important to be open to the possibility of amending your solution as your campaign develops. Later in this manual, I will promote the importance of being flexible and being able to evolve your campaign strategy, and it is equally important to be open to the possibility of needing to modify the solution that your campaign seeks to promote.

At Oxfam when we launched our campaign against the use of asylum vouchers, we were conscious that this was a new campaign for Oxfam, and indeed it was the first time we never spoken out on a domestic issue in the UK. Possibly as a result, we initially had a relatively conservative campaign ask, which was to ensure that people using the vouchers were able to receive change, when the current practice had been to deny users of the voucher any ability to redeem unspent money on their voucher. As the campaign developed and we built more momentum, and in particular we heard more from individual people's experiences of this voucher system, together with our partners we amended our campaign solution from asking for change to be given to a call for an outright abolition of the scheme and a re-introduction of cash support.

So, as you settle on your campaign problem, do think about your desired solution particularly in terms of your immediate ask and your long-term goals, but also be open to amending your solution as you develop your learning from running your campaign.

But why?

Once you have decided your campaigning priority, it is really important to spend some time thinking about why the problem that your campaign is focused on is actually a problem. Now, that may seem a somewhat strange suggestion, but there is a danger when you are motivated to campaign on a particular issue that you jump right into doing things and look only at the superficial issues facing you without seeking to address the deeper causes of your problem.

There is a really simple campaigning tool to help you think about why your problem really is a problem, and it is called the **but why?** technique. It is a simple tool designed to help you to get to the root of an issue. You may recall me stating earlier that children are often the best at campaigning (remember the cookie story?), and this tool is another piece of evidence to support that fact.

When I was a child, I was always asking my mother, but why, but why, and she would often have to tell me to be quiet. But as a campaigner, you need to return to that almost childlike quality of persistently asking the **but why?** question. This campaigning tool simply involves taking your problem and then asking repeatedly the question: **but why?** And it is best done with somebody who knows nothing about your issue and can quite genuinely ask the question: **but why?**

Probably the best thing that I can do here is to give you an example that I came across many years ago, working for INTRAC, of a very simple application of the **but why?** technique:

The immediate problem

- The children are not going to school
- Ask: but why?

The initial problem:

- The children keep falling ill and don't go to school
Possible response: provide medicines

Ask but why?

- They drink bad water

Possible response: dig a well

Ask but why?

- The well is too far from the school

Possible response: put in a pipe

Ask but why?

- The local government said it would dig a new well last year but it hasn't

Possible response: dig a well or lobby local government

Ask but why?

- The government has not released the funds that are supposed to have been set aside

Possible response: dig a well/put in a pipe or lobby central government

Ask but why?

- The international donors haven't released the pledged aid funds

Possible response: dig a well/put in a pipe or lobby international donors

Ok, so this is a very simple fabricated example, but I hope it makes the point that it is so important to take your campaigning problem and ask the question, **but why?** so that you can make sure that you are really tackling the root causes of the problem and not just the superficial manifestation of your problem's cause.

So, with this example, whilst your initial answer is maybe to focus on providing medicines, which would be a very legitimate humanitarian response to the problem, by keeping asking the question, **but why?** you would get to the root cause of the problem, which is the lack of action by the international donors, and arguably, that is where you need to direct your campaigning energy.

In my time at the British Red Cross, we were keen to turn attention to the problem of destitute people, who had been refused refugee status but were unable to be returned home. We used the “but why?” technique to help us focus down on the real problem that we needed to address as opposed to just talking about destitution in general.

Asylum seekers are destitute – **but why?**

They have been refused refugee status but have not returned home – **but why?**

There are some countries that people cannot be returned to, so people are stuck – **but why?**

These countries are too dangerous to fly into or do not accept people back who have fled – **but why?**

The government refuses to accept this actually is the case for some countries, which then leaves people in limbo unable to return but also unable to meet their basic living needs in the UK – **but why?**

The government has not been forced to focus on these countries and produce a policy response – **but why?**

There has been no focused pressure on this point. We therefore commissioned research on this vital issue, so that we could exert focused pressure to push for policy change.

One of my colleagues has used this tool extensively around the world in his own training. He has come to differentiate the answers to this question as either being technical or political. So, a technical answer might be a lack of training and a political answer might be a lack of funding. He has felt making this differentiation is important because technical and political issues will require different campaign strategies.

Summary:

In campaigning, it is so important to be clear on your campaigning objective, to be transparent on how you came to select your objective, but also to be persistent in asking a simple question, **but why?** so that you can direct your campaigning energy to promote an effective solution to your problem.

And this is not something that you do just at the start of your campaign. Repeat this exercise of asking **but why?** throughout your campaign to see if your thinking and knowledge has changed at all, or indeed the nature of the problem – which might then impact on your future campaigning.

Before you go any further with your campaign thinking, it will be really helpful to do two things – or at the very least start this process, which you can return to and review later:

1 - Do you know your priority issue for your campaigning? If not, it will be useful to think about your selection criteria for choosing your priority; you can then apply your shortlist of issues against your selection criteria. And even if you have already chosen your priority issue, it may be worth spending a bit of time reminding yourself about why you chose this issue. Believe me, you will be challenged on this point at some stage in the future! It will be great to have your answer ready.

2 - Then take your issue and tell someone your problem – ideally someone who knows nothing or little about your issue. Then get them to ask you the question **but why?** repeatedly. Do take time to reflect on the outcome of this exercise. Were you surprised by how it forced you to think? Did it make you question any of your earlier thoughts or assumptions? Where do you think that you should now direct your energy to ensure that you are focussed on the real problem that will bring about the change that you want to see?

3. How is your external environment

A common understanding

As I have supported people to campaign around the world, I have noticed a common obstacle facing many of them, which is that they do not share a common understanding of their own external environment. Yet, I have come to see that having a shared understanding of your external environment, which you review and update on a regular basis, is such a fundamental building block for effective campaigning. In many respects, it is like building a house, where you will need a strong foundation for the house to be secure; campaigning is no different! You need to be able to build your campaign plan, based on a firm foundation of your own robust understanding of the reality of your external context.

I have come across so many people who are so enthused with the problem that they want to tackle and are energetic about getting stuck into the campaign planning, and just assume that they all share the same understanding of their external environment. My warning here is don't make that assumption!

It is so important to take the time to discuss your understanding with your colleagues, to challenge each other's understanding, but also to talk to other people outside of your immediate circle to get their perspective, and to write down your conclusions. As your campaign and learning develops, you need to keep this understanding under review.

And I suggest that there are a few questions that could be quite helpful to use in your discussions with your colleagues and then with people in other organisations:

- How does change happen in our society?
- Where does power lie in our society?
- What approaches to change have influenced you in the past – both good and bad?

- How are you answering your curiosity about how change happens? Where can you go to find out more?

If you feel that first question is too big to start with, you might find it easier to get going to focus on your particular policy and to ask: who are the key actors, institutions, organisations on that issue in your country? What are the key policies, laws, regulations affecting that issue? Who then has the power to decide on this issue and what influences them?

As a campaigner, you do need to foster a strong sense of curiosity, and keep asking these questions as your campaign develops. It is also so important that you read a variety of media; don't only read the media that you are comfortable with but challenge yourself to read media that you do not agree with, but do so to understand their argument and hence your own understanding of your external context.

You may well feel that this is one part of my approach to campaigning that you can safely ignore. My firm advice to you is: don't!

I remember years ago, doing some work for an international charity, running a regional campaigning workshop in Bangladesh, and we got to the stage in the training where we began to encourage each of the countries present to reflect and discuss the reality of their own external environment. There was a team with us from the headquarters in Europe, and I remember there being some quite strong resistance from them about not needing to engage with this exercise.

I asked them to indulge me for a few minutes and just to begin having the conversation. They agreed, I left and returned shortly to find them having the most robust exchange of views. It proved to be an incredibly helpful conversation, one that they had not had before, but also one that could help them develop a sound foundation for their campaigning plans. Why don't you also give it a go?

Summary:

Do make sure that you devote time with your immediate colleagues to debating your understanding of your own external environment, write down your conclusions (or even better visualise them!), and then keep them under regular review. This will be such a sound foundation for your subsequent campaign planning.

At this stage of your campaign journey, I do encourage you to pause and get a small group of people together who share your passion on your issue and discuss with them these key questions:

How does change happen in our society?

Where does power lie in our society?

What approaches to change have influenced you in the past – both good and bad?

How are you answering your curiosity about how change happens? Where can you go to find out more?

Do record your discussions; your notes will form the foundation for your campaign planning. Your campaign needs to be rooted in the reality of your own context, and if it is not, it runs the risk of becoming a fantasy. This exercise brings in realism to this campaign process and will help guide you as you think about your strategy to bring about change on your issue.

And as your campaign develops, do repeat this exercise: reflect on your earlier conclusions, discuss whether your thinking has changed and write down any change in your thinking.

4. What evidence do you have?

Importance of evidence

Evidence can be the fuel for your campaigning. It can help you to show the extent of your problem and why it is so important for your change to actually happen!

However, I should be honest with you that I have not always waited to develop my evidence base before campaigning. Sometimes you just don't have that luxury. *When I was running that Oxfam campaign against supermarket vouchers for asylum seekers, we realised that we needed to launch a campaign as soon as possible to highlight the distress that it was causing. So, with hindsight we did begin campaigning fuelled only by a sense of injustice! But our campaign was fuelled by the views of people with lived experience of this scheme. Yet once we had built up some early momentum and attracted some support, we were quick then to develop our evidence base by producing what we called our 'dossier of shame'.* So, if there is a sense of urgency don't delay because you lack evidence, but be very aware that you will need very soon to make sure you do have evidence to sustain your campaign going forward.

Rapid and revealing evidence

I think that there is a distinctive approach for gathering evidence for effective campaigning. *When I started at the Red Cross, I was keen to talk about the importance of *quick and dirty* research. I was trying to convey the importance of doing things quickly so that we could build momentum for change. However, I did appreciate that my research colleagues took a degree of offence at that particular phrase, so instead I opted for the more pleasing alliteration of *rapid and revealing research*.* I think when you have that burning desire for change, you will need evidence behind you, but you should be striving to produce research, which is both rapid as well as revealing.

But before you start gathering evidence of your problem, it is good to ask yourself the question, what evidence of your problem do you already have or indeed what evidence already exists? It can also be good to go back to your use of the ***but why?*** technique because very often using that simple approach can tell you that you do need more information by way of evidence. I have found

asking that simple question, **but why?** can make you realise you don't know the answer and therefore you do need research to help you answer it. It is so much better to come to this conclusion before rather than after you start your campaign!

But be wary. Research can be the greatest excuse for inaction. For example, you might be massively motivated to start campaigning on a particular problem, but then decide that you need research and work with a university on a three-year research programme. This could be all well and good; however, the world will probably have moved on within those three years. You need to be thinking about how you can generate research which is both rapid and revealing. It will also be helpful to think about the best angle for your research so that your target audience will find it compelling as opposed to just doing what interests you.

I have found, particularly at my time with the Red Cross, that the most powerful evidence for campaigning is evidence, which covers both the macro and micro. By this, I mean evidence which can include numbers and statistics to give a sense of scale, on the big picture side, but also can tell individual human stories as well, on the small picture side. I have worked with a local homelessness charity in the past, which was very effective both in sharing the scale homelessness in their city but also in telling individual stories of people affected by being homeless. I think campaigning evidence which can both give you a sense of scale, but also a sense of the impact on individual people can be incredibly powerful.

And a final point to think about: who is actually going to do your research? If you do it, you could probably do it very rapidly, but will it be credible? You could get an ally to do it, but they might seem to be too close to your own campaign? Or you could get somebody independent to do it which might take slightly longer, you couldn't control, but will have a much greater credibility for your campaign. There is no right answer, and you need to think about what is right for your campaign to drive it forward.

There is also the option of participatory research where you look to develop your evidence base with either a potential opponent or a target. For example: you might look to do your research with a local authority to produce evidence jointly that could then energise future action. There are clearly risks here where you will possibly lose control, but you gain the benefit of your opponent or target beginning to own the evidence, which might then encourage them to take action. **I have worked with NGOs across Europe which endeavoured to use this approach to show local authorities the value of investing in early childhood development.**

And finally, we will later in this manual look at how you can develop momentum on your campaign by crafting a future story, and very often I have found the early steps of any future story for a campaign can very often be around putting in motion your plan to develop the research you feel that you need to help fuel your campaigning. You shouldn't see evidence gathering and research as something separate, but it should be integrated into your campaign plan. Also, it is not a process that you do just at the start as there may well be occasions during the course of your campaign that you will need additional evidence gathering and research.

So, what rapid and revealing research do you have or can you develop for your campaign?

Summary

Evidence can be the fuel for your campaign, but remember you should be striving for evidence that is both rapid and revealing so that you can quickly move forward in developing momentum on your campaign. But be wary that evidence gathering can be the best excuse for inactivity, and also that sometimes you may have to begin campaigning without evidence, but know that you will need to come back and fill that gap very soon.

To help you answer the above question, which is such a critical one for your campaign, these questions might help you to decide upon what is the right course of action for you:

What evidence of your problem do you already have?

What does the 'but why' questions tell you that you need by way of more evidence?

Does your evidence have both the macro and micro: numbers and human stories?

Who is going to do it – you/ an ally/ or someone independent? And when do you need it by?

5. Do you pass the TEA Test?

The TEA Test

You now need to begin to pull together all of your work so far to develop your campaign message. But do you remember the TEA test that we covered earlier? As you begin to think about constructing your campaign message, using the TEA test can be an incredibly helpful thing to do.

As you think about your campaign problem, and the evidence supporting it, how might you be able to touch someone? How might you be able to get somebody interested in your issue?

Having got their interest and touched them, made a connection with them, how will you be able to enthuse them with what change is possible?

And then, finally, what do you want them to actually do in support of your campaign?

These three simple stages can be incredibly helpful at the beginning of your campaign as you begin to organise your thinking as to how you can build support and momentum for your issue. It will become the bedrock for your campaign, but as with all of these campaign tools, it will be something that you will review on a regular basis as your campaign develops.

One of my favourite examples of the TEA test, which I experienced myself, was an Action Aid campaign that I came across many years ago. They wrote to me, telling me about a problem in South Africa with farmers working for a UK supermarket receiving incredibly little money for their produce; yet they also told me that if the supermarket could pay the farmers five pence an hour extra that could make all the difference. I was really struck by the clarity with which they described the problem, but also their clarity around their solution to tackle this problem. But they didn't just leave it there. Having touched and enthused me successfully, they then went on to get me to do something. They urged me to send their enclosed postcard to the chief executive of the supermarket, asking for

this change, but also, and I thought very powerfully, encouraging me to find a five pence piece, stick it to the postcard and then send it off. I just loved this example.

In the midst of a busy life, this campaign message really got through to me; it touched me, it enthused me, but most importantly, it got me to take action. This campaign for me, at least, certainly passed the TEA test.

I remember years ago having the opportunity to meet the Minister of State for Justice to discuss Red Cross concerns about the withdrawal of publicly funded legal support for refugee family reunion. He was very clear at the start of the meeting that the Government did not agree with our concerns, but he gave me the space to make my case.

I endeavoured to convey the argument that refugee family reunion is not an issue of immigration but one of international protection for refugees. I sought to explain that very often, it would be one member of the family, most often the male, who is able to reach a safe country, and then he or she will seek to use refugee family reunion procedures to bring the rest of the family to safety. The importance of this re-unification is to ensure the on-going protection of all the family members.

It was only when I started telling the minister about a story that I had heard about a brother and sister being physically separated in a refugee camp that I felt I was beginning to touch him. It was a harrowing tale of their hands slipping out of each other's grasp, and the brother then losing sight of the sister. It was at this point that the minister's interest grew. He then promised me a subsequent meeting with his officials to discuss what might be possible.

I felt that I had touched him with my story, enthused him that change was possible, and then before I left the meeting got him to commit to act. In this instance I felt I passed the TEA test. Admittedly this was just the start - but this meeting had got us up and running.

Summary

A good campaign will be able to touch and enthuse someone but also, and very importantly, get them to do something in support of your campaign. And the TEA test is a great way to assess a campaign – all campaigns need to be able to touch, enthuse and get an action.

As you start out on your campaign, how might you be able to pass the TEA test with your campaign? This be a question that you will grapple with and change as your campaign develops, but as you look to begin, how will you on your issue:

Touch your target

Enthuse your target

Get your target to do something

6. Is your elevator pitch ready?

The elevator pitch

As you think about your TEA test, I would like to introduce a simple but highly important campaign tool.

I'd like you to imagine, if you would, that you enter an elevator or a lift, and the one politician that you have been waiting months to speak to steps into that very same elevator with you – how do you use the next 15 to 30 seconds?

Conscious of what we have covered above, I might suggest that, in addition to introducing yourself, you might set out your problem, your solution and then get across your ask.

This is the elevator pitch. To my mind, it is one of the most essential building blocks for your campaign. It is your tried and tested ability to communicate the essence of your campaign - your problem and your solution - in a succinct and compelling manner, finishing with a request for action. It sounds so easy, but it is actually quite difficult to do and it is one campaigning tool that requires a lot of practice.

I remember once years ago, going to a Parliamentary reception, where there were lots of Members of Parliament. At the time I was running a campaign on empty homes, and I noticed, as I worked my way round the room, using my elevator pitch to communicate my campaign, that my pitch became better and better as I was practising and using it more and more.

I also remember sharing this tool with a group of charity chief executives, and got some real pushback from them, saying that their issues were far too complicated to condense to 15 to 30 seconds, and they would need at least half an hour to communicate their issue. My response was simply that you don't have half an hour. The beauty of the elevator pitch is that it is your entry point, and your ability to speak with an absence of ambiguity to convey the essence of your campaign finishing with a call to action.

If you can develop your elevator pitch for your campaign, it means that you are always ready, you will not be searching for the right words because you are prepared and the words will come. Having an elevator pitch is like being able to explode out of the blocks when you are sprinting.

I shared this tool during a campaigning workshop in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, and the room went very, very quiet. I asked the group somewhat cautiously, whether they had a problem with this campaigning tool? They replied that they had no problem, but they just needed to let me know that there were no elevators in Somaliland! I had not realised that simple fact, but they were gracious enough to continue to say that, nevertheless, this tool had made them aware that when they went down to the market and saw the housing minister, they could never quite pull their words together to communicate with him before he was able to escape. So, whilst they would not have the opportunity to practice their pitch in an elevator, they could see the value of having their campaigning message ready and prepared.

I got another interesting reaction in Tanzania, where there was some degree of pushback from the group on this campaigning tool. Once again, I was interested to understand their reticence, and they explained to me that in the context of their society, it would be impossible to suddenly start with an elevator pitch and that they would need to spend at least a few minutes enquiring about the person's family. My response was that this would be fine and a highly appropriate way to start a pitch relevant for their context, but nevertheless, at some stage, they would want to introduce their campaigning message, having dealt with the family niceties, and at this stage, the elevator pitch could be invaluable. Once again, this group was gracious to accept this point, and was then ready to move on and develop their elevator pitch.

I have used this campaigning tool in so many countries around the world, and I've always taken a delight in how different cultural contexts affect how you would present your pitch; but nevertheless, in every country, at some stage, there would be a real benefit in being able to communicate with an absence of ambiguity, the essence of your campaign.

Developing your elevator pitch

So, in your pitch, having introduced yourself, you need to set out what **problem** your campaign is focused on, possibly also including a line on your evidence. The challenge is whether you can distil your problem into a few words.

You can then move on to your **solution** and set up what you think needs to happen for this problem to be tackled. Again, your challenge is, can you distil your solution into a few words.

Having conveyed both your problem and your solution, you can then move on to your **ask** - what are you going to ask the recipient of your pitch to actually do?

At this stage, possibly the best thing that I can do is to share with you, an elevator pitch that I have used in the past. *Many years ago, I was working for the Red Cross in the UK, and we were running a campaign to ensure that all children in English schools learnt first aid. If I was to have met the Education Minister, I can still remember what my pitch would have been:*

Hello Minister. I'm Jonathan from the Red Cross. We are really concerned that only one in five schools in England teach their children basic first aid skills. We would like to see a generation of lifesavers come out of English schools. Would you meet with me to discuss how we might make this goal happen?

In my pitch, I hope that you think that I convey succinctly my problem, my solution and I make a polite and focused ask. I also think the use of the plural pronoun is good. I don't think saying you have a problem and you need to change things is helpful; I think it is far more constructive to say that **we** have a problem here, and together **we** can do something about it.

Reflecting on my words, it does all sound so simple. But I know from my work around the world that people do find it very hard to develop an elevator pitch, particularly on an issue that they care about so passionately and on which they know so much. Yet I fundamentally believe that being able to be ready and poised to convey your basic campaign message, at any time, is such an important building block for your campaign. But it needs practice. You need to practice your message so that it becomes instinctive. So that you never knowingly lose a chance to make your pitch!

Summary

Your elevator pitch will become the basic building block for your campaign. You will be able with confidence to set out your problem and your solution and also suggest an action. You will not need to search for words and you will be able to speak with clarity and an absence of ambiguity. Practice is key to this campaign tool, and it can also be really helpful to practice on people who know nothing about your issue – does your pitch make sense to them? With practice you will always be ready to make your pitch whether or not you find yourself in an elevator!

What is the elevator pitch for your campaign?

Have a go at writing it down, and then practice it.

You will no doubt refine and hone it many times

Don't be worried about reading it at first

The more that you practice it, the more instinctive it will become

So that you are always ready to deliver your campaign message

We will look later at how and when you should review your pitch, but when you have a pitch that you are happy with that is a great foundation as we continue to look to build your campaign.

7. How credible are you and what are the risks?

Your credibility

Another important thing to think about before you start campaigning is to think about your answers to these important questions:

- What makes you credible to speak out on your issue? Do you really know about your issue?
- What gives you legitimacy to speak out on this issue? Where do you get your mandate from to speak out?

I suggest to you that you will need clear answers to these questions on both your credibility and legitimacy before you start campaigning, and just don't be surprised when you are asked them!

The more successful you are with your campaigning, and the more momentum you build up, the more likely I have found that you will be the target of attack. And when doing campaigning, I have found that it will be your credibility to speak out which will often be a question. So, don't be surprised and be ready with your response.

It is also a really good topic about which to have a quick conversation with your campaign team so that you can discuss what you collectively think are your best answers to these questions. And so that when you are challenged, you are not surprised but you are ready.

When I was at the Red Cross and we were challenged about what gave us the right to speak out on refugee policy, and we were quick to point out that with offices in over 50 locations supporting refugees at that time across the UK that we were in a strong position to speak with knowledge about the impact on refugees.

One of my colleagues is always quick to point out the importance of being able to 'walk the talk', by which he means the importance of doing the very things you are asking others to do. This may sound like a statement of the obvious, but it is so important to ensure

that your own house is in order before you start campaigning for change on that issue. Clearly there is a huge risk of being challenged of not doing the very things you are asking others to do. I'll develop this point below.

Potential risks

Another thing which can be really helpful to think about before you start campaigning, but not to spend too long doing, is around the potential risks to you of doing campaigning.

I came to realise that it is so important to take ownership of your risks associated with campaigning and not to let others do so for you. I've come across so many campaigners, who were so enthusiastic to start campaigning, who quickly developed their campaign plans and proudly presented them to their management board only to be slapped down with a single question, but what about the risks? Don't wait for other people to ask you about the risks, take ownership of them and be clear about how you can reduce the risks.

Now, let's be clear, risk is not just associated with campaigning. There are risks in every aspect of our daily lives, and campaigning is no different.

A risk register

I suggest to you that you could use a risk register to identify the following:

- The risks that you could face
- The likelihood of each risk actually happening
- The likely impact on you of any of these risks happening
- Any action you will take to reduce these risks

It is important not just to focus on the risks to you. You might want to think about risks in the following areas:

- your project and your organisation
- for your team
- for your partners and allies
- for communities and citizens

Having developed this risk register, I suggest you add it to your campaign plan as an appendix, but also that you review it on a regular basis as part of your ongoing review process, which will discuss later, for your campaign.

This is my suggested format for a risk register for a campaign:

Risk	Likelihood (1=low; 4=high)	Impact (1=low; 4= high)	Your action to reduce the risk

And this is an example of a risk being added to such a risk register:

Risk	Likelihood (1=low; 4=high)	Impact (1=low; 4= high)	Your action to reduce the risk
Your donors are not supportive of your plans	2 – there is a good existing relationship and understanding	4 – very high impact if they withdrew their support	Talk to donors in advance of starting your work and address any concerns that they might have and do so regularly

And finally, an obvious but sometimes neglected point on managing risk – when you are campaigning, you do need to be able to walk the talk. By this I mean: if you are campaigning for something to happen, do make sure that you what you are doing yourself is helping the issue.

One of my most painful memories was doing some work for a charity that was mobilising people to volunteer at foodbanks and was concerned at the increasing problem of poverty. Yet this same charity was refusing to pay its workers a living wage, a decent wage to afford life’s costs, and therefore were forcing some of their very own staff to have to use foodbanks. This fact never came to light, but it was a huge risk and would have undermined the charity’s position both to help and to campaign on this issue.

As part of your risk assessment for your campaign, do make sure that you are walking your own talk!

Summary

The more you build momentum in support for your campaign, the more you will be open to attack. And very often your credibility to speak out will be challenged; when this happens don't be surprised and be ready with your answer.

Also don't ignore any possible risks for you as a result of your campaigning. Face up to them, write them down, but most importantly think about what you can do to reduce the risk of these things actually happening. Don't let other people take responsibility for your risks – own them and review them on a regular basis. And remember to walk the talk!

Do think about your answer to the question: what gives you the right to speak out on your issue? Don't be surprised when you are challenged – be ready!

With your campaign team, begin to build your campaign register using the method above. It is a good idea to do this exercise before you start campaigning, and to build your actions to reduce the risk into your campaign plan. It is also a very good idea to review your risk register on a regular basis with your team so assess your existing risks and associated actions together with any emerging risks from your developing campaign.

8. Who is your target and how can you reach them?

The influence tree

One of the first campaigning tools that I learnt was one called the influence tree, which I still use to this day. Now, the first thing to say here is that, to be fair, it is the funniest looking tree, but don't be worried by that, this is an incredibly simple but useful tool to help your campaigning.

You start out by trying to answer these key questions:

- Who has the power to make the change you want to see?
- Who influences that person?
- How can you seek to influence those people to influence your target?

Your target

The critical starting point is working out who actually has the power, if they were to decide to agree with you, to make the change you actually want to see happen.

I remember years ago running a campaigning workshop for some very senior and highly educated lawyers in the UK and we got to discussing their influence tree. It soon became very, very clear that they did not have any idea about who was actually the named person who had the power to make the change they wanted to see happen. It was a sobering moment in the workshop, but we then went on to have a conversation about what research they needed to do to be able to identify who actually was their target. It was however also sobering to reflect afterwards that they would have been quite happy to have launched a campaign without actually knowing who their target was!

I have also worked with groups around the world who have wanted the target to be the government or the council or a particular department. That is a good starting point, but you really need to be able to focus in on who is the named individual with the power who can make the change you want to see.

Having identified your target, who will be situated at the top of your tree. It is then worth asking yourself whether you are able to approach them directly – the direct approach to them with your campaign ask. I have run campaigns in the past where I have both been able to go directly to make my case but also where I have been blocked from going directly. But it is always important to ask yourself whether that is possible, as your allies, that you will hopefully recruit, will undoubtedly ask you that question.

It is then good to do some thinking about your target. What do you know about them? Who or what influences them? Who has access to them, who could potentially be your messengers?

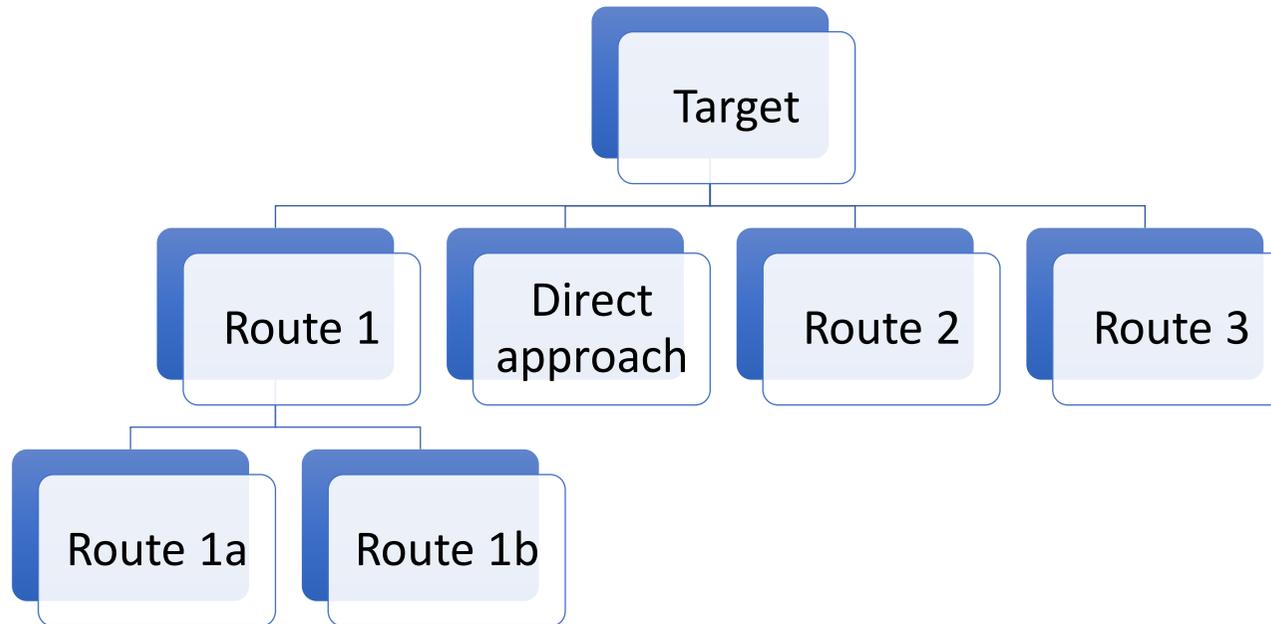
Your messengers

The more that I have done campaigning, the more that I have begun to realise that whilst a strong campaign **message** is really important, it can be equally important to think about who are the most effective **messengers** to convey your campaign message.

Sometimes, for campaigners, we may not be the most effective messengers of our own campaign message, but we might look to support others to convey our message.

For example, in the past I have supported Roma community groups across Europe to develop campaigns on behalf of their community, and a real challenge for them has sadly been the fact that some politicians just would not engage with them. So, no matter how good their campaign message was, they would not have had the opportunity to present it to people with the power to make the changes they wanted to see. In this situation the influence tree became incredibly important because it encouraged them to think about other people and groups who did have influence over their target and with whom they could seek to work to persuade them to convey that message for them.

In theory, an influence tree looks like this:



Your tree shows the different routes to influence your named target at the top of the tree. One route will be the direct route - is that an option for you?

Other possible routes

But then you need to think about: what are the other routes you could go down? The influence tree makes you think hard about your target and what are the other possible routes to seek influence.

One of my colleagues always makes the point that when you are doing this exercise, you should not dismiss a whole institution but try to look inside and see if there are people with whom you can work. For example, you might regard the Environment Ministry as hostile to your issue, there may still be a person or persons within that institution who might be sympathetic or at least neutral with whom you can engage at the very least to enhance your own understanding of that institution.

One of my reflections over the years is that effective campaigning needs both **knowledge and access**; knowledge of the issue and access to your target. In campaigns that I have been involved in, we have had knowledge of the issue but not had access to the target. Therefore, we have had to think creatively about different routes to get such access.

An influence tree then is the road map for your campaigning

And below is a practical example of using the influence tree on one of the campaigns that I have run in the past. We were running a campaign to influence the Home Office in the UK to reverse their new policy of supporting asylum seekers with supermarket vouchers, only redeemable in certain stores and change was not received when the voucher was used, and to replace this policy with the re-introduction of cash support.

We did initially try the direct approach by contacting the Secretary of State at the Home Office, and I will never forget the response which was the Government would not contemplate change because this new policy was “the settled will of Parliament.”

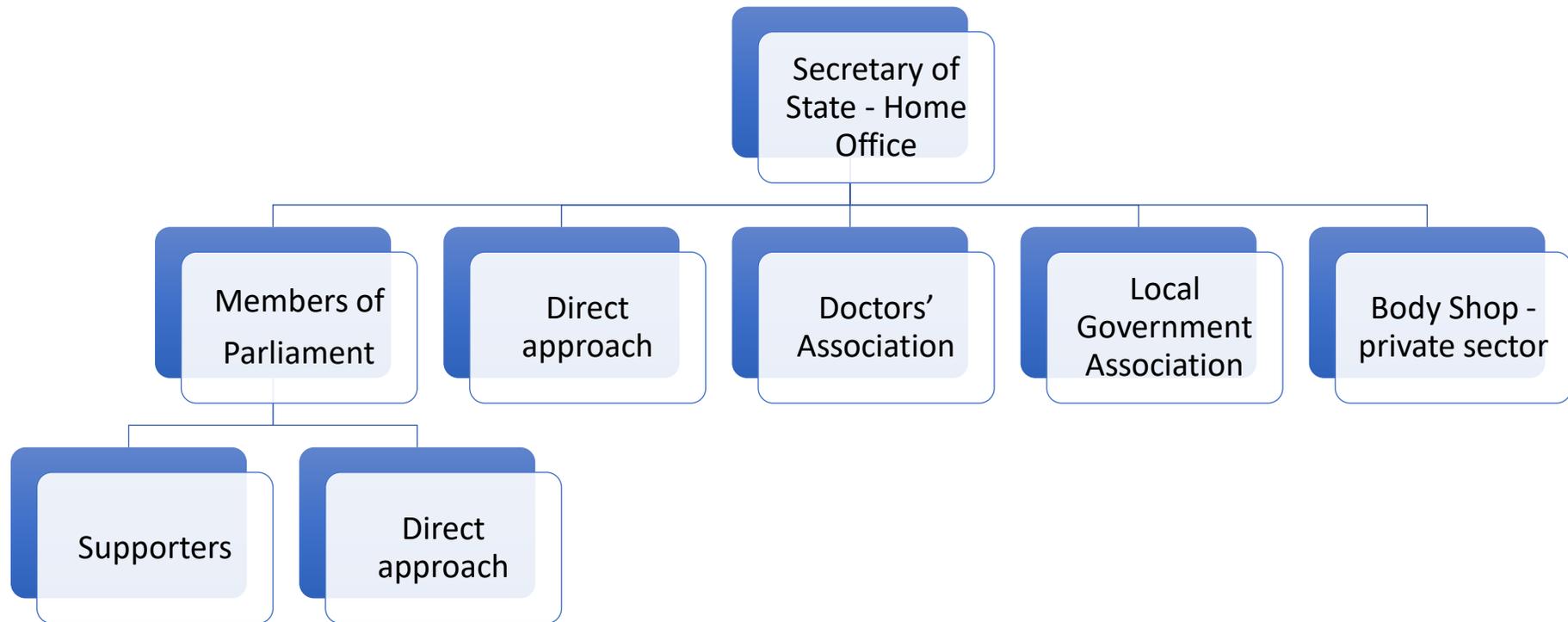
The influence tree below then shows the different routes that we were able to identify to mobilise other messengers who could promote our campaign message of abolishing this harsh policy.

We sought to approach Members of Parliament both directly and through our supporters to convey our campaign message to the Secretary of State.

We also approached the British Medical Association, because at the time their members were becoming increasingly concerned at the health impact of this policy.

We also reached out to the Local Government Association, because we began to appreciate that their members, local councils across the country, were having to pick up the pieces as a result of this policy. And although not listed below, we also saw the media as a very important channel and throughout our campaign, we endeavoured to maintain media interest in this story. We found that in doing so, we gave energy and oxygen to our campaign.

And possibly most interestingly and surprisingly we approached the Body Shop. At the time they had been running a campaign promoting refugee rights, and we approached them to see whether they might support our campaign. They were very supportive and are an excellent example of my earlier point around how important it can be to recruit surprising allies, not just usual suspects to support your campaign.



And then some years later, I ran a campaign to bring back private empty homes into use to meet housing need. We were able to build a wide-ranging coalition of organisations supporting our campaign. But I will never forget talking to one civil servant, who dismissed the large number of homelessness charities that we had recruited as almost implying they would support this wouldn't they? But it was clear that our mobilisation of organisations representing private property owners was far more impactful on the government. We had been able to recruit them by developing the message that private property owners, who let their properties go to rack and ruin, were damaging the reputation of property owners in general.

So, whilst it can be easy sometimes to go out to recruit your natural allies and friends to act as messengers for your campaign, sometimes it can be even more powerful to think more tangentially about other organisations, surprising allies, whom people would not expect necessarily to speak out on your issue, that may carry more impact for you.

Summary

The influence tree can be the roadmap for your campaign. Never forget the direct route, but also be curious about who your potential messengers could be to convey your message to your target. As a campaigner you will need to harness both knowledge of your issue but also access to your target to be effective. Your challenge is how are you able to do both those things. It is by developing an influence tree that you can begin to see how you could move forward sharing your knowledge with your target.

Once you have completed your influence tree, you will have a number of potential routes for your campaign as you seek to put pressure on your target, but you clearly will not be able to do them all simultaneously nor possibly would that even be desirable to do so. How should you then prioritise and sequence your actions for maximum effect? We will return to this important question in our chapter on your future story for your campaign below.

Do think about your answers to these key questions:

Who has the power to make the change you want to see?

Who influences that person?

How can you seek to influence those people to influence your target?

And with these answers, can you then begin to build your influence tree for your campaign. This influence tree will become the road map for your campaign journey!

9. How are you using opposition to help you?

The opposition matrix

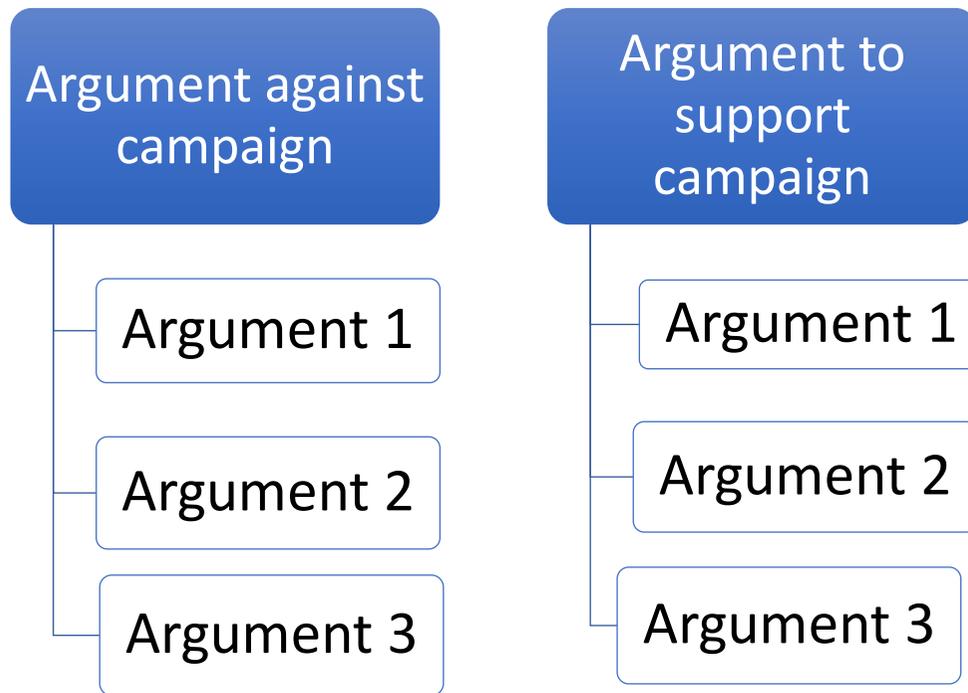
When I was younger and got involved in campaigning, I had absolutely no interest in any opposition to my campaign because frankly I was right and they were wrong. But as I got older, I began to realise that in campaigning terms, opposition arguments can be like gold dust for your campaign because they can help you understand why your campaign is not moving forward, and how you might need to modify your campaign to build broader support.

I had the good fortune many years ago to attend a training session on giving media interviews, and contained within this course was a fantastically simple but very effective tool that I saw could have immediate benefit for campaigners.

I have come to call this campaigning tool the **opposition matrix**. It is very simple: you take a blank sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left-hand side of the page, you list all of the possible arguments that you can think of against your campaign. And on the right hand side of the page, you list all of your arguments in support of your campaign.

It is also important to reflect at this stage whether or not you have the evidence to support your arguments. Sometimes by doing this exercise you begin to see that you do not have all of the evidence that you need to be able to run your campaign and counter some of the arguments. In this instance, you should go back to your thinking on evidence for your campaign, and ask yourself whether your opposition matrix is encouraging you to do some additional evidence gathering to strengthen your campaign's chance of having impact.

So, in using this tool, you should come up with something looking like this:



I should add at this point that this tool should come with a major health warning. It is not a pleasant thing to spend time thinking about opposing arguments, particularly on an issue which you feel very strongly about, and I strongly suggest to you that you should do it in a group and not by yourself! It is also fascinating when you do this exercise in a group how different people have heard different arguments.

Once you have completed this exercise, it is good just to sit back and take a look at what you've produced. You should ask yourself to what extent are your arguments actually addressing your opponents' arguments? When I have done this exercise on some of the campaigns that I've run, it has helped me to see that the two sets of arguments almost exist in two parallel universes. The challenge of this exercise is the reflect on all of the arguments at your disposal, and decide which will be the most effective in building support for your campaign.

I remember doing this exercise in South Africa and one man saying very proudly to me that he had no opposition arguments on his issue; I replied saying that he must be running a very successful campaign to which he replied that he was struggling to move it forward. I then tried to suggest to him that there may well be arguments against his issue, but he just hadn't yet heard.

As you start using this campaign tool, it should encourage you to develop your curiosity to be actively searching out the arguments both public and private against your issue, and then using this intelligence with this tool. As your campaign develops, your list of arguments should increase – do make sure that you continue to log them and discuss your best responses. And as this matrix increases, you might want to sub-divide them into different sub-sections such as economic, social or technological.

At this point, it might be helpful if I bring in a few examples of when I've used the opposition matrix so that you can see how I have used it but probably more importantly how it's helped me to develop our key opening campaigning messages to build greater support:

The campaign to give local authorities new powers to bring empty homes back into use to meet housing need:

Arguments against campaign	Arguments for campaign
Your home is your castle	Help homeless people
Right to personal freedom of action	Empty homes attract crime and vandalism
	Empty homes can devalue neighbouring homes

When I first used this campaign tool on this campaign on empty homes, it really struck me how our key campaign message was totally disconnected to the opposition arguments.

I was highly motivated to run the campaign as a practical means of doing something to address homelessness. Yet the key argument against taking action on empty private property was that it was all around freedom of action.

Yet when I reflected on the other campaigning messages that we had available, whilst they were not the most motivating for me personally, I was keen to see if there might be other more effective opening messages that might at least get a connection with people who were not engaging and might begin to build more support.

With this goal in mind, I began to see that taking an economic argument around the fact that empty property can devalue other neighbouring property could be a very useful connecting argument between people who were more concerned about the rights of individual homeowners. Why should someone's decision to keep their property empty impact on another person's property?

So, I tried to use this argument, not as my only argument, but as my entry point when I was in encountering some opposition to my campaign, and I found that it was far more effective because it was engaging with my opponents on ground that they understood that then allowed me to have a conversation and move on and talk about my other messages.

The campaign to give people seeking refugee status in the UK permission to work whilst they wait for a decision on their asylum application:

Arguments against campaign	Arguments for campaign
Need to separate asylum from economic migration	A moral right
Asylum process should be so short there should be no time to work	End destitution

Less jobs for own citizens	Save tax payers money by getting tax from those working
No public support	Asylum seekers are not looking for benefits
	Allow people seeking asylum the chance to make a contribution

Several years later, when I was involved in a campaign to give people seeking asylum permission to work in the UK, using the opposition matrix once again enabled me to see that there might be other messages which might be more effective as entry points in conversations about the campaign

We were very motivated to talk about issues around morality and ending destitution as the key campaigning messages underpinning our campaign. Yet when we started talking to some politicians, and we used these entry points, sadly it became very clear that they were uninterested and not engaged.

By using this campaign tool, we began to realise that we had other arguments at our disposal. We found in particular the argument that if you allowed people seeking asylum the chance to work, they could then pay taxes which in turn would save the taxpayer money was a compelling argument for some of our opponents.

Now this was not the major motivator for us in running the campaign, but by beginning to use this message as our entry point it allowed us at least to begin conversations with some of the people we were seeking to influence.

We found that by using this message around taxation it enabled us to build broader support than we had previously been able to build by focusing just around messages of morality and destitution. We didn't stop talking about these issues, but we made a strategic decision not to begin conversations always this way, but maybe move onto them once we had got some degree of engagement on our issue.

Building broader support

I think as campaigners, and this was certainly the case for me, that we can be guilty sometimes of running only with the messages that motivate us. Yet campaigning is not about satisfying us, but it is surely about building broader support. I think this simple tool can be very useful in helping us as campaigners to begin to think more creatively about the best messages to build more momentum and interest in our issue.

I am not though talking about giving different messages to different people.

I have often said in my training that it is important I think as a campaigner to imagine that there is one independent person observing all of your interactions with different people. Whilst you may decide to change the entry points for your conversations, I would like to think that there is a degree of consistency about the overall messages that you are using but that you are just deciding which ones to prioritise first.

I have also come to learn as a campaigner that you need to start a conversation with someone where they are at, and not where you want them to be, so that you can look to move them. I do increasingly see that your choice of an entry point in any conversation is absolutely critical in beginning to build some momentum and engagement when you are talking with someone new.

I also remember using this tool with a group of young campaigners, and being attacked by one of them for being too pragmatic and losing my ideals. I did find this attack hard to bear because I would hope it would be the case that you would never lose your ideals but in building support and momentum for your issue you are prepared to be pragmatic and decide how you plan to start conversations in an attempt to try and engage with people and to influence them to support change. But we all have choices as campaigners. Do you just want to stick to the messages that you want to talk about or are you interested to use other messages to build broader support to increase the chance of change happening on your issue?

Finally, I just wanted to add that this can be such an incredibly useful tool to use when you are preparing for an important meeting. The use of role play can be a really helpful form of preparation for such a meeting. I remember being at the Red Cross with the

prospect of a meeting with the Minister of Justice and spending the whole morning with the advocacy team working through the opposition matrix thinking about all the possible arguments against direction and our best responses, and I have never been better prepared for a meeting!

In the same spirit, I remember one participant on a training course saying that he could see this tool having use within his own organisation and that he would use this it every time he prepared for a meeting with his manager so that he was ready for their opposition to what he was going to propose!

Summary

I hope that you will come to see the value of being curious about the opposition to your campaign and thinking creatively about the most effective campaign messages to respond to that position so that you can build more support for your issue. As a campaigner it is so important to reflect on what you feel are the best entry points in conversations about your campaign; conscious that this may not be where you yourself would prefer to start.

Do think about your opposition matrix on your issue:

Can you list all of the arguments you have heard against your issue? But remember to do this with others and not alone!

Then can you list all of your arguments. But then think: do all of your arguments answer your opposing points? Are there some more effective answers to certain points? And do you need to think about developing any other answers to respond to any of the opposing arguments?

And do then reflect, what has this exercise made you think about the most effective messages for your campaign?

And possibly also now go back to your elevator pitch. Do ask yourself, having done this exercise, is your elevator pitch still the best way to introduce your campaign to build support?

10. Have you got a theory of change or a future story?

A future story

We have got to, in my opinion, have a future story for our campaign. It's the most important part of our journey on campaigning; the information in this section is what I would have loved to have heard in my early days campaigning!

Right from the start, I have always had a rough idea in my head of where I was going and how I could see change happening on my issue.

Over the years I began to realise that this is such an important part of campaigning; some people might describe it as a theory of change, but I have increasingly preferred to talk about a **future story**. I have come to see that the term 'theory of change' is not always the most accessible for people, and I fear that in recent years it has somewhat been overcomplicated.

I remember running a workshop in Sofia, Bulgaria and got onto the section on the need to have a theory of change. At the break a woman came up to me and said when I had used those words, she had wanted to jump out of the window. Now, this would have been a problem as we were on the 12th floor. But she went onto say that my preferred wording of a future story and focussing on the events that you want to see happen was just so much more helpful and accessible to her.

Stripped to its basics, your future story is your vision of how change is actually going to happen on your issue and what you are going to do to make that change happen.

Your **future story** contains the chain of events that you are going to make happen that will, in your opinion, bring about the change that you want to see. Conscious that none of us can predict the future, but nevertheless it is still so important as a campaigner to be able to articulate how you see change happening on your issue.

Your future story will start off simple and very top line as you plot your overall direction, and then as your thinking and actions develop, your future story will become more detailed. But never forget that top line story – despite the need for detail – you will always need that crisp and inspiring future story!

I have referred above many times to the importance of having a clear message for your campaign, which includes both the problem and your desired solution; but that is not enough. I have come to realise that you also need a robust story of how you see your desired change actually happening. And it is not good enough as I used to do just to keep it in your head, you need to write it down, commit it to paper so that you can share and discuss with others.

Key elements of a future story

And I do think in campaigning, it is so important to have a story that you can tell, and I suggest there are three key elements to your campaigning story:

- Where you have come from (the past)
- Where you are now (the present)
- Where you are going (the future)

I once made this statement at a conference about the importance of stories in campaigning, and I remember being challenged by someone who very rightly said that campaigning is not about storytelling, rather it is about story making, and I absolutely love this important distinction. Campaigning is not about **telling** a story; it is about actively **making** a story happen.

As you think about your **future story**, that will bring about change on your issue, and to make sure that it is robust, you need to:

- Go back to your discussions on your external environment - what were your conclusions?

It is vital that your future story is grounded in your understanding of your external environment; if not, you run the risk of running a fantasy campaign.

So that

In developing your future story, there are two little words in the English language that become so important to you as you seek to demonstrate how you can build momentum on your issue, and they are **so** and **that**.

So, a simple example of a future story using **so that** as the connecting words between each activity to build momentum might look like this:

- We are going to do some research
- **So that** we can brief politicians
- **So that** they can raise the issue
- **So that** we can get some media coverage
- **So that** the government responds

So that so that ... so that ...

I remember in my early days of the Red Cross, where we were building a new advocacy campaigning team and we were looking to hold an event in Manchester, and being so happy when members of my team were talking about the **so that** of what actions they would take next and were not just focused solely on the event itself. As a campaigner, you need to be able to focus on your immediate activity, but you never lose sight of those future steps that you are going to take as you build momentum.

It also reminds me of a campaigning workshop that I ran for senior doctors in Nigeria; at the end of the workshop, they came up to me and boldly told me that they had gained nothing new from my workshop, other than the recognition that campaigning was never about doing one isolated activity - it was all about building momentum. They reflected that in the past they had done an activity such as a report or a press conference and then just stopped, and a while later did something else but did not build any momentum. The one learning that they took from the workshop was that they needed to sustain momentum, and to think about those two little words **so** and **that**.

It may be helpful to think of....

- **Big steps in your future story:**

We are going to do some research so that we can build allies **so that** we all promote our issue to government so that they respond so that we show how the change will help them so that the policy is changed so that...

- **Small steps in your future story:**

We are going to develop a term of reference, so that we can commission a researcher so that we can plan a research plan so that....

I have found it can be helpful in developing your **future story** that you distinguish between those immediate small steps that you need to do to get moving, what you are going to do today, tomorrow and the day after, but also to be very conscious of the bigger steps, the milestones along the way of your journey towards your ultimate goal, that you will look to reach as you develop your campaign.

No battle plan ...

But do remember this infamous quote from Helmut von Moltke:

“No battle plan ever survives the first contact with the enemy”

Now I am conscious that you may well not see your campaign as a battle, and that you may well not see your target as the enemy, but nevertheless there's an inherent wisdom in this quote for anyone campaigning. You can develop your future story and begin to implement those small steps, but possibly in your first interaction in the outside world, you learn something that you had not appreciated before. You need to take this piece of learning into account and discuss with your team whether you need to make any changes to your future story.

I'd like to suggest that every time you have engagement with the outside world, it can be really good practice just to take stock, review what you've learnt and discuss whether you do need to make any changes to your approach.

I remember doing some work several years ago in Liberia, albeit virtually, and in one workshop we developed a really promising future story. I then left them to get on with their immediate small steps, and we met up again a few weeks later. When we did meet, they were quick to apologise to me for having to change the future story. It turned out that shortly after our workshop they had met with UNICEF, and learnt that they were about to launch a major piece of work on the issue, which inevitably would impact on their plans. They apologised to me profusely for having to change their future story.

My response was only to praise them as this is just the ethos that we need when we are campaigning. To be able to have the courage to set out your direction of travel but then to be ready to make changes as and when you develop your understanding.

It is therefore so important to review your future story regularly, and definitely after you have had contact with the outside world.

And in writing it down, you can also then seek external 'sense checks'. It can be really helpful on occasions to sit down with an ally or maybe a supportive politician, or a journalist and share your future story with them. It can be incredibly helpful to receive their challenging questions because they might come up with ideas and points that frankly you just had not thought of.

You should also be ready to challenge your own assumptions. Any future story will almost inevitably contain some assumptions; you will make some assumptions in terms of the logic underpinning the progress and momentum that you will seek to build. It is helpful to recognise that they are just your assumptions, and do be ready for them to be challenged by others and for you to see whether you are able to defend them.

Confidence with humility

In developing a future story, you need to be:

- **Confident** – in writing down your story. It does take some guts to commit your thinking to paper on how change will happen on your issue in the future.
- **Humble** – to invite challenge so you can test and strengthen your thinking.

As I have developed my campaign training around the world, I have found myself increasingly referring to these two somewhat contradictory characteristics that effective campaigners need. You do need to have the **confidence** to present your future story, but that needs to be offset by the **humility** of inviting challenge and testing yourself as to whether you can respond to that challenge. I have come across campaigners who are either very confident or indeed very humble, but I do think you can be most effective when you seek to combine both characteristics to energise your campaigning.

Looking backwards

I have also found that for some people it helps them to think about:

- What does success look like when you have achieved your campaign goal?
- From that point – how did you get there?

Think about your future story backwards, starting from achieving your goal, to complement your plans and your thinking. I personally don't find this retrospective way of doing campaign planning that helpful, but I am respectful because I have come across many people who have found it an incredibly helpful way to trigger their thinking around their campaign.

At one workshop when I suggested this alternative approach, a participant told me about a famous golfer who would always start at the hole and walk back to the tee every time he approached a new golf course. When he was challenged about this backwards way of looking at the golf course, his answer was clear that he always liked to see where he would get to and then how he had got there. Maybe you would like to take a similar approach in your campaign thinking?

I have found in the past when I have shared this campaigning tool with people, whilst they have appreciated the concept, they then struggled to understand how it could actually be implemented in a practice. For this reason, I developed a practical working example based upon my work supporting rumour communities in Bulgaria. [You can access this case study here.](#)

Summary

So, to conclude this important section that brings together all of our earlier content to help you to move forward on your campaign. And in particular it will make you go back to your influence tree and to think about your target and the sequence of activities that you will look to do to build momentum on your issue. Remember to:

- Base your future story in your understanding of your external environment
- Be both confident and humble
- Keep under regular review and be open to challenge
- And that no battle plan ever survives...

And this future story will be the engine for your campaigning!

So, what does the future story look like for your campaign? What are your immediate small steps and what are your longer-term big steps?

Before you proceed just remind yourself about your earlier work on your external context – this work is the foundation upon which you can build a robust future story.

And also go back to your influence tree. Remember how it was referred to as the road map for your campaign journey. The issue with the influence tree is the rather obvious point that you cannot do everything on your influence tree simultaneously, but it does offer you multiple routes. When you come to your future story, you will need to prioritise the different routes; what will you do first and why?

Begin to write down your future story; commit your thoughts to paper. Then share it with your colleagues – remember to be both confident in presentation and humble to take their comments. And then share it with other people in other areas to encourage different viewpoints, perspectives and experience to help shape your thinking.

And remember that no battle plan ever survives the first contact with the enemy and so keep your future story under regular review – and your future story truly can become the engine for your campaign!

11. Do you have a plan for success?

Giving your target time

Before you achieve success on your issue, always give your target both time and space to move – do not close off their channels to change position. Do think how it will feel to change from their side – what do they need to make the change?

I remember being told by a group of refugees during a campaign workshop that it was so important to never forget that your targets are still human! And I've always thought that is a particularly good piece of advice although sometimes quite hard to really engage with.

If your target has spent months, possibly years, publicly opposing your campaign, how will it feel for them if they decide to support your objective?

When I was running a campaign to introduce the compulsory leasing of long term private empty property, the government slowly moved from being in opposition to beginning to engage with this proposal.

I had to accept that they needed time to make this change, but also, that they felt the need to make the issue their own. So, when their initial proposal came out, they dropped our language of 'compulsory leasing' and instead introduced their own term of 'an empty dwelling management order'. Whilst I personally felt that it was strange to feel the need to create a new term, it helped them take ownership of the policy and make it theirs as opposed to just implementing our campaign. I very quickly realised that it didn't matter what you called it - the important thing was what it actually did!

Moment of breakthrough

And at your moment of breakthrough, when your target finally agrees with you, I have come to learn, through my mistakes in the past, that it is important to focus on these three points:

- 1) **Have a plan for success** – what are you going to do next? I have been caught out a number of times, when our campaign had finally succeeded and we found ourselves unsure as to what we wanted to do next. I now suggest as an integral part of your campaign planning, you should make a small amount of time available to have regular conversations with your team as to what you will do when you achieve your goal. Will you walk away and let your target implement it themselves? Or will you seek to get involved in the implementation of the change? I think it could be really helpful to have done some thinking about what you will do in advance of this moment of breakthrough.
- 2) And **never stop campaigning for your issue**. To get to this moment of breakthrough, you have had to create such pressure and momentum. And now you have finally achieved your goal. I have come to learn that even then you should never stop campaigning on your issue just because you have got agreement in principle. You need to keep the pressure up to make sure that real tangible change actually happens on your issue. It is also true to reflect that *nature abhors a vacuum*. If you have done so much to create the environment for this change, if you stop, you then leave a gap into which others could step, possibly taking your issue in a different direction. Even at this moment of breakthrough, don't stop campaigning!
- 3) Remember at this point of success **you can be at your most vulnerable**. This may strike you as a counter intuitive point, because surely you must be at your strongest at your moment of breakthrough? But everything changes when you achieve your campaign goal. Your issue goes from being an aspiration to being the policy embraced by your target. And therefore, as has happened to me on several occasions, you can find yourself and your issue the subject and target of other people's campaigns. And you will be expected to have more detail as to how this will actually work in practice. The first time this happened to me, I was really surprised. But don't be. And just remember that you can be vulnerable at this moment of breakthrough and therefore you need to keep campaigning and making the case for your issue.

And just reflecting on the third point above, I remember campaigning on empty homes and for the need for new powers for local authorities. When we were in campaigning mode with our target, the government in opposition, it was relatively straight forward. But when they embraced our policy, suddenly things became more complicated. We now represented not the change but the new status quo. Indeed, a tabloid newspaper ran a 'crusade' against this policy issue. And we found ourselves the target of a campaign. We were surprised and totally unprepared for this change of status. But slowly the second point dawned on us – you never stop campaigning. We put together a multi-agency letter in support of our issue including both homelessness charities and the private sector. The paper was good enough to publish this letter and after that show of wide support, the heat was turned down on us. But we had learnt a salutary lesson – we had not had a plan for success!

Once your target begins to agree with your campaign message, you need to be clear about how you are going to:

- conduct yourself with your target – will you give full support, become a critical friend or push even harder?
- deal with the media – how will you present yourself once it seems you and your target are beginning to share the same view on an issue?
- communicate with your allies – they may assume it is all over for the campaign. How do you keep them involved and interested in case you need their support later?

Finally, nothing ever stays the same. Just because you have achieved a campaign success doesn't mean that that it will stay the same forever, and you must be ready to defend your gain.

At Oxfam back in 2001, we ran a successful campaign with others to persuade the government to abolish their supermarket voucher scheme to support asylum seekers. Yet within a couple of years, primarily because the pressure had been relaxed, this policy had been re-introduced for some people seeking asylum and this time embedded in primary legislation making it so much harder to change.

Just because you have achieved a campaign success, it does not mean that this success will hold forever. You must be vigilant and alert and be ready to defend this position in the future.

And just to add back in 2007 I wrote a book for NCVO, *Campaigning for Success: how to cope if you achieve your campaign goal*. Sadly, no trace remains online of this book, which looked at this issue in far more detail by assessing eight campaign case studies. Admittedly, it is very historic now, but do get in touch if you'd like to know more about this publication.

So, what is your plan for success?

As you begin to develop your campaign plans this question may seem somewhat distant and irrelevant to you, but I think it is vital that you begin to think about it even in the early stages of your planning.

Maybe your early discussions about your plan for success will be quite short, but as your campaign develops keep having these conversations, reflect on your learning and your progress, and discuss how your plan for success might need to change.

At this stage of your campaign thinking what is your plan for success?

12. When are you next going to review progress?

Regular review

You have a clear message. You know your target. You are clear about your allies and your opponents. You have your future story to make it all happen.

So, what else do you need?

You need to make time for regular review meetings to discuss your future story:

- What action have you taken?
- If you have been blocked, what have you learnt?
- What is your learning?
- What if anything, do you need to change on your future story?

And remember how important it is to write down your future story:

- It allows you to share it with others
- But it is also a powerful way to record your changing thinking as your campaigning develops and helpful for your future campaign planning
- It can also be a very useful way to record progress with your campaigning to supporters and donors.

But be wary! As your campaign takes off and you become busier and busier, it will become more and more difficult to make the time for these regular reviews. Do make sure you schedule time with your colleagues as these quick catch-up meetings will become vital

elements in driving your campaign forward towards the change you want to see. As pace of your campaign picks up, you will need more frequent review meetings.

So, when are you next going to review your progress? Have you got a date?
And when you meet, use these prompting questions to help your discussion:

What action have you taken?
If you have been blocked, what have you learnt?
What is your learning?
What if anything, do you need to change on your future story?

We have now covered those 12 essential questions to be able to answer before you can run an effective campaign. Here is a recap of those 12 questions, and then we will move onto the additional information to support campaigners that I have developed from my experience of using this framework to support people campaigning around the world.

CAMPAIGNING CHECKLIST

1. What is campaigning and why is it important to you?
2. What is your problem? But why is it a problem?
3. Is there a common understanding of your external environment?
4. What evidence have you got or do you need?
5. Do you pass the TEA test with your solution?
6. Can you do the elevator pitch?
7. How credible are you and what are the risks to you?
8. Have you got an influence tree with a target and allies?
9. How are you using opposition to help you?
10. Have you got a theory of change?
11. Have you got a plan for success?
12. When are you next going to review progress?

C. Additional content:

Since I published my book on campaigning, *Campaigning for Change: an Essential Guide to Campaigning around the World*, back in 2017, I have had the good fortune to be able to use this material in training workshops around the world both in person and increasingly online.

One of the major benefits from these opportunities has been the feedback from participants and the questions raised in response to my training. I have relished these diverse challenges around the world, and how they have really made me think and question my approach to campaigning.

As a result of these challenges, I have done two things.

Firstly, as you will already know from reading to this point, I have utilised the existing chapter structure from my original book, but I have used the words that I have come to use over the past seven years in delivering my training. Essentially, these opening chapters have been the words that I would use on my courses, and if you have been on one of those courses, they may be familiar to you.

And secondly, I have thought long and hard about what additional content, missing from my original book, could be helpful to people in developing both their understanding of campaigning but also to prepare them for actually taking their campaigning forward.

I do hope these additional chapters are helpful, but once again I would relish any challenge or questions arising from my words below.

1. Clear message and a future story

As I have run campaigning training courses around the world, I have become increasingly focused on promoting the importance of having a clear message and a robust future story. I think if there are two key elements that I would like people to take away from any training on campaigning, it would be to get them thinking long and hard about these two elements.

I have found myself increasingly talking about the importance of communicating with **an absence of ambiguity**. Your campaign message needs to be crystal clear about the problem that you are seeking to address and your desired solution. Clearly this is not all you need to be able to campaign, but it is such a powerful foundation stone upon which you can build so much.

But this is not the same as saying that your issue needs to be simple. Many campaigns are seeking change to complex problems and there will be times in your campaign when it will be right to get into the details of your issue – and you need to be prepared for these times. For example, you might meet with a politician and get some top level support, and then you get to meet their officials and that is when you need to get into the detail. But you can't start with the detail. To begin to build support you need a clear and simple message – an absence of ambiguity. This is your entry point. Once you have got interest and engagement, you can then afford to get more detailed. But first off, you need a clear message setting out your campaign problem and solution- in essence your elevator pitch.

I did some work with a group of refugee-led organisations recently, and they were responding well to my simple approach to campaigning but it wasn't really taking off for them; it wasn't really becoming real for them as they did not have a common issue to focus on. I then asked them to indulge me by taking an issue with a clear problem and a clear solution just as a working example. Then being cognisant that this may not be their priority, I worked with them to develop a plan on how they might push for change on this issue. And then things really took off and became exciting as ideas began to come in from around the group about their target, allies, opposition and future story to take the specific issue forward. They had seen how this approach could open up their discussions on campaigning, and that they could apply it to different issues, but only after they had applied these campaign tools to a specific problem and solution.

Over time I have found that a training course on campaigning is massively enhanced if there can be clarity and agreement at the start on a particular campaign problem and solution to which you can then go on to apply all the subsequent campaign tools. It just makes the training more real and useful. And do be ready to invest the time to get clarity on your issue – it will be time well worth spent in the future.

But it is also very clear that having a good message is not enough by itself. But combining it with a compelling and realistic future story of the chain of events, based on a robust understanding of the external environment, that you are going to help make happen to bring about change on your issue, can be a powerful combination.

I am really interested when I come across a campaign for the first time to seek to understand both the campaign message but also their future story of how they see change actually happening.

And I think when you are promoting a campaign particularly to a new audience it can be such a compelling combination of both a strong campaign message and a robust future story.

I've come across campaigners, who are either very angry or just very busy and are frankly too busy to set out their future story. I think this is such a shame and such a missed opportunity as they could direct some of their energy and anger into developing a future story to help people understand how they can play a part in bringing about change.

But the use of the word robust here is also important. It can be incredibly seductive to develop the future story, which to your mind looks brilliant, but has absolutely no foundation whatsoever in reality. I have referred to this above as fantasy campaigning. A critical element to making your future story robust is having an almost childlike curiosity about your external environment, being ready to ask the question **but why?** to shape your own understanding of your external context, so that you can build your future story based on that clarity of insight.

So having a clear message and a robust future story to my mind is fundamental for effective campaigning.

2. Welcoming challenge

It takes real confidence then to set out your campaign priority, articulated through your campaign message, and your future story of how you see change happening. Many people get stuck by being almost paralysed by facing a multiplicity of choices on their campaign priority and being overwhelmed by the possible potential directions of travel. So, to break free from this potential paralysis takes great confidence.

But campaigning is not just about confidence. As I've said before, campaigning is very much a collective not an individual pursuit. Having had the confidence to set out your message and then your future story, you then need to embrace humility to welcome challenge.

Some of the most effective campaigners that I've seen have been able to communicate with great clarity their message and future story, but then have actively sought out and encouraged other people to challenge them. They have been expressly interested in soliciting the views of other people.

What do they think? Do they think that something is missing? Is there a gap in the logic underpinning the future story?

And when they have been asked these challenging questions, they don't revert to a defensive mode, they pause and think about whether they can actually answer the challenge, and if they can't answer the challenge, they are more than ready to think about what that might mean for their own campaign future story.

I have come to appreciate that an effective campaigner has an ability to harness both extreme confidence but also genuine humility, which may initially appear to be mutually exclusive, but if you can manage to hold both confidence and humility simultaneously that can be an incredibly powerful place to be.

Effective campaigners have a really clear sense of what they're trying to achieve and how they're going to do it. But they are acutely interested in the views of other people, and if they are unable to answer their challenges, they are very ready to think about what changes if any need to be made to the future story. And they go out of their way to invite such challenge.

This includes moving out of their immediate comfort circle and talking with people who may have different views and different insights because they actively want to be challenged.

In my younger days doing campaigning, once I had that clarity of message and direction of travel, all that I was really looking for was expanding the degree of my support.

I would travel extensively talking to people to try to enthuse them with the goal of getting more people being prepared to speak out in favour of my campaign. And clearly that is important in building momentum for your campaign. But as the years progressed, I began to realise that sometimes the most valuable contribution that other people could make, especially people outside of your immediate circle and sector, would be to give you their views on your future story.

For example, whenever I used to meet a politician, all I craved was for their active public endorsement of my campaign. Over time I began to realise that this wasn't always the most helpful thing, and sometimes particularly when I first had contact with them, the most useful thing that they could do to support the campaign would be to offer me their reflection on my future story.

I did some work years ago supporting a particular hospice, which was trying to develop a campaign to improve the funding available for hospices in England, and I remember speaking to a few politicians on their behalf. A really powerful way to start the conversation was to offer them a reflection on what we thought were the problems holding back the hospice movement and what could happen to change, before inviting them to offer their perspective. These conversations helped us to test our own thinking by inviting challenge and fresh ideas to strengthen our strategy.

So, welcoming challenge is so important. But I think it is this combination of a powerful message and compelling future story together with the humility to invite challenge, which can be such a powerful approach as you seek to develop your campaign.

3. Capture learning; record it; revise your plan

Another key element that I have emphasised in my more recent workshops, linked to having a future story, is the importance of capturing your learning, recording it, and then revising your plan. I have been keen to stress that doing campaigning is like going on a learning journey, and it is so vital to be able to log and reflect on your learning to enhance your own campaigning practice.

This may sound like a statement of the blindingly obvious, but it is interesting how often it doesn't happen, primarily because motivated and energetic campaigners are always rushing on to do the next thing on their campaign. It can be incredibly empowering though to pause to make the time to reflect on what you have learnt.

I would like to suggest that after every external engagement on your campaign, you do take time, albeit briefly, to reflect on your learning, to write it down and record it, and with your colleagues to reflect on whether you need to revise your plan.

The writing it down part may seem unnecessary at the time, but having a recorded log of your activity and your resulting decisions impacting on your campaign will massively help you in time when you look back either to assess how you succeeded in your campaign or maybe why you didn't.

This process will also help you in developing your approach to monitoring and evaluation. And I have [written extensively in the past about how your future story can help you veer away from being tied down to rigid historic performance indicators](#), but nevertheless still demonstrate your accountability as your campaign progresses.

When I have been a trustee of an organisation engaging in a campaign, in addition to being focused on what our campaign message was, I have been most interested to probe our future story and how it was developing and changing over time as a result of our activity. As a trustee, being prepared to ask:

- *what did we say we would do?*

- *what did we do?*
- *what have we learned as a result?*
- *and what are we going to change in the future?*

are probably the four key questions you need to focus on. And as a campaigner, if you have been making time to capture, record and revise your plans based on your learning, this will put you in a strong position to respond helpfully to your trustees' questions.

Furthermore, if you are fortunate enough to receive funding for your campaign, I think funders are becoming rightly increasingly more interested not so much in your delivery against historically agreed performance indicators, but far more interested in how you are learning from your campaigning activity, and how that learning is influencing the direction of your campaign.

I did some work several years ago with the Open Society Foundation in Bulgaria, and we were emphasising this point around reflecting on your learning and being able to make changes to your campaign plan. We found that the group was very nervous with this approach, and when we sought to understand their nervousness, it became clear that they were very reticent about ever reporting to funders that they had failed in what they had set out to do. It got to such a point at the workshop that we had to get the grants officer to stand up to say explicitly that she would welcome a report which indicated there had been failure, if they could show what they had learnt from this failure, and how it was going to strengthen their campaign activity going forward.

I remember in my first few days at the Red Cross making a point of telling my manager that I would fail on many occasions as we started developing campaigning activity. I wanted to get that point in early! Yet what I was endeavouring to get across was that campaigning is all about experimentation and trying things (based on your own understanding of the outside world and not just random actions!) and inevitably you will try things not all of which will succeed, but it is only by doing things and engaging with the external world that you can gain an understanding from your learning, which will help you to be more effective in your campaigning.

During my first national campaign at Oxfam, we were running a campaign to end the use of supermarket vouchers to support people seeking asylum. One of our early activities was a postcard action whereby we were encouraging our supporters to send postcards into their local supermarket, with a till receipt attached, protesting about the supermarket's involvement with this scheme. We distributed tens of thousands of cards and there was huge interest from our supporters and others in this campaigning initiative.

However, owing to the diffuse nature of our targets, whereby we were targeting so many supermarkets which meant that one supermarket maybe at best got one or two postcards, it really had no impact at all. So, on one level this action was a complete failure, but on another level, it launched the campaign and energised our supporters, and it showed us that at that stage of the campaign, targeting individual supermarkets was not the appropriate method, and we needed to build other campaigning activities and develop other allies to push our campaign forward. So, we failed, but it was only through our failure that we were helped to see where we could go next.

I have come to realise in campaigning that having an ability to embrace failure is paramount. Not that you want to continually fail, but it is only by trying things and then taking the learning from that activity to enhance your performance that you can really make progress. In many societies, I have noticed that there is a real aversion to opening up about failure. When I wrote my first book on campaigning for success, referenced above, I found it incredibly hard to get campaigners to talk about their failures. Yet very often you can learn as much from failure as you can from success.

I think as a campaigner you need to be far more open and acknowledge failure, but only as a motivator to understand what you might do better next time.

In addition, as a campaigner, while it is important to focus on your ultimate goal, it is also important to be clear about the milestones for you along your journey to get to your goal. Your development of your future story will help you to identify those milestones. So, while you might yet to be delivering on your ultimate goal, you may still be making progress on your milestones and it is good to acknowledge and celebrate that progress. In so doing, I have come to see that it is helpful for some of your milestones to be more within your power to achieve; for example: number of new allies recruited or politicians spoken to. These actions are not your desired success but they are a good sign of you building momentum towards your final goal.

During my time at Oxfam there was a campaign to influence the UK government's policy on arms exports, and we tracked the use of language by the government over time on this issue. Their rhetoric began really hard line but then we noticed how it softened along the road to get policy change.

So as a campaigner, I hope that you can capture your learning, record it, and revise your plan accordingly ... and write it all down!

4. The passion of 'non-campaigners'

Over the years, I have felt myself begin to favour working with groups of people who did not see themselves as professional campaigners, but were highly motivated to achieve change on a particular issue owing to their own practical experience of the issue.

What I have loved about working with such people is that they bring no baggage with them, and they often sit in the workshop room with a palpable sense of hunger to learn, and on many occasions, they take my basic framework and apply it to their own context on their own issue. I find that to be an incredibly exciting professional environment within which to work. *I will never forget the response from a Roma leader at a workshop in Bulgaria, who came up to me at the end of the workshop, and told me that as a result of the training, she now realised that she had been doing campaigning all her life, she just would not have attached that description to her activities. I loved that feedback. Or the workshop I ran with community groups in Sri Lanka and I could almost feel their sense of hunger to learn things to help them promote their cause.*

To do campaigning you don't have to be a professional campaigner with the word campaign in your job title. Rather you need to have passion to achieve change on a particular issue. But to be clear, I have also had the privilege of working with professional campaigners who have maintained this passion.

Yet I have found that some professional campaigners can be reluctant to engage with my suggested framework. I am sympathetic as I was not initially interested in theory and frameworks; I just wanted to campaign! Many people can be instinctive campaigners, but where possibly I begin to lose sympathy is when they reject my framework, which is fine, but have no alternative framework that they can present themselves. I think that if you are a successful campaigner, it is beholden on you to reflect on what has made you successful, and then to seek to share it with others to encourage more campaigning. It is not something that you should keep to yourself, and I think that you should be able to communicate to others to inspire them.

So, if you are reading this book feeling conscious that you are not a campaigner, but you do feel strongly about certain issues, I so hope that this book, and in particular this chapter, will help you to see that you are in fact a campaigner! You have the most precious

commodities for effective campaigning and that is passion, drive and energy for your issue. I have seen over the years how combining those elements together with the practical campaigning tools contained in this book can be a really dynamic combination.

But if you are a professional campaigner, someone like me who is fortunate enough to actually be paid to campaign, I do hope that you don't feel alienated by my words above. The world needs people in professional campaigning roles like you, and I have found it to be a truly wonderful occupation to be paid for something that you both believe in and truly love doing.

For me the critical issue is how as a professional campaigner you then stay motivated and passionate.

Several years ago, I was invited to speak at a public meeting at the Amnesty human rights action centre in London. I was on the panel with several other people talking about campaigning but all of us were talking from a position of being a volunteer. Listening to the panel's speeches, I was struck by the sheer passion, energy and vitality coming through their words. It was refreshingly different to some of the speeches I had heard in the past, and it did make me wonder whether if the panel had been composed of professional campaigners whether they would have had the same energy? I really hope they would have had.

But how do you sustain that passion and motivation? One idea that I've been discussing with people over the last few years is this idea of campaigners having **reservoirs of motivation**.

Basically, where do you go when your motivation levels begin to dip? Where do you go to get re-fired up on your campaign? I think that all of us myself included, if we're honest with ourselves, do need to have answers to those questions. I have referred to this as needing a **reservoir of motivation**.

And I suggest that all of us as campaigners need to identify the location of our own such a reservoir. No matter how committed we are at the start of a campaign, undoubtedly motivation levels will flag, and then what do you do? Where do you go to re-energise your motivation to keep going on your campaign? As a campaigner, it is so important to have your own answer to this question.

For me being involved with campaigns on issues around refugee rights and my voluntary involvement with the City of Sanctuary UK network has offered me a phenomenal reservoir of motivation, where I have had incredible opportunities to meet the most marvellous

people, who are in the UK seeking safety, and meeting them and connecting with them has done so much to re-fire and sustain my motivation.

In summary, I hope for two things:

- If you are not in the fortunate position to be paid to campaign, but you still feel passionately about an issue, I so hope that this book encourages you to campaign and put these practical tools into use: you are a campaigner!
- And if you are in the fortunate position to be paid to campaign, I so hope that you can identify the location of your reservoir of motivation so you can stay motivated both for your campaign but also to help other people to campaign!

5. Push backs to your campaign and using this framework

If campaigning can be as simple and straightforward, as I endeavour to set out in my training workshops and in my words above, why is it that on some occasions, my initial suggestion to follow this framework has been rejected?

If, as I stated above, people have an alternative framework for their campaign, I will be delighted and very interested to learn from them to improve my own practice. However, if as has sometimes happened, they have no alternative framework, then I am very interested as to why they are pushing back on having an opportunity to review their progress against my approach. When I have come across alternative approaches, I have always been incredibly interested and challenged to apply this framework to my own thinking on my issue.

Just taking two of the central tenants of my approach: having a clear message and developing a future story, it is really interesting to reflect how often there has been resistance to working on them.

I can think back to working with two large organisations, which were both already running global campaigns, but where there was incredible reluctance to clarify the precise message and indeed to set out the future story for the campaign. They seemed content to raise awareness of their general issue, and then *to do stuff*. There was very little interest in a focused message around tangible changes and in any sense of building a future story; yet they were incredibly busy doing things on their campaign.

I also remember supporting a pan-European campaign, where, while there was much energy around data capture and report writing, there was incredible reluctance to seek clarity on the precise change objectives, and to set out a future story. Without that clarity of focus and direction of travel, it was difficult then to build any real sense of momentum on the campaign.

There was also the time that I joined an organisation, and the head of campaigns proudly told me that their approach to campaigning was basically just to do stuff, but a lot of it! Now, there is something to be said for sometimes just doing a lot of things, making a lot

of noise, and getting people interested, but I can't help myself thinking that isn't it a better option to use your limited resources and time in the best way possible to have maximum impact in your external environment?

Campaigning isn't just about being busy, and you would hope if you were in the middle of a campaign that you would be very busy! But campaigning is about making the best strategic choices about where you direct your energy and effort. How do you make those best strategic choices? I would suggest using a framework like mine is a good process to go through to help you make those decisions.

Now one point I should add here is that very often when I start a campaigning workshop, I will hear myself say *that I will now offer you a series of practical campaigning tools, not all of which you will engage with, but I hope some of them will prove useful to you in the future*. So, while I hope that you embrace the whole framework, even if you just take one or a few bits of it that has to be good.

And where there is a push back to this approach either by yourself or by others, I would be really interested to know what the alternative is. Now if there is an alternative approach that not only is available but is being used then that is excellent, and do please let me know about it.

I have also come across very experienced and successful campaigners, who have not wanted to engage with my approach at all. And to be fair they haven't needed my approach, as they have clearly been very successful without it.

My only question would be, based on my own experience, is that while they may not need a framework for their campaign because in their mind they see things really clearly, such a framework like mine might help other people who are going on that campaigning journey with them.

In conclusion then, pushbacks to my approach are always welcome. I would love to know what you think of this approach, but also if you use an alternative approach which you find helpful. But if you don't want to engage because you are too busy doing things, then I might just gently challenge you that whilst you may not need it, having such a framework might help other people travel with you on your campaigning journey sharing a mutual understanding about your journey.

Ultimately campaigning is a collective human experience not an individual pursuit. We all come to campaigning with different skills, instinct and experience, and I would like to suggest that sharing a common framework helps different people with a common purpose come together in the most effective way to push for change. What do you think?

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6. What stops campaigning?

In more recent years, I have become increasingly interested about what actually stops people campaigning. It is fine to talk about how to campaign and to offer a simple framework with practical tools, but I have often found myself at my workshops discussing the obstacles to campaigning. I have begun to wonder that, in addition to offering a framework, I might also highlight to people potential obstacles in advance to them so that they may be slightly better prepared for when they meet these obstacles.

Too busy

Sometimes, whilst people may have been interested in the training, when they get back to the day job, they find themselves just too busy doing their routine stuff to really engage with a different way of doing business. So, what can you do if you find yourself just too busy doing your job to actually put this campaigning framework into practice? It certainly is a difficult question, and it is good to highlight to people that they may well find the busyness of their working lives getting in the way of their campaigning aspiration.

One practical suggestion that I've made in the past is that you make a small period of time each week for you to advance your campaign. I remember once leading a small charity where we were incredibly busy just keeping the show on the road, but in my diary every week I scheduled a couple of hours to move my campaign forward. Making a deliberate point of making the time really helped me, and now when I look back several years later, I don't remember the business as usual activities, but I do remember the campaign and the momentum that we were able to build up.

How performance is monitored

Another obstacle is the way that performance is very often monitored. People will return to their normal role and will find themselves under pressure to deliver on certain key activities with no credit given for your campaigning. If you are serious about your campaign, then your campaign needs to be included in your performance objectives, otherwise you will be under pressure to de-prioritise your campaigning. You might want to take a look at [my thoughts on monitoring and evaluating campaigning](#), as this could help you with

your approach to including your campaign in your performance goals, whilst still keeping some room for manoeuvre and flexibility. And don't just focus on your desired end result for your campaign; it is equally important to be able to identify the key milestones you need to reach as you develop your campaign.

Focussing just on the next thing

Whilst people may remember this approach to campaigning after the training, they will be focused on the next big thing be it writing a report or organising a conference for example. A critical element here is that these activities are very easy to monitor in terms of whether or not they can actually make them happen. This is fine, but remember those two little link words in campaigning – **so and that**. So even though you are focussed on making one activity happen, you also should think of the **so that** – you are doing this **so that** what can happen? One key campaigning skill you can integrate into your working life is your ability to think beyond your immediate activity to where you are going next.

I have seen many organisations put so much energy and drive into a single activity such as writing a report, and it can be such a painful process by the time that it is finally signed off and printed that everybody is exhausted with little energy or capacity to actually do anything with the report. But also, as these activities are within their comfort zone, and indeed, possibly within their own performance monitoring, they may then look to produce the next such activity, and so the wheel of activity continues. But always think about the **so that**. As a campaigner, you should always be thinking about the **so that** and encouraging your colleagues to do likewise.

Reacting to external events

Furthermore, often people will be under intense pressure to react to external events. So, whilst they may be focused on a particular activity, such as writing a report, they also know that they have to reserve some capacity to be able to react to such external developments, and therefore their space for campaigning becomes ever less. I think this point about being reactive is a really interesting one, and can be a massive challenge for campaigners. It is clearly massively important not to ignore external events and to be able to react to them, but you should not be a slave to these events feeling completely powerless and letting them dictate your own agenda. I wonder as a campaigner whether we are better placed always looking at external events through the lens of our future

story for our campaign, and asking ourselves whether there are particularly important opportunities emerging and whether we can use these external events to promote our campaign issues?

Fighting on many fronts

And linked to this point is that, whilst they know that they should be focused on their campaigning, they will be under huge pressure possibly from both themselves and their organisation to fight on many fronts because there are so many things to oppose and campaign against. They may remember that the enemy of effective campaigning is a lack of focus, but they find themselves compelled to react on multiple fronts. Indeed, some people might even welcome the diversity in their working life. I think this obstacle is a real challenge to campaigning. Because you are motivated in a particular area, you will no doubt find it very difficult to restrict yourself to just focusing on one thing and the temptation to fight on multiple fronts will be immense. Yet, as I have stated above many times, the lack of focus is one of the biggest blocks to effective campaigning. It does take real courage to take a focus on an issue, and your choice will always be criticised – but a lack of focus will undermine your efforts. I have wondered in the past whether there is an answer to this particular dilemma of needing to fight on multiple fronts:

When I was working on refugee issues in the UK there were multiple issues to be concerned about and want to talk about, but it would be impossible to campaign on all of these simultaneously. I made sure that we had clear policy lines and communication messages on all of these issues including having the capacity to develop them on emerging issues, but nonetheless still having the discipline of sticking to our limited number of campaigning priorities.

You may feel that this is a slight cop-out, but I like this distinction between having a policy basket of issues that you feel comfortable talking about and then a much smaller list of your campaigning priorities. So, you are not ignoring other important issues, but you can still have some degree of focus on your priority issues.

Lack of a goal

And in the midst of all of this activity and reaction, there can also be an incredible reluctance to define a specific campaign goal. This requires some degree of courage to be able to prioritise one goal over and above others, and then to attract possible criticism for this

choice. I have always said on my workshops that no matter what you decide to prioritise, you will be criticised; I can almost guarantee that will happen!

The important element here, as I stated before, is that you can clearly and transparently show how you have reached the decision on your priority issue. Nevertheless, I have come across huge amounts of paralysis in very committed people, who find themselves almost unable to make a decision on their priority. I think this can be one of the biggest obstacles to campaigning. I think the answer here goes back at least in part to chapter B2 where I talk about the selection criteria for your priority issue.

I remember years ago running a workshop for a European campaigning network of different NGOs and they had an incredibly long list of priorities, which were completely unrealistic to run with simultaneously, and yet certain members were passionate about certain issues. Until we could resolve this issue, it would be impossible to really move forward with any campaign planning, so we tentatively agreed the key selection criteria for our priority issue. We then slowly, and admittedly somewhat painfully, went through every single issue applying the selection criteria. It soon became very clear that some issues needed substantially more work and thought before they would be ready for a campaign and actually our shortlist was much shorter than we initially thought. It did seem an unnecessary process at the time, but it is absolutely vital to make sure that everybody has their say against agreed criteria to help you come to a clear and understandable decision on your priority.

What is interesting about all of these obstacles is that none of them are bad things. So, for example, when you are campaigning, you do need to do things, you do need to focus on particular activities, you do need to react, and you do need to have some limited capacity to engage with other issues. Yet the salient point, which is so often missed, is that campaigning is not just the collection of all of these things, but it is harnessing and bringing them together in an overall sense of a strategic focused direction.

Without a clear campaign goal, and a future story for your campaign, you run the risk of being incredibly busy, doing things, reacting to things, fighting on multiple fronts, but actually not really building momentum for change. Yet, when challenged, people can be incredibly and understandably defensive.

They will turn around and point to how busy they are, and how many hours they are working, the number of outputs they have achieved; all of which will be true, but without the context of a clear goal and strategic direction.

Fear of a backlash

In more recent years a common concern I have heard expressed is people's fear of a backlash, or a negative reaction, to a campaign, and this can act as a major obstacle to campaigning.

In the context of the UK, I think the backlash to a tweet that Oxfam sent out in 2014 had an incredibly sobering impact on campaigning energies within the wider voluntary sector. They had tweeted, not unreasonably in my view, that a perfect storm had been created by the then government implementing a number of specific policy changes which had impacted on domestic poverty. Government supporting politicians then launched a campaign against Oxfam accusing the charity of becoming too political which led to a subsequent investigation by the charity commission.

I think that this episode shows that fear of a backlash is not an irrational concern for any campaigner to have; yet far from stopping you from speaking out, it should I think encourage you to think through what the consequences might be of you undertaking a certain campaign or promoting a particular issue or message. As campaigners, and I am conscious of having made this point before, we should never just focus on our immediate next action. We should always be thinking ahead and trying to judge what might then happen as a result, what reaction we might get to our campaign, and what action we might take as a result. Furthermore, such thinking ahead should also be encouraging you to think about what you could do in the present moment to reduce the risk of a backlash happening.

What do you think – does any of this resonate with you? Do you have other ideas of how to tackle these obstacles? Are there other obstacles that you are concerned about?

D. Conclusion: clarity of message with a confident and humble future story

I do hope that these words help to inspire you either to start campaigning or to push on with your campaigning. I would love to think that you will proceed with a clear message supported by your confident yet still humble future story. And I hope these campaigning tools help to energise your campaigning, and that you will share them with others to enthuse more people to campaign.

And I would love to hear how you get on, the lessons you learn, the new tools you acquire and the impact you make.

And that is what has inspired me to refresh my book on campaigning. I have been so energised over the years to learn about how people in different parts of the world have responded to my approach to campaigning:

In South Africa, the ‘but why?’ technique helped NGOs to see that they did not have a full understanding of their issue, and that they needed to do some more research first. In Switzerland work on the external environment showed campaigners that they did not all share the same understanding, and that they needed time to come to a common position. Whilst in Kenya, an early discussion on the realities of their external environment and the opportunities at different levels of government created the foundation for an impressive campaign strategy. In Sudan the questions on research helped an NGO to see how they needed to develop their evidence base before they could begin to advocate for a change in government policy. In Senegal, the TEA test helped project staff see that they had in fact been campaigning for years - they just hadn’t been calling it that! Designing an elevator pitch helped a forum of refugees in the UK to identify their campaigning priority. And in Somaliland, the elevator test exercise was a revelation for local NGOs: they told me that they so often saw their target Minister in the market at the weekend, but were never quite sure what to say to him, this exercise ensured they were ready for the next opportunity!

In Ethiopia, the questions on risk were so important for NGO staff to help them to secure the support of their management. The influence tree has been an incredibly simple tool to help people think about whom they should seek to influence. In Haiti this tool led to a fascinating conversation about hidden power and the role of the Church, and that it is not always the government minister who has the power. And in the UK, the influence tree helped to show a group of lawyers that they did not actually know who had the

power to make the change they wanted to see. Before using this tool, they would happily have launched a campaign with no focus on the real target!

In Peru, the opposition matrix enabled NGO staff from across Latin America to construct their campaign message firmly focussed on responding to the opposition arguments and made them change the framing of their messaging. In Germany, the theory of change tool enabled one international NGO to see that so much of their effort went into report writing and the subsequent press conference, and that they needed to invest more time into thinking about what happened next on their campaign. And in Bangladesh, the future story work helped an NGO to cope with setbacks on their campaign and to encourage them to think about different scenarios to seek to build influence. In Liberia, we developed a great future story but when we met next, they apologised for having to change it having had a chat with an international partner – how could I be cross when this was a great example of an evolving future story based on their external engagements? Whilst in Bulgaria, once they had heard a practical example of a future story driving a campaign forward despite the setbacks, there seemed to be nothing that could stop their campaigning!

Your campaign will be engaging with human beings, with all of our varieties and eccentricities, and there will be many twists and turns. But I hope this approach at least helps you somewhat prepare for all of this!

For information on further reading and for the latest updates on my thinking and on current developments in campaigning do check out my website - <http://jonathanelliscampaigns.com>

So, maintain your focus, persistence, flexibility, and a burning desire to see change, remember why you are running your campaign, and don't lose sight of those 12 questions and your answers, and look to build momentum on your issue . . . happy and successful campaigning!

Thanks for reading my manual,

Jonathan