

# Nutrition Advocacy Training

## PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK

Strengthening Advocacy Capacity to  
Scale Up Nutrition Investments and Outcomes in Uganda

March 2012





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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Overview .....	1
<b>SESSION 2: ANALYSIS OF THE NUTRITION PROBLEMS AND THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Overview .....	2
Group Work.....	2
<b>SESSION 3: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Overview .....	4
Group Work.....	4
Handout 1: Analysing the Nutrition Advocacy Issue .....	5
Handout 2: Checklist for Selecting an Advocacy Objective .....	6
<b>SESSION 4: MOBILISING SUPPORT FOR NUTRITION ADVOCACY</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Overview .....	7
Group Work.....	8
<b>SESSION 5: UNDERSTANDING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Overview .....	10
Handout 3: The Formal Decision-Making Process Hierarchy at the Local Government Level (Example of Uganda) .....	11
Group Work.....	13
<b>SESSION 6: DEVELOPING AND COMMUNICATING ADVOCACY MESSAGES</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Overview .....	14
Handout 4: Example of an Advocacy Message.....	15
Group Work.....	16
Handout 5: Assessing the Adequacy of Advocacy Messages.....	18
<b>SESSION 7: FOLLOWING UP AND MONITORING ADVOCACY EFFORTS</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Overview .....	19
Group Work.....	19
Handout 6: Checklist for Monitoring Progress in the Nutrition Advocacy Process .....	20
<b>SESSION 8: CREATING NUTRITION ACTION ADVOCACY PLANS</b> .....	<b>21</b>
Group Work.....	22

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# SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

## Overview

This training is highly participatory and is based on principles of adult learning. This session is necessary to establish your knowledge of advocacy so that appropriate training methodologies are adopted. To do this, you will take a pre-course test to check your understanding of nutrition advocacy. You will also form working groups for the entire training period.

## SESSION 2: ANALYSIS OF THE NUTRITION PROBLEMS AND THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

### Overview

To be effective advocates, you need to clearly and simply define and prioritise the nutrition problem(s) (i.e., the nature, magnitude, distribution of) in your areas of operation, describe what is being done and the gaps in the current level of operation to sustainably reduce the nutrition problems, and suggest adjustments/changes needed to effectively implement programs that address malnutrition in the areas of operation. In this session you will work in groups to suggest up to four priority adjustments that are needed to improve the implementation of nutrition interventions at your level of operation. Follow the instructions provided to identify priority nutrition problem(s) in your area of operation.

### Group Work

- 1) After agreeing on a case study for your group, discuss and rank all the nutrition problems identified in your area of operation. Identify the two nutrition problems with the highest rankings. These will be the two priority nutrition problems the group examines in its case study.

**Priority nutrition problems in the area of operation:**

**RANKING**

- 2) List the two priority nutrition problems your group will use in its case study, as determined in question 1.
  - a.
  - b.
- 3) Take one of the nutrition problems prioritised in question 2 and do a root cause analysis to identify its causes. Identify two immediate causes, three underlying causes, and three root causes of the problem.

**Immediate causes:**

- 1.
- 2.

**Underlying causes:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Root causes:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- 4) For each of the problems prioritised above, identify the priority changes/adjustments needed to improve the nutrition situation.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.

## **SESSION 3: DEVELOPING ADVOCACY ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Overview**

For effective advocacy, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound) objectives are a prerequisite.

### **Group Work**

1. Review (modify if necessary depending on comments given during the presentation of PROFILES Part C) the challenges/changes identified as necessary to improve programming to address the nutrition problems identified.
2. Identify one or two advocacy issues and indicate why you think it is an issue that needs advocacy.
3. What would be the purpose of the advocacy?
4. What two or three objectives would you have for such advocacy?

## Handout 1: Analysing the Nutrition Advocacy Issue

Address the following questions, then analyse the objectives using **Handout 2** on the next page.

1. What is the issue that needs change/adjustment to have effective interventions to address nutrition problems?
2. Why does the issue need advocacy? (Can it be restated in a way that it needs advocacy?)
3. Who will be affected, negatively or positively, if the issue (that needs change) is changed? Why?
4. Have there been any previous advocacy efforts that tried to address the issue? Find out what strategies were used, who was involved, and what the results were.

## Handout 2: Checklist for Selecting an Advocacy Objective

Criteria	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4
1. Do qualitative or quantitative data exist to show that the objective will improve the situation?				
2. Is the objective achievable, even with opposition?				
3. Will the objective gain the support of many people?				
4. Can you clearly identify the target decision-makers? What are their positions?				
5. Is the objective easy to understand?				
6. Does the objective have a clear time frame?				
7. How will the objective help build support from other organisations?				

Adapted from: Ritu R. Sharma. 1997. *An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide*. Washington, DC: Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA Project).

## **SESSION 4: MOBILISING SUPPORT FOR NUTRITION ADVOCACY**

### **Overview**

Connecting with other individuals/organisations that are working on food security and nutrition issues is important so that policymakers and the public hear a unified message. Collaboration can generate more political sway than single agencies can. A range of champions with varying degrees of influence can be used to facilitate decisions and institutionalise change at multiple levels.

## Group Work

Using the advocacy objectives determined in Session 3, identify possible groups/individuals to build a coalition with and consider why that group/individual is chosen, such as expected benefits or a shared vision.

**Objective 1:**

Actions/Decisions Needed

**Decision Maker(s) 1**

**Reason(s)**

**Influencer(s) 1**

**Reason(s)**

**Decision Maker(s) 2**

**Reason(s)**

**Influencer(s) 2**

**Reason(s)**

**Food/Nutrition Information Needs**

**CONSIDER:**  
What they need  
to know in order  
to act

**Objective 2:**

**Actions/Decisions Needed**

**Decision Maker(s) 1**  
**Reason(s)**

**Influencer(s) 1**  
**Reason(s)**

**Decision Maker(s) 2**  
**Reason(s)**

**Influencer(s) 2**  
**Reason(s)**

**Food/Nutrition Information Needs**

**CONSIDER:**  
What they need  
to know in order  
to act

## **SESSION 5: UNDERSTANDING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION**

### **Overview**

To advocate effectively, it is necessary to be familiar with the decision-making process that needs to be influenced. Decision-making processes have a time frame, when they start and finish; critical points when key decisions are made; and formal (and informal) rules and procedures that govern how decisions are made. Understanding this is fundamental to achieving the objectives of the advocacy effort.

## Handout 3: The Formal Decision-Making Process Hierarchy at the Local Government Level (Example of Uganda)

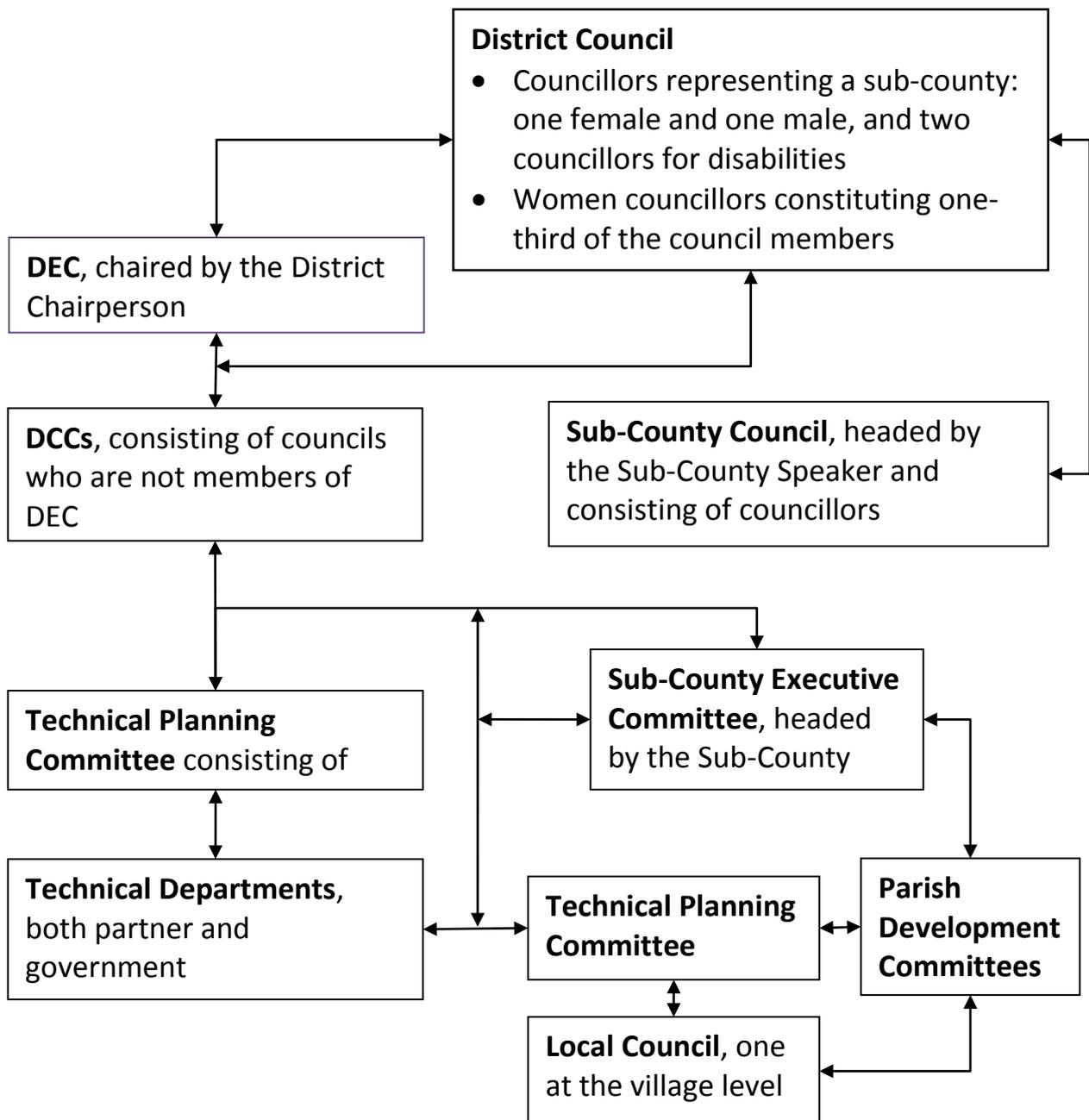
Though every decision-making process will contain elements of the stages outlined in **Lecture Notes 5**, each process will vary in its rules and procedures. There are key questions to ask to fully understand the process you are trying to influence, as listed below. These are the elements in creating a Policy Process Map.

- What organisation or policy-making body will make the decision you are trying to influence?
- What is the formal decision-making process for this institution?
- What are the steps in the formal process?
- When will each step take place?
- What are the informal workings or behind the scenes actions for the decision-making process?
- Who is/are the key decision-maker(s) at each stage?
- Which steps are open to outside input?
- Which stages in the process can you influence?
- How can you influence these stages?

The system of local governments in Uganda is based on a district as a unit under which there are lower local governments and administrative units. In rural areas, the local governments in a district include the district council and the sub-county council. In cities, the local governments are the city council and city division councils. In municipalities, the local governments are the municipal council and municipal division councils. In towns, the local governments are called town councils. In advocacy terms, a city is equivalent to a district, a city division is equivalent to a municipality, and a municipal division and a town council are each equivalent to a sub-county council.

The district council is the highest policy-making body with influence at the local government level. The key decision-makers in the formal decision-making process at the district level include district councils; the District Speaker and Deputy Speaker; the District Chairperson; the District Executive Committee (DEC); District Council Committees (DCCs); District Councillors; the District Service Commission; the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO); Resident District Commissioner (RDC); and the Technical Departments of Management and Support Services, Finance and Planning, Production and Marketing, Works and Technical Services, Health Services, Education and Sports, Natural Resources, and Community Based Services. The figure below shows how local government entities and positions interact.

## Levels of decision-making in the local government



## Group Work

Discuss the following questions using one of the advocacy objectives identified in Session 3.

### Understanding the Decision-Makers

What is the decision-making process (when does it start and what are the steps)?

What is the timing of the different steps?

Who are the actors/decision-makers at each step?

What are the decisions made at each step (and who are the key influencers and other actors involved)?

What key information is needed to support the decisions at each step?

## **SESSION 6: DEVELOPING AND COMMUNICATING ADVOCACY MESSAGES**

### **Overview**

Advocacy communication seeks to inform, persuade, and move decision-makers to action. Decision-makers/influencers are persuaded by advocacy messages, specifically the content of the messages, the way they are packaged and communicated, who is communicating them, and follow-up to and reinforcement of the messages. Therefore, advocacy messages must have the information (and data) that gets the decision-makers' attention. Key messages are short statements that are vivid and memorable and that clearly inform the audience on the nutrition problem, its effect on the population/society, why the nutrition problem is not effectively reduced, and what the decision-makers can do.

## Handout 4: Example of an Advocacy Message

### What catches attention?

- **Targeted shockers** (of the problem or of the consequences of status quo):
  - Recent numbers
  - New information
  - Visuals/pictures
- **Strategic interests** (something, e.g., a statement or picture, that the audience associates with)

### The Problem

Malnutrition kills. Malnutrition kills five women every day in Uganda. Despite this established fact we have not done enough to prevent these deaths. Many children remain motherless and many homes remain without a key caregiver. Today five homes will shed tears and mourn their mothers—for some it is their daughters—all because we who could do something have not prioritised this as an urgent issue.

### The Advocacy Issue/Solution

We need comprehensive programmes at the district level to address this problem. This has not happened yet because there is no forum at the district level to coordinate and mobilise people to reduce maternal deaths associated with malnutrition and we have not mobilised enough resources to implement comprehensive programmes in the districts.

### Proposed Action 1 (Based on Our Objective)

You, the members of the district executive committee, were elected to do the best you can for the vulnerable members of our constituencies. If you save women's lives during your term in office, you will be proud that you did something for God and this country. We are therefore requesting that you establish a district forum on maternal health and nutrition with the motto 'every woman must live'. We request that one of you chair the forum when it is established.

### Proposed Action 2 (Based on Our Objective)

We also request that one member of the district executive committee propose—and the rest of you mobilise your other colleagues to support—the inclusion of a budget line for maternal health and nutrition activities of not less than 25 million UGX in the district development plan for 2013. The 25 million UGX will be seed money to mobilise other partners to this course.

## Group Work

Choose one of your group's advocacy objectives and create two advocacy messages using the tables below as a guide. Use the boxes for audience, where, when, communicator, time needed, and tools needed to determine how the advocacy messages will be communicated. Then, present your messages to the rest of participants.

**Audience 1:**

**Where:**

**When:**

**Communicator:**

**Time needed:**

**Tools needed:**

	<b>Moral/emotional/physical aspect of the message</b>
What is the problem and why must we address it (e.g., who is affected, magnitude of the problem, why)?	
What is the issue? (What constrains us from making progress in reducing the problem?)	
What needs to be done (the desired outcome/goal)? What alternative solutions can be provided? Why did you choose these solutions?	
What decision do decision-makers need to make?	
Why should decision-makers make this decision now?	

**Complete Message 1**

**Audience 2:**

**Where:**

**When:**

**Communicator:**

**Time needed:**

**Tools needed:**

	<b>Moral/emotional/physical aspect of the message</b>
What is the problem and why must we address it (e.g., who is affected, magnitude of the problem, why)?	
What is the issue? (What constrains us from making progress in reducing the problem?)	
What needs to be done (the desired outcome/goal)? What alternative solutions can be provided? Why did you choose these solutions?	
What decision do decision-makers need to make?	
Why should decision-makers make this decision now?	

**Complete Message 2**

Note: Assess the complete messages based on Handout 5.

## Handout 5: Assessing the Adequacy of Advocacy Messages

	Message characteristic	Check	How to improve message
1	Is the problem simply stated for the target audience to understand and relate to?		
2	Is the issue clearly and simply brought out for this target audience?		
3	Is a specific solution to the issue (concerns) provided and justification made for why this solution was proposed?		
4	Does the message let the audience/decision-makers know exactly what they should do? (Is it something under their ability to do?)		
5	Has the case been clearly made as to why action or a decision is needed now?		
6	Are there phrases that engage the audience's passions and emotions?		
7	Is the message simple and understandable to the target audience?		
8	Is the message clear and concise for the target audience (or are there words that add no value to the message)?		
9	Will the message achieve the intended objective?		

## SESSION 7: FOLLOWING UP AND MONITORING ADVOCACY EFFORTS

### Overview

The nutrition advocacy process may take time before decision-makers appreciate the issues and start taking actions in the desired direction. It requires continuous reflection and review of the process.

### Group Work

Think of the ways to:

- 1) Ensure your ideas for advocacy are executed
- 2) Monitor your advocacy efforts and keep coalition members informed

Opportunity for executing the ideas	Who?

Indicators to monitor the process	Frequency/when?

Use Handout 6 to monitor the progress of the nutrition advocacy process.

## Handout 6: Checklist for Monitoring Progress in the Nutrition Advocacy Process

Item	Excellent	Well done	To some extent	Poorly done	Needs redoing
Were the key issue(s) clearly defined?					
Was the most appropriate solution to the issues chosen?					
Were the strategies effective in reaching the (critical number of) key decision-makers?					
Was the most appropriate advocacy target audience chosen?					
Was the timing of advocacy most appropriate (given the decision-making process)?					
Were messages short, simple, and easy to understand and relate to?					
Were the presentations (and communication channels) effective for the target audience?					
Were decision-makers convinced that change is necessary?					
Was follow-up with the decision-makers done?					
Were there adequate resources to carry out the advocacy plan?					
Were key partners/allies periodically informed of the process and outcomes?					
Did the advocacy team have a mechanism of monitoring progress and changing tact?					

## SESSION 8: CREATING NUTRITION ACTION ADVOCACY PLANS

Effective advocates plan their activities and lay out appropriate strategies for reaching their target audiences. They think of the actions needed in the nutrition advocacy process, such as what will be done, when will it be done, who will do what (or the roles of the allies and partner agencies), and the materials and resources needed. Tactical details that are key to the advocacy process are identified and planned. Back-up strategies are prepared just in case the preferred plan fails. The plans include strategies for reaching non-supporters and also the initial preparatory actions (e.g., composing an advocacy working group). Timing of activities is critical, so nutrition advocates must select the opportune moment to put their plan into action. Action plans should indicate ways of raising the resources needed to conduct the advocacy and the indicators to monitor the activities and their outcome.

## Group Work

Fill out the action plan below with key actions for the next 3 and 6 months. Then present to the rest of participants.



Action Item	Who	When	Comments