Part 3

Taking action

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Introduction

Part 3 of the handbook introduces some basic advocacy techniques, with suggested sources of further information. It is based on the idea that, although the contexts may be very different in – for example – Manila and Madrid, the practice of advocacy derives from some core principles which are potentially useful to all activists, wherever they are working.

The details of any advocacy programme will of course be different in every case and in every situation. You will need to adapt the suggested approaches to your own circumstances. This part of the book asks a lot of questions, to help you to confront the problems that you have identified, to develop your thinking, and to relate your experiences to those of other organisations campaigning against the abuse of small arms – experiences on which this part of the text is based.
1 Working with others

The problems associated with small arms are international in nature. They might manifest themselves in a particular way in your community, but your problems are linked to those faced by others: in your country, in your region, and around the world.

For example, if your community is affected by insecurity and gun-related violence, that fact is likely to be connected to a lack of national regulation, action, and capacity. This could be made worse by weak border controls in neighbouring countries, allowing small arms to spread into your village. The weapons are often likely to be manufactured in a country many hundreds of miles away, and transported via other countries, using airplanes or ships which are registered elsewhere and operated by companies based in yet another country.

Working together

The international nature of the problem requires that your work should be linked to that of others working on similar issues in other places and at other levels. Where action has been successful on the abuse of small arms in the past, organisations participating in campaigns for change have usually worked in partnership or coalition with others to achieve it.

In addition to presenting a framework to help you to decide when to work with others, this section considers how you can work with others for change. It is easier to build a momentum for change if organisations work together, rather than in isolation. Of course, this approach carries its own risks, and it is good to be aware of them in order to minimise any potential disadvantages.

Key questions to address

What value can our own organisation add to the actions of others?

- Can we reach a different audience from others?
- Do we have information or access to information that others don’t have?
- Do we represent people who would otherwise not have a voice?
- Can we contribute additional skills, expertise, or resources?
**Why work together? What are the benefits?**

Obviously all situations are different, but joint action offers many benefits:

- Efforts at one level can build on those at another level. For example, analysis presented to high-level institutions is more powerful if informed by local research, personal stories, and individual testimony.
- A range of organisations can speak with a common voice. Their individual credibility and influence are strengthened.
- It is possible to reach a wider range of audiences and policy makers.
- Joint representation may protect those who cannot act alone.
- Civil society is strengthened when knowledge and understanding increase and new relationships and new leadership are forged.
- Funds and other resources can be shared.
- Working together with like-minded institutions and individuals brings strength through unity, moral support, and solidarity.
- Collaboration helps to avoid competition and duplication. Each group can make its own contribution, depending on its particular strengths.

**What are the disadvantages, and how can they be minimised?**

These are some of the common disadvantages involved in programmes of joint action:

- Co-ordinating collaboration may be time-consuming and distracting.
- It may be difficult to agree clear goals.
- Working together may require groups and organisations to make difficult compromises.
- Conflicts of interests may arise, both internally and externally.
- Individuals or participating groups may not always get credit for their own work.
- The members' distinctive identities may be lost.
- Organisations may have conflicting agendas which are hard to reconcile.
- Participation can be a frustrating, cumbersome, and expensive process.
- If the network breaks down, the credibility of individual members may be damaged.
- Opponents will exploit any opportunity arising from divergence of views.
- Some organisations may tend to dominate the group.

Once you have identified the potential or actual disadvantages, you should think of ways of working that will help to reduce them.
Which organisations should be involved?

Be careful which organisations you choose to work with. Association with trusted, committed organisations can bring credibility to your work and enhance your chances of success. Working with those who have different policies and approaches may be problematic: there is a danger that you could weaken your message in order to find a policy on which you all agree. You should choose allies who complement your overall strategy: are you seeking to build a positive relationship with decision makers, or do you need to challenge them directly through public pressure? Which potential allies fit best with your chosen approach?

What is the best way of working together?

- What are the common goals on which all agree and on which all will work together? (And what are the goals on which individual organisations will continue to work separately?)

- How can the expertise that each organisation offers be put to the best use?

- Is it possible to involve other organisations, for whom the problem of small arms may be a secondary focus?

How will communications and organisation be managed?

Working together, no matter how informally, demands a degree of co-ordination in terms of communication and project organisation. Here are some questions to address:

- What role will our organisation take on?

- Will a loose network be sufficient to achieve our common goals, or will we need a more formal structure, devolving responsibility to an inter-organisation management group to take key decisions?

- How can we make sure that organisations with differing levels of commitment, resources, and capacity can participate on an equal basis?

- Is everyone clear about their roles and responsibilities?

- What communication channels will we use to ensure that people can be kept informed and engaged, even if they don’t attend meetings?

- How will we reach decisions? For example, if we need to respond to opportunities quickly, is it acceptable to do this without getting everyone’s prior permission?

- How will meetings/information-sharing processes be managed?

- What mechanisms are in place to resolve any conflicts that may emerge?

- Who will take responsibility for keeping things moving?
Case study: building networks in Kibera, Kenya

Kibera in Nairobi is one of the biggest slums in East and Central Africa, housing around one million people. Surrounded by affluent areas of the city, the people of Kibera are generally treated as if they don’t exist. Most of their houses are made of mud. There is no police post, no government schools, no power supplies, poor water and sewerage facilities, and virtually no functioning infrastructure. These problems are compounded by constant population pressure, as more people arrive in Nairobi from the villages and find that they cannot get work or earn a living wage. So they end up living in Kibera.

In Kenya, youth groups align themselves to political parties and often, under the guise of offering security, terrorise local people. People do not trust the police to protect them: there is a fear, sometimes realised, that guns recovered by police will find their way back to the criminals. One result of these conditions is that crime is endemic in Kibera and other slums in Kenya, as people fight for scarce resources. Since the mid-1990s there have been clashes between ethnic groups in Kibera. These clashes have had a religious dimension; one tribe was Muslim, one Christian. The government has used coercive measures to try to calm the situation, but without significant efforts at reconciliation.

The Kibera Youth Group emerged in 1999 as a response to these problems and set itself the task of looking for solutions. The group’s message to young people – both young Christians and young Muslims – was: ‘We are fighting for something which is not our cause’. Youths were fighting on behalf of political leaders, but not gaining anything from it. Young people are seen as the perpetrators of the violence, but they are also its major victims.

In a climate of continuing sporadic violence, Kibera Youth Programme for Peace and Development (KYPPEDE) works to create awareness of local problems and their causes and solutions. Its approach is based on the fundamental principle that young people are best placed to influence other young people. KYPPEDE has undertaken a wide-ranging programme of action. Its multi-faceted approach includes the following initiatives:

- Seeking to encourage dialogue between the police and community groups.
- Promoting community policing and better procedures for managing stockpiles of weapons.
- Establishing networks to give early warning of impending trouble.
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- Providing training in conflict management.
- Giving support to the victims of violence.
- Mobilising peace organisations.
- Advocating reforms to the President, the police, and religious leaders.
- Developing skills and creating alternatives to violence.

KYPPDEE recognised that the problem was bigger than any one organisation; so they asked themselves: who can we work with? They engage in networking, from the local to the global levels, in the following ways:

- Participating in local forums involving the local community administration, police officials, and the private sector.
- Combining with community-based organisations in order to gather evidence and conduct research.
- Helping to establish the Nairobi Network for Peace, whose first meeting was attended by youth representatives from more than 100 organisations, from eight constituencies across Nairobi.
- Working with peace groups to help them to incorporate action on small arms in their work.
- Working actively with the National Peace Organisations, seeking to create a country-wide youth movement.
- Building links outside Kenya: for example, through visits to camps, barracks, and rehabilitation centres in Uganda to meet child soldiers and other young people affected by violence.
- Working with IANSA to promote global solutions to the problems of small arms.
- Organising a day of international solidarity at the time of the 2001 UN Conference on Small Arms, involving UN representatives, the Police Commissioner, the Mayor, and others.

The organisation's focus is always on promoting dialogue, based on the conviction that peace cannot be achieved without it.

(This case study was developed with the help of the Kibera Youth Programme for Peace and Development and is based on the members' own experiences and opinions.)
Case study: building an advocacy alliance in the UK

An informal grouping of NGOs working on arms issues in the UK has been in place for a number of years, originally operating as an information-sharing network. More recently, the UK Working Group has evolved from a network into a more coherent advocacy alliance. The UKWG consists of Amnesty International UK, BASIC, Christian Aid, International Alert, Oxfam GB, and Saferworld. Some members are broad-based mass membership/campaigning organisations; others are smaller, with a focus on research and policy reform. The UKWG now works on a number of different levels:

- Internationally, UKWG members have played a key role in the development of a global small-arms network (IANSA).
- Regionally, the UKWG, in collaboration with partner NGOs in other EU member states, monitors the impact of the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports and encourages EU member states to implement and strengthen the Code.
- Nationally, the UKWG is working to strengthen arms-trade legislation, monitor UK arms exports, and promote transparency and parliamentary accountability.

As a formalised alliance, the UKWG differs from an information network in the following ways:

1. The UKWG has a joint mission statement and a set of jointly agreed aims. These clearly position the members as advocating that the regulation of arms transfers and any lawful uses of arms must be based upon observance of universal human-rights standards and international humanitarian law. This policy means that organisations who campaign for an end to all arms transfers, for example, cannot join the UKWG, although it does not prevent the UKWG from working with those organisations informally.

2. UKWG members seek to act jointly: for example in meetings with government ministers, officials, and parliamentarians and through the issuing of joint briefings and joint press statements. In addition to these combined approaches, individual members contribute according to their particular specialisms, such as local campaigning, or in-depth policy analysis.

The experience of the UKWG members suggests that by working together the organisations involved have achieved more than they could have done individually.
The early stages of the formation of the working group presented many challenges. Each of the component organisations has an individual and distinct profile. The challenge when establishing the group was to identify a strong common focus and to agree that this focus was particular to the work undertaken by members as part of the group, but that membership did not preclude organisations from following their own agendas and from forming other alliances in other areas.

The grouping started as a network and gradually became the UK Working Group. This change in the nature of the way in which the individual organisations worked together occurred to meet the challenges of the external political environment. All the organisations wanted to see a change in UK legislation on arms, and they recognised that the potential for making an impact on the UK government was greater if they worked together than if they worked individually. Each organisation is different, and therefore each has something valuable to contribute to the alliance. The members are able to benefit from each other’s strengths, and by acting collectively they can minimise their weaknesses.

Thus the relationship is mutually reinforcing. For example, the policy analysis undertaken by Saferworld can be combined with the legitimacy of an organisation like Oxfam, and the strong membership base of organisations like Amnesty International can enhance the power of collective advocacy.

The UK Working Group has been instrumental in the development and passage of the Arms Export Control Act, which is the first such legislation in the UK since 1938. It is recognised by all organisations that they have benefited from working together, and it is this shared understanding of the value of cooperation which maintains the alliance.

(This case study was developed with the help of the UK Working Group and is based on its experiences and opinions.)
2 Security and risk

As part of your planning process, you have probably analysed the general social, political, and economic environment in which you are working. (See Part 2 of the Handbook.) However, you also need to think about the specific environment in which you will be operating, from the particular perspective of managing security and risk.

It is very important to assess the security situation in which you are working, in terms of both political engagement and the maintenance of personal safety. The questions in this section should help you to make this assessment. However, in the end, only you can decide how much risk your work entails, and the degree of risk that you are willing to accept.

Minimising risks

Risk can be minimised by understanding in detail the environment in which you plan to act. Make sure that you conduct a joint assessment with everyone who is involved in a specific project.

Key questions to address

What risks might be faced?

Risks may arise, for example, from the following sources:

- government, if the availability of arms is being treated as a security issue;
- rebel groups, if, for example, you are perceived as being a 'double agent';
- arms brokers and others with vested interests in maintaining the status quo; these groups may have links with organised crime.

Security risks can affect both you as an individual and also your organisation. Risks might include the following:

- theft/robbery/banditry
- traffic 'accidents'
- detention
- hostage-taking/kidnapping
- surveillance/Attempts to seize information
- armed attack (e.g. risk of injury from shelling or bombing)
- fabricated scandals to discredit your organisation
- staff targeted for abuse.
To help you to determine the risks, you may need to contact knowledgeable
sources, such as:

- researchers
- aid/development NGOs active in the relevant areas
- UN country offices (UNHCR, UNDP)
- embassies and consulates
- media contacts.

Obviously, the levels of risk and the types of security threat vary according to
external factors such as geography and timing. And the higher your own profile
and the more effective you are, the greater the risk is likely to be. The best advice
we can give is that you can never assume that there is no risk.

What measures can be taken to reduce the risks?

It is essential to gather specific, up-to-date information about the potential security
risks that may arise as a result of particular interventions you are considering. In
addition, you could consider adopting some or all of the following measures:

- establishing and maintaining clear lines of communication
- issuing protective equipment, e.g. bullet-proof clothing
- avoiding travelling alone
- developing specific evacuation plans
- travelling with partners who have relevant skills and experience
- developing good relations with key powerful people who will use their
  influence if you are threatened
- planning in advance for various possible security threats.

How can your organisation support others, and how can others support you?

Many NGOs working for change on small-arms issues provide an extremely
important support service to colleagues. This support function is crucial to
maintaining safety and minimising risk in difficult circumstances. Sometimes,
developing networks and coalitions can help to formalise a support network
through linked strategies and plans. Solidarity techniques include the following:

- campaigns against those who perpetrate the threat
- campaigns though the Internet and letter writing
- demonstrations at embassies and elsewhere
- campaigns in alliance with government and inter-government
  organisations
- setting up a solidarity fund for victims
- awards/recognitions and other incentives for those working to combat the
  abuse of small arms.
Case study: peace communities in Colombia

In 1998, Oxfam developed a solidarity campaign to support peace communities in San Jose in Colombia. Members of these communities took positive action to ban the carrying of guns and all assistance to the various armed factions operating in Colombia at the time. The political context in Colombia was so precarious that intimidation, violence, and fear prevented those affected from speaking out. In the first three months of the project, some 37 members of the communities were killed in armed violence. In response, the peace communities sought international support for their initiative.

Oxfam supporters and members of the UK public sent thousands of messages of support to those in danger of being harassed or killed. These messages of solidarity were used to focus international media attention on the forgotten victims of violence. In addition, UK campaign supporters sent letters encouraging the UK government to use its presidency of the European Union to express its support for the peace communities and appeal to armed factions to respect them.

Such solidarity action played a key role in reducing risks of further armed violence in the communities themselves, by reminding the various armed groups to respect the peace communities, knowing that the eyes of the international community were scrutinising their actions.

Two members of the communities have commented: ‘We will always be grateful to you [Oxfam]. In San Jose, when we feel alone, we think of all the people who support our community of peace.’ ... ‘We feel more secure with the international community putting pressure on the gunmen to respect the peace communities.’

Practical guidelines for assessing risk

Risk-assessment checklist

Points to consider in a risk assessment include the following:

Has the risk to personal health and safety of those travelling been assessed?

- Have travellers received the necessary advice on medical precautions, for example on immunisation against infectious disease?
- Have details of any specific security advice or information been gathered?
- Has the previous relevant experience of others been identified?
- Is safety equipment available (protective vests, etc.), and has safety training been provided?
- Are appropriate contingency plans in place?
Have risks relating to the schedule and mode of travel been assessed?

- Have the modes of transport been considered, and the specific risks associated with them, including the normal risks of travel by road or air in the country?
- Have alternative methods of travel been identified?
- Is there a detailed schedule of the trip, with contact telephone numbers identified for each destination? Is there a commitment not to deviate from this schedule?

Is an appropriate evacuation plan in place, and can this plan be implemented promptly and effectively?

- What transport will be used in an emergency? Which routes will be followed? What additional visa requirements might apply if activists were evacuated to a neighbouring country?
- If the plan is dependent on the United Nations, has agreement for evacuation in the event of an emergency been obtained in writing? If not, can contact be made and assurances received as a priority from UN officials on arrival in the country?
- Have all relevant sources of advice at the destination been checked?

Is there an adequate level of control over physical security?

- In general: in the country, city, or region?
- In particular: at venues for meetings, and at accommodation facilities?

Have appropriate communication methods, back-ups, and contacts for travellers been identified?

- Has an individual with leading responsibility for security been identified?
- Is there a list of details of contact people, and has a schedule of regular contacts at agreed dates and times been arranged?
- Is communication equipment available – e.g. satellite phone, mobile phone?
- Do all travellers have a copy of the necessary information about security and addresses of contacts?
3 Gathering information through research

One of the most common problems faced by all governments, NGOs, and community groups is a lack of credible and accurate information about the nature and extent of the small-arms problem in their area. Research will help you to understand these problems and to assess which approaches have or have not worked in response to the problem of small arms in various situations.

Reliable information on small arms is often hard to find. Data may be treated as secret by governments and other institutions. Even in the European Union, for example, where the EU Code of Conduct on arms places a political obligation on all member states to publish an annual report on arms sales, the Dutch government is currently the only one that makes available detailed information on licence applications that it has refused.

However, conducting research on small arms is not always so difficult: officially published and secondary sources of information are often available – if you look in the right place. One visit to a newsagent's shop in Warsaw, Poland, for example, led to the discovery of more than ten magazine advertisements for electric-shock weapons.

Some people think of research as an academic activity; but for planning purposes, research need not be of academic quality. Often all that is needed is a careful analysis of the environment in which the planned activities will be taking place. In other situations, the quality of your research may help to determine your legitimacy and authority to speak on a particular issue. It can help you to demonstrate the reasons why change is needed.

There are basically three different types of research. They each have a different purpose, and may differ also in the kind of evidence that is collected, and the way in which the findings are presented. See Figure 3.2. These approaches are not mutually exclusive. For example, sometimes an effort to understand the problem better may provide the basis for policy recommendations that influence others to change.
Figure 3.2: Three different types of research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding the problem or context</th>
<th>Monitoring and evaluation</th>
<th>Advocacy research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting and analysing information in order to identify and understand a problem or the wider context</td>
<td>Assessing your progress towards meeting your objectives, or how the work of others has affected the situation</td>
<td>Research whose findings and conclusions are presented in ways that seek to influence others to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See, for example, the range of findings that led the Working Group on Weapons Reduction in Cambodia to identify the key problems facing the country and the region (p.78 of this book)</td>
<td>See, for example, the range of measures established by Viva Rio to assess the success of their project to reduce firearms violence in the State of Rio de Janeiro (p.132 of this book)</td>
<td>See, for example, the sections relating to lobbying and audiences and communication for more details on the importance and use of advocacy research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research: key questions to address

If you don’t have enough information about the problems facing you and the people on whose behalf you are working, you may need to conduct additional research. Sometimes you may need to commission others to do the research on your behalf. The following questions should help you when shaping, conducting, and presenting your research:

**What do we want the research for?**

Think clearly at the outset about what you hope to achieve or find out by doing a particular piece of research. Make sure that the research is directly relevant to your organisation and its goals. For example:

- What, in precise terms, is the problem that we want the research to address?
- What are the goals and objectives of the research?
- What do we want to find out? Why? (Prepare a list of questions or a framework for the research.)
- What constraints might we face in doing the research? Are there concerns about security and risks?
- Is new research really needed? (Maybe someone else has already done it!)
- What are our likely audiences: what kinds of information and quality of evidence will they each need?

Always be prepared to challenge your initial assumptions or hypothesis when you develop your research plan.

**How will evidence be gathered?**

Ensure that your research is designed with a particular purpose in mind. Ensure too that your research is credible, reasoned, and well argued. For example:
- How will the information be gathered? What sort of data? From what sources? (Where possible, you should seek to use original information, collected directly from those affected by the issue, or from officially published material which you can cite.)
- Who should be approached? Which people? Which groups?
- How will bias be avoided? Will issues be analysed from the perspective of groups who may be affected in different ways? For example: men and women, children and older people, disabled people, members of different ethnic or religious groups.
- What techniques will be used?
- What is the budget?
- What is the timetable?

Who should do the research?

- Should it be done by our own organisation, or do we need to work with other experts and researchers?
- If it is proposed to commission a research team, can we ensure that members contribute different kinds of experience: will there be an even balance between men and women, and a balance of backgrounds?
- If others are commissioned to do the research, who will be accountable for each aspect of it?
- Are there security-related reasons for using specialist researchers?

How will data be collected?

- Will the data be reliable and valid? Can the information be cross-checked from different sources?
- Have we made provision for the security of researchers collecting data in violence-prone communities?
- Have we recorded (and cited, where appropriate) the sources of the data used?
- Are we sure that our research techniques are free from bias? (For example, when using questionnaires, researchers should not ask leading questions, which encourage people to answer in a certain way. They should be aware that interviewees may give biased or deliberately inaccurate information; so all data should be validated by questioning people with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.)
- Are all members of a community able to participate in the research process? Times and techniques might disadvantage certain groups. Should men and women be interviewed separately, for example, to prevent men from dominating discussions?
Part 3: Taking action – 3: Gathering information through research

- Can we obtain documentary evidence of events: video footage, photographs, and taped interviews, for example, to supplement written testimony?

How will the data be analysed and evaluated?

- Do we want the researchers simply to present the facts, or do we want them to interpret them too?
- Does the analysis relate back to the objectives that we set in the research brief?
- Is it clear how the data have led to particular conclusions?
- Does the analysis demonstrate how the conclusions have been verified? For example, it should show that information, particularly qualitative information, has been cross-checked.

How will the research report be presented?

- The content and style of the report must be appropriate for the intended audiences.
- Data should be presented in accessible formats (tables, graphs, etc.).
- The report should include a summary of the main findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- It should contain an explanation of the research methodology (short and simple, unless the research is for an academic audience).
- Exposing or accusing private individuals or companies may lead to legal action for libel and defamation. It is essential to have absolute proof of guilt when making specific allegations against named targets.
- People who have supplied information should not be put at risk.
- How will the results of the research be shared more widely? Publishing a report is rarely enough to influence decision makers. It is important to develop a dissemination strategy, to include private lobbying meetings based on the report, and perhaps a media launch.

Primary and secondary data, and possible sources

Two types of data are used in research:

- information especially collected for the research project: so-called ‘primary data’
- information which has already been published: so-called ‘secondary data’.
### Table 3.1: Sources of data for research on small arms and light weapons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of primary data</th>
<th>Some sources of primary data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal comments and reactions</td>
<td>• Listening to what different people are saying in different situations</td>
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<td>Semi-structured qualitative input</td>
<td>• Recording oral histories</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conducting surveys and presenting questionnaires</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conducting interviews, discussions, and workshops with individuals and groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantified data</td>
<td>• Using ranking and scoring exercises to identify people’s priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results of action learning</td>
<td>• Using pictures and maps to stimulate community discussions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Piloting small-scale solutions, with rigorous monitoring of results, to persuade decision makers to implement similar solutions more widely</td>
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<tr>
<th>Types of secondary data</th>
<th>Some sources of secondary data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official import and export data</td>
<td>• Government reports on arms sales, e.g. UK government figures (<a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk">www.fco.gov.uk</a>)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The Federation of American Scientists provides excellent information on US arms sales (<a href="http://www.fas.org/asmp/library/handbook/covehtml">www.fas.org/asmp/library/handbook/covehtml</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital records</td>
<td>• Try the World Health Organisation website (<a href="http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/">www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/</a>)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Or the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (<a href="http://www.ippnw.org/">www.ippnw.org/</a>)</td>
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<td>UN reports</td>
<td>• See the website of the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (<a href="http://disarmament.un.org/">http://disarmament.un.org/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO research reports</td>
<td>Many NGOs produce reports on small arms, including:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Small Arms Survey (<a href="http://www.smallarmsurvey.org/">www.smallarmsurvey.org/</a>)</td>
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<td>• Saferworld (<a href="http://www.saferworld.org.uk">www.saferworld.org.uk</a>)</td>
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<td>• International Alert (<a href="http://www.international-alert.org/">www.international-alert.org/</a>)</td>
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<td>• Oxfam GB (<a href="http://www.oxfam.org.uk">www.oxfam.org.uk</a>)</td>
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<td>• Amnesty International (<a href="http://www.amnesty.org">www.amnesty.org</a>)</td>
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<td>• Human Rights Watch (<a href="http://www.hrw.org/arms/">www.hrw.org/arms/</a>)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) (<a href="http://www.bicc.de/">www.bicc.de/</a>)</td>
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<td>• NISAT (<a href="http://www.nisat.org">www.nisat.org</a>)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Federation of American Scientists (<a href="http://www.fas.org">www.fas.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arms-trade monitoring agencies</td>
<td>• For more information, visit the IANSA website (<a href="http://www.iansa.org">www.iansa.org</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government or international commissions of inquiry</td>
<td>Try the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs for UN reports (<a href="http://disarmament.un.org/">http://disarmament.un.org/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press reports</td>
<td>• Many media outlets (national, regional, or international) have websites carrying small-arms features. IANSA’s news section and news archive are good starting points (<a href="http://www.iansa.org/news/index.htm">www.iansa.org/news/index.htm</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist media and special interest journals</td>
<td>• Jane’s Defence Weekly (<a href="http://www.janes.com/">www.janes.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Defence News (<a href="http://www.defencenews.com/">www.defencenews.com/</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic research and specialist researchers</td>
<td>• Organisations such as Saferworld, International Alert, Small Arms Survey, Amnesty International, and Oxfam can provide contacts with small-arms specialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary scrutiny</td>
<td>• Some parliaments or committees of parliamentarians analyse small-arms issues. Some hold hearings in public and produce reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Company records and databases

Company records are often accessible. They can be found in the following places in the following countries; you can find links to the same information for other countries at www.companieshouse.gov.uk/:

- Brazil: Departamento Nacional de Registro do Comércio (www.facil.dnrc.gov.br/)
- Cambodia: Ministry of Commerce (www.moc.gov.kh/)
- Czech Republic: Czech Ministry of Finance (wwwinfo.mfcr.cz/)
- Spain: Colegio de Registradores de la Propiedad y Mercantiles de España (www.registradores.org/castellano/comunes/home.html)
- South Africa: Companies and Intellectual Property Registration Office (www.cipro.gov.za/)
- UK: Companies House (www.companieshouse.gov.uk/)
- USA: Corporate Registrations in the United States of America (http://ws1.companies-house.gov.uk/ias/usa_sites_-_english_frameset.html)

Promotional material

- Brochures and promotional material produced by manufacturers and dealers.

Firearms-ownership data

- Police and other licensing authorities

Personal testimony of those involved or affected

For an example of personal testimonies, try:

- Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org)
- Oxfam GB (www.oxfam.org.uk/policy/papers/drc/congo.pdf)

See Part 4 of this handbook for a more comprehensive list of useful organisations.

No single research method is without bias. To make the research as objective as possible, you should use a set of different research techniques, both qualitative and quantitative, and then cross-check your findings.


4 Obtaining funds

Your ability to deliver your programme of action will depend on your ability to obtain funding. Competition for funds is great, so you will have a key advantage if you understand how funding processes work and what donors are looking for. Donors are more likely to fund your project if you can demonstrate that you are working with others – or at least that you will not duplicate the work of others.

This section introduces a range of practical suggestions to help you to identify funders, write a fundraising proposal, and write reports to donors. However, in addition to support in the form of grants from donors, there are many other possible funding options, which include the following.

- **Membership funding**: Some organisations invite individuals to become members, in return for a membership fee. Organisations such as Amnesty International, with a large supporter base, can raise a significant proportion of their income in this way.

- **Regular donations by individuals**: Some organisations, such as Saferworld, have supporters who regularly donate money, often on a monthly basis. They also depend on legacies, and one-off donations by post or by credit card via the Internet or telephone.

- **Street collections**: The Red Cross, like many organisations, raises a significant portion of its funding by collecting money from people on the street. This approach has been successfully adapted by some organisations who collect donations from local businesses to fund their work: the Forum for Civic Initiative (FIQ-FCI), for example, an NGO based in Kosovo.

- **Merchandising**: It is also possible to raise money through the sale of merchandise, although this usually requires a level of expertise in commerce or business. Oxfam is one example of an organisation that raises money in this way, through its shops, catalogues, and on-line sales.

- **Events**: Adopt A Minefield raises money by organising an annual event called The Night of the Thousand Dinners, when people pay to enjoy a meal cooked and hosted by someone in their local community. Many organisations raise funds by sponsored events, such as a marathon walk; participants persuade their friends to pay them to take up the challenge.
Practical guidelines for securing funding

1. Do your research. Try to identify all possible funders and their interests.
2. Compile a list of the donors that appear most likely to support your project.
3. Choose prospective funders by examining their descriptive profiles and recent histories of grant-making. Make sure that you research their restrictions before you approach them.
4. Research the donor’s existing projects to gain an idea of their likely character.
5. Look for foundations that have already supported projects similar to yours, or those based in your geographic area.
6. When identifying potential sources of funding, think how you could match your priorities to the donors’ interests. Think how you could frame your project so that it links to related issues such as development and peace-building, which may be the prime concerns of the potential funders.
7. Send appropriately customised requests to a few prospective donor organisations.
8. Take account of the application deadline of each funder, and make your plans accordingly.
9. Try to submit your proposal six to nine months before your programme is to be implemented. This will allow you time to apply elsewhere if you are not successful.
10. Be realistic in your expectations. Do not make the mistake of focusing all your efforts on one ‘ideal’ funder. Even the most experienced proposal writers will receive many letters of rejection before securing a grant.

| Table 3.2: Some potential sources of funds for action against the abuse of small arms |
| Governments |
| United Kingdom Department for International Development | www.dfid.gov.uk |
| Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs | www.ud.se |
| Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs | www.minbuza.nl/english/homepage.asp |
| Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs | www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca |
| UN agencies |
| United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | www.undp.org |
| International NGOs |
| IANSA | www.iansa.org |
| Oxfam GB | www.oxfam.org.uk |
| World Council of Churches | www.wcc-coe.org/ |
| Foundations and trusts |
| The Ford Foundation | www.fordfound.org |
| The Rockefeller Foundation | www.rockfound.org |
| Ploughshares Fund | www.ploughshares.org |
| Soros Foundations Network | www.soros.org |
| Earned income |
| Membership fees, merchandising, shops, events |

(See Part 4 of this handbook for a more comprehensive list of useful organisations.)
Sources of funding – and their implications

Consider the political implications of potential sources of funding.

- What does the donor hope to gain from the relationship?
- Will the donor introduce conditions that limit your freedom of action?
- Does the donor have sufficient sensitivity and local knowledge to be able to understand the context in which your organisation is operating?
- Is the donor likely to interfere in your organisation’s work, or to influence the type of programme that you operate, or the way in which you deliver and measure it? If so, what negative consequences might be implied?
- Could a prospective donor be a useful channel of political influence, as well as a source of funding?

Writing a proposal for funding

An increasing number of funders prefer to receive a brief letter of inquiry concerning the suitability of a project before a full proposal is submitted. This initial contact should briefly indicate all the elements that would eventually be part of a proposal (programme goals, objectives, and activities, timetable, estimated costs, methods of monitoring and evaluation, etc.).

The relevance of the proposal to the agenda of the prospective funder should be made very clear. Your proposal must show how your project fits a funder’s pattern of giving. If a donor provides guidelines on the format of a proposal, you should follow them closely. Table 3.3 summarises the elements of a good funding proposal.
Table 3.3: What to include in a funding proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Links to other parts of the handbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a brief statement of the overall aim of your programme;</td>
<td>Framing the issue (pp. 98–100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a short description of the project in question;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an explanation of the amount of money required for the project; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a brief description of your organisation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Setting objectives (pp. 117–121)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This section should provide an explanation of the need for your project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the specific problems that you want to address, and support your argument with evidence and statistics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to demonstrate that your project is workable; that it can be done within a reasonable time, by you, and with a reasonable amount of money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid exaggeration and excessively emotional appeals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to the work of others in this field and explain how your work complements, but does not duplicate, their work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Working with others (pp. 141–7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the anticipated outcomes of the project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your objectives must be specific, measurable, and achievable in a specified time period. Don't promise what you can't deliver.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project partners</th>
<th>Influence maps (pp. 113–15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who are the project partners?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the division of responsibility between them and you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods and activities</th>
<th>Creating a Gantt timeline (pp. 124–6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will the project actually do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How it will be conducted?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project timetable</th>
<th>Developing an action plan (pp. 122–3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the major activities, and when will they take place?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate the time-scale in months if you cannot give precise dates.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include the points when evaluation and report writing will take place.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Staffing needs | |
|----------------| |
| Which staff will be deployed on the project, and for how much of their time? | |

<p>| Budgeting         | |
|-------------------| |
| Bear in mind the restrictions of the funder (e.g. some refuse to fund salaries) and compensate in your budget accordingly. | |
| For most projects, costs should be grouped into sub-categories (see the section on finance and budgeting). | |
| If costs are simple and obvious, narrative explanations are unnecessary. | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring and evaluation</th>
<th>Monitoring and evaluation (pp. 128–38)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Who will monitor the activities during the project time-frame?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will activities be monitored?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What criteria will you use to measure the difference that has been made?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of your organisation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Briefly outline:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when your organisation came into existence;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• its mission, and how your proposal relates to that mission;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the organisation's structure, programmes, and special expertise;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• staffing, including the numbers of full-time and part-time staff, and their levels of expertise.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarise your case and try to end with a powerful appeal for your project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing reports to funders**

In order to produce progress reports and project-evaluation reports, it is essential to establish and maintain rigorous monitoring systems. (See the section on monitoring in Part 2.) If a donor provides guidelines on what the format of a report should look like, follow them closely.

**Table 3.4: What to include in a funding report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress report</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Outline the progress (or lack of progress) of your project so far. Funders want to be sure that you have completed the activities that you included in your funding proposal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate how you have used the criteria for monitoring and evaluation that you described in your proposal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variances and proposed changes to the action plan</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Give explicit information about variances from the proposal — activities not completed, or progress not achieved — and give the reasons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain explicitly what you will do differently in order to reach your objectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons learned</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify any lessons learned from the successes and failures of your project so far.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The future</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Building on the conclusions of your previous sections, explain how you intend to maximise the effectiveness of your activities in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Audiences and communications

Persuading decision makers to initiate reforms usually involves a number of techniques. In different political situations and at different times, different approaches will be more appropriate; but some principles always apply.

Defining audiences and the appropriate means of communicating with them

Whenever you act, you are communicating with an audience. This is true whether you are targeting a government minister, a journalist, a local community group, or a potential donor. In all cases, you need to deliver your messages in relevant and effective ways. To do this, you will need to set clear goals, identifying which audiences you are communicating with, and why. For each specific audience, both the message and the ways of delivering it will be different. The identification of potential audiences should be part of your planning process. You will choose specific audiences at different times as a way of delivering the message that you wish to communicate to your target or decision maker. These audiences are your channels of influence to help you to achieve your objectives.

For more advice on identifying audiences and decision makers, see also the sections in Part 2 on identifying stakeholders and devising an influencing strategy.

Key questions to address

Research your audiences: don’t base your communications on assumptions. Ask yourself the following questions.

WHO are the various audiences that we want to reach?

Different groups have very different impacts on the state of affairs that you are seeking to change. And all kinds of factors – such as geography, demographics (age, gender, education, etc.), attitudes, and lifestyle – affect people’s response to your messages. ‘The public’ is not a single group with consistent characteristics and opinions; it includes, for example, women, men, children, politically active people, civil servants, businessmen, and trade unionists. As precisely as possible, you should define the specific audiences whom you will target.
WHY are we communicating with them?

• What change in this audience do we want to bring about?
• Do we need them to know, believe, say, or do something differently?
• How will this help us to achieve our goals and objectives?

WHAT do they know and care about?

WHAT are the messages that will work best with this specific audience?

WHAT do we want to say to them?

• What do they already know about the issue or situation of concern to us?
• How sympathetic are they likely to be to our concerns?
• What things do they care about? (Not simply in relation to small arms.)
• How can we describe the issue in their language and on their terms?
• What kinds of message might mean something to those audiences?
• Have we told them what we want them to do, why it is important, and why action is needed now?
• Can we test our messages with sample groups from the target audience before using them more widely?

HOW will we reach them?

• Do they listen to radio, read newspapers, or watch television?
• Where else do they obtain their information? Whom do they listen to and respect? What has changed their opinions in the past?
• What groups do they belong to?

Practical guidelines for communicating with various audiences

As noted above, in developing your communications programme, you should consider how different audiences may listen to and be interested in different types of message. A simple way to think about various audiences is to consider three distinct groups:

• policy makers and opinion formers
• other groups and individuals who are interested in the issue
• the wider public.

Different messages will be appropriate for these different audiences. At one end of the spectrum, when engaging with policy makers and opinion formers, you should probably target small numbers of people, using very detailed arguments. But you may first need to reach them with simpler messages about your legitimacy to speak out on the issue, building your relationship with them to the
point at which you can meet and discuss the arguments in detail. (See also the section on lobbying in this part of the handbook.)

At the other end of the spectrum, in trying to promote your messages to general audiences who may not initially have a reason to be interested, you will need to attract the attention of large numbers of people. This could require a variety of popular approaches, using stories, pictures, or simple and easily accessible slogans and ‘sound-bites’ through the media. It might help you to obtain the endorsement of famous people or community leaders; or to work directly through communities with music and drama. Or you may choose to train activists who themselves train others to spread the messages, or work through a key group such as a teachers’ union, whose members themselves communicate with a wide audience in their daily work.

A communications strategy might therefore look something like the one shown in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3: Devising a communications strategy to end the abuse of small arms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of audience</th>
<th>Types of message that might be appropriate for these audiences</th>
<th>Appropriate ways to convey messages to these audiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Policy makers and opinion formers</td>
<td>Either present detailed, evidence-based arguments, or else show how the issue relates to their power and status</td>
<td>Through detailed policy documents, or simpler letters or meetings to establish the importance of the issue to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Groups and individuals who are interested in the issue</td>
<td>Explain what you are calling for and why, identifying the barriers to change, but without specific details</td>
<td>Through newsletters, leaflets, and newspaper articles; provide more detailed information to those who ask for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) The wider public</td>
<td>Simple and dramatic stories and messages which make it easy to understand and engage with the issues</td>
<td>Through using celebrities or the personal testimonies of those who have suffered as a result of small arms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case study: public-awareness campaign developed by the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross

Drastic political changes in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, involving many armed conflicts and the dissolution of the former State, altered the social fabric of the country. Economic, political, and social instability led to growing levels of insecurity. People felt the need to increase their own personal security, and the easy availability of small arms offered them an obvious tool. A deterioration in the rule of law accelerated the process. Levels of criminality rose, numbers of gun victims increased, traditional moral values disappeared, and attitudes towards weapons, especially among young people, shifted radically. It became very popular to own and even use a pistol or some other weapon, and to show it off in public places. More and more people bought weapons to protect themselves, and more and more people were dying or being seriously injured.

In keeping with its mandate, the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross identified an opportunity to influence public opinion regarding the acceptability of the new ‘gun culture’. The primary audience for its campaign, ‘For life – without weapons’, was established as young people. This was because the youth were both perpetrators and victims of gun crime. The campaign seeks to convince young people that having a weapon is not a feature of a modern civilised society, and that a gun is a source of insecurity, rather than security. The campaign aims to offer young people other ways of expending their energy: by participation in sport, arts, and social life.

In thinking about how to reach and communicate with young people, the campaign identified several even more specific target groups:

- teachers and university professors
- schoolchildren
- students of secondary schools
- students of universities
- youth in general.

Messages, slogans, and ways of reaching these different audiences were then developed. For example:

- Thanks to work with the Ministry of Education, it was agreed that, for five weeks in more than 1,500 schools, five to ten minutes of the first class on Monday mornings were devoted to small-arms problems.
- Messages from famous opinion formers regarded as good examples for young people, including sportsmen and women, actors, and
In preparation for the traditional New Year’s Eve celebrations, which always involved the firing of guns, 50,000 coasters carrying the campaign slogan were produced for use in coffee bars in Belgrade.

The campaign continues. Results to date include the following:

• The campaign has raised awareness of the problem of small arms, putting the issue on the public agenda.
• Public authorities and various ministries have shown their support for the campaign’s aims.
• A pledge by the former Yugoslav delegation at the UN Conference on Small Arms to publicly destroy a quantity of weapons was partly fulfilled, with the destruction of 51,000 pieces of small arms in the presence of media and representatives from foreign countries.
• Anecdotal evidence suggests that the volume of shooting on New Year’s Eve was much reduced.

Lessons learned

As a result of its public education work, the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross has identified the following important conclusions to inform its future programmes:

• Timing: the campaign must be very carefully planned, to avoid competing with other activities.
• People: the key resource in the public-awareness campaign was highly motivated and well-informed speakers and representatives.
• Approaches: it is essential to use a range of diverse communication techniques.
• Encouragement: in addition to presenting sound arguments, some kind of attractive offer has to be made to people, especially the young.
• Messages: use common, modern, and understandable language, adjusted to suit the various target groups. All messages must be short, clear, and effective.
• Materials must be attractive, with modern design.

(This case study is based on the experiences and opinions of the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross.)
6 Mobilising support

There may be times when it is important that significant numbers of people support you and are prepared to show their support for your goals. In some political situations, this will not be possible (for security reasons); and in some contexts it may not be productive (because governments and decision makers may not be influenced by such tactics). But in other situations and at certain times, mass support can be an effective way of increasing the pressure on a decision maker or ensuring that change comes about at the community level. In such circumstances, achieving your goals may require changes in the attitudes or behaviour of key sections of the population.

The approaches that you use will depend on your goals, your audiences, and the political context. In each situation it is important to think carefully about what type of approach will be most effective. The wrong approach at the wrong time could actually damage the legitimacy of your organisation and the chances of your action being successful. For example, a show of concern by only a small number of people may seem to show that the issue is not a political priority, because very few people care about it.

When you plan to convince a decision maker by demonstrating public support for your issue, think about the following:

• What do we want to achieve?
• How much support from people do we need?
• How much preparation time will we need?

This section presents a range of practical guidelines for mobilising support. However, on this subject, above all, local knowledge about what works best is often most valuable. We offer three case studies which illustrate how organisations have mobilised local communities to take action on the abuse of small arms. All three demonstrate how local knowledge, combined with skill and imagination, can be used to achieve change.
Practical guidelines for mobilising support

Effective public action

Table 3.5: Techniques for effective action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petitions</td>
<td>• A simple way for people to show support for your cause.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May also be used as a way of generating extra media publicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrations of protest</td>
<td>• May be news-worthy: issue a news release and offer to provide a spokesperson to explain why the demonstration is being held.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At the protest itself, use strong and simple visual images (with minimal text) which will look good on TV and in the newspapers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Music and noise help to attract attention and motivate people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Act peacefully: don’t advocate approaches which put people at risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be aware of the law and how to act in order to stay within it: breaking the law can undermine your legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public meetings</td>
<td>• Can be used as an opportunity for getting your message across.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Think about how to motivate those attending to take follow-up action in support of your aims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You may be able to set up a stall or display at public meetings or events organised by related groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-access radio</td>
<td>• Phone-ins or discussion programmes may provide opportunities for key supporters to discuss your issue in public or challenge others who are opposing your messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>• Using the Internet allows you to control what you say and how you say it, and gives you global reach, instantly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Internet technology works best when it supplements traditional communication techniques, not when used as a substitute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You will need to devise ways for your supporters to take action through the Internet: do you have the email addresses of your key decision makers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there discussion forums which you could join?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• But there are significant cultural, social, political and economic barriers to Internet usage. Be careful not to widen the ‘digital divide’ between rich and poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community mobilisation</td>
<td>• Community-level analysis of the issue and its impact could be introduced through workshops and drama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• This may lead to direct action to solve the problems, or to lobbying sessions involving both community leaders and decision makers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Case study: Conscientious Objectors in Bosnia (COIB)

The problem identified by COIB is that there is no alternative to military service for young Bosnian men who object to taking up and using a gun. The organisation seeks the introduction of a fair system of civilian service which operates without discrimination against those who choose to take part in it.

COIB identified three barriers against resolving this problem:

- The law in Bosnia gives insufficient attention to the notion of civilian service.
- Public awareness of the concept of civilian service is very low.
- It is commonly assumed that ‘You’re not a man if you don’t serve in the army’, and that any dilution of the army’s strength could threaten national security.

COIB has focused its efforts on removing the first two of these barriers. It has tried, so far without success, to address the third barrier by framing the issue as a question of freedom of choice, rather than one of opposition to the army.

Politically, COIB is working with and through federal and national parliaments and relevant ministries, including Defence, Justice, Social Care, and Education. Its political strategy is designed to access and influence representatives from the various different political currents.

The second strand of action has been to promote public awareness and action. Research before the launch of the campaign revealed very low awareness of the idea of civilian service. The target group for the campaign was established as men between the ages of 15 and 25. COIB chose to reach this audience through intensive, continuous work in the major cities and related, smaller actions in the smaller cities.

Campaigners arrive in a place, recruit support, and then get active – erecting book stalls, holding lectures, displaying posters, distributing leaflets, making as many contacts as possible. The idea is to organise interesting activities which reach the biggest possible audience and gain attention from the media. For example, on one occasion, twenty street actions took place at the same time across the country, as a symbol of youth acting together. On another occasion, on the first day of Spring – a day that is identified as heralding peace – COIB established a presence at crossroads in the big cities. In a two-hour action, promotional materials were distributed, petitions signed, and questionnaires completed. Support was given to those people who expressed an interest in applying for civilian service, rather than military service. As a result, surpassing all expectations, hundreds of people have applied: 150 people visited the organisation’s offices, and 500 applied on the streets.
COIB has kept meticulous records of its activities and outputs. This has made it possible to make a strong case that the outcomes noted below have resulted from, or been heavily influenced by, COIB’s own actions:

- Applications for civilian service rose from only a handful before the launch of the campaign to more than 250 in the last six months of 2002.
- Research has shown that awareness of the concept of civilian service among the target population has risen tenfold.
- The campaign has been recognised by the international community and by politicians operating at various levels of government.
- There has been a policy change within various State bodies: for example, the Ministry of Justice has established a Civilian Commission.
- Fifty organisations have been approved for participation in the civilian service programme.

Despite these successes, at the time of writing the Ministry of Defence has yet to sign a single contract with those organisations that have expressed willingness to take part in the scheme. The next phase in the campaign is to work for the drafting of a new law on civilian service, in accordance with European standards and human-rights law – and then to ensure that it is enacted.

(This case study is based on the experiences and opinions of Conscientious Objectors in Bosnia.)

Box 18: Working with grassroots communities – notes from a consultation workshop in West Africa

A consultation workshop was hosted by the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), Mouvement Contre Les Armes Légères in Afrique de l’Oest (MALAO), and the Centre for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE) in Senegal in 2002. There follows a summary of the discussions that took place there.

- Social change is not just about broadening the conditions for participation and improving the functioning of the State. It is also about strengthening civil society itself.
Community conscientisation is the process of bringing together groups and organisations to raise people's awareness of and demand for particular solutions. This approach involves community members critically reflecting on their experiences, becoming aware of a problem, and identifying it as a high priority for community action. This may lead to action on chosen courses, involving many strategic allies, at all levels, in a wide range of support activities.

This participative, grassroots approach provides the local community with skills and a sense of ownership of the campaign.

Methodology, challenges, and obstacles

The vital first step is to conduct participatory research through surveys and discussions with community groups, in order to understand the social relevance of your campaign to the community with which you hope to work. Your solutions must not be (or be perceived to be) externally imposed.

A priority is to identify and involve key targets, e.g. traditional leaders, State representatives, and community-based organisations (including religious groups, age groups, trade unions, women's groups, armed groups in conflict areas, civil defence groups, NGOs).

The participative approach uses a lot of resources, so your programme should be planned accordingly.

Community mobilisation often works best as a complement to policy influencing, rather than as an alternative to it. But in some cases, community-level action can begin to solve problems directly, where governments have failed. [See, for example, the case study below on PPDI.]

Common problems include the following:

- Cultural differences may emerge between the campaigning organisation and the local community.
- Lack of local community knowledge may act as a barrier to progress.
- Lack of clarity about the possible outcomes and how they might benefit the community will also obstruct progress.
- The community may tend to protect its own members, resenting external interference.
- Community members may feel personally insecure about any change.

One way to manage these challenges is to gain the support of influential champions of change within the communities themselves. They will be able to give legitimacy to the activities promoted by outsiders.
Where the community has resorted to guns, we should seek to increase our own understanding – and their understanding – of the often complex, interlinking causal factors, which may include the following:

- economic insecurity
- suspicions between the community and the security forces
- bad governance, making the community feel marginalised
- a collapsing State – and hence the absence of any State security force
- the absence, or perceived absence, of social justice.

**Case study: Pastoralist Peace and Development Initiative (PPDI)**

When civil war and anarchy broke out in Somalia in the early 1990s, large numbers of refugees and their livestock fled over the border into northern Kenya. Natural resources such as water, pasture, and firewood were insufficient to cope with the new demands. The widespread proliferation of small arms in Somalia was one of the major factors that led people to flee to Kenya. Some of the refugees brought arms with them, and used them to gain control of water-holes and wells, denying water to weaker or unarmed clans and family groups.

The guns gave their owners prestige and created fear. They also brought economic and commercial benefits, because there was money to be made in selling arms to local livestock owners, and even in Nairobi. Local clans who had traditionally used spears in conflicts with their neighbours now armed themselves with guns to protect their property, bartering livestock for small arms. Killings, robberies, and rape became a daily occurrence. Travel became increasingly difficult and dangerous. Women and children lost husbands and fathers. Traditional custom dictated that warring parties should spare women and elders, but now everyone was vulnerable to violence. Clan fights proliferated. Everybody was an actual or potential loser, because even the man making money from selling arms faced the prospect of one day meeting his enemy.

Traditional means of conflict resolution were breaking down. The government had set up new political structures to rival traditional systems in which community elders were responsible for resolving conflict; but these new bodies were not answerable to their communities, and the government's security agents found that they could not provide security for its citizens. Government officials were being murdered for their weapons. These factors created a vicious cycle of violence, insecurity, and chronic underdevelopment.
PPDI was established with the goal of achieving sustainable peace and development in the region through active community participation and involvement. Its aim was to promote conflict resolution and peace building. Because the easy availability of guns was intensifying the conflict, PPDI focused on tackling the proliferation of small arms.

PPDI’s approach has been founded on respect for and understanding of traditional ways of life. PPDI arranged meetings with warring clans in the region and facilitated the formation of cross-border district peace committees to oversee peace building and to re-establish control over the movement of arms across their borders. The committees consisted of elders, women, and young people from clans living on both sides of the border, along with government officials.

These measures proved workable, due to the way of life of the communities. The population of the area is mostly Somali, a very distinct ethnic entity, distinguished by language, culture, and lifestyle from much of the rest of the Kenyan population. Clan elders represent their communities and proved to be very important in initiating the recovery of illegal small arms from the warring clans, acting as law-makers in their own clans.

The process has helped to revive traditional methods of conflict resolution by which ‘blood money’ was raised by opposing clans to compensate for lost lives, instead of revenge being sought. Another key element has been the degree of co-operation with provincial government. Despite an initial lack of trust on the part of the communities, PPDI recognised that government involvement was vital to achieving progress, and it has worked to give support and encouragement to government representatives.

The project’s successes have been founded on patience, dialogue, and co-operation. Despite the difficulty of raising funds, PPDI’s progress to date has produced the following results:

- a marked reduction in violence in the region;
- improved relationships between government officials and representatives of civil society, especially the community leaders;
- the voluntary surrender of thousands of illegal arms by community members;
- improved cross-border co-operation with communities living across the Somali border, thus minimising the spill-over of small arms and tension from Somalia into Kenya.

(This case study has been developed by the Pastoralist Peace and Development Initiative and is based on their experiences and opinions.)
7 Lobbying

Lobbying is likely to be an important element of your work, whether you are talking to your target directly, or indirectly through the channels (the routes of influence) that you have identified. Lobbying is often perceived as a complex and difficult exercise; but you can easily develop your skills, if you break it down into its two key components: relationship building and negotiation.

Too often, lobbying is seen as a matter of debating eloquently - whereas it is in fact rare for decision makers to change their mind purely as a result of the forcefulness of campaigners' arguments. First you need to establish your legitimacy and demonstrate that it is worth the decision makers' time to listen to you. Only then can you begin serious negotiation. And this negotiation is only partly about persuading decision makers that you are right; often it is more important to show them how taking action will be in their own long-term interests.

Even when decision makers are sympathetic to your arguments and aims, and the relationship is collaborative, encouragement, support, and pressure will be needed, to make sure that they take the actions that you are advocating. Your lobbying can then also become an opportunity to offer detailed advice on implementing the solutions that you are proposing.

In addition to the guidelines given below, see Phase 3 of Part 2 for suggestions on how to develop an influencing strategy.

Relationship-building

It is very rare to achieve your objectives within a single lobbying meeting, even with the best possible preparation. Decision makers often have many different interest groups seeking to influence them; they will also often have fixed views on particular issues. Your overall influencing strategy should include a range of varied ways of reaching decision makers with your messages. This principle applies to lobbying too. Aim to reach a stage where you can establish a dialogue with your key advocacy targets, giving you the opportunity to provide more and more detailed advice, as they come to realise the value of your contributions.

In every meeting with decision makers, you will need to strike a balance between building your relationship with them and negotiating about the issues in question. If the decision makers do not know you at all, you may need to focus
mainly on developing the relationship: establishing your credibility and demonstrating that you can offer the decision makers advice that is of interest and potential benefit to them. The early stages of this process will begin before you have a chance to meet: through personal letters, media work, and public support, you should bring your issue (and your organisation) increasingly into their view.

Once you have shown what you have to offer (the strength of public support, the quality of your research, ideas which can help to solve high-profile problems, etc.), you can move forward to detailed negotiations. But even at this stage, do not lose sight of the need to build and maintain good relationships. You may ultimately be seeking to turn the decision makers into champions of your issues and messages, and this will require an on-going dialogue. In each meeting, try to establish an opening for a follow-up meeting (to explore one issue in more detail, or to meet again in three months’ time to review progress, for example). You may also seek to expand the lobbying relationship to include other decision makers, by using your supportive target to set up opportunities to lobby others.

**Who should lobby?**

Should your organisation do the lobbying? Or should you facilitate others to do it? This depends, of course, on your context and the issue, and particularly on who has the best credentials to speak out on the issue. If you are seen as an outsider, or an organisation with foreign links, it may be better to support others to meet the decision makers. But if your organisation is responsible for strong research or has a powerful constituency of public support, you are certainly well placed to do the lobbying yourself. In either case, consider joint lobbying meetings, where you meet a decision maker with three or four representative members of an alliance working on your issue. It provides an opportunity to divide up the roles in the lobbying meeting (see below), as well as providing a range of perspectives and demonstrating a broad-based concern.

See the case study of the UK Working Group on Arms on page 146 for an example of successful joint lobbying.

This section presents a range of practical suggestions to help you to organise and implement your lobbying activity.

**Practical guidelines for effective lobbying**

The principles outlined below give a general overview of good practice in lobbying. Obviously, the details will depend on your own cultural and political context, and all the suggestions made here will need to be adapted accordingly.
If you have not previously met the person whom you are lobbying, do some research in advance of the meeting:

- What is the scope of his or her authority?
- What action can he or she take?
- Is there anything in his or her background that is relevant to your objective, or does he or she have any particular interests that may be relevant?
- Has he or she ever spoken publicly about this issue?
- What is his or her initial response likely to be: supportive, hostile, or neutral?
- What do you think he or she already knows about your organisation?
- Have you had any previous contact, through letters or meetings with officials in his or her team?
- What is it realistic for you to ask him or her to do?

Make sure that you communicate the one or two most important messages that you want to convey. Be clear about the objective of the meeting and what action you want as a result.

Know your subject: make sure that you are fully briefed with up-to-date information.

If you go as a group, decide who is going to say what. Assign roles: e.g. note taker, introducer, main spokesperson.

Check in advance that you all understand and agree on the main arguments.

Be direct and clear, but not confrontational: listen actively and show interest in and understanding of others' point of view.

Show how and why the decision maker needs to act differently: remember that it is not sufficient simply to win your argument on the issues.

Plan for different kinds of response: you may have to negotiate compromises.

If an opportunity arises, mention your key allies and their contribution, in a way that will strengthen their legitimacy to reach this decision maker; allies may be able to achieve a further meeting with this person sooner than you will.

If appropriate, check what you have agreed before finishing the discussion.

Leave behind detailed background material (research reports or information on your organisation, for example): they may provide the basis for follow-up with the decision maker's supporting officials, who may have a strong influence on policy formation.

If possible, get agreement in principle for a follow-up meeting with the decision maker: prepare a clear rationale for this in advance.

After the meeting, send a letter of thanks to the person for arranging the meeting; summarise what you discussed, and mention any promises that he or she made.

Keep a summary of the discussion for your own future use.
Negotiating

When you are negotiating, you are in a situation where there is a balance of interests. Several factors influence the nature of the relationship between the two negotiating sides. Decision makers may gain their authority from their formal positions within the government or other organisation; but there will almost always be reasons why you will be able to influence them. Demonstrate the value of your case to them. You might have information that is useful to them, or access to valuable resources, such as local community support. You may be an expert on the issue. If you have links with people who are important to the person with whom you are negotiating (for example, journalists or donor governments), he or she may be more inclined to listen to what you have to say.2

The decision maker's perception of your organisation is all-important. Sometimes it is not the power that you actually have but the power that you are believed to have that is important. This explains why the credibility of your own organisation and its links with others is vital.

Choose the right time for the negotiation. Timing can critically affect the perceived importance of your issue. If your meeting follows immediately after a large public demonstration on your issue, for example, you have more power within the negotiation than if the decision maker has seen no evidence of public support.

You should be clear in advance about your 'bottom line' (the minimum that you are prepared to accept) as well as your 'optimum solution' (the ideal solution for you). You should think also about the bottom lines and optimum solutions of the people on the other side of the negotiation. Results tend to be more successful when the two bottom lines overlap.

Negotiating may include bargaining. Don't start by revealing your bottom line. But be prepared to compromise: 'If you start with nothing, demand 100 per cent, then compromise for 30 per cent, you're 30 per cent ahead.'3

And remember that the negotiation does not end at the conclusion of this meeting. Think about how the negotiation is affecting your on-going relationship with this decision maker. If there are unresolved matters, can you leave openings for follow-up? (But beware of deferring a decision that has to be reached now!) Can you agree on partial commitments now, which might be strengthened during future negotiations?
8 Using the media

Most governments and institutions care about their public image. The mass media help to make and shape such images and may therefore be an important tool for you. The media can do the following:

- build awareness and influence public opinion;
- stimulate people to act;
- influence and put pressure on governments and other institutions;
- publicise your work and influence people's perceptions of you.

Engaging the media can enhance your organisation’s power, can improve your legitimacy, and may mean the difference between a low-profile activity and a high-impact event commanding significant public interest. The media may also be a highly effective tool for demonstrating public concern for your issue and for changing the minds of decision makers. However, mismanaging your contacts with the media may have disastrous results. In the same way that the media can enhance your profile and legitimacy, they can also destroy it. Understanding how to work with the media, how to develop media strategies, and some of the most basic communications techniques is crucial to making the best use of your media opportunities.

**Practical guidelines**

The principles outlined below give a general overview of working with the media. The details will need to be adapted according to your particular context.

**Understanding how the media work**

Monitor your media: who reports on what particular issues, and what perspectives do they promote? The media are rarely neutral on any issue. In relation to any specific medium – a newspaper, or a radio or TV station, for example – find out:

- Who owns it?
- Is it run commercially? Or politically?
- Is it dependent on a political party?
- Is it independent of government?
- Whose politics does it reflect?
• Is it hostile or friendly to you and your concerns?
• What kinds of story does it cover? Are the stories trivial, or trivialised?
  What kinds of people are they aimed at?

**Target audiences**

Before deciding which media to use, think about the people whom are you trying to reach, and about how media are used in your culture. For example:

• Who has access to which media in your country?
• Which newspapers, magazines, radio and television programmes most influence public opinion on issues of concern to you?
• Which media do decision makers, politicians, government officials, etc. read, listen to, or watch?
• Which media are most likely to shape the debates on issues of importance to you?
• How important are regional/local media to communities or locally based politicians and decision makers?
• Which journalists particularly influence public opinion or government?
• Is radio more important than print media?
• Are institutions sensitive to media coverage and public opinion in your country?

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**Case study: using the media to raise public awareness in Malawi**

Political liberalisation and civil war in Mozambique, and the disbanding of the youth wing of the former ruling party, all contributed to the problems of the proliferation of small arms in neighbouring Malawi. With democracy came greater elements of lawlessness, an increase in crime, and increased possession of illegal firearms. As a result, there was a growing tendency for people to try to provide for their own security.

In response, the main focus of the Community Safety and Firearms Control Pilot Project in Malawi has been on work with local communities and the police to address the problems of firearms proliferation. Activities included a training of trainers workshop scheme, involving recruits from the Malawi Police Service, NGOs, and community representatives. This was supported by the production and dissemination of a Community Safety Handbook, posters, and a film about community policing, entitled ‘Protecting our Lives’.
In addition, the Pilot Project sponsored, funded, and helped to arrange a series of public broadcasts by the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Television Malawi to promote public awareness of the need to support professional policing to counter armed violence. The MBC and TV Malawi produced four radio and TV programmes on the development of community policing in four districts. In addition, the MBC arranged four panel discussions with senior Malawi police officers and NGO specialists on a range of topics. The programmes were broadcast just before the panel discussions, so that members of the public could ask questions and express their opinions to the panellists for on-air discussion.

During site recordings, posters, leaflets, and audiocassettes on themes related to human rights and firearms control were distributed to members of the local communities.

The aims of this media work were to improve the awareness of the general public in Malawi about the work of the police and especially of the need for community support to counter violent crime and the spread of firearms.

A later evaluation showed that, following the broadcasts, there were indicators of changed attitudes on the part of both police and local people in relation to the work of community policing. In Mchinji and Mangochi districts, for example, the local community had helped the police to recover stolen goods and a number of small arms after the airing of the programme. In Dedza, crime-prevention committees were being established as a result of the radio programme.

The radio programmes were felt to be one starting point for the debates on tackling the issues of violent crime and firearms control.

[This case study has been developed by the Community Safety and Firearms Control Pilot in Malawi and is based on their experiences and opinions.]

**Working with the media**

Three things are vital to your relationship with the media: credibility, immediacy, and timing. Analysis of examples of good practice suggests the following guidelines.

- Resist the temptation to try to get as much coverage as you can; you should build your media activity around a media strategy, using those media that will genuinely help to achieve your objectives.
- Provide information to journalists in a ready-to-use format: the more you do this, the more you are likely to control what they say.
• Build good long-term relationships with journalists, especially by fostering informal links.
• Keep an up-to-date list of media contacts.
• Be aware of the journalists' agenda, not just your own agenda.
• Develop a reactive strategy: how will you respond to criticisms or unfortunate events? How will you react when there is a positive news story?

What the media want

Normally the media will be more interested in a story which
• affects people
• is happening now
• is here
• is different
• inspires an emotional response
• has celebrity interest
• is 'the most ...' (the biggest, the newest, the fastest, the first, etc.).

Developing media lists

Develop a list of contacts, and keep it up to date. Keep files of press clippings and add to the list when new reporters cover your stories.

Think about people in the following positions:
• radio news directors and reporters
• television news editors, reporters, and producers
• wire-service bureau chiefs and day-book editors
• newspaper editors, news reporters, defence/security reporters, columnists, editors of op/ed (opinion/editorial) pages, features editors
• talk-show producers and bookers (those who arrange the guest speakers)
• editors of community or special-interest newspapers and magazines
• diary editors on newspapers/radio/wire service/television.

Techniques for working with the media

The media release

• Use headed paper, with printed details of your organisation's name and address.
• Always include at least one contact name, with a telephone number and/or an email address.
• Keep it short and simple. Ideally, media releases should be confined to one side of one sheet of paper.
Part 3: Taking action – 8: Using the media

- Always put a date on your news release. Make it clear to whom it is addressed and when the embargo time is. If it is not embargoed, put ‘For immediate release’.
- Make the heading and first sentence sound interesting.
- Put the main facts in the first paragraph, if possible.
- When promoting a special event, make sure that you include all the following information: Who is doing it? What is happening? Where is it happening? When is it happening? Why is it happening?
- Try to include a good quote.

The media conference

A media conference usually consists of someone making a short speech and then answering questions and being available for follow-up interviews.

- Use this tool sparingly – only when you have a major news story to announce and/or someone in whom the media are interested.
- Consider holding a joint press conference with other organisations.
- Keep the panel small and the speeches short.
- Remember that various types of media have differing needs.

The media pack

At the launch of a major campaign or research report, it may be useful to provide a media pack which summarises the key information. This might include, for example,

- summaries of the major findings or issues of the report
- outlines of some of the individual cases featured in the report
- sample quotes from the report
- a list of the major recommendations
- what you hope to achieve, and what will be happening
- anticipated questions and answers: this is a good way to provide clarification on controversial or complex issues.

Interviews

The key to doing good interviews is a thorough knowledge of your subject and good preparation.

Before the interview

- Agree the time, the place, and the duration.
- Agree the subject and define the issues with the producer or interviewer. Be specific about the topics to be covered.
- Make a list of the three or four most important points you want to make. Express them as ‘sound-bites’ (short, dramatic statements).
• For radio and TV: research the programme: who is the audience? Is the show live or pre-recorded? Is it a discussion?
• Anticipate the questions and practise your answers; rehearse stories that illustrate your key points.
• Check that you have the latest information.
• For radio and TV: discuss with the journalist the questions to be asked first.

During the interview

• Try to relax.
• Keep your answers concise; use simple language and avoid jargon.
• Do not get side-tracked. Keep your key points in mind, and continually steer the conversation back to them.
• Do not allow a journalist to put words in your mouth.
• Use examples and stories to illustrate facts and statistics.
• Stay calm, but don’t be afraid to show some emotion. If you are attacked by a hostile question, you should not get upset: just answer back firmly.
• For radio and TV: do not fidget. Cameras and microphones pick up the slightest movement.
• For radio and TV: do not interrupt or speak at the same time as others.
• For TV: remember that the camera is on you at all times.
• Most important of all: remember that nothing is ever ‘off the record’: say nothing that you would not be happy to see in print, or heard broadcast to the public.

Feature articles

• For a major report, negotiate with one or more newspapers to carry a feature article to reinforce the news coverage. Features provide an opportunity to elaborate an issue in depth, using stories and more detailed analysis.
• Newspapers often have an op/ed (opinion/editorial) page to allow substantial space for opinion pieces.

Letters and phone-in programmes

The letters pages of newspapers provide a forum for encouraging discussion of issues and demonstrating public interest and concern.
• Keep your contribution short.
• Make it a response to something that has been in the news.
• Have letters signed by someone representing an organisation.
Part y. Taking action - 8: Using the media

• Provide a contact number so that facts can be checked.
• Radio phone-in programmes which invite audience participation provide an opportunity to demonstrate concern or express interest about an issue. Even if the topic is not precisely relevant to your issue, you can often use a story to create a link between the two.

Photographs and photo opportunities

• Ensure maximum visual impact, for example by using a celebrity, and/or an eye-catching public event.
• Give the media plenty of notice. Be clear about the location and timing. Send out a media release giving these details and headed 'photo opportunity'.
• Be flexible if possible. Offer to rehearse or re-stage events to fit in with the schedule of the newspaper.
• Take your own photographs and offer them to newspapers that did not send their own photographers.
• Add captions to relate the picture to your issue, and to explain who is doing what, why, where, and when.
9 Taking action: a summary

Effective action involves combining your experience, skills, and legitimacy with those of your allies to create change. Your chosen method of doing this – through media, lobbying, mass action, etc. – will depend on what you want to achieve, and on the position from which you are starting. A membership organisation will be better suited to mass letter writing than a policy organisation, for example: the latter would be better placed to develop public-policy recommendations with government officials. Usually a combination of two or more approaches or actions is most effective, especially if it is co-ordinated with the work of others with similar goals.

It is important to understand that often change is a long and complex process. It involves developing relationships – sometimes over considerable periods of time – and it involves a lot of hard work: understanding problems, conducting research, developing messages, and delivering these messages to those with the power to make the change that you desire.

Change does not always occur in expected ways and in accordance with your strategies and plans. It is important always to think of the wider context in which your action is taking place, and remember that sometimes if you are not progressing it might not be your research or action that is wrong, but the focus of your efforts. For example, you might be lobbying the government in your country for stronger national legislation on arms exports. You may be failing to bring about change because – although it agrees that there is a need for more stringent arms-exports legislation – the government does not want to do something that would put commercial activity in your country at a disadvantage. However, if you broaden the context and focus on the development of regional legislation, then your government might be less hostile – if, for example in this case, it could be demonstrated that the commercial status quo would not be altered. In some cases it is possible that the government might become a positive advocate of your case.

There is no perfect way to plan or to act. Often changes happen as a result of political, social, and economic factors combining in a way that you cannot anticipate or control. The forces resisting change are often extremely powerful, and your resources may be scarce. However, there are many examples, included in this handbook and elsewhere, which prove that change is possible.
A thorough approach to planning will help you to select the most appropriate ways in which to act for change. And a detailed understanding of the various options for taking action will help you to select the right approach at the right time. The contents of this handbook provide a framework for helping you to plan and act effectively. In the end, however, your success will depend on a combination of what happens in the wider world and your own skills, dedication, and passion.

‘Vision without action achieves nothing.
Action without vision just passes the time.
Vision with action can change the world.’
(Nelson Mandela)