



Workbook
N°4

Youth advocacy

YOUTH TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE:
a toolkit for storytelling, leadership, and advocacy



Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), 2026



Youth Transforming Agriculture. A Toolkit for Storytelling, Leadership, and Advocacy.
Youth advocacy

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Editor: Andrea Marcela Ávila Segura

Copyediting: IICA Language Unit

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Table of Contents

1. How to use this guide?	4
2. Preparing to Facilitate: Key Concepts and Useful Bibliography	8
Advocacy	8
Types of advocacy	9
Power and authority	10
Power relations	11
Characteristics of youth advocacy	12
Citizen participation	13
Situation analysis	14
Context analysis	15
Stakeholder mapping	17
3. The Decalogue of advocacy	20
4. Recommended bibliography	25
5. Getting started: A Practical Guide to Facilitating the Workshop	26
General information about the workshop	26
Overall structure of the workshop	27
Content guide for the workshop	29
Block 1. The power to change things	29
Block 2. Exploration of key concepts	31
Block 3. Planning my advocacy	37
Block 4. Designing our advocacy strategy	43
Block 5. Closing: putting the decalogue into action	48

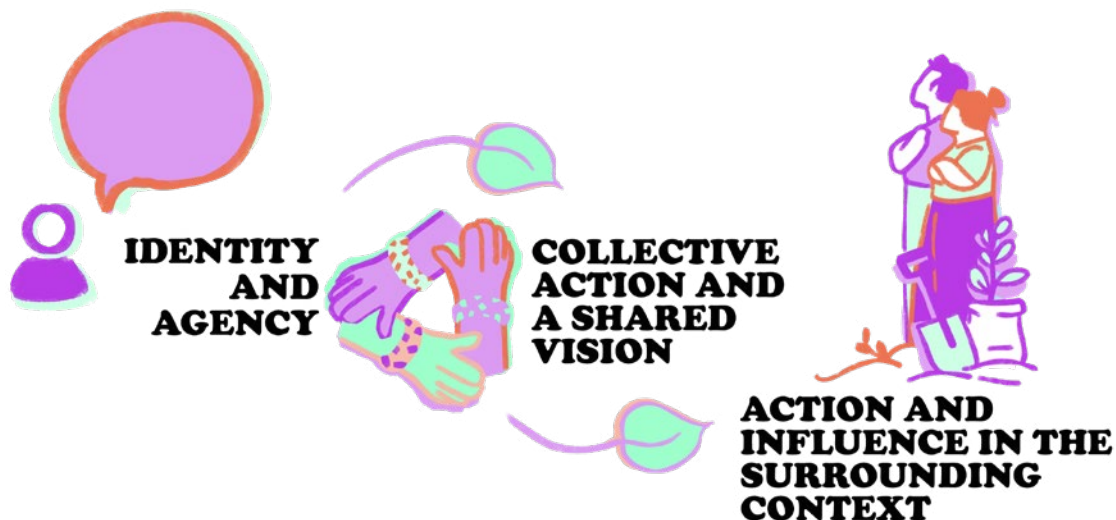
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How to use this guide?

This workbook is part of the collection *Youth transforming agriculture: a toolkit for storytelling, leadership, and advocacy*, designed to empower rural youth through participatory workshops. Each workbook, which offers conceptual and practical content on a key theme (narratives, leadership, or advocacy), can be used independently or as part of a training sequence.

There is no strict rule regarding the order in which the workshops should be delivered, but it is recommended to follow a logical sequence, which is the one proposed below: first, address the topic of narratives so that young people can define how they want to tell their reality and generate positive messages; then, study the content related to leadership to strengthen their self-confidence, values, and capacities for collective coordination; and finally, explore the content related to advocacy in order to channel those narratives and leadership toward concrete plans for action and influence.

In this way, those who participate in the workshops experience a gradual process of empowerment that includes:





It is recommended that, before conducting this workshop, Workbook No. 1: Facilitator's Guide be reviewed in detail.

This is Workbook No. 4: Youth Advocacy.

It focuses on strategies for political advocacy and youth participation in civic life. It provides a clear explanation of the concept of advocacy and its different types (direct advocacy, community advocacy, digital advocacy, etc.). It addresses concepts such as power relations, effective civic participation, context analysis, and stakeholder mapping. It also presents a decalogue of advocacy that includes its fundamental principles.

This workbook guides the facilitator in conducting a practical workshop aimed at helping young people learn how to design advocacy strategies, from identifying a problem in their community and analyzing the surrounding context to planning concrete actions to achieve change (e.g., campaigns, dialogue with authorities, or community projects).

Each workbook is structured in three main sections.

1. The first, entitled “**Preparing to Facilitate,**” presents key concepts and recommendations for introducing the topic.
2. The section “**Getting started**” includes the script and activities organized into thematic blocks, with detailed instructions for each stage of the workshop.
3. The third section, called “**Resources,**” provides templates, visual guides, and other supporting materials needed to facilitate the activities.

Each workbook is designed so that any facilitator, even without specialized training, can effectively lead the learning process

Cross-Cutting Principles

All workshops should be facilitated in accordance with the following principles:

- Ensure the necessary conditions for women to express themselves, take leading roles, and make decisions, as well as identify structural barriers that may hinder their effective participation.
- Recognize that not all youth experience the same realities; therefore, their differences in terms of sex, ethnicity, territory, and disability, among others, must be taken into account.
- Start from the experiences of rural youth as protagonists. It is necessary to understand the experiences, knowledge, and transformative potential of young people in order to recognize the challenges they face and the specific opportunities they can seize in rural areas.
- Promote the rights of youth as active subjects, with special emphasis on the right to participation.

Recommendations for Facilitating the Workshop

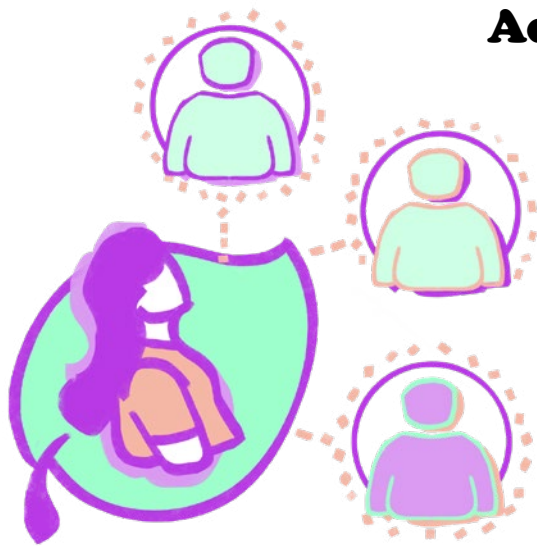
- Create an environment of trust. Efforts should be made to foster horizontal relationships and ensure a safe space where all voices are valued.
- Practice horizontality and mutual respect. A key principle of this methodology is horizontality, as it translates into mutual respect and balanced power dynamics within the group.
- Use active and participatory methodologies. Experiential learning, critical reflection, and constant participation should be prioritized.
- Adapt the content to the territory and local culture. Examples, language, and activities should be tailored to the specific rural context in which the workshop is delivered.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each workshop may include brief evaluation activities before, during, and after its implementation (e.g., entry and exit surveys, closing rounds, and self-assessment matrices). This makes it possible to adjust the training process according to the needs of the group and assess the learning achieved.

2

PREPARING TO FACILITATE: key concepts and useful bibliography



Advocacy

Advocacy is a planned, strategic, and sustained process led by organized social actors to influence public or private decisions with collective impact, including norms, policies, budgets, guidelines, regulations, and institutional or corporate practices throughout their cycle (design, adoption, implementation, execution, monitoring, and evaluation). In principle, its purpose is to protect, guarantee, or expand rights and public goods in order to produce verifiable changes in people's lives or in the structural conditions that affect them.

Advocacy operates on decision-making power rather than on abstract opinions. It is carried out through multiple strategies, such as technical dialogue, public deliberation, strategic litigation, social mobilization, communication, budget oversight, and lobbying.

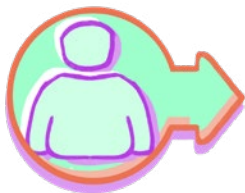
These actions are aimed at modifying, reforming, partially changing, or eliminating policies in local, national, regional, or international contexts. A healthy democracy has advocacy processes that are active, pluralistic, transparent, and subject to social oversight.

Political advocacy must be ethical and responsible. All actions in this regard must operate within the law and in the public interest. Any effec-

tive advocacy strategy avoids corruption and illegal practices, relying instead on legitimate arguments and dialogue to strengthen the credibility of the movement.

Types of advocacy

According to their level or sphere of action, advocacy can be classified as follows:



1. Direct advocacy. This involves one-on-one engagement with individuals who hold decision-making power, for example, through formal letters, lobbying, and meetings with national legislators, local governments, or national political authorities.



2. Institutional advocacy. This consists of participating as a legitimate actor in state or official mechanisms, such as public consultations, local government sessions, or formally convened dialogue tables.



3. Community or local advocacy. This refers to action carried out from a social or community base through the organization of neighborhood collectives, citizen assemblies, or community mobilizations.



4. Cultural advocacy. This includes artistic, communication, or educational activities aimed at transforming the community's perception of an issue.



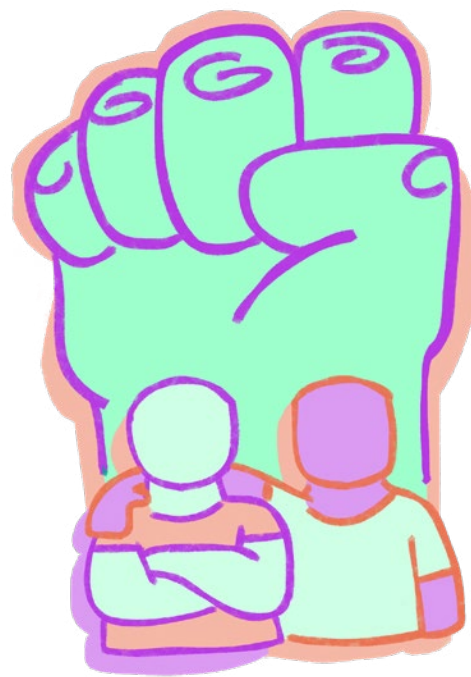
5. Digital advocacy. This refers to the use of social and traditional media to make demands and petitions visible online and to mobilize support virtually. Although it may overlap with other categories, it uses its own strategies, such as the viralization of messages and social media campaigns that broaden the reach of advocacy, especially among youth.

Power and authority

Historically, power has been understood as the capacity of an individual or a group to influence the decisions or actions of others. In the Western classical tradition, authors such as Max Weber¹ and Robert Dahl² defined it as a relationship of domination or control through which actor A gets actor B to do something that, under other circumstances, they would not do.

From a Latin American perspective, power is not limited to giving orders; rather, it extends to the creation of possibilities for action and collective transformation. Paulo Freire³ argues that power emerges when people develop critical consciousness and act collectively to free themselves from oppressive structures.

Within this Global South perspective, power is also defined as a shared social energy. In this sense, all people can exercise collective power to



1. Weber, M. 1947. The theory of social and economic organization (online). Henderson, AM; Parsons, T (trads.). New York, United States of America, OUP. 436 p. Consulted 10 Nov. 2025. Available at https://archive.org/details/weber-max.-the-theory-of-social-and-economic-organization-1947_202106/page/n7/mode/2up.

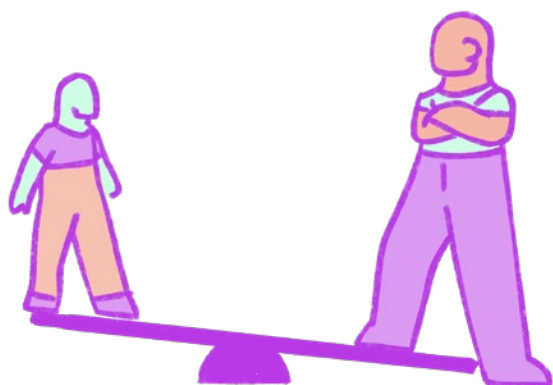
2. Dahl, RA. 1957. The concept of power. Behavioral Science 2(3):201-215. Consulted 12 Nov. 2025. Available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/bs.3830020303>.

4. Freire, P. 1970. Pedagogía del oprimido (en línea). Ciudad de México, México, Siglo XXI. 175 p. Consultado 12 nov. 2025. Disponible en <https://www.servicioskoinonia.org/biblioteca/general/FreirePedagogiadelOprimido.pdf>.

transform their surroundings, while true authority is legitimized through service and responsibility toward the community.

Power should not be confused with authority. Power is the capacity of one actor to influence another, while authority is power that is recognized and legitimized. In other words, authority is linked to a person's standing within an organization or society, whether through the position they hold (president, mayor, etc.), their reputation or track record, or their leadership or charisma.

Power relations



In the political sphere, power relations determine how different actors interact. Formal power derives from positions and legal mandates, as is the case of those who legislate, state authorities, and regulatory bodies, which possess explicitly recognized decision-making authority.

Informal power stems from social authority, public influence, or non-state resources. Opinion leaders, social movements, or the media, for example, can shape the political agenda without holding official positions because they exercise informal power. Petri⁴ highlights this distinction by noting that, in order to advocate effectively, it is essential to identify actors who hold “formal power” or institutional veto capacity (presidents and legislators), as well as those who possess informal power or social veto capacity (social groups capable of mobilizing public opinion).

Understanding power relations requires recognizing the key actors involved (formal and informal), their capacities (institutional/social veto), and the dynamics of domination and resistance at play, in order to design advocacy strategies that are coherent and ethically sound.

4. Petri, DP. 2019. El decálogo de la incidencia (online). In Launay Gama, C; Dabène, O (coords.). Los efectos de los procesos participativos en la acción pública. Buenos Aires, Argentina, Teseo. p. 217-231. Consulted 15 nov. 2025. Available at <https://platformforsocialtransformation.org/download/socialdialogue/Petri-El-decalogo-de-la-incidencia.pdf>

Characteristics of youth advocacy

Youth-driven advocacy presents particular features linked to their generational identity. Latin American youth are not homogeneous: they are often seen not only as agents of change but also as sectors characterized by apathy or distrust. According to FES⁵, many young people identify with values of transformation (equality, environmental rights, social justice, etc.), although there is also a significant segment with conservative orientations or that is simply disengaged. This reflects a generational gap with respect to traditional politics, as well as possible gaps in the institutional representation of young people.



5. FES (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Germany). 2024. Juventudes: asignatura pendiente: el más reciente estudio sobre juventudes de América Latina y el Caribe (online). Consulted 18 nov. 2025. Available at <https://juventudesasignaturapendiente.com/>.

Second, youth advocacy often takes the form of transformative participation: young people tend to seek profound changes in society and to challenge established structures. They adopt innovative methods (cultural mobilization, intensive use of social media, creative collective action, etc.) and do not limit themselves to activism within formal mechanisms. They often put forward agendas aimed at defending equity and sustainability.

This disruptive character gives them potential for political pressure, as they can destabilize the status quo and open new spaces for dialogue; however, they also face institutional gaps: the current political structure often excludes them due to the lack of formal spaces for participation or of policies specifically designed for youth. Youth advocacy therefore plays a dual role: driving political innovation and reclaiming recognition of young people's rights and demands within institutions.

Citizen participation

Citizen participation is the exercise through which people actively engage in public affairs that affect their lives in order to influence state decisions and the management of common goods. It is not limited to voting in elections: it also includes the possibility of deliberating, proposing, overseeing, and transforming public policies from different spaces (institutional or community-based).



According to Kliksberg⁶, Participation strengthens democracy because it expands the legitimacy of decisions and brings institutions closer

6. Kliksberg, B. 2000. Capital social y cultura: claves olvidadas del desarrollo (online). Buenos Aires, Argentina, BID. 42 p. Consulted 18 Nov. 2025. Available at <https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Capital-social-y-cultura-Claves-olvidadas-del-desarrollo.pdf>.

to society. In rural contexts, this means that communities can directly influence agricultural, environmental, or territorial policies that affect their development.

La participación adopta diversas formas:

1. **Formal or institutional**, when it occurs in spaces recognized by the state, such as public consultations, participatory budgeting, or local councils.
2. **Social or community-based**, when it is organized from the grassroots level, that is, within producers' associations, water boards, cooperatives, youth organizations, or social movements.

From a Latin American perspective, citizen participation is not only a right but also a practice of empowerment that enables people to see themselves not as passive recipients of policies, but as agents of change. According to Freire⁷, authentic participation “emerges from dialogue and is oriented toward transforming reality.”

Situation analysis

Situation analysis is a tool that helps to understand current political, economic, and social developments and how they influence opportunities for advocacy.

An effective advocacy strategy depends on knowing when to act. Contexts change constantly, and some decisions involve taking advantage of political “windows of opportunity.”



7. Freire, P. 1970. Pedagogía del oprimido (en línea). Ciudad de México, México, Siglo XXI. 175 p. Consultado 12 nov. 2025. Disponible en <https://www.servicioskoinonia.org/biblioteca/general/FreirePedagogiadelOprimido.pdf>.

Analyzing the situation involves asking questions such as the following:

- What issues are currently dominating the public agenda?
- Which actors appear most active or responsive?
- What decisions are being made or are upcoming (elections, reforms, crises)?
- Are there risks or conditions that could block advocacy?

This analysis is carried out using various sources, such as news reports, official statements, social media, local experiences, and community perceptions.

For example, if a new law on water use is being discussed, rural youth can use situation analysis to decide whether it is the right moment to make their demands visible or to organize a public campaign.

According to Petri⁸, understanding the situation makes it possible to act strategically, without improvisation. Effective advocacy indicates not only what one seeks to change, but also when and how to do so.

Context analysis



Context analysis is broader and more in-depth than situation analysis. While the latter focuses on what is happening at a specific moment, context analysis examines the underlying structural conditions that explain the emergence of certain problems or resistance to change. It includes the examination of the political, social, economic, cultural, environmental, and institutional factors that shape the reality in which advocacy seeks to take place, including:

⁸ Petri, DP. 2019. El decálogo de la incidencia (en línea). In Launay Gama, C; Dabène, O (coords.). Los efectos de los procesos participativos en la acción pública. Buenos Aires, Argentina, Teseo. p. 217-231. Consultado 12 nov. 2025. Disponible en <https://platformforsocialtransformation.org/download/socialdialogue/Petri-El-decalogo-de-la-incidencia.pdf>.

- Historical inequalities between urban and rural areas
- The lack of infrastructure or basic services
- Cultural traditions that influence the participation of women or young people
- Levels of trust in institutions
- Existing legal or political frameworks.

According to De Sousa Santos⁹, understanding the context is essential to avoid quick fixes to deep-rooted problems. Advocacy with a structural perspective aims not only to identify symptoms but also to transform underlying causes, which requires recognizing power relations, dominant values, and real opportunities for change.

Context analysis helps answer questions such as:

- What problem have we identified?
- Why does this problem exist?
- Which actors or interests benefit or are affected?
- What limitations should we consider before acting?

Stakeholder mapping

Stakeholder mapping is a strategic tool that helps identify the individuals, groups, or institutions that influence, directly or indirectly, the issue at the center of the advocacy effort. Its purpose is to understand

9. de Sousa Santos, B. 2011. Epistemologías del sur (online). Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana 16(54):17-39. Consulted 15 nov. 2025. Available at <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/279/27920007003.pdf>...

who holds power, what interests they represent, what positions they take, and what relationships exist among them¹⁰.

The mapping process includes three steps:

1. List the actors, including public institutions, companies, social movements, media outlets, churches, community organizations, and local leaders.
2. Classify them according to their level of influence (high, medium, low) and their position regarding the cause (ally, opponent, or undecided).
3. Analyze the relationships among them, such as alliances, tensions, or possible bridges for dialogue.



What does influence mean in the context of stakeholder mapping?

Category	Value	DEFINITION
INFLUENCE	High	They have access or legitimacy to shape the decisions of third parties (other legislators, public opinion, donors, elites, and professional associations). Their position has the potential to shift the overall balance.
	Low	They express a position or outlook, but their capacity to persuade or mobilize others is limited or sector-specific.
	None	Their opinion does not affect any relevant actors. Even when they speak or act, they do not shift other key actors. It is worth noting that an actor may have wide media visibility but little real influence over other actors.

¹⁰ Petri, DP. 2019. El decálogo de la incidencia (online). In Launay Gama, C; Dabène, O (coords.). Los efectos de los procesos participativos en la acción pública. Buenos Aires, Argentina, Teseo. p. 217-231. Consulted 18 nov. 2025. Available at <https://platformforsocialtransformation.org/download/socialdialogue/Petri-El-decalogo-de-la-incidencia.pdf>.

The result can be presented in a matrix or in a visual map, such as the one shown below, where actors are positioned according to their stance and level of influence.

How to place stakeholders in an advocacy process?

Level of influence	High-influence opponent	High-influence undecided person	High-influence ally
	Low-influence opponent	Low-influence undecided person	Low-influence ally
	No-influence opponent	No-influence undecided person	No-influence ally
Level of support			

This tool helps answer questions such as:

- Who do we need to persuade or convince?
- Who can be allies?
- Who could block the proposal?

Based on this classification, it is possible to define appropriate actions with respect to the most relevant actors, for example:

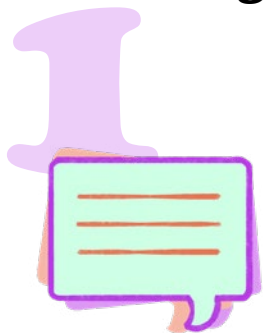
Stakeholders	Recommended actions
High-influence allies	They should be protected and strengthened through coordinated, secure technical support. They require care, follow-up, support, and whatever they request.
High-influence opponents	Social, political, and media pressure around them needs to be increased. The objective is not necessarily to change their position, but to isolate it from that of other actors and reduce their influence. Debates should be organized to challenge their position, as well as mobilizations that make the community's discontent with it visible.
High-influence undecided person	They should be given priority. Every possible effort should be directed toward persuading them, especially if their position is decisive (e.g., a deciding vote). Direct persuasion efforts should be undertaken, including meetings and campaigns. The political or reputational cost of their position must be made visible if it is not currently favorable (e.g., community discontent, loss of trust, possible legal action, etc.).
No-influence undecided person	There is no need to devote significant efforts to persuading them, as their position is not decisive. Their stance should be monitored in order to detect any changes that could affect the strategy. the strategy.

Stakeholder mapping is not a static exercise: it should be updated regularly, as relationships and positions can change over time. It must also be carried out with ethics and transparency to prevent manipulation or misuse of the information. In rural contexts, this tool helps identify the informal influence of community leaders, associations, or local media, which often have greater capacity to shape decisions than formal authorities.

3

The Decalogue of advocacy¹¹

Use arguments, not money, to persuade.



Political advocacy should be grounded in rational and ethical arguments, not in corruption or the exchange of favors.

Using money or favors undermines the legitimacy of the process and reflects an inability to sustain solid arguments. Genuine influence is achieved through well-founded reasoning, empirical evidence, trust with decision-makers, and responsible management of information and relationships. Any advocacy effort must be carried out within the law and in the public interest¹².

Define your demand.



One of the most common reasons advocacy efforts fail is a lack of clarity about the objective. The second principle of the decalogue is to formulate a specific and viable demand: a concrete policy proposal, reform, or decision. Vague or overly general demands dilute efforts. The key is to begin with small, achievable wins and gradually build legitimacy; for example, instead of saying “We want more social justice,” it is more effective to say, “We propose a reform to the municipal regulation that guarantees equitable access to water in rural communities.”

11. Petri, DP. 2019. El decálogo de la incidencia (en línea). In Launay Gama, C; Dabène, O (coords.). Los efectos de los procesos participativos en la acción pública. Buenos Aires, Argentina, Teseo. p. 217-231. Consultado 18 nov. 2025. Disponible en <https://platformforsocialtransformation.org/download/socialdialogue/Petri-El-decalogo-de-la-incidencia.pdf>.

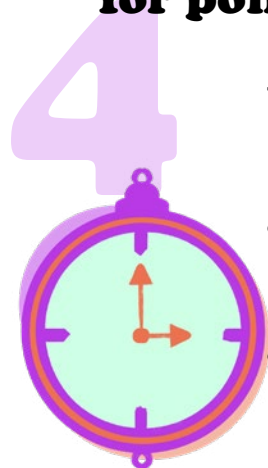
12. Ibid.

Document, document, document.



Effective advocacy depends on reliable information and solid evidence. Without credible data, it is as if the problem does not exist. Rigorous documentation—based on research, media monitoring, and the systematic recording of incidents—helps demonstrate the urgency and legitimacy of the cause. Empirical knowledge turns a subjective concern into a verifiable “social fact.”

Understand the right timing for political advocacy.



The success of any strategy depends on recognizing the right political moment to act, which involves considering:

- The sociopolitical context, such as local elections, a major productive project in the community, or a crisis;
- The public policy cycle: stages of design, approval, implementation, and evaluation; and
- Institutional regulations and laws.

A sound strategy leverages political windows of opportunity—moments when the context favors change—and avoids periods of low receptivity (such as electoral campaigns).

Choose your strategy according to your objective.



Not every cause requires the same tools: the means must align with the end. Depending on the objective, it may be appropriate to launch a public campaign, convene a dialogue table, pursue legal action, or build a strategic

alliance. As Petri¹³ notes, impulsive activism (for example, organizing marches without a clear purpose) should be avoided in favor of strategies that maximize real political impact, such as influencing the implementation of existing laws or strengthening institutional accountability.

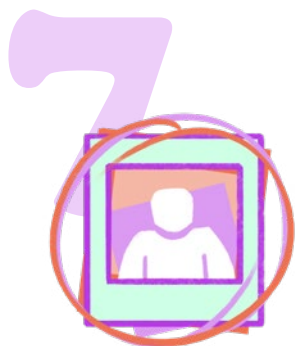
Use the media strategically.



Depending on how they are used, the media can be allies or create risks. Public communication should be carefully planned and well timed, ensuring that the right messages reach the right audiences at the right moment. Using the press as an early instrument of confrontation should be avoided, as it may close the door to dialogue.

Instead, it is advisable to build trust with journalists and take advantage of news cycles to increase visibility without antagonizing authorities. Advocacy does not necessarily imply confrontation; it can also involve critical and constructive dialogue.

Focus your efforts on influential actors.



Advocacy efforts should concentrate on those who truly hold power or influence. This requires mapping actors with “veto power” (the ability to approve or block decisions), as well as those who influence them indirectly. Success depends on directing resources and energy toward actors with the greatest political or symbolic weight, rather than dispersing them among peripheral interlocutors.

¹³ Petri, DP. 2019. El decálogo de la incidencia (online). In Launay Gama, C; Dabène, O (coords.). Los efectos de los procesos participativos en la acción pública. Buenos Aires, Argentina, Teseo. p. 217-231. Consulted 18 nov. 2025. Available at <https://platformforsocialtransformation.org/download/socialdialogue/Petri-El-decalogo-de-la-incidencia.pdf>.

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Use both formal and informal channels.

A comprehensive strategy combines institutional and non-institutional channels. Formal channels include official spaces for participation, such as public consultations, legislative hearings, and negotiations.

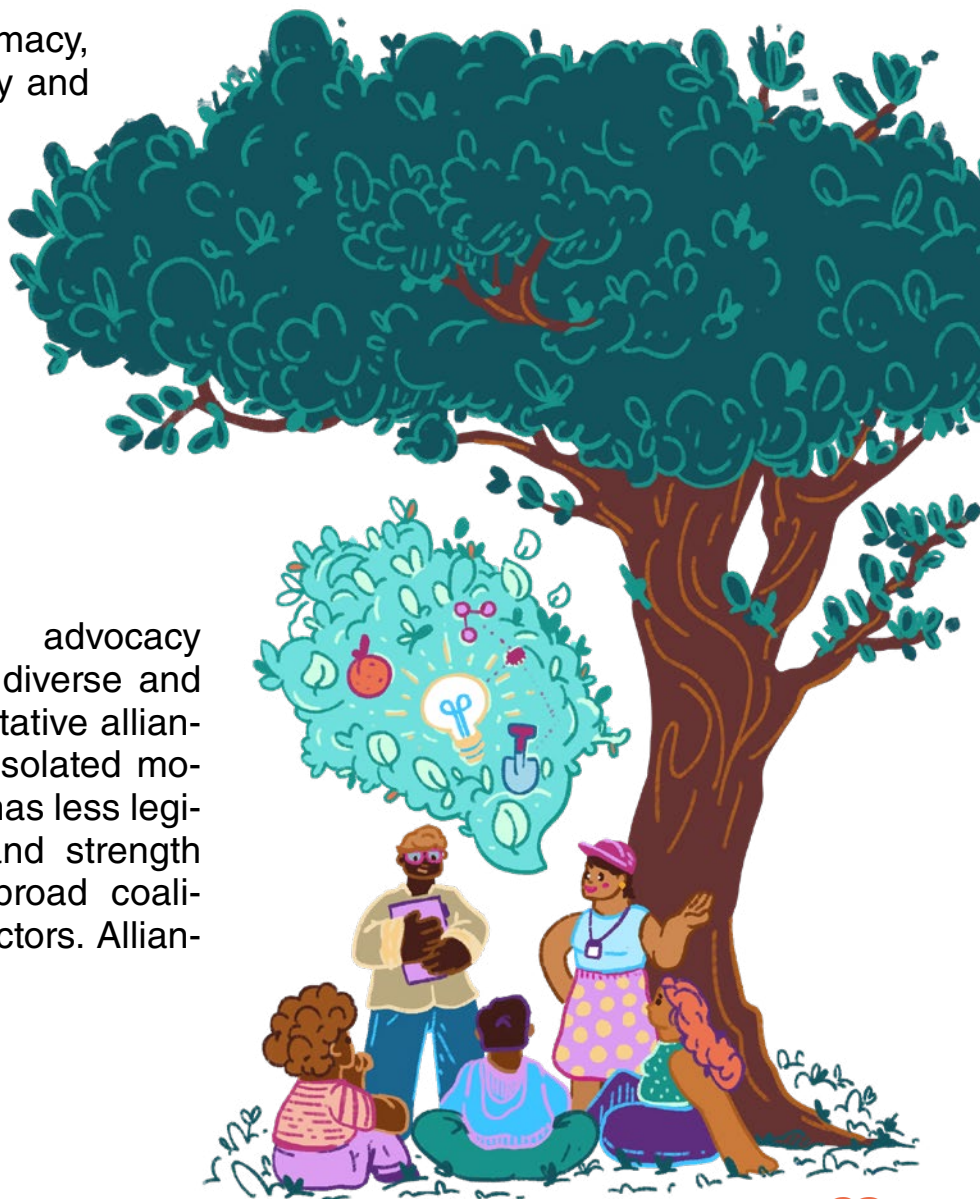
Informal channels include personal contacts, social media, citizen diplomacy, or indirect influence through opinion leaders. While formal

channels provide legitimacy, informal ones offer agility and access to less structured arenas of power. Effective advocacy requires navigating not only visible institutional structures, but also the less visible dynamics of power.

Build coalitions.



Effective advocacy requires diverse and representative alliances. An isolated movement has less legitimacy and strength than a broad coalition of actors. Allian-



ces expand resources, legitimacy, and social reach, while also distributing responsibilities.

At the same time, building coalitions among organizations requires managing internal differences and coordinating interests, spokespersons, and commitments in order to sustain unity throughout the process.

Conduct continuous monitoring and evaluation.



All advocacy efforts should include ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This involves measuring concrete results (for example, asking questions such as: Was the aqueduct built? Did the price of inputs change?) and learning from mistakes. Monitoring makes it possible to adjust the strategy, document progress, and remain accountable to allies and communities, while evaluation strengthens the sustainability of the process and the confidence of funders and partners.

4

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5

GETTING STARTED: practical guide for facilitating the workshop

General information about the workshop

Purpose of the workshop

To enable young people to understand what political advocacy is, identify how they can influence decisions that affect their rural communities, and acquire practical tools to design proposals that transform their reality.



Total recommended duration

3 hours, 30 minutes



Number of participants

Between 15 and 30 young people from rural areas.

Before beginning the workshop, create an atmosphere of trust and openness. Ensure that the physical space is welcoming: have flip charts, markers, cards, and tape readily available and, if possible, use soft background music to welcome participants.

Remember that the objective of the workshop is to inspire and empower those taking part, not to evaluate their knowledge. Your role as the facilitator is to support a process of collective discovery rather than deliver a traditional lecture. Introduce yourself courteously, explain the workshop agenda, and provide important logistical

Overall structure of the workshop

Block 1

The power to create change

Duration



20 minutes

Purpose: Break the ice, motivate participants, and connect the concept of advocacy with their everyday lives.

Block 2

Exploring key concepts

Duration



40 minutes

Purpose: Introduce the basic concepts of political advocacy and support participants in defining a concrete advocacy objective in their own context, which they will work on throughout the workshop.

Block 3

Planning my advocacy

Duration



60 minutes

Purpose: Use strategic tools to plan effective advocacy. In this block, participants will analyze the context surrounding their issue through two key techniques: stakeholder mapping and an analysis of the current context or situation. By the end, they will understand who holds influence over their issue and what external conditions may affect their strategy for change.

Block 4

Designing my advocacy strategy

Duration



60 minutes

Design a specific advocacy plan through a strategy aimed at achieving the proposed change. This involves identifying clear objectives, tactics, communication channels, and alliances by integrating everything learned in the previous blocks.

Block 5

Closing: putting the decalogue into action

Duration



30 minutes

Purpose: Close the workshop by consolidating learning around the ethical and practical principles of political advocacy. The aim is for young participants to recognize that they have already applied several of these principles during the workshop and to commit to continuing to advocate in their communities in an ethical, persistent, and collaborative manner.

Content guide for the workshop

The following script will help you develop each block of the workshop.

Block 1

The power to change things

Duration



20 minutes

Purpose: Break the ice, motivate participants, and connect the concept of advocacy with their everyday lives.

1.1. Intro (5 minutes)

At the beginning of the workshop, introduce yourself and explain the agenda, along with all relevant logistical information, such as the availability of childcare services, the location of emergency exits and restrooms, and the schedule for breaks.

1.2. Block 1 activity: “If I had the power...” (10 minutes)

Each participant should complete the following sentence on a card, which has been previously displayed on a flip chart:

“If I had the power, I would change...”

Give each participant a card to complete the sentence. Then ask each person to introduce themselves, read their full sentence aloud—“If I

had the power, I would change...”—and place their card on the flip chart below the opening phrase.

Examples of ways to complete the sentence “If I had the power...”

“...I would change the prices of the vegetables I sell.”

“...I would modify agricultural education programs.”

1.3. Closing (5 minutos)

Conclude with a brief reflection on how the tools provided in this workshop can help transform reality. Close the activity with a short motivating statement such as: “You have just expressed that you would like to have the power to change many things. Political advocacy is precisely about that: influencing decisions in order to bring about change.”

Block 2

Exploration of key concepts

Duration



40 minutes

Purpose: Introduce the basic concepts of political advocacy and support participants in defining a concrete advocacy objective in their own context, which they will work on during the workshop.

2.1. Lecture segment (15 minutes)

Use simple examples to clearly present the following concepts.

Concept of political advocacy. Clarify that the term “political” is not limited to party politics, and that political action can take place within communities, associations, cooperatives, schools, and other local spaces.

Then explain the different types of advocacy with examples.

- **Direct advocacy.** Direct communication with decision-makers (e.g., a meeting with the mayor or the local council).
- **Institutional advocacy.** Participation in formal or official spaces (public consultations, youth councils, town hall meetings, etc.).
- **Community advocacy.** Actions undertaken at the grassroots or community level (neighborhood mobilizations, community assemblies, and the organization of youth groups, among others).

- **Cultural advocacy.** Using culture and communication to shift mindsets (social media campaigns, art, community theater, messages on local radio, etc.).
- **Digital advocacy.** Using online platforms and social media to disseminate petitions and build support virtually.

Also explain the concepts of power and authority.

- **Power.** Emphasize that authority figures are not the only ones who hold power (the ability to influence or make something happen) and that a united community possesses collective power. Explain that, in advocacy processes, we can use our power (voice, evidence, and alliances) to achieve change.
- **Authority.** Explain the difference between authority and power and note that community leaders and respected elders may hold informal power. Both concepts are important when planning an advocacy strategy.

2.2. Block 2 activity: “Defining my advocacy objective” (20 minutes)

In this activity, participants will begin to define the type of advocacy they would like to pursue in their communities.

To do this, organize them into groups of 5 to 6 people and provide each group with a flip chart or several sheets of paper and markers so they can record their key ideas. Each group should identify a specific

problem or need (not a general one) in their environment that they would like to address or influence. Ideally, this should be a problem or need that directly affects young people in rural areas.



The following examples illustrate the difference between a general problem and a specific one.

General need or problem	Specific need or problem
Education must be improved	Agricultural technology training should be offered at the school in our community.
Our community must be improved	A community irrigation system needs to be installed to improve production in family gardens led by young people.
More opportunities are needed for young people.	A microcredit program is needed to support rural youth entrepreneurship in our municipality.

Once the situation or specific problem has been defined, ask each group to respond to the following questions:

1. What is the specific situation we want to change?

E.g.: “In our municipality there are no accessible financing programs for rural youth who want to start a business.”

2. What arguments will we use to request this change?
Participants should identify at least three reasons why it is necessary to address the problem.

Examples of arguments in the case of a microcredit program:

- Rural youth face high levels of unemployment and migration due to the lack of productive opportunities.
- Access to microcredit would allow young people to develop agricultural enterprises that provide income and economic autonomy.
- In other territories, microcredit programs have helped strengthen the local economy and encourage young people to remain in their communities.

3. What evidence or proof do we have (or could obtain) to support our request?

Examples of evidence:

- Testimonies from young people with business ideas who have not been able to access financing.
- Local or national data on youth unemployment or underemployment in rural areas.
- Data from similar programs implemented by NGOs or governments in other regions.
- Photographs of projects or prototypes of ventures that have stalled due to lack of capital.
- Official documents showing the absence of specific credit programs for rural youth in the municipality.

The more evidence a proposal gathers, the stronger it will be. Therefore, it should be based on data rather than opinions.

After 20 minutes of discussion, each group should briefly present its case: the problem it selected and a summary of its arguments and evidence. You may invite groups to post their flip charts or notes with their responses on the wall or board.

Closing (5 minutes)

Tell participants that they have already taken the first steps—two fundamental principles—of a successful advocacy campaign: clearly defining what they want to achieve and why it matters. In other words, they have clearly formulated a request (they know what they want to change) and supported it with evidence (they have arguments and proof).

Block 3

Planning my advocacy

Duration



1 hour

Purpose: Use strategic tools to plan effective advocacy. In this block, participants will analyze the environment surrounding their issue through two key techniques: stakeholder mapping and contextual analysis. By the end, they will understand who holds influence over their issue and what external conditions may affect their strategy for change.

Resources:

[Stakeholder mapping matrix](#)

[Stakeholder map](#)

[What to do with each type of stakeholder](#)

3.1. Lecture segment (20 minutes)

Begin by reminding the group of what they have achieved so far. You may say something like: We have already taken very important steps: we identified a problem we want to change and found arguments and evidence to support our cause... That is a major step forward!

Briefly introduce the new key concepts to be addressed in this block:

- **Citizen participation.** The exercise of our right to be involved in public affairs. Advocacy is one form of citizen participation.
- **Stakeholder mapping.** A tool used to identify who is who in relation to our issue. Through stakeholder mapping, we determine who has influence on the issue (authorities, leaders, organizations, the community, etc.) and what position they might take (support, opposition, or undecided).

- **Situation analysis.** A review of what is happening in the current context that may affect our cause. This includes recent events and political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and institutional changes in the local environment or in the country that may represent an opportunity or an obstacle for our advocacy efforts.
- **Context analysis (structural).** A broader analysis that complements situational analysis, aimed at identifying the deeper or structural causes of the problem and the socio-cultural conditions of the territory.

Explain that both analyses (situational and contextual) help identify the best moment and the best way to act, and that advocating at the right time can make the difference between success and failure.

3.2. Block 3 activity: “Stakeholder mapping and situational analysis” (30 minutes)

Explain that this activity has two complementary parts: the first is stakeholder mapping, which will take 25 minutes, and the second is a brief reflection on the situational context, which will take 15 minutes. Participants will continue working on the problem each group defined in the previous block.

Part A. Stakeholder mapping

Within 25 minutes, each group should identify and classify the individuals, groups, or institutions related to their issue by following these steps

Step 1. Identifying key stakeholders. Ask groups to prepare a list of all stakeholders involved in or affected by the issue they selected. These may include authorities (mayor's offices, municipal councils, universities, ministries, etc.) as well as community groups (parents, associations, local businesses, NGOs, youth leaders, etc.). They may also consider indirect actors, such as local media outlets or influential figures on social media.

Step 2. Classification according to influence and position. Once the lists are prepared, provide each group with the stakeholder mapping matrix (included in the "Resources" section of this guide) so they can classify stakeholders according to their level of influence (high, low, or none) and their position (ally, undecided, opponent) in relation to their demand. They should then write the names of those actors in the corresponding quadrant of the stakeholder map. For example, a "high-influence ally" (someone who supports the cause and has power) should be placed in the upper right corner. A "high-influence opponent" (against the cause and with power) should be placed in the upper left corner. A local entrepreneur who supports the cause but has little power (a low-influence ally) could be placed in the lower right corner.

Step 3. Definition of strategies according to the type of stakeholder. Once most key stakeholders have been placed in the matrix, each group should consider what advocacy actions would be appropriate for each type of stakeholder identified. Before completing this step, remind groups to prioritize allies, opponents, and undecided actors with high influence. Each group should also note what actions should be taken with each stakeholder (see "What to do with each type of stakeholder?" in the "Resources" section).

Step 4. Completion of mapping. After 25 minutes, groups should have completed their matrix and identified some actions related to each stakeholder.

Part B. Situational and contextual analysis

Within 10 minutes, each group should briefly reflect on the timing and conditions in which they intend to advocate. This complements the “who” with the “when and in what context.” The following questions can help guide the analysis.

Situational questions (short term, current situation):

- What recent events are affecting our community or territory in relation to our issue (floods, protests, budget cuts, epidemics, upcoming local elections, etc.)?
- What current decisions, debates, or conflicts at the municipal, provincial, or national level relate to this issue (e.g., a debate on a land law or a regional water conflict)?
- What topics are currently being discussed in our environment or in the media that are connected to our cause (youth unemployment, climate change, migration, etc.)?
- What opportunities exist for presenting our proposal (a public consultation, the preparation of the local government’s annual plan and budget, a visit from an authority, the celebration of a relevant day related to the issue, etc.)?
- What current risks or resistance might hinder the change we are seeking (a political crisis, organized opposition from certain sectors, a recent scandal that diverts attention, etc.)?

Context questions (medium- or long-term, root causes). If time allows and groups progress quickly, invite them to reflect on deeper contextual factors through the following questions:

- What historical or structural problems lie behind this situation (poverty, exclusion of young people, concentration of resources in cities, discrimination against rural areas, etc.)?
- How do factors such as local culture, traditions, education levels, and the local economy influence this issue?
- What policies, laws, or institutions address this problem? Do they work well, or are there gaps?
- What recent social or economic changes may explain the current situation (youth migration to cities, fewer community leaders, the emergence of a new monoculture affecting water resources, etc.)?

Note: There may not be enough time to answer all these questions in detail. The important thing is to discuss at least the most immediate questions related to the current situation.

Plenary and closing (10 minutes)

Ask each group to share the most important insights they discovered during this exercise. Thank participants for the effort involved in completing such a dense block. They should now have a much clearer understanding of who their allies are, what obstacles they must overcome, and what the best timing and approach may be for taking action.

Before closing the block, emphasize two or three key lessons learned that connect theory with practice. You may mention these two examples:

1. Stakeholder mapping helps determine who to approach first, who can be brought in as an ally, who should be monitored, or who needs to be persuaded (this applies the concept of focusing efforts on influential actors, which is essential in advocacy).
2. Situational or contextual analysis helps identify the right moment to act and prepare for possible obstacles (this applies the idea of determining the most appropriate moment to act).



**A BREAK IS RECOMMENDED
BEFORE BEGINNING BLOCK 4.**

Block 4

Designing our advocacy strategy

Duration



1 hour

Purpose: Design a specific advocacy plan through a strategy aimed at achieving the proposed change. This involves identifying clear objectives, tactics, communication channels, and alliances by integrating everything learned in the previous blocks.

Resources:

[Advocacy plan template](#)

4.1. Lecture segment (10 minutes)

Review what participants learned in the previous exercises; for example, you may note that by this point they have taken several crucial steps:

- First, they identified a problem they wanted to change and defined it clearly (dream/objective);
- Then, they gathered reasons and evidence explaining why that change is needed (arguments);
- Next, they analyzed who influences this issue, who may support them, and who may oppose them (stakeholder mapping); and
- Finally, they reflected on the right timing and the conditions surrounding their cause (context and situational analysis).

Explain that every advocacy strategy combines three fundamental elements:

An objective. This is the specific outcome to be achieved within a defined timeframe; for example, having the local government approve a USD 5,000 budget to implement a micro-credit program for youth agricultural enterprises starting next year.

Tactics or actions. These are the specific activities aimed at achieving the objective, such as meetings with authorities, social media campaigns, alliances, public events, formal petitions, etc. In this dimension, the forms of advocacy previously discussed (direct, institutional, community, cultural, and digital) are applied. Often, a strong strategy combines several of them; for example, direct advocacy through a meeting with the mayor's office or participation in a Municipal Council session; community advocacy by organizing a local march; and digital advocacy by promoting the initiative through Facebook and WhatsApp.

The necessary resources. These are the means available or required to carry out the tactics: the people involved, time, funding, materials, contacts, knowledge, and external support.

These three elements (objective, tactics, and resources) are like the legs of a table: if one fails, the table becomes unstable. Therefore, they must be defined together to ensure a successful strategy.

Review the concepts previously studied and integrate them:

- The five types of advocacy (direct, institutional, community, cultural, and digital) represent possible tactics. A strong strategy may use several types of advocacy.

- Situation analysis helps determine when and where those tactics should be applied.
- Stakeholder mapping shows who should be approached first and what strategy should be used with each actor.
- Arguments and evidence provide the substance for the tactics.

4.2. Block 4 activity: “Designing the advocacy plan” (40 minutes)

Provide each group with the advocacy plan template containing the guiding questions numbered from 1 to 7 (available in the “Resources” section). The exercise consists of completing the template, discussing the responses as a group, and then preparing a short and ideally creative presentation. The template includes the following questions (read them aloud to ensure everyone understands them):

- What do we want to change? This is the specific and measurable objective of the advocacy effort, ideally including a timeframe.
- Who do we need to persuade or involve? These are the key actors on whom the strategy will focus: authorities, potential allies, community groups, etc.
- What evidence or arguments do we have? This is a summary of the main evidence to be used for persuasion: data, stories, testimonies, photographs, among others.

- What strategy will we use? These are the main lines of action or tactics, such as a public campaign, direct negotiation, strategic alliances, legal actions, etc.
- What channels will we use to communicate it? These are the means for outreach or communication: face-to-face meetings, local radio, Facebook, WhatsApp, the press, theater, fairs, etc.
- Who can we partner with? These are the allies that can be formally or informally involved: other organizations, community leaders, churches, schools, NGOs, youth groups, etc.
- How will we know we are making progress? These are indicators or intermediate milestones used to evaluate progress; for example, acknowledgment by the Municipal Council, collecting 500 signatures, or receiving a formal commitment from the mayor.

Groups then work together to complete the plan. Each group discusses and fills out the template. It is recommended that groups follow the order of the questions, as they are organized logically; however, if they find a question difficult to answer, they may skip it and return to it later.

It is also advisable to circulate among the groups, especially to verify that:

- **The objective has been clearly defined.** If it remains too general, help the group make it more specific and establish a timeframe.

- **The group is focusing on the appropriate actors** (those with influence).
- **The strongest available evidence has been identified.**
- **Creativity is encouraged when defining tactics and communication channels.** A variety of ideas should be considered, but they should remain feasible.
- **For progress indicators, groups should consider how partial success will be measured.** A good indicator is a milestone achieved (collecting a certain number of signatures, securing a meeting with a key official, etc.).

Each group will have three minutes to present its plan (the time may be adjusted depending on the number of groups).

Closing

To build participants' confidence, express your satisfaction with the work accomplished. Tell them: Congratulations! In just a few hours, you have moved from an idea to a structured plan. This is exactly what real advocacy groups do to influence policies.

If you have any type of recognition available—such as symbolic certificates, pins, or stickers—this is a good moment to distribute them.

Block 5

Closing: the decalogue in action

Duration



30 minutes

Purpose: Close the workshop by consolidating learning around the ethical and practical principles of political advocacy. The aim is for young participants to recognize that they have already applied several of these principles during the workshop and to commit to continuing to advocate in their communities in an ethical, persistent, and collaborative manner.

Resources:

[Summary of the Decalogue of Advocacy](#)

5.1. Introduction and connection with the journey (10 minutes)

The facilitator opens the block with a brief guided conversation to connect the path traveled with the final objective. You may say something like:

“Today, without even realizing it, we completed almost all the steps involved in political advocacy. We started by identifying what we want to change, then we analyzed the problem, gathered arguments, identified key actors, considered strategies, and discussed how to move forward. Now I would like to show you something: a summary of everything we have already done—what many people use as a guide for their efforts to create change. It is called the Advocacy Decalogue.”

Provide participants with a QR code or a link so they can download the Decalogue of Advocacy (10 principles). You may also distribute a printed copy or present it on a flip chart.

5.2. Lecture segment: the meaning of the Decalogue (10 minutes)

The facilitator briefly explains that the decalogue is not a list of commandments, but rather a systematization of practical lessons for acting strategically.

Each time a principle is mentioned, the facilitator should link it to a part of the workshop.

Principle of the decalogue	Applied in the workshop when:
Use arguments, not money, to persuade.	We develop arguments and present evidence to support our proposals.
Define your petition.	We defined the problem and identified what we wanted to change.
Document, document, document	We gather data, testimonies, or other forms of evidence.
Understand the right moment for political advocacy.	We analyze the current situation and the broader context
Choose the right strategy	We design the action plan (in the previous block).
Use the media strategically.	We consider how to communicate our cause.
Focus your efforts on influential actors.	We carry out a stakeholder mapping.
Use formal and informal channels	We discuss where and with whom to take action.
Build coalitions	We define who to partner with.
Conduct evaluations and monitoring.	We verify that our ideas are realistic.

5.3. Block 5 activity: “My advocacy experience”

Finally, invite all participants to reflect on the principles of the decalogue that were applied and ask them to make a personal advocacy commitment. Each participant should write a sentence on a card beginning with:

**“ In my community, I commit
to advocating for... ”**

After completing the sentence, ask participants to place their cards on a mural, a wall, or a flip chart. If the space is permanent (for example, if the workshop is part of a broader training process), the cards can remain displayed for the community or the youth center as a sign of their commitments. Otherwise, participants are encouraged to take their cards home and place them somewhere visible (on a mirror, a wall, etc.) as a personal reminder of what they learned and committed to do.

Close the workshop with a round of applause and thank participants for their participation.