



Policy Influence

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HOW TO INFLUENCE POLICY FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS?

The first steps you need to take

FIRST STEPS AND QUESTIONS

- 1 | What is the problem?
- 2 | What is the context of the problem?
- 3 | Who are the stakeholders?
- 4 | What is your objective?
- 5 | Communication strategy
- 6 | Things to keep in mind

1 | What is the problem?

When you want to influence policy, you need to **start with the reason why** you want to do this. Therefore, you should first gain a deeper insight in the problem.

'Five why's' method:

You can gain more insight by asking several times (max. 5) why it matters to influence policy on a certain aspect.

E.g.: You want to introduce 'best practices' on interdisciplinary cooperation for road traffic victims

1. Why does this matter? Professionals from different disciplines need to work more together.
2. Why 1? Road victims encounter professionals from different disciplines. Research showed us that there is a lack of communication or referral between these professionals.
3. Why 2? The lack of communication or referral often leads to unfulfilled needs of road victims.
4. Why 3? The help questions of road victims are complex. They need help on different aspects which are intertwined. Professionals can only solve complex help questions through complementing their knowledge with those of others. This can only be achieved through interdisciplinary cooperation.

2 | What is the context of the problem?

The context influences the complexity of the problem and consequently the chance to affect policy.

Insight in the context can therefore be necessary.

By answering the five following questions you can develop an analysis of the context of the problem.

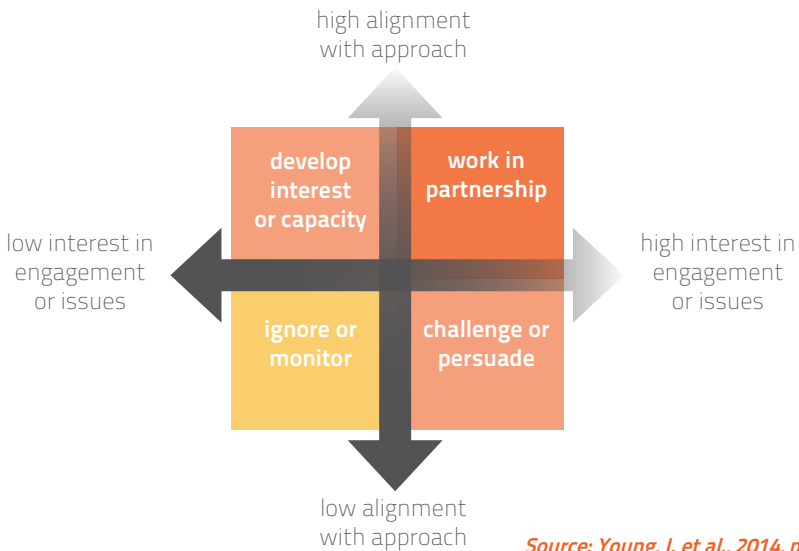
The five questions:

1. Which branch of government can make change happen?
E.g. parliament, civil services, ...
2. Where and how does a political debate take place?
3. What is the role of informal politics?
4. What is the capacity to make change happen?
5. Which influence can external forces have on a potential change?

3 | Who are the stakeholders?

You cannot influence policy alone. It is important to map the people or organisations which have an interest in the problem.

1. The first step is making a list.
2. The second step is determining your actions towards each stakeholder. Placing them in a 2x2 matrix can help. The **matrix** is composed of the alignment with the approach and the interest or engagement in the issue. By defining whether the alignment and interest is high or low, you can determine the right action.



3. The third step is to determine the outcomes these contacts should have. E.g. which change you would expect, like and love to see due to the contacts.

4 | What is your objective?

After defining the problem, the context and the stakeholders, you need to identify the objective.

Together they are the basis of your policy influence strategy. To identify your objective, you should clarify the following matters:

- What is the importance of the change?
- Who will be affected by it?
- What is necessary for the change to happen?
- What is your relation towards others who want the same change?

Together the answers will lead you to your objective.

To reach the objective, you might need help from others or enablers. They are called positive forces. But there are also negative forces. These are opposed to the change that you want. By creating a **force field analysis** (see below) you can prepare yourself for possible points of conflict.

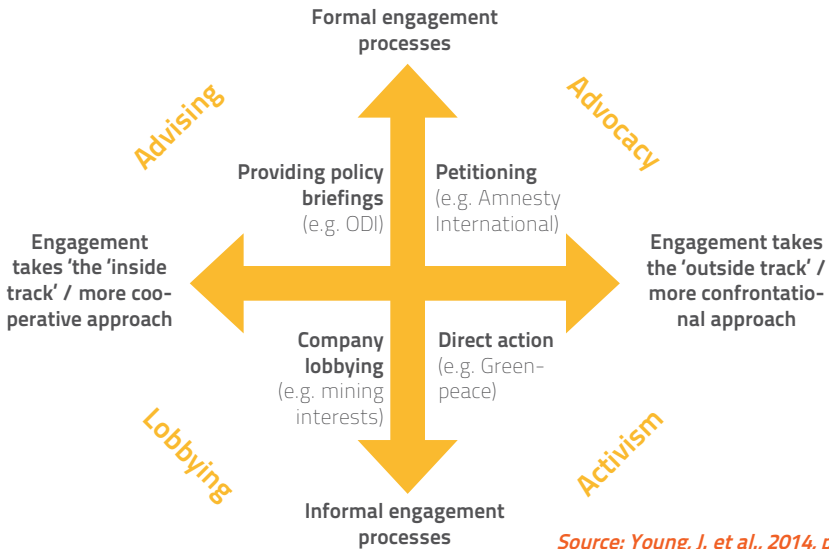


5| Communication strategy

A proper communication strategy might **encourage the right people or organisations** to strive for the same policy change.

By answering the following two questions and consulting the matrix below, you can define which method you should use:

- Do you have a direct interaction or connection with the stakeholder (inside track) or do you have to reach them through a large number of individuals or debate (outside track)?
- Do the stakeholders have an informal or formal engagement in the changing process?



In case of a complex problem, you should start with brokering knowledge and relationships between and among the stakeholders. The focus here is **developing capacity and improving the quality of the debate**.

You can achieve this through:

- Translating the content of the problem to the knowledge of your audience and pushing the information to them through the existing channels.
- Linking experts to a debate on the problem so they can give advice.
- Introducing people to each other in order to establish recognition for the different credible voices in a debate.

6| Things to keep in mind

- Specify which person within an organisation has the right degree of influence or interest.
- Some stakeholders will have to be immediately involved and others not. Make this distinction and involve them as soon as possible, taking into account that developing relationships can take a considerable time.
- Take existing connections, networks, alliances and loyalties into account.
- Coalitions can be crucial. Start with common values and keep the objective as broad as possible.
- Select a team of people with different competences. A combination of political enablers, storytellers, networkers and thinkers/engineers is ideal.
- Your organisation should try to be the foremost authority on the problem. Make sure that policymakers know this and foster a relationship with the relevant department.
- Make your organisation also known among journalists to establish yourself as an authority or organisation with an important message.
- A positive approach is important. It is better to respond to the policy in a constructive way, rather than to criticise it.
- Adjust your approach to the people you would like to influence and be aware of the agenda of the current government.
- Timing is key! E.g. monitor the evolution of the political process on the problem and respond quickly after an important policy announcement.
- Stories are a powerful tool. They are much easier to understand than statistics or a list of facts. When hearing a story, the audience will let its walls down and be more susceptible to influences.
- When you integrate storytelling in your strategy, you can use vibrant imagery or irony or metaphors to shake your audience out of the mundane.

References

The information given in this brochure is a summary of the documents listed below. The brochure is intended as a practical tool for self-help groups who want to influence policy. It should not be seen as an academic publication. Therefore, we decided to remove all academic references from the text, except for those for images directly drawn from the specific documents.

Karen Keller International (s.d.). Stories Are Powerful Tools Of Influence [WWW] Karen Keller International: <https://www.karen-keller.com/blog/stories-are-powerful-tools-influence> [08/01/2018]

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Project partners

**Moderator vzw, Forum for restorative justice and mediation
Leuven Institute of Criminology, University of Leuven
Rondpunt vzw, Centre of expertise and ally after a road traffic crash**

Associate partners

**Victim Support Europe
European Federation of Road Traffic Victims
European Forum for Restorative Justice**

**Information on the project:
www.rondpunt.be**

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