

# Module 3



## Advocacy

### Module at a Glance

#### Overview

This module familiarizes child protection staff with the main elements of developing an advocacy strategy as well as a plan for its implementation. Through advocacy, child protection staff can influence relevant actors to advance the rights, well-being and protection of children.

This module does not explicitly deal with advocacy within the mission since this is covered in Module 5 on mainstreaming. However, child protection staff can apply the techniques presented in this module to any type of advocacy.

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Create SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) advocacy objectives
- Select a target audience
- Compose strong advocacy messages
- Assess resources for advocacy

## Module Outline

**Duration: 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes)**

<b>The Module</b>	
Intro slides	Slides 1-2
SMART advocacy objectives	Slides 3-10
Target audience	Slides 11-13
Composing strong advocacy messages	Slides 14-18
Advocacy resources	Slides 19-23
<b>Learning Activities</b>	
Learning Activity 3.1 Quiz: identifying SMART advocacy objectives	Page 10
Learning Activity 3.2 Group exercise: stakeholder analysis	Page 15
Learning Activity 3.3 Group exercise: creating advocacy messages	Page 21
Learning Activity 3.4 Group discussion: leveraging the UN Security Council CAAC agenda	Page 26

## The Module



*This module focuses on advocacy as a core function of your work. For advocacy to succeed it needs to be well planned and specific to the context. In this module, we will focus mainly on advocacy planning and how to develop advocacy approaches that are tailored to your mission context.*

### Slide 1: Introduction to Module 3 - Advocacy



## Module 3: ADVOCACY



**Slide 2: Learning objectives**

## Learning objectives

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Create SMART advocacy objectives
- Select a target audience
- Compose advocacy messages
- Assess resources for advocacy



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2

- The learning objectives of this module aim to strengthen your capacities and skills for preparing the key elements of an advocacy plan. At the end of this module, you will be able to:
  - Create advocacy objectives that are SMART, i.e., specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
  - Select a target audience for your advocacy
  - Compose strong advocacy messages for different audiences and occasions
  - Assess resources to support your advocacy efforts



*Ask learners to define advocacy. What is advocacy?*

- In their answers, look for the following elements:
  - Advocacy is the process of influencing others
  - Advocacy is an approach to bring about change
  - Advocacy can take many forms and employs a diverse set of methods (e.g., public vs. private, direct vs. indirect, multilateral vs. unilateral)

## Learning Outcome 3.1

### SMART advocacy objectives

#### Slide 3: What is advocacy (in the context of child protection)

## What is advocacy?

*“The process of influencing the host State’s government, armed groups, UN entities, NGOs, donors and other actors to support and implement actions to advance the rights, well-being and protection of children.”*

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3

- In general, advocacy describes a process of influencing an actor to change their attitude or behaviour. For child protection staff, advocacy is the process of influencing the host State’s government, armed groups, United Nations entities, NGOs, donors and other actors to support and implement actions to advance the rights, well-being and protection of children. Since you are not directly in charge of policies or programmes, it is your effectiveness in influencing others to make changes that ultimately determines your success.



*Note that this module deals with advocacy with external actors. Child protection staff also conduct advocacy within the mission as part of their mainstreaming efforts. This is further discussed in Module 5 (Mainstreaming). Some of the methods discussed in this module are also relevant for in-mission advocacy.*

## Slide 4: Advocacy challenges

## Advocacy challenges

- Lack of coordination
- Lack of access
- Lack of political leverage
- Changing conflict dynamics
- Limited ability to demonstrate direct impact



*Ask learners what they consider to be the major challenges for advocacy in their mission context and to share some of their experiences.*

- You can point to some common challenges listed on the slide, including:
  - Lack of coordination in terms of coordinating advocacy strategies and messages with allies (e.g., within the mission, between HQ and field level, among partners)
  - Lack of access to advocacy targets due to legal, security, logistical or other constraints
  - Lack of political leverage, e.g., if the armed actor demonstrates a disregard for international laws and norms or their international reputation
  - Changing conflict dynamics, e.g., if there are constant changes in the leadership structures of the advocacy target
  - Limited ability to demonstrate direct impact because multiple actors are contributing towards progress on the same issue.



At the end of this discussion, ask learners how an advocacy strategy and plan can help them address some of these challenges? What are some of the main aspects their strategy should focus on?

### Slide 5: Elements of an advocacy strategy



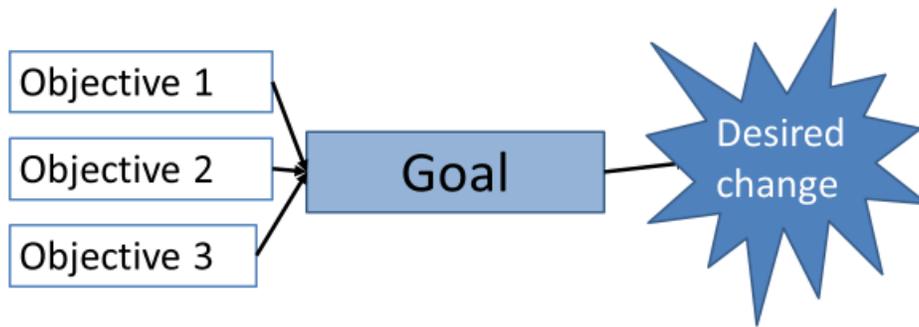
5

- An advocacy strategy provides you with a road map for your advocacy work. It helps keep you on track and ensures that your actions are well thought out, strategic and feasible. Some key elements of an advocacy strategy are:
  - Goals and objectives: What does the strategy aim to achieve?
  - Target audiences and allies: Whose actions does the strategy primarily aim to influence? Which actors can help support advocacy efforts?
  - Key messages: What are the core messages of the strategy? How can you adapt core messages to different audiences?
  - Activities: How can you engage your target audience? What are possible activities?
  - Resources: What resources (e.g., staff, funding, capacity) are needed? What resources are available to support advocacy plans?
  - Monitoring and evaluation: How and when can you assess whether the strategy is working?

- During this module we will go over each of these elements. While careful planning is essential, you always need to be prepared to make adjustments to these plans. Again, if we use the metaphor of the road map, there are many different ways to reach your goal or new advocacy avenues that may emerge.

**Slide 6: Goals and objectives**

## Goals and objectives



- It is critical for child protection staff to have clearly defined advocacy goals and objectives that drive their work. Your long-term goal is usually bold and ambitious, and unlikely to be fully achieved within the duration of your assignment.



*Ask learners for an example of a long-term goal. For example, your goal could be "to protect children from conflict-related violations in the mission area."*

- Your objectives are usually shorter term. They clearly define what changes in policies and practices you need to achieve to reach your long-term goal. These advocacy objectives may change over time so make sure to review and adapt them on a regular basis.



Ask learners for an example of a short-term objective. For example, an advocacy objective could be to influence the host government to adopt legislation to criminalize recruitment and use of children by armed forces/groups or to criminally prosecute alleged perpetrators of grave violations committed against children by armed forces/groups.

### Slide 7: SMART objectives

## SMART objectives

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound



A common mistake in advocacy is to use generic advocacy objectives, e.g., influence all actors to protect children's rights. Ask learners why choosing such broad objectives is not as useful.

- You should always try to use SMART advocacy objectives, which will allow you to be more focused. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. Let me explain what each of these terms mean:
  - Specific means that the objective clearly identifies a target audience and an action.
  - Measurable means that the objective defines criteria for measuring progress.
  - Achievable means that the objective can be realized given the current situation, time and resources.

- Relevant means that the objective is in line with the mandate of the mission and the child protection mandate.
- Time-bound means that the objective includes a timeframe for completion.
- Let's do an exercise together to demonstrate the difference between SMART and non-SMART objectives using some examples. As we are going through these examples, you should note that SMART criteria (e.g., time-bound, measurable, specific) ultimately make your advocacy objectives more achievable and thus help you demonstrate actual impact.

### Learning Activity 3.1

Quiz: identifying SMART advocacy objectives



*This activity enables learners to recognize SMART objectives and shows how they can result in more focused actions.*

**TIME:** 30 minutes

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- For each example, ask the group to decide whether the stated objective is SMART or not. Then ask a learner to go over the SMART criteria to explain why they believe the objective is SMART/not SMART.

## Slide 8: Example 1. Is this objective SMART?

## EXAMPLE 1: Is this objective SMART?

- Influence parties to conflict to end recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

- **S**pecific?
- **M**easurable?
- **A**chievable?
- **R**elevant?
- **T**ime-bound?

ANSWER KEY (Example 1)

- No, this objective is not specific, measurable and time bound.
  - **Specific:** No, it should clarify whether “parties to conflict” means all parties or only a few specific ones. It could also be more specific on the action associated with this objective, i.e., whether this advocacy objective is tied to the development and/or implementation of an action plan and/or other commitments.
  - **Measurable:** No, because it does not have a specific target and end date. It also depends on the ability of monitors to verify compliance.
  - **Time-bound:** No, it does not set a date of completion.
  - **Achievable:** Yes, possibly.
  - **Relevant:** Yes, ending recruitment and use of children in armed conflict is a priority.

## Slide 9: Example 2, Is this objective SMART?

## EXAMPLE 2: Is this objective SMART?

- By the end of year 2, influence the host government’s Ministry of Justice to adopt a new law to protect schools from being used for military purposes, in accordance with the Safe School Declaration Guidelines.

- **S**pecific?
- **M**easurable?
- **A**chievable?
- **R**elevant?
- **T**ime-bound?

ANSWER KEY (Example 2)

- Yes, this objective is SMART.
  - **Specific:** Yes, it specifies the proposed target audience and action (i.e., influencing the host government to adopt a new law...).
  - **Measurable:** Yes, it provides indicators for measuring progress (i.e., adoption of new law).
  - **Achievable:** Yes, possibly.
  - **Relevant:** Yes, ensuring children are safe from attacks in schools is relevant for the mission.
  - **Time-bound:** Yes, it sets a date for completion (i.e., by the end of year 1)

## Slide 10: Example 3, Is this objective SMART?

## EXAMPLE 3: Is this objective SMART?

- Convince donors to increase funding for psychosocial support services for child survivors of gender-based violence for country X.

- **S**pecific?
- **M**easurable?
- **A**chievable?
- **R**elevant?
- **T**ime-bound?



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10

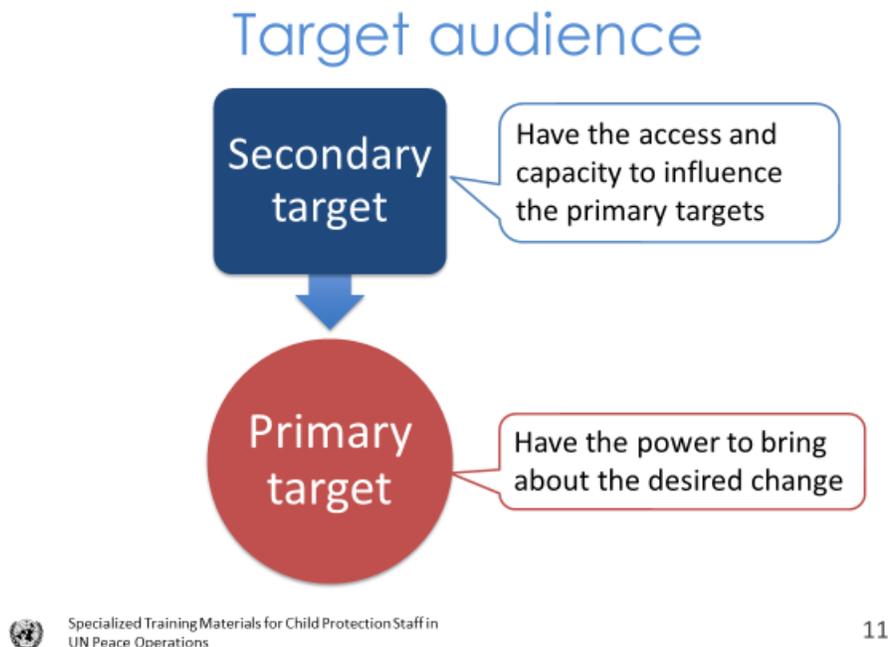
ANSWER KEY (Example 3)

- No, this objective is not SMART because it is neither measurable nor time bound.
  - **Measurable:** No, it does not state desired funding increase and by when.
  - **Time-bound:** No, it does not set a date for completion (e.g., during the country's upcoming donor conference).
  - **Specific:** Yes, it specifies the proposed target and action (i.e., convincing donors to increase funding). However, it could be more specific regarding the donors being targeted, e.g., the country's top three donors or explicitly naming them.
  - **Achievable:** Yes, possibly.
  - **Relevant:** Yes, advocating for more funding to support services for children in conflict zones is a priority.

## Learning Outcome 3.2

### Target audience

#### Slide 11: Target audience



- Now, we'll take a closer look at your advocacy targets, the actors you are trying to influence. As child protection staff, you should carefully select your advocacy targets, distinguishing between your primary and secondary audience.
  - Primary targets are entities that have the power to bring about the desired change, i.e., create or strengthen protection for children in your mission area. Examples of primary targets are government authorities, non-State armed groups, donors, etc.
  - In contrast, secondary targets are entities that don't have this power. However, they have the access and capacity needed to influence the primary targets or to act as messengers. Examples of secondary targets are NGOs, community leaders, diplomatic missions, etc.

## Learning Activity 3.2

Group exercise: stakeholder analysis

### Slide 12: Group exercise: stakeholder analysis

## Group exercise: stakeholder analysis

### Tasks:

- 1) Identify 2-3 influential actors that are primary targets for advocacy on children in armed conflict concerns in your mission context
- 2) Discuss the following questions for each of the actors:
  - a. What is the actor's level of interest in this issue?
  - b. Is the actor supportive/opposed to the issue(s)?
  - c. What are the actor's motivations and pressure points?
  - d. How can you access this actor?
  - e. Are there any potential risks that come with engaging with the target?



*Learners will recognize the value of choosing a small number of actors as primary advocacy targets and strengthen their skills in analysing these actors.*

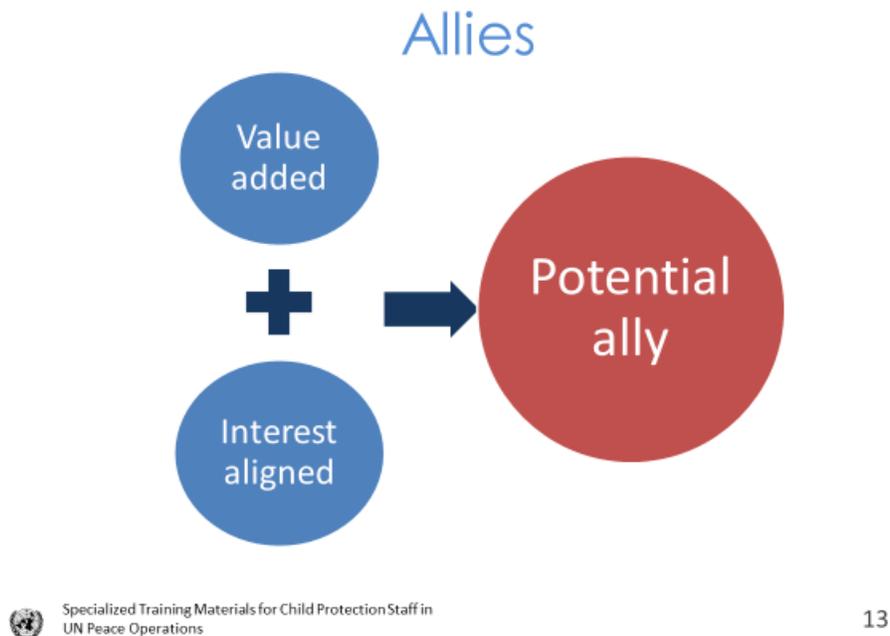
**TIME:** 40 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Divide learners into smaller groups of 5-6 people and give them 30 minutes to work on this stakeholder analysis. Then, ask each group to report back on their findings.
- Some key points to highlight to learners during the exercise and feedback session are:
  - Be open to engagement with all types of actors. You don't need to agree with an actor's views or behaviours to engage with them in order to advance child protection.

- Be creative in identifying advocacy avenues. Even if you are not able to directly advocate with a perpetrator, there may be others that can.
- Be curious and try to understand the actor's interests and motivations.
- Be honest about your own knowledge gaps about each actor and try to find out more through research and talking with your contacts.
- Use your findings to further refine your advocacy messages and strategies.

**Slide 13: Allies**



- You could consider having a small number of allies to support you in your advocacy efforts. There are two main questions you need to ask yourself before entering into this kind of relationship:
  1. What is the added value of involving this actor in my advocacy effort?
    - What do I gain by working with this actor on this advocacy effort?
    - Are there any associated costs of working with this actor?
    - Does the added value outweigh the costs of collaborating with this actor?



*Ask learners: What valuable contributions could an ally bring for advocacy? For example, the ally may have technical expertise or credibility with your primary target or offer additional resources or access to their contacts.*

2. Are our interests and values compatible? For example, it may be useful for you to collaborate with some community leaders to influence local government authorities that are wary of 'foreign influence'. However, a potential risk could arise if community leaders are themselves involved in serious human rights violations.

## Learning Outcome 3.3

### Composing strong advocacy messages

#### Slide 14: Advocacy messages

## Key advocacy message

- Include call for action
- Utilize monitoring and reporting work
- Build on language from key UN documents
  - ✓ Security Council mandates
  - ✓ SCWG-CAAC conclusions
  - ✓ 2017 DPKO/DFS/DPA Child Protection Policy
- Create a primary and secondary message

- A strong advocacy message should engage the target audience and specify what actions they should take in response (i.e., a call to action). Make sure that all your advocacy messages include a 'specific ask' of your target audience.
- As child protection staff, you should fully utilize the data from your monitoring and reporting work (in addition to other evidence you may have access to) to inform your advocacy messages.
- Make sure you build your advocacy messages on the core messages of foundational documents, such as Security Council mandates, SCWG-CAAC conclusions and the *2017 Child Protection Policy*. At a minimum, your messages should be consistent with the core messages of these key United Nations sources.
- Finally, you should create an advocacy message for all target audiences (i.e., primary message) and messages that are tailored to specific target audiences (i.e., secondary messages). Let's look at the distinction between these two types of messages in more detail.

## Slide 15: Primary message

## Primary advocacy message

### For all audiences:

- 1) Start with a compelling statement
- 2) Give evidence of the problem
- 3) State the desired change



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15

- The primary message should be simple, direct and appeal to your target audience as well as a broader audience. You can use this primary message for different types of occasions, such as public events, press conferences or general briefings.
- To create the primary message, you can follow these three steps:
  - 1) **Start with a compelling statement** to get the attention of your audience.  
*Example: Armed forces and groups must release children without delay!*
  - 2) **Give evidence of the problem**, including facts, statistics or stories to support your main point.  
*Example: The United Nations documented X cases of forcible child recruitment in province A, B and C in the last 6 months. Armed force A conducted more than half of the recruitments and armed group B conducted the others. Documented evidence by the United Nations shows that both groups are using children as combatants, messengers, informants and cooks...*
  - 3) **State the desired change** or call to action  
*Example: All armed forces and groups should immediately release all children and work with the United Nations to develop action plans for ceasing all future recruitment of children.*

- Ideally, you would give an example of a primary advocacy message that child protection staff are already using in their mission context. You could retrieve these from recent press releases or briefings.

**Slide 16: Secondary message**

## Secondary advocacy message

For specific target audience:

- 1) Start with a statement that captures the audience’s particular interests
- 2) Give evidence of the specific problem(s) and how it concerns the audience
- 3) Make a request to the audience



- The secondary message is more specific since it aims to influence a particular target audience. You should prepare secondary messages for all actors that you consider as a primary target audience, as well as other important stakeholders. You are likely to use these messages in your bilateral meetings with these actors.
- The secondary message should be consistent with your primary message but should include more details. Here are three steps to help you create a secondary advocacy message:

- 1) **Start with a statement that captures the audience’s particular interests.** (In this example, the primary target is the Government of a country experiencing armed conflict)

*The Government Armed Forces are on track to have their name removed from the annex of the Secretary-General’s report.*

- 2) **Give evidence of specific problem(s) and how it concerns the audience.**

*The recent signing of the action plan is an important step in this direction. However, the United Nations has verified X cases of recruitment of children in recruitment centres in province A in the last 6 months.*

### 3) Make a request to the audience.

*The Government must strengthen the armed forces' screening and documentation procedures to ensure that no further child recruitment takes place.*

## Learning Activity 3.3

Group exercise: creating advocacy messages



*Learners will look at how to create a key message for their top advocacy targets in their mission context.*

**TIME:** 30 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Ask learners to return to the smaller groups they worked in earlier for the stakeholder analysis. Give them 20 minutes to work on the two tasks listed on the slide (see below). Then, ask each group to report back on their findings.
  - Option: You could give groups the option of doing a short role play where one member poses as a primary advocacy target and another delivers the advocacy message directly to him/her. The scenario would be for the two parties to have a pre-planned bilateral meeting.
- Some key points to highlight to learners during the exercise and feedback session are:
  - Related to task 1: Make sure that learners follow the format and have a clear statement, supporting evidence, and a specific request for their target audience.
  - Related to task 2: During the debrief, ask learners what they considered when making their decision on how to convey the message. Highlight how this can vary based on multiple factors, including the context in which they are operating, the primary target's perception of the United Nations, or whether their involvement is likely to increase the impact of the message (for example because they have an established relationship or know the target well). Remind learners to make sure that the messenger is comfortable talking with the target audience and is well prepared.

Slide 17: Group exercise: key message

## Group exercise: key message

Tasks:

1) Create a secondary message that is specific to your top advocacy target

- a) Start with a **statement** that captures the audience's particular interests
- b) Give **evidence** of specific problem(s) and how it concerns the audience
- c) Make a **request** to the audience

2) Determine whether you should convey these messages directly or through other actors



## Slide 18: Advocacy activities

## Advocacy activities

Consider:

- ✓ Timing
- ✓ Format
- ✓ Messenger
- ✓ Resources



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18

- Once you know your advocacy objectives, targets and messages, you can start thinking about your advocacy activities. You need to ask yourself how you can best convey your messages? This could include bilateral meetings, organized negotiations, media events, training sessions, published reports and awareness-raising campaigns.
- When planning your activities, consider:
  - Timing of the activity, possibly tying it to other events/occasions, e.g., visits of high-level United Nations officials; international days; release of United Nations reports.
  - Format or type of advocacy activity, e.g., whether the advocacy target is more likely to respond to a small private meeting or a large public event.
  - Messenger(s), e.g., whether to convey the message directly or through other actors.
  - Resources that are needed versus resources that are available for advocacy (e.g., staff, funding, capacity).

## Learning Outcome 3.4

### Advocacy resources

#### Slide 19: Advocacy resources

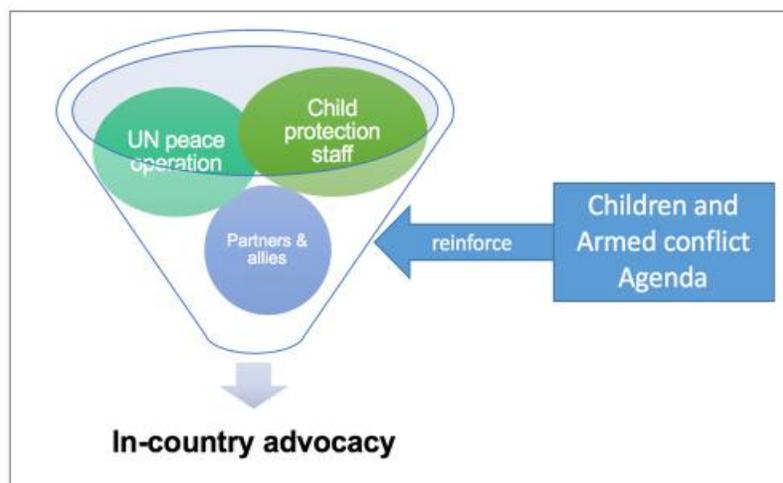


- Make sure that you have the resources needed to carry out your advocacy successfully. This means evaluating resources within the child protection team, as well as the resources of your United Nations peace operation and partners/allies. Also, make sure that you are not only looking at financial resources, but also at other types of resources such as political support or help with logistics.
- Ask learners how they would assess their own advocacy resources. For example, what aspects can they look at when evaluating the advocacy capacities of their own child protection team? Some pointers for possible responses are:
  - Child protection staff: number/location, level of expertise and experience, reputation and relationship with key actors, financial resources for advocacy
  - United Nations peace operation: support from mission leadership, logistical support, support from other mission components, links to other mission efforts

- Partners: financial/logistical support, relationships with advocacy targets
- Depending on the results of your resource assessment, you may need to scale back the effort, pool resources with other mission components, or work to develop additional resources. This would all be part of your advocacy plan.

**Slide 20: Leveraging the Security Council agenda on CAAC**

## Leveraging the UN Security Council agenda on CAAC



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20

- One advantage that you as child protection staff have, unlike most of the other mission components, is your direct link with the UN Security Council through the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda. This allows you to leverage a number of actors, mechanisms and tools associated with the CAAC agenda, notably the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict.

### Learning Activity 3.4

Group discussion: leveraging the UN Security Council CAAC agenda



Learners will identify ways to leverage the UN Security Council CAAC agenda to reinforce their in-country advocacy.

**TIME:** 20 minutes

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Discuss the question on the slide (below).
  - See Table 7 (Possible support mechanisms/actors/tools for in-country advocacy) in the *Handbook* (section 5.1) for suggestions on how child protection staff can use the UNSC CAAC agenda to support in-country advocacy.

**Slide 21: Group discussion (on leveraging the UN Security Council CAAC agenda)**

## Group discussion

- 1) How are you currently leveraging the UN Security Council CAAC agenda for advocacy purposes?
- 2) What is working well?
- 3) How can you better leverage the UN Security Council’s CAAC agenda for advocacy in your mission?



**Slide 22: Advocacy plan**

## Advocacy plan

- Put your strategy into action
- Clearly assign roles and responsibilities
- Determine timeframes
- Regularly review the plan and adjust as needed



- Once you have outlined all the core elements of your advocacy strategy – goals and objectives, targets, messages, activities and resources – it is time to put them into an advocacy plan. You can find a sample advocacy plan in the *Handbook* (section 5.3, table 10). Your plan should clearly assign staff member roles and responsibilities and timeframes for carrying out the planned activities. Also, make sure to regularly review your plan and make adjustments as needed.

Slide 23: Takeaways

## Takeaways

- For advocacy to succeed, it needs to be well planned
- Develop SMART objectives to focus your advocacy efforts
- Know your primary advocacy targets and create tailored messages for them
- Fully utilize your resources, including your direct link to the UNSC CAAC Agenda



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23



*Review these takeaways and ask participants about their own takeaways from this session.*