



# Introduction to advocacy

– think, strategize, plan and act

A facilitator's guide | **Eva Nilsson** | 12/2016

# Introduction

**Would you like to introduce** your partners to easy-to-use tools that help them to plan and kick off their advocacy? Would you like to support your colleagues and partners to improve their skills in planning and doing strategic advocacy? If your answer is yes on both counts, this facilitator's guide is for you.

**The aim of this guide** is to help you set up an introductory workshop on advocacy in any given country context. You don't need to be an advocate yourself and you don't need a detailed knowledge of the context in which your participants work. All you need to do is to support them in finding out what advocacy is, and how they can achieve definite outcomes through the proper planning, execution and monitoring of advocacy. Your participants are the experts in their particular context; your task is to bring out their expertise.

**This guide gives you** the flexibility to plan a workshop that suits your target group and the time you have available to hold a workshop. It can be altered to a half-day, one-day or two-day training course. It also allows you to include resource persons who know the context and its political culture and have experience of doing advocacy in that particular context.

**This guide has been developed** based on the experience gained from a number of advocacy training courses with civil society actors in Tanzania, Mozambique and Finland. During these training events simple but effective tools have been used by participants to bring out everyone's "advocacy mindset" and to support advocacy work of CSOs.

## Rationale

Simple, easy to learn for facilitators who have not done advocacy themselves. The idea is to enable people discover and teach themselves, not to be taught.

## Objectives

1. To give participants an introduction to **what advocacy is**
2. To give participants tools to **plan advocacy strategically**
3. To give people a space to **learn from each other**

## Methods

Participation, interaction, video, group work, learning through sharing

## Target group

CSOs that engage in or want to engage in advocacy

## Number of participants

2-25

## Duration

Ideally one to two working days. See annex 2 for timetable suggestions for one and two days. Please note that the duration of each part depends on the number of participants and their previous experience. As a facilitator, be flexible and prepared to alter the schedule also during the day itself. Some parts may take longer, others less, than you expected.

A half-day training course can be facilitated through introducing participants to only some parts and tools of the advocacy cycle.

# Topics to be covered

1. Welcome and introductions
2. What is advocacy?
3. Identifying problems and solutions
4. Analysis of social and political context
5. Defining an objective
6. Choosing a target group
7. Defining the message, approach and activities
8. Monitoring & Evaluation & Learning
9. Final wrap up and feedback

## Questions about the material?

Contact Kepa's Training Coordinators at [koulutus@kepa.fi](mailto:koulutus@kepa.fi).

## How to prepare?

Identify the participants you want to include and invite them. See model invitation in annex 1.

If you don't know your participants, ask them for information about the theme they work on and their previous experience of advocacy. Ask them in advance so that you have time to adjust your workshop accordingly.

If the participants are from different organisations, group them in advance according to the themes that they work on. Ideally, the participants/members of each group are from the same organization and/or work on the same topic. This allows them to understand the exercises better. Be flexible. Sometimes the groupings that you have arranged in advance do not make sense and you have to re-adjust them according to the ideas and wishes of the participants.

Make sure there is a big enough space for the workshop so that it not only has space for the participants but also allows for group work in different parts/corners of the space and for moving around for some "natural energisers". Make sure all participants are able to face the front and see the facilitator. The more "informal" the space, the better the discussion and brainstorming usually is. Remove big meeting tables that give the space a very formal atmosphere. If you want to show something online, make sure you will have an internet connection. If you want to show videos, make sure to have sound equipment.

Decide whether you need a resource person to support the workshop. A resource person can be very useful for talking about the political context (formal and informal politics of the country) or for sharing (successful) experiences of advocacy and campaigning. If your schedule is too tight or you cannot identify a person, find out if any or all of the participants have the same expertise. Finding a good resource person usually requires that you have a contact person in the country who can support you to identify one.

Obtain the stationary you will need: flipcharts, markers, post-it notes etc.

Print the **Advocacy Cycle** (annex 3) in at least A3 size and place it on a wall in the workshop space. It will enable re-check the structure of the course any time.

Print **Problem and Solution Trees** (annex 4) and the **Power Map** (annex 6) material. If you want to be more creative and draw them on a flipchart, do this ahead of the workshop so that time is not spent on this during the workshop.

Plan the timetable and schedule for breaks and lunch (see annex 2). Adjust your breaks according to the local context, e.g. in some cultures it is common to have a small breakfast at 10 am and lunch at 1 pm. In others people expect to have coffee on arrival and lunch at 12.

# Workshop outline

## 1. Welcome and introductions

**Aim:** To know each other and to have a clear idea of what will happen during the workshop

**Materials:** Slides 1-3

**STEP 1:** Ask the participants to present themselves, to say which organisation they come from and whether they have previous experience of advocacy. Also ask them to share their expectations, collect them on a flipchart and place the flipchart in front of the room for the day. This allows you to check at the end of the day whether you were able to fulfill everyone's expectations.

**STEP 2:** Divide people into groups according to preparatory mapping (be flexible). Inform the participants that they will stay in these groups throughout the workshop.

**STEP 3:** Talk through the objectives and expectations of the workshop, present the timetable.

**Note:** Clarify to participants that although they will be doing a number of exercises, they should not think that they will have a perfected advocacy strategy ready when the workshop is over. The training workshop is just the start.

### FACILITATION TIPS

In many countries people are keen to present themselves to the rest of the group. An alternative introductory method is that you ask everyone to find a partner who they do not know from before. The partners then interview each other to find out their names, organizations, reasons for attending the workshop and their previous experience of advocacy. Finally, everyone presents their partner to the rest of the group.

If your preparatory grouping would not work, you can either ask people to form groups according to their own preferences (if the participants know each other from before, this can work efficiently). Otherwise you can ask everyone to stand in a line in alphabetic order according to the first letter of their first name and count up to 3 or more depending on how many groups you want to form. All number 1s form a group, number 2s form a group, number 3s form a group and so on...

## 2. What is advocacy?

**Aim:** To introduce participants to the definition of advocacy

**Materials:** slides 4-6, optional YouTube-video

**Schedule:** Allow for 30 minutes. You can save time by not showing the video.

**STEP 1:** As an icebreaker, ask willing participants to share what they think that advocacy means. Note ideas on a flipchart.

**STEP 2:** Present different definitions through the advocacy “megaphone”. (See slide 5, you can also print it and display it at the front of the room for the participants to see throughout the day)

**STEP 3:** Ask willing participants, who have experience of advocacy, to explain which approach they are using at the moment.

**STEP 4 (optional):** If you sense confusion about the difference between advocacy and awareness raising, show the [video](#) “Advocacy or Awareness Raising” (5-10 min). Note: This video can be shown later at any point throughout the workshop, if there is a need to clarify the difference between advocacy and awareness raising. In Tanzania and Mozambique, for example, experience shows that there is confusion about the difference between these two approaches.

**STEP 4:** Go through the steps of the “advocacy cycle” (slide 6). This provides the structure for the whole workshop.

### 3. Identifying problems and solutions

**Aim:** To identify the root causes of the problems participants work with and to support a move from a problem-oriented mindset to a solution-oriented mindset.

**Materials:** Slides 7-10 and Problem and Solution Trees.

**Schedule:** If you need to save time, skip the Problem Tree and do only the Solution Tree. Depending on this, allow for 1 hour – 1 hour 45 minutes for this topic.

**STEP 1:** Introduce the participants to the topic and give them an example of a problem that relates to them (slides). Examples:

- Foreign companies are violating human rights
- The majority of Mozambicans do not have access to good health care

**STEP 2:** Hand out Problem Trees (print these in A3-format from annex 4 or draw them on flipcharts in advance)

**STEP 3:** Instruct participants to identify a problem that they want to tackle through their work. Write it on the tree trunk.

**STEP 4:** Instruct the participants to list the causes of the problem on the tree roots.

**STEP 5:** Instruct participants to list solutions to the problem (opposites to the causes) on the branches of the tree

**STEP 6:** Hand out Solution Trees (print these in advance from annex 4 or draw them beforehand on flipcharts) and do the same exercise but now using a vision, solutions and effects. The vision is the opposite of the problem, the solutions you already have in the Problem Tree so you mainly need time to think of the effects that reaching your vision will have

**STEP 7:** Feedback: 1) ask each group to place their Solution Trees on the wall 2) ask participants to go to each of the Solution Trees 3) encourage everyone to ask questions about the presented trees. For example:

- Where you surprised at a particular solution?
- Did you especially like or dislike any proposed vision-solution-effect? (30 min)

**Note:** if this feedback method turns out to be confusing, you can also just ask each group to present their plan to others and allow everyone to comment.

**Note:** Solutions are usually harder to find than problems, and despite the instructions people might put more emphasis on what is familiar to them. Hence solutions might be to some extent disconnected to presented problems. Try to avoid this because this is the most important exercise in that it determines the success of all the rest as the actual advocacy objective and message stem from this exercise. Give this exercise enough time so that the outcome is clear to everyone.

**Tip:** Feeling stuck with your challenge? You can also try out solution-oriented approaches and exercises, for example [Reverse Brainstorming](#).

## 4. Analysis of social and political context

**Aim:** To invite participants to take into account the importance of contextual analysis

**Material:** slides 11-16 and optionally a resource person to give depth to the analysis

**Schedule:** If you have a limited amount of time, consider not inviting an external resource person and rely on the expertise of the participants. If they lack knowledge, this exercise should encourage them to find out more. Depending on this, allow for 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes for this topic.

**STEP 1:** Introduce the topic and give examples of what needs to be taken into account when analyzing the context. Guiding questions:

- Do we have research information about our topic? Statistics?
- Has this issue been debated publicly? Do many people see it as a problem?
- Which institutions, organisations and individuals have the power to change this?
- Is there a meeting or some policy process upcoming that can affect this issue?
- Are there elections approaching?
- What other external factors influence this issue?

**STEP 2:** Ask each group to think about “what we already know” about the topic we are working on. Many participants may already have a lot of research information about the topic or they may know of statistics or other facts about the context.

**STEP 3:** Invite a resource person to talk about the political and legal context or discuss it in groups. (30 min)

### FACILITATION TIPS

It may be useful to invite a resource person to give a presentation about the political and legal context. This is easier if your participants all work on the same theme, as it allows for the resource person to limit the scope of their presentation. For example, if they work on tax justice, relate the political context analysis to tax justice. You need not to discuss the whole political system. If you have groups that work on very different topics, having a resource person talk about the political context here might be too general, and group discussions using internal expertise could be more useful. If time or other factors do not allow, ask the participants to use their own expertise about

the context. This can be done within the groups. As a concrete exercise, you can ask the groups to draw the political system as a picture.

Often, when people consider a political context, they think of the formal context – institutions, ministries, Parliament etc. In order to deepen this perspective, include a discussion, with or without the resource person, about informal politics: i.e. what individuals, businesses, religious groups etc. exert a strong influence over decision makers. Alternatively, you could discuss this under topic 6. Power Mapping, or at least return to it during that session.

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**STEP 4:** Discuss about the space for civil society to influence – closed, claimed, invited space?

Guiding questions for discussion:

- Can CSOs access information about policy processes and decision-making?
- Are CSOs invited to consultations and hearings?
- Can CSOs set up face-to-face meetings with decision makers?
- Can CSOs express their views and opinions freely?
- Are CSOs seen as important stakeholders in society?

**FACILITATION TIP**

As an alternative to a joint or group discussion, you can ask participants their opinions about the space for civil society either through a thumbs up/thumbs down exercise, thumbs up signifying “agree”, thumbs horizontally signifying “don’t know” and thumbs down signifying “disagree”. The same exercise can be done so that each participant is asked to stand on an imaginary line, where

one end signifies “agree” and the other end signifies “disagree”. Ask participants to use their thumbs or stand in different positions on the line when answering the guiding questions listed above. Doing the line exercise requires a big enough space but when done, it is also a “natural” energizer that can keep participants going.

**Note:** In many countries and contexts, issues related to corruption, safety and security might feature in the discussions. These may be such sensitive topics – e.g. land rights – that CSOs feel unsafe and threatened in working on them. Return to this issue under topic 6. Define message, approach and activities and discuss the scope to claim space through safe ways, i.e. public mobilization vs. direct lobbying, civil disobedience without taking to the streets or going to public spheres etc. In some countries human rights defenders have developed risk assessment tools for CSOs. Ask participants to find out about this.

## 5. Defining an objective

**Aim:** To give participants guidance to define SMART objectives

**Material:** Slides 17-20.

**Schedule:** Allow for about 40 minutes for this topic.

**STEP 1:** Introduce what setting SMART objectives means.

**STEP 2:** Give each group the task of defining one SMART objective:

- Go back to the Solution Tree.
- Look at the list of solutions that you have proposed in the roots in order to reach your long-term vision. Are any of them SMART? Can they be made SMART?
- Reflect on the last session about context. What realistic to attain in this context?
- Choose ONE “solution” that you turn into your concrete advocacy objective.

**STEP 3:** For feedback, ask each group to share what was most difficult in defining a SMART objective and how they tried to overcome it.

### FACILITATION TIP

Depending on the duration of the workshop and the time spent on other topics, you can ask a resource person to share their advocacy objective and the process of defining it. There might also be experienced participants who can do this on

behalf of their organization, or you yourself may have an example to share. Participants are usually very pleased to hear concrete experiences from others.

## 6. Choosing a target group

**Aim:** To give participants tools to identify targets based on the previous contextualisation

**Material:** Slides 21-27, Power Map (annex 6) and tables for categorising targets (annex 5).

**Schedule:** Allow 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes for this exercise.

**STEP 1:** Introduce guiding questions for defining targets and introduce the power-mapping tool

- Who has the power to bring about or oppose the solution you plan to advocate?
- Who has the power to change the policies and practices you want to change? (official power)
- Who within and beyond the sector can influence decision-makers? (hidden power/pressure maker)
- Who needs to be convinced to take action?

**STEP 2:** Hand out tables to groups and advise them on how to do the power-mapping exercise (print the lists and the maps from annex 5 and 6 or draw them beforehand on flipcharts)

**STEP 3:** List audiences

**STEP 4:** Place the audiences on a power map

**STEP 5:** Choose three audiences that are most relevant to target in order to achieve your objective

**STEP 6:** Feedback: ask each group to present their three targets and explain why they chose them.

**Note:** People have a tendency to stay on very general level, e.g. list ministries, institutions etc. Try to guide them to be as detailed and exact as possible and name smaller committees, units and individuals who have power. In some contexts, the political system is so transparent that information about people and their views can be easily found online. In this case, encourage participants to get online and do research during the exercise. In many contexts, however, this is not possible. It may be useful to spare a few minutes on discussing “where can I get the information from” and what experiences the participants have of finding out who their targets could be.

### FACILITATION TIP

Alternatively, you could have a resource person in this session. The resource person can give useful insights about the country’s political culture, including formal and informal politics.

## 7. Define message, approach and activities

**Aim:** To give participants the tools to identify a message, approach and activities that suit their organisation.

**Material:** Slides 28-37, optional YouTube-video.

**Schedule:** Allow 1 hour 30 minutes for this topic.

**STEP 1:** Explain what a successful message must include

**STEP 2:** Ask each group to draft their main message with bullet points, including the following heading: The change we want, why and how. Ask them to re-visit the Solution Tree and their main objective in order to find the change that they are striving for.

**STEP 3:** Present different approaches (go back to the megaphone pictures, talk about differences in public and “private” campaigning. Note: In section 2 you had the option of showing a video about the difference between awareness raising and advocacy. If you did not show the video yet and you still hear confusion about the difference between the approaches, you can consider showing the [video](#) here.

**STEP 4:** Present different forms of activities

**STEP 5:** Talk about the characteristics of a good lobbyist

**STEP 6:** Exercise: Identify the approach that suits your organisation

- Map your strengths and resources with the help of the following guiding questions:
- What skills and know how do you or others in your organization have that are useful for advocacy or for reaching your objective?
- Have you had a success – even a minor one – with advocacy work before?
- What did you and others do to make the situation a success?
- What tools, media and activities helped you to achieve this success?
- Based on this, what would be the most suitable approach for your organization be?

**STEP 5:** Feedback: Ask each group to present their main message and the way they will deliver it to decision makers.

**BONUS:** Role-play with a face-to-face lobbying situation. Choose one person, ideally a resource person, or someone who has not been an ordinary participant in the workshop, to act as a stereotypical decision-maker of the country in question. Ask each group to prepare for a lobby meeting with the decision-maker, to choose the ones who will deliver the message and then to role-play the situation.

To end with, ask other groups to give feedback to each performing group by answering the following questions: What did they do well? What could they have done better? Was their message clear?

You can either do this only with the groups that have chosen lobbying as their approach or try it out with every group. Usually this exercise is great fun, which can be a good way to start wrapping up the workshop.

## 8. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

**Aim:** Give tools to do monitoring, evaluation and learn.

**Materials:** Slides 38-40.

**STEP 1:** Go through slides. Highlight the importance of constant learning in advocacy work: planning – action – reflection – learning). Ask participants to tell about the good experiences they have had in adjusting their advocacy strategy.

**STEP 2:** Have a short round of questions.

## 9. Final wrap up and feedback

**STEP 1:** Re-cap what has been learnt during the day: go back to the advocacy circle and discuss what the participants have done and learned today.

**STEP 2:** Invite everyone to share two specific things that they have learned today and to explain how and within what timeframe they will take this issue forward within their organization.

**STEP 3:** Hand out feedback forms (annex 7) and ask participants to fill them before heading off.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Model invitation

### INTRODUCTION TO ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

The idea of this workshop is to give participants the tools to discover what advocacy means and does in practice. Through interactive methods and “self-teaching”, the participants will learn about the basic steps of starting, planning and doing advocacy. The workshop is aimed at organizations and people who do not have extensive previous experience of advocacy or who want to improve on doing strategic and systematic advocacy.

The workshop will also provide a space for CSOs to share best practices, challenges and experiences of influencing decision-making. The workshop was developed based on an identified need to improve CSOs’ advocacy skills.

#### Objectives

1. To give participants an introduction to what advocacy involves
2. To give participants tools to plan advocacy strategically
3. To give people a space to learn from each other
4. To start the development of an actual advocacy strategy

#### Methods

Participation, interaction, video, group work, learning through sharing

#### Facilitator

[Present yourself and your organisation. Mention who the resource persons are if you have decided to invite any.]

#### Target group

Civil Society Organizations

#### Duration:

#### Venue:

**Registration:** [email address and/or phone number and the due date for registration for the workshop]

## Annex 2: Programme and schedule

### Indicative programme & schedule for 1 day

**Note:** The time for each activity depends on the number of participants, their background and expectations. So allow for flexibility and plan your own time. Monitoring, evaluation and learning has been left out of this schedule. Consider including it and cutting from another exercise if your participants expect to learn about it. In any case you can hand out or send out slides that include information about it.

- 9.00–9.30 Welcome and introductions
- 9.30–10.00 What is advocacy?
- 10.00–11.00 Identifying solutions
- 11.00–11.15 Tea Break
- 11.15–12.15 Analysis of social and political context
- 12.15–13.00 Choosing an objective
- 13.00–13.45 Lunch
- 13.45–14.45 Choosing a target group
- 14.45–16.15 Defining your message, approach and activities
- 16.15–16.30 Wrap up, feedback forms and closing

### Indicative programme & schedule for 2 days:

**Note:** The time for each activity depends on the amount of participants, their background and expectations. So allow for flexibility and plan your own time.

#### **DAY 1**

- 9.00–9.30 Welcome and introductions
- 9.30–10.00 What is advocacy?
- 10.00–10.15 Tea Break
- 10.15–12.00 Identifying problems and solutions
- 12.00–13.00 Lunch
- 13.00–14.30 Analysis of social and political context
- 14.30–15.10 Define an objective
- 15.10–16.30 Power mapping
- 16.30–16.45 Wrap up, see facilitation tip.

#### **FACILITATION TIP**

In wrapping up Day 1, ask each participant to write down what they learned and leave their comments with the facilitator. On Day 2 hand out the notes to the participants and ask each to tell what they wrote the previous day and to share how they feel about Day 2.

**Schedule:** Skip the afternoon break and ask participants to take their tea/coffee while they are working on the power mapping exercise.

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## **DAY 2**

9.00–9.30 Welcome back

9.30–11.00 Define message, approach and activities

11.00–12.00 Lobby exercise

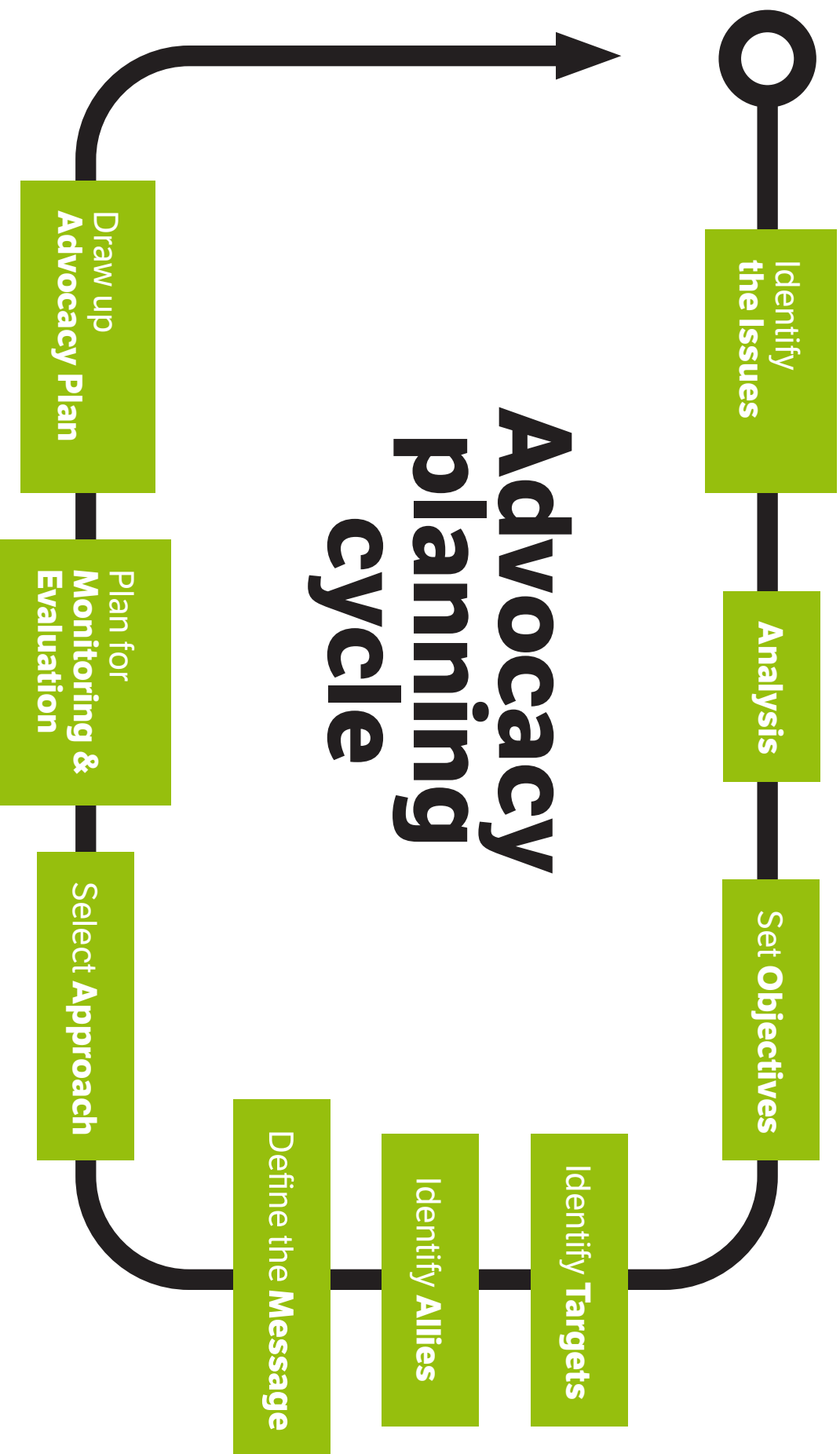
12.00–13.00 Lunch

13.00–14.00 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

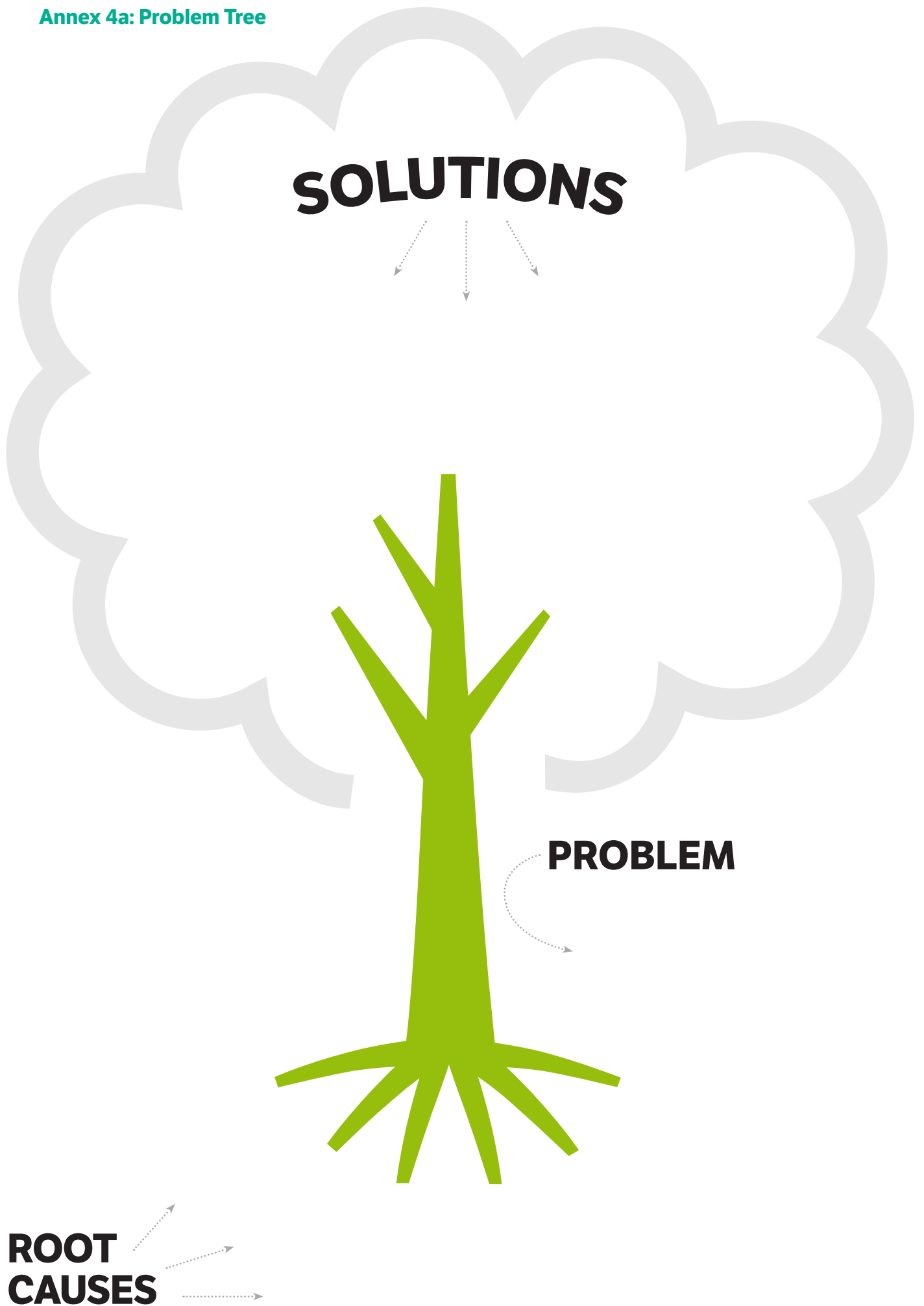
14.00–14.45 Presentations of plans and feedback from other groups

14.45–15:30 Final wrap up, closing and feedback forms

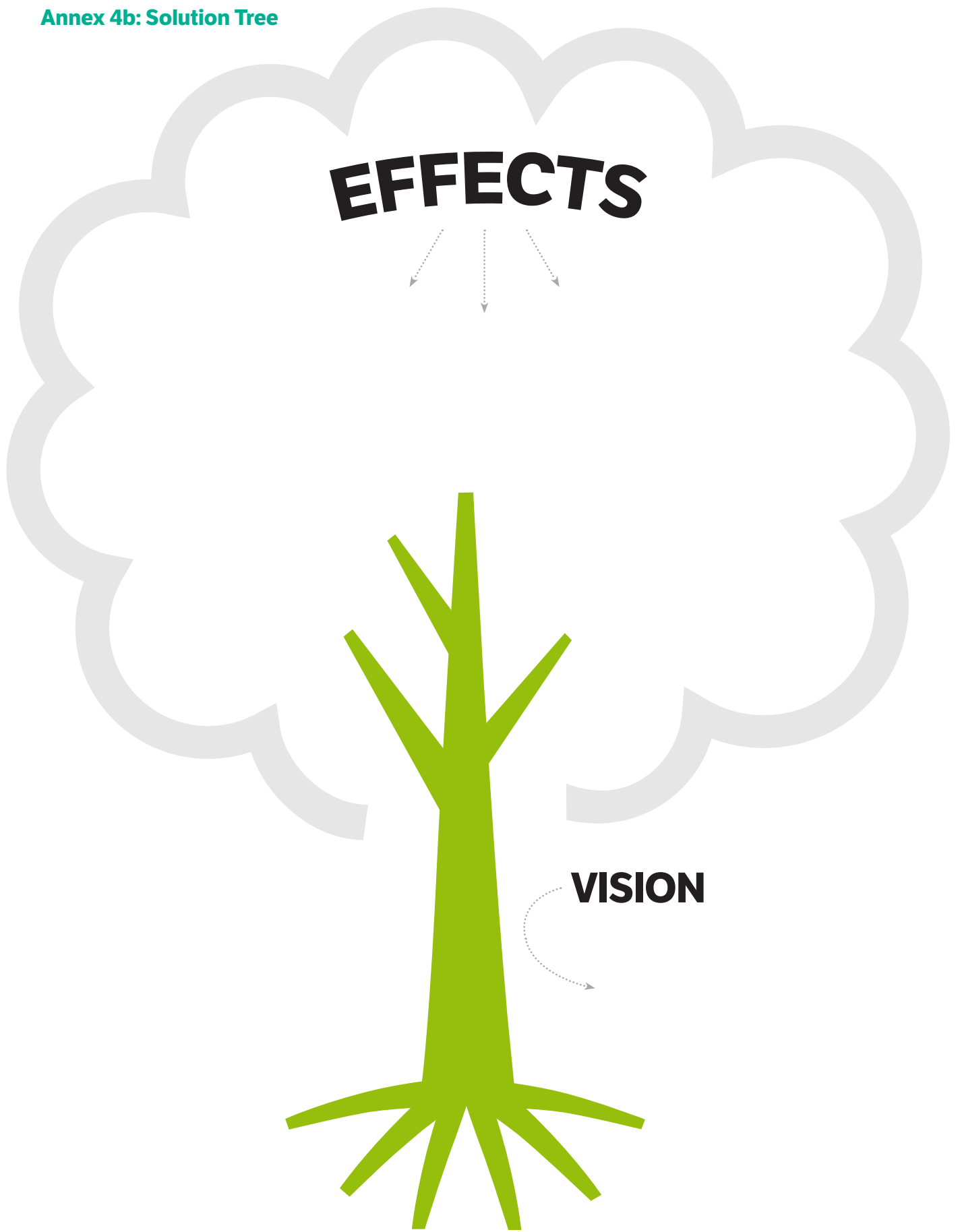
**Schedule:** The second day allows for flexibility to handle topics and issues that there was not time for on the first day. Therefore it is useful to leave space in the timetable and adjust accordingly.



**Annex 4a: Problem Tree**



**Annex 4b: Solution Tree**



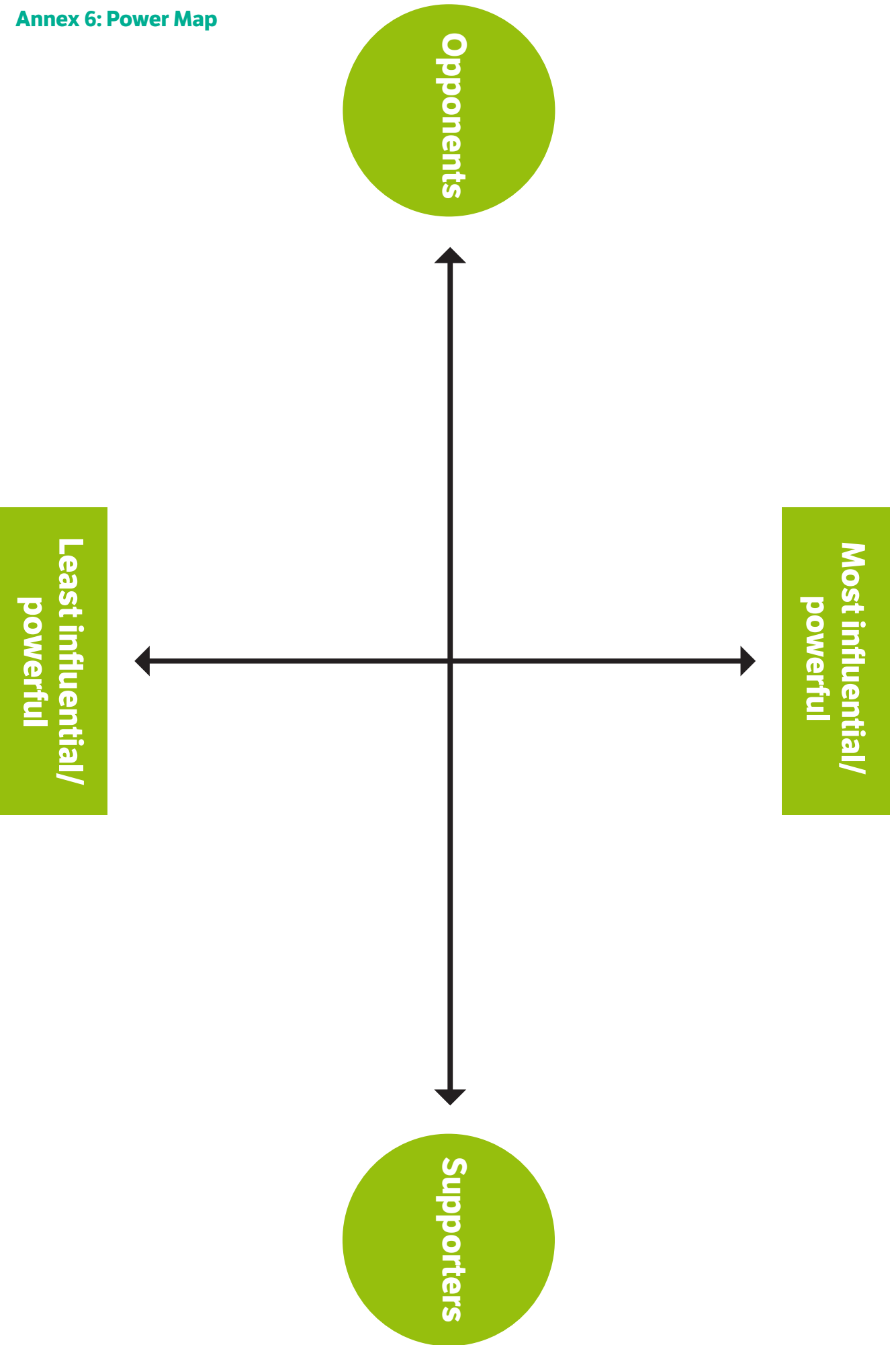
**SOLUTIONS** ↗ ↘ ↙ ↚

**Annex 5: Listing target groups**

List and categorise the targets that are relevant for your cause.

<b>DECISION MAKERS</b>	<b>PRESSURE MAKERS</b>
E.g. MP from budget committee	E.g. Religious leader, president's wife...

**Annex 6: Power Map**



## Annex 7: Feedback form

### 1. What is your overall rating of the workshop?

Poor

Excellent

1      2      3      4      5

Comments:

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### 2. What is your overall rating of the following sessions?

Poor

Excellent

a. What is advocacy?	1	2	3	4	5
b. Identifying problems and solutions	1	2	3	4	5
c. Setting an objective	1	2	3	4	5
d. Choosing a target group	1	2	3	4	5
e. Choosing the message, approach & activities	1	2	3	4	5
f. Monitoring, evaluation and learning	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

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### 3. How useful was the training?

Not at all

Very useful

I will use what I have learned in my work	1	2	3	4	5
The workshop gave me new thoughts and ideas	1	2	3	4	5
I want to further develop what I have learned	1	2	3	4	5

### 4. With what aspect of advocacy would you need further support?

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### 5. Any additional comments?

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