



➔ Introduction to **FACTSHEET** 11 & 12

Campaigning and influencing change



A campaign is a planned and well organised event or process that an organisation carries out to further its overall objectives. One dictionary definition is, “to work in an organised and active way towards a goal”. Often campaigns are carefully targeted to highlight one priority of the organisation. For example, for your gynaecological cancer support and advocacy group, you may want to highlight the need for earlier diagnosis of ovarian cancer in your country. Campaigns can be ad hoc or take place annually to coincide with other significant events to ensure maximum exposure to the media and target audience.

Why is a campaign needed?

As you start your group, there may be a particularly pressing need that needs to be addressed in your country. This could form the background to a campaign. Campaigns usually start with a particular goal in mind, such as raising attention for the need for **research**, providing a greater level of support to patients and cancer survivors, or increasing general awareness of a specific cancer.

Campaign objectives

As always, spending time at the beginning of the process is very valuable. Discussing and agreeing your key objectives sets a framework for the campaign that can be assessed, evaluated, and changed as the campaign progresses. This starts with careful research about the current situation, and accessing facts and figures from reliable sources to make sure that you know exactly what is going on. For example, how many people are diagnosed with a particular gynaecological cancer? Are gynaecological cancers diagnosed early? Where and how are these treated? What supportive care is available for patients and families? Does the situation differ in different regions of the country?

Information can be gathered from good quality sources on the internet (such as facts and figures from ESGO or the ENGAGE website or your local cancer registry or local cancer society). When searching the internet do make sure that the statistics can be verified from other sources to ensure they are correct and up to date.

Once you have a clear picture of the situation, then you can start planning your campaign based on this accurate research. This may involve talking within the group and getting the perspectives of other people including clinicians, patients, and the general public.

A simple and valuable tool in the planning process is the SWOT analysis, where you list your ‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats’ as you prepare for the campaign.

Among some of the key questions you should be asking in your group as you plan a campaign are:

- Who is your audience? Identify exactly who you are hoping to communicate with and aiming to influence. This may take some time to agree the target audience.
- What is your core campaign message or overall goal? What exactly are you trying to get across to your audience? It is helpful if you can distil this into a short sentence or phrase. For example, “Our campaign aims to improve women’s awareness of the symptoms of gynaecological cancers”.

As this process continues, you should be able to set some simple goals and milestones that you would like to meet during the campaign. This will also help with evaluation at the end of the campaign (see below). For more details refer to Factsheet 11 (Patient Advocacy Guide).

Campaign resources

When you have established the situation and started to discuss your objectives and plan the campaign, you must assess the resources you have available in terms of people, time, and finances. Great ideas are wonderful but they need adequate resources to be put into action and to be effective so you can achieve your objectives.

Engaging stakeholders

Getting buy-in from key stakeholders often ensures the success of a campaign. Ensuring that you get the perspectives of other patient groups, healthcare professionals, government agencies and other interest groups will help your campaign to be engaging, relevant, and effective. Also, other groups can be extremely valuable in helping to support and disseminate your key messages.

Strategic approach

In your planning process you must decide how your core campaign message should be broken down and communicated to any different target audiences.

This could involve dealing directly with the media, so take into account some of the issues raised in Factsheet 10 (Marketing and Communications). The ENGAGE website also includes a valuable Media Toolkit to help groups work effectively with the media. (http://engage.esgo.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/esgo_engage-mediatoolkit_trainingguide_final_pbp.pdf) The toolkit includes how to prepare a media strategy, working with the print and broadcast media, how to write various documents such as press releases, media backgrounders and letters and how to run press conferences.

You may also want to work with well-known or influential public figures that could help with publicising your cause. Celebrities who have a personal interest in your issue can be a powerful advocate and ally as you try to communicate with the wider public.

You could create a special awareness day or week to highlight your message as widely as possible. Again, research is necessary to ensure no clashes with other competing interest groups.

Linking your campaign to other events or activities can create synergies that further increase the penetration of your core message. For example, there may be major conferences or events taking place, or storylines in popular TV programmes that you could use as a springboard for any campaign. In 2013, ENGAGE used International Women's Day (8 March) to highlight mortality rates from different gynaecological cancers in different European countries, and advertise a patient group seminar to coordinate the voice of cancer patients across Europe. (<http://esgo.org/ENGAGE/Pages/PressRoom.aspx>)

Campaign evaluation

It is very important to evaluate the success of a campaign both during the process and when it has finished.

Before the campaign starts consider some realistic parameters of success. For instance, how many people are you expecting to reach, how many responses do you expect to receive, will the number of referrals to family doctors increase, will the campaign change national policy, etc.

Even if you cannot afford to measure specific markers of success, it is well worth asking yourself some key questions after a campaign. These could include:

- What did we do well and what did not go to plan?
- How could we improve next time?
- What was supposed to happen, what actually happened and why were these different?
- In what ways have our, and our target audience's, understanding about the core issue deepened or changed?

Evaluating your campaign also provides a benchmark for future campaigns especially if you are running an annual event, so you can assess whether your resources, both time and money, are being put to the best use.

Further information

An internet search on "Developing your own campaign" or other key search terms will produce a wide variety of useful information to help you as you start. For example, a number of effective campaigns have been developed by large international and national groups that may give ideas for your own smaller setting.

- Target Ovarian Cancer (<http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk>) is a UK-based women's health charity to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and provide support for women who have been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. They have a useful website which features details of recent campaigns. (<http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/our-campaigns/symptoms-awareness/ovarian-cancer-awareness-month>)
- The World Health Organisation used its WHO Day 2015 (the founding day of the organisation, 7 April) to focus on food safety. This document gives some background to the campaign and the types of resources that could be used. (<http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2015/campaign-toolkit.pdf>)
- The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Campaign aimed to support a law passed in the US in 2005 to raise awareness of the five main types of gynaecological cancer. (<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/knowledge/about.htm>)
- SCOPE, the disability charity, has a useful 5-step DIY campaigns toolkit with tips and skills that can be transferred into your area of interest (<http://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/community/diy-toolkit>)