

Final Version October 2005

Questions may be directed to the Cooperation for Peace and Unity  
(CPAU), Research and Capacity Building Department

[cpaukابل@yahoo.com](mailto:cpaukابل@yahoo.com) – 0093 (0)79304003/ 79136296

# ADVOCACY PRACTICES

## Afghanistan: 2001 Onwards

### **Carried out by:**

Cooperation for Peace  
And Unity (**CPAU**)

### **Researchers:**

Muhammad Suleman  
Kanishka Nawabi

Funded by Novib  
Capacity Building Programme  
for an Agriculture Revival Project  
(**NOVIB - CaBARP**)

## TABLE OF CONTENT

Acronyms	
The Authors	
Executive Summary	Page
<b><u>Key Findings of This Research</u></b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1. Policy Advocacy</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Civil-Military Relationship	9
1.2 NGO Code of Conduct	9
1.3 Capacity Building on Rights Based Approaches to Development	10
1.4 Refugees	10
1.5 Donor funding for Afghanistan	10
1.6 Security	11
1.7 Anti-narcotics and Alternative Livelihoods	11
1.8 Marital Laws	12
1.9 Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)	12
1.10 HIV/ AIDS	12
1.11 Fair Trade	12
1.12 Small Arms	12
1.13 Gender Issues with Focus on Women	13
1.14 Presenting Alternative Point of View	13
1.15 Political Development Processes in Afghanistan	13
<b>2. Community Level Advocacy</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Anti-narcotic and Livelihoods	15
2.2 Budget Tracking	15
2.3 Women and Self-emulation	15
2.4 Civic Education and Public Awareness	16
2.5 Children	16
2.6 Disaster	17
2.7 Social Mobilization and Advocacy	17
<b>3. How Advocacy is carried out?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4. Contributing Factors to the Success of Advocacy works in Afghanistan</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1 HQ Support	22
4.2 Available Funding and Commitment	22
4.3 Clear Organizational Strategy for Advocacy	22
4.4 Working Together	22
4.5 Capacity Building Department	23
4.6 Field Capacity	23
4.7 Working in a Consolidated Manner	24
4.8 Security Improvement	24
<b>5. Major Advocacy Challenges</b>	<b>25</b>
5.1 Security Concerns	25
5.2 No Systematic Advocacy Approaches	25
5.3 Less Developmental Focused	26
5.4 Focus on Peoples Basic Needs	26
5.5 Afghan Capacity on Advocacy	26
5.6 Less Reliable Information	27
5.7 Afghan Analytical Capacity	27

5.8	Lack of Literature on Advocacy	27
5.9	Problem with Advisors	28
5.10	NGO Place	28
5.11	Advocacy Receptivity	28
5.12	Advocacy Culture Less Developed	28
5.13	Weak Civil Society	28
5.14	Bad NGO Image	29
5.15	Overall Lack of Capacity in Advocacy	29
5.16	Advocacy without Research and Research without Advocacy	29
5.17	No Deep Understanding of the Problems	29
5.18	Prioritizing Problems	29
5.19	Cultural Sensitivity	30
5.20	Male Domination	30
5.21	Lack of Free Media	30
5.22	Finding a Balance for Risk	30
<b>6.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1	Choosing the Right Topic	31
6.2	Improving Environment for Advocacy	31
6.3	Forming Advocacy Groups	31
6.4	Provision and Finding Accurate Information	31
6.5	Facilitate Creating Impartial Media	32
6.6	Improved Coordination	32
6.7	Facilitate Improving the Security	32
6.8	Developing Strategies	32
6.9	Community Involvement	33
6.10	Targeting Different Government Authorities	33
6.11	Advocacy and Research as a Continuous Process	33
6.12	Right People for Right Research	33
6.13	Dedicated Afghans for Advocacy Positions	33
6.14	Budget Allocation for Advocacy	34
6.15	Institutionalizing Advocacy in Afghanistan	34
6.16	Advocacy Response to the Emergencies	34
6.17	Political Well in the NGOs	34
6.18	Inclusive Advocacy	34
6.19	Non-English Speakers and Advocacy	34
6.20	Transfer of Knowledge	35
6.21	Coordination	35
6.22	Long Term Funding	35
6.23	Indicators for Advocacy Evaluation	35
6.24	National Advocacy Plan	35
6.25	Crafting Proper Advocacy Messages	36
6.26	Afghans need Natural/ Organic Growth in Advocacy	36
6.27	Focusing on Major Advocacy Themes	36
<b>7.</b>	<b>Annexure</b>	

## ACRONYMS

AA	Action Aid
ACBAR	Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief
ACSF	Afghan Civil Society Forum
ADA	Afghan Development Association
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
ANP	Afghan National Police
APEP	Afghanistan Primary Education Program
AREU	Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit
AWEC	Afghan Women's Education Center
CA	Christian Aid
CaBARB	Capacity Building Project for Agricultural Revisal Program
CARE	Care International
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CoAR	Coordination of Afghan Relief
CPAU	Cooperation for Peace and Unity
CPN	Children Protection Network
CSAND	Civil Society Afghan National Development Strategy
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GCAP	Global Campaign Against Poverty
GOA	Government of Afghanistan
HRRAC	Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium
HQ	Headquarters
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISAF	International Stabilizing Assistance Force
MoE	Ministry of Education
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
NATO	Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non Government Organization
NOVIB	Netherlands Organization for International Development Cooperation
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
SCF (US)	Save the Children (US)
UNICEF	United National Children's Fund
UN	United Nation

## **THE AUTHORS:**

Muhammad Suleman and Kanishka Nawabi are working in the fields of Development and Research over the last decade in Afghanistan. They are currently working with Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU) in Kabul, Afghanistan.

## **THANKS!**

This report was conducted on a course of more than a month and involved two full time researchers. It is the researchers view, that the theme of this research is unexplored in the past in Afghanistan. From the very beginning of this process, it was the objective of this research to explain the context and functions of the Advocacy and its related activities in Afghanistan, since 2001 onwards.

The result presented here is a summary of this approach. While all the findings and recommendations are the output obtained from the participants, we ought to thank NOVIB – CaBARP - the donor agency - for their financial support to this unique study, which we believe will greatly contribute to the future research and in depth study on different aspects of Advocacy in Afghanistan. CaBARP requested CPAU to conduct this survey prior to their preparation of capacity building support to CHA and ADA.

A great deal of knowledge and experience was shared by different organizations interviewed. This report reflects the contribution by these organizations. We very much appreciate their excellent support in every step of this research, their management with regards to the preparation, interviews, and other arrangement whilst doing this research.

We want to thank all participants of the research - for their most valuable time and the resources provided both in hard copy and the soft. The generosity of the agencies involved in donating their time and experience for this process, as well as their willingness to share their experience with us.

Sincerely Yours,

Mohammad Suleman  
Kanishka Nawabi  
Researchers, CaBARP

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMERY:**

Afghanistan requires more developmental oriented policies and practices in the years to come. This needs to be coupled with more development of the Afghan civil society, capacity building in Advocacy, Human Rights, Gender and other relevant issues. The increased number of donors and international organizations engaging in response to these reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan suggests that the nature and shape of these responses are becoming more focused on longer term issues such as Advocacy, Civil Society and other soft components. However, these trends may have implications in terms who should be in the driving seat? Much more attention needs to be paid that knowledge and capacity will not only remain with the expatriates and also Afghans are not sidelined in this changing environment of aid delivery in Afghanistan.

The Research and Capacity Building Department of CPAU was contracted by CaBARP to conduct a study on *Advocacy Practices: Afghanistan 2001 Onwards*. The purpose of the study was to provide some context to future work around Advocacy with CaBARP Partner NGOs. This study focused on Policy and Community Level Advocacy and was done through interviews and meetings of the organizations and individuals who are engaged in Advocacy works in Afghanistan.

*Advocacy Practices: Afghanistan 2001 Onwards* is an attempt to help both the national and international actors improve their understanding of and increase their effectiveness in Advocacy related activities in Afghanistan. With good intentions, commitment and funds for the Advocacy sector, for the years to come, it is important for the actors to have measures of progress to determine whether their Advocacy efforts makes any major changes and positive contribution to the reconstruction process of Afghanistan.

The findings of this research suggest that organizations involved in Advocacy work in Afghanistan are operating through two major levels of Advocacy: Policy Advocacy where the Advocacy interventions address the policy change issues at the government, donors and other concerned stakeholders and Community Advocacy where efforts are being made to bring about a positive change at the community through their involvements. The Advocacy themes covers a wide range of activities from civil military relationship, marital law, HIV/AIDS, ANDS, donor funding, gender issues, civil society representation, security, fair trade, small arms, refugees etc.

There are different factors which facilitated the smooth engagement in the Advocacy activities by the NGOs involved in this field. Some of these are: HQ support, available funding; organizational strategy for Advocacy; working together, partnership with Afghan civil society. Despite these positive factors, there are enormous challenges awaiting the future Advocacy interventions in Afghanistan. These can include: security, lack of systematic approaches to the Advocacy, demand for basic needs, limited capacity in the field of Advocacy, lack of reliable information sources, lack of literature on Advocacy, low level of the receptivity at the government level, weak civil society and lack of free media.

The challenges in the field of Advocacy are enormous, hence the desire at the NGO level for more proactive involvement in this field. This will require a sustained and long term commitment not only at the NGO but all levels of Civil Society and the government in Afghanistan. As a finding of this study, there are a couple of factors which potentially contribute to the enhancement and effectiveness of Advocacy works in Afghanistan. These are: choosing the right topic for Advocacy, forming joint Advocacy groups, provision and finding accurate information, improved coordination, developing strategies and community involvement, though the list doesn't end here.

The Advocacy as a whole is a difficult task to do, especially in an environment like Afghanistan. Hence, we should think in long terms about the results of our activities. Though it should be kept in mind that in order to get a maximum result out of our efforts, we need to slot in the Afghans, in the driving seat. Below is a summary of the organization taking on different Advocacy themes:

<b>Agencies and Advocacy Themes</b>		
<b>NO</b>	<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>Advocacy Issues</b>
1	Care International	Refugees, Donors Funding for Afghanistan, Security, Anti Narcotics Strategies in Afghanistan, violence against women, Civil Military Relation,
2	Mercy Corps	Research on Alternative Livelihood, Alternative Livelihood groups, ACBAR Sectoral Groups, Civil Military relations and PRT, Alternative Points of View,
3	Christian Aid	PRSP, Code of Conduct of NGOs, Security, NGO Legislation
4	Rights and Democracy	Family Law/Marriage Law, Human Rights and Women Rights,
5	Ockenden International	ANDS, Community liaison with and Advocating their voice to the local and national government. Strong community base.
6	Save the Children (US)	Children, Maternal Childhood Health, Street Children
7	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan	Seminar on Fundamentalism, Fund Raising/Awareness Raising/Advocacy for Afghanistan in Sweden,
8	Afghan Civil Society Forum	Youth Conference, Loya Jirga Conference, Elections
9	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung	Petersberg Conference, Post Petersberg Meeting in London, Civil Society Involvement, Women and Politics, Civil Society Conference in Germany
10	Oxfam GB	Code of Conduct for NGOs, Gender, Civil Military Relations, Livelihood, Governance, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Resolutions, Fair Trade, Small Arms
11	Action Aid	HIV Aids, Afghan National Development Strategy, Rights to Food, Human Security, Rights to Education, Rights to Faire Governance, Women Rights
12	Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium	Security Rights, Economic Rights, Political Rights, Education, Elections
13	Hamkari	Lobbying on donors to support the Afghan partners
14	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission	Human Rights, Advocacy on the Rights of the Afghans, Legal representation, Land and Property Rights,
15	Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit	Governance, Gender, Livelihoods & Vulnerability, Health, Education, Natural Resource Management, Political Economy & Markets
16	German Development Services (DED)	Assist partners for advocacy works by providing financial and moral support.
17	Afghan Women's Education Center	Woman Rights, Elections, Fund Raising for Afghanistan

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The Research and Capacity Building Department of CPAU developed a strategy for conducting this study. The strategy included: the identification of relevant organizations and individuals for interviews, development of questionnaire and a review of available literature on Advocacy.

A total of 17 national and international organizations were approached and interviewed in the course of this study. The questions for this research encompassed a range of issues such as Advocacy activities, ways of doing Advocacy in Afghanistan, factors for success, challenges in Advocacy and suggestions/ recommendations for improvement of Advocacy works in Afghanistan.

Besides, the research team, as part of literature review, accessed a range of literature and material on Advocacy from different sources. Besides, the results of the interviews were compiled, analyzed and a comprehensive report was produced and presented to CaBARP.

## **KEY FINDINGS OF THIS RESEARCH**

The Research found that Advocacy practiced amongst the national and international NGOs in Afghanistan has two levels: 1) Policy Advocacy 2) Community Advocacy:

### **1. POLICY ADVOCACY:**

The reconstruction challenges in Afghanistan are immense. A safe environment from which to have a working platform on works such as Advocacy is not easy to find. In such an environment, the organizations involved in Advocacy try to address strategic issues through the policy level Advocacy. Policy level Advocacy is where the problems, especially from the communities in Afghanistan are taken up and addressed. Though lack of capacity at the government level and other policy level stakeholders, makes it very difficult to find a partner in tackling Advocacy related problems in the country. Followings are the examples of these initiatives by the NGOs:

#### **1.1 Civil-Military Relationship:**

There is a considerable degree of confusion both among the humanitarian community and the Afghan population over the various military forces present in Afghanistan, particularly with regards to their respective mandates and humanitarian support/ liaison operations. Organizations such as CARE International and Oxfam do conduct meetings on promoting further understanding of the NGO works with the ISAF and Coalition forces. Oxfam GB through its external Advocacy mainly focuses on Civil and Military relations. ACBAR as a coordination body, too holds meeting with different security forces in Afghanistan.

#### **1.2 NGO Code of Conduct:**

The Afghan government has several times accused aid agencies of hindering the growth of local firms and misusing billions of US dollars allocated for reconstruction efforts in the country. NGOs, through Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) developed and launched NGOs Code of Conduct. This was to rebuke the extensive negative image NGO community was receiving through not only government but also other Civil Society and other sources. There has been continuous debate over the effectiveness of NGOs and their works in Afghanistan in different circles, specially the GoA. This showed that suspicion over some of the bad apples, caused continuous attacks on NGOs image and reputation. Beside support developing the Code of Conduct for NGOs, some of these organizations have been involved in different process such as workshops, seminars, meeting with high level GoA authorities and also international Advocacy on re-building the image of the NGOs. Oxfam GB and CARE International are both involved in building NGO image, through contacts with government at local levels, working with ACBAR and Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC).

### **1.3 Capacity Building on Rights Based Approaches to Development:**

There is a process of Advocacy through capacity building of the government institutions and civil society on rights based approach to development. The promotion of rights-based approach to development is framework, promoted by some of the NGOs. The right-based approach is normally based on international human rights standards. The priority for this approach in Afghanistan is because it integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development at the organizational levels for both NGOs and the GoA. For example this approach has been taken over by Action Aid where capacity building is offered to the government departments, consultative and Advocacy approaches in partnership with the government for identification of good partners.

### **1.4 Refugees:**

Based on the research carried out, a number of the organizations have taken a keen stand on Afghan refugees Advocacy works with the government of Pakistan and others on issues such as forced repatriation of the Afghan refugees to their country. The range of these activities involved Advocating on these refugees' behalf, talking to the host governments on security issues, economical activities and their livelihoods. This was the initial works carried out by Save the Children (US) from the last 20 years, while working with the refugees in Pakistan and other cross border activities for Afghanistan. By 2001 CARE International as well initiated Advocacy works in Peshawar focused on Pakistani policy of forced repatriation of Afghans to the bordering refugee camps. The Advocacy process was carried jointly with Oxfam.

### **1.5 Donor funding for Afghanistan:**

The level and flow of the funding from donor sources to Afghanistan is a major Advocacy theme by many organizations involved in Advocacy works in Afghanistan. The concerns raised by these organizations include problems with money pledged from international level for Afghanistan either promised not provided or long delays occur for transfer of these funds to Afghanistan. Oxfam GB and CARE International have been in the forefront by representing Afghanistan in different donor and policy meetings and including NGO voice into these funding issues. During 2002-3 CARE International embarked on a series of Advocacy initiatives on donors reduced funding levels to Afghanistan. HAMKARI on the other hand has been doing Advocacy works on donors support to the Afghan Partners/ NGOs. Swedish Committee for Afghans (SCA) has a major Advocacy role in Advocating for Afghanistan in Sweden. SCA functions as a cooperating link between Afghanistan and Sweden, presenting facts about Afghanistan to the Swedes. Besides they do fundraising/ awareness raising and support the popular movements annually in Sweden to support reconstruction processes in Afghanistan. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) on the other hand worked on Advocacy in Afghanistan when the Iraq war started, so donors and other policy makers don't leave Afghanistan aside.

## **1.6 Security:**

Aid delivery in an insecure environment, after the 2001 Taliban defeat, is a major concern for the aid organizations working in Afghanistan. Different security issues such as failures of Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and other security forces to provide security for the Afghans has been advocated for by different organizations involved in Advocacy works. Coordination meetings, interactive programs, joint initiatives with these source and other international political and military organizations are held. International NGOs, especially through ACBAR have been involved on civil-military relations with ISAF and other security forces in Afghanistan. Oxfam GB and CARE International have played their major role in cooperation with ACBAR. They also embarked on a series of Advocacy works on security issues; ANA, ANP and ISAF and other security forces weakness to maintain and improve security in Afghanistan. Swedish Committee for Afghanistan has organized seminar on fundamentalism in Sweden with a focus on Afghanistan. On the other hand FES is working with its Afghan partners to promote the alternative means to war, through conflict resolution and alternative means and policies/practices. It is also a link between Germany and Afghanistan on different Advocacy issues at the policy level. They also provide secure space for different people from different backgrounds to visit FES and share their political and other views with other interested groups.

## **1.7 Anti-narcotics and Alternative Livelihoods:**

The failed policies on eradicating the poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and preventing farmers from poppy cultivation present an important need for developing anti-narcotics policies through Alternative Livelihood. Hence it is a major theme of interest for the NGOs involved in Advocacy works in Afghanistan. The main factors for involvement in this theme have been:

- 1) The nature of the work by the NGO on developing works and provision of the Alternative Livelihood through their programmatic intervention
- 2) The risk of presence of the Narco business in the areas where the organizations operate. The instability in the area is a threat to the NGO workers and their operations in the area and also the eradication processes carried by different security forces can cause disruption and security risks to these organizations.

During 2004, CARE International started on Advocacy process on anti-narcotics strategies in Afghanistan. The policy focused on alternative livelihood rather than policies to destroy or compensate the farmers. The works on counter narcotics advocacy are still underway by CARE.

### **1.8 Marital Laws:**

At the moment either there is a non-existence of law or is weakly established to prevent child or forced marriages. Through Advocacy works by the NGOs, a framework for the laws to address these problems has been discussed with the relevant departments in the government. Through expert support, especially from other Islamic countries, NGOs have drafted laws or guidelines been established and a continuous process of consultation and discussions held with the Afghan ministries for possible developments or incorporation of these into Afghan laws. Rights and Democracy is involved in Advocacy works in these fronts.

### **1.9 Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS):**

ANDS is the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) strategy for promoting growth, generating wealth and reducing poverty and vulnerability in Afghanistan. Since it provides the framework for the development of Government policies in the future millennium, many NGOs have taken a keen interest in getting involved in its development process. As part of consultative process, NGOs, through ACBAR formed a consultative committee to incorporate the views of the civil society into the ANDS, this is called Civil Society Afghan National Development Strategy (CSAND). The groups meet in different intervals and consult the ANDS body on different issues. Both Christian Aid and Action Aid are in the forefront for representing the Civil Society in the ANDS processes and a large number of both national and international NGOs, including CPAU, are playing a supportive role.

### **1.10 HIV/ AIDS:**

Health and other organizations have been Advocating for the problem of HIV/ AIDS in Afghanistan. The Advocacy has a major focus on bringing up the problems of this epidemic in public sphere. It is still a taboo to mention of these issues in the public so Advocacy on public awareness and also working on the policy levels for major campaigns for strategies to tackle this issue in Afghanistan is taking place. Through policy level Advocacy, Action Aid is doing research to identify and link it to the policies at the government levels. HIV Aids is one of the research themes which would link up research outcomes to the national level health programs.

### **Fair Trade:**

As the research shows, at least one organization (Oxfam GB) interviewed has taken steps to promote the issues of Fair Trade in Afghan context. This though in a very initial stage and the objective is to link the local farmers and their products into the international markets. International bodies, promoting Fair Trade have been contacted on this issue.

### **1.11 Small Arms:**

Small Arms is also an Advocacy theme taken over by Oxfam GB. This is in identification of the fact that Advocacy on small arms requires a strong link with the international

interested organization to address this issue in Afghan context. Oxfam GB is the lead in pursuing this Advocacy cause. This though has to be mentioned that this theme is on the papers and not yet implemented.

### **1.12 Gender Issues with Focus on Women:**

Despite a token progress in plight of Women in Afghanistan, major organizations in Afghanistan are incorporating the Women issues into their Advocacy themes. The Advocacy messages are coming more forceful especially from women organizations. There is however an interesting understanding at these organizations end that only addressing the women issues, sidelining male in the family, boys and girls in the society, is not carrying a strong and effective Advocacy message across or solve women issues in Afghanistan. Hence while addressing the women issues, they need to have a whole encompassing approach to address the whole gender issues. Advocacy works by CARE is still underway on violence against women at the community level. Oxfam GB has a focus priority on Gender issues. Through social organizers, Oxfam GB encourages creation of female shuras and at the meantime Advocates communities to send their daughters to school. AREU is involved in the research based Advocacy with a focus on published publications, meeting with the key stakeholders and policy makers, arranged workshops and creation of information sharing mechanisms such as networks meeting on gender, livelihoods, security and other themes. On the other hand Afghan Women Education Centre (AWEC) has been involved in women representation at the local, national and international levels to bring up the women problems in Afghanistan.

### **1.13 Presenting Alternative Point of View:**

Many NGOs, especially internationals are forefront in presenting alternative points of view to their governments. International staff are holding meetings with their respected governments to provide first hand information on the situation and developments in Afghanistan. Also letters were sent to senate, parliament, high level government officials after major events such as Presidential and Parliamentary elections, Loya Jirga etc on how events unfolded during these processes. HRRAC on the other hand published a series of publications, after through field researches, which included Speaking Out focusing on economic, security and political rights of Afghans, Take the Guns Away focusing on Security and Elections, We Voted and We will Vote Again focusing on following up of the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections. FES is continuously lobbying for involvement of the Civil Society in national and international scenes. It also keeps the government of Germany well informed about the political developments unfolding in Afghanistan, especially on the major events such as elections by writing to MPs and other high level government officials in Germany.

### **1.14 Political Development Processes in Afghanistan:**

Some NGOs have been actively involved in all the political development processes in Afghanistan after the signing of the Bonn Agreement. The role of these NGOs has been very major especially for the promotion and development of Civil Society causes at the

international arena. They also facilitated provision of platforms through which the Civil Society perspective were included in the political debates and dialogues for Afghanistan. Swiss Peace organized a Civil Society conference parallel to the political Bonn Conference. It also organized a second Civil Society conference in Kabul, prior to the Emergency Loya Jirga. Afghan Civil Society Forum ACSF on the other hand also carried out event based Advocacy works such as organizing Youth Conferences, Loya Jirga Conference, Election etc. On the other hand, Save the Children (US) worked with three Afghan Ministries on how to do survey/ surveillance and built their capacity on it. Through this intervention, they produced massive reports which are now used by different government offices. FES is working on this field including arranging the Petersburg Conference and presently working on follow up Petersburg, The London Conference. Work of Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) in itself is a very good example of incorporating the Human Rights issues into the constitution and the government of Afghanistan.

## **2. COMMUNITY ADVOCACY:**

There has been a continuous Advocacy related intervention at the community level by many of the NGOs involved in Afghanistan. Though may be not considered an intentional Advocacy intervention, these organizations were and are involved in trying to bring about a positive change in different communities, through these communities own interventions and support. These interactions have been widely acknowledged by different organizations interviewed which are going on for many years. On the other hand more structured Community Level Advocacy is going on by different organizations with the followings as examples:

### **2.1 Anti-narcotic and Livelihoods:**

Like the policy level Advocacy, NGOs had Advocacy roles in the issue of Anti Narcotics and Alternative Livelihood at the community levels as well. NGOs with development themes, had worked with the Shuras and Community Based Organization on promotion of the Alternative Livelihood Strategies to Poppy. Awareness campaigns couples with physical provision of improved seeds, fertilizers, training etc, has been a major component of some of the organizations activities. CARE International is involved in the Anti-narcotics and livelihood support programmes.

### **2.2 Budget Tracking:**

Budget tracking through community organizations is an innovative approach in Advocacy works in Afghanistan. It is a method, specially planned to be carried out with National Solidarity Programme (NSP), where communities are trained and capacity built so they track the expenditures and budgets spent by NSP at the community levels and follow up on the chain of these expenses up to the ministry level. The objective is the improvement of transparency at the government, building up communities' involvement in the government affairs and also taking their messages up to the government and the donors. Action Aid's (AA) work and future plans would be focused on the budget tracking; a facilitated process by AA to work with Civil Society (CS) to track the budgets of different government implemented projects.

### **2.3 Women and Self-emulation:**

Majority of the women organizations interviewed has taken up the issues of violence against women, especially violence at domestic level, as an Advocacy theme. Doing researches on the types of violence on the communities has been the basis for strong Advocacy works by these organizations. Some of the Advocacy works have been toward attracting national and international media attention to the plight of these women in different parts of Afghanistan. Self-emulation has been a major theme of Advocacy for some organizations at the community level, especially for the organizations operating in the west of the country. Christian Aid, through its partners working on this topic through research and follow up Advocacy works.

The self-emulation has also attracted both national and international media. The work of these organizations much more focuses on the causes for self emulation especially amongst the girls. A major reason for this self-emulation is thought to be the cross-border immigration and refugees returning from Iran where there is a more open view of their status and rights in that society as opposed to the situation in Afghanistan.

#### **2.4 Civic Education and Public Awareness:**

The needs for such awareness campaigns are immense in Afghanistan. Presently, there is a total lack of awareness both amongst the rural and urban communities about political processes and knowledge about parliament or other political institutions. To minimize the information and knowledge gap, the Civic Education process contains a standard package of awareness to every Afghans in every village, district and province of Afghanistan.

Public awareness as a communication process includes Advocacy, social mobilization and programme communication which has also been carried out by some of the organizations at the policy levels. Though creating awareness and getting commitment of decision-makers for a social cause have been a major challenge for Advocacy works in Afghanistan. HRRAC supports running Radio programs (mobile theaters, radio shows) for awareness raising on different issues and topics in Afghanistan. Besides, press conferences, press releases, executives summary of the reports are different ways through which HRRAC conducts public awareness.

#### **2.5 Children:**

Children are another theme of Advocacy for some of the organizations interviewed during this research process. NGOs working for children Advocacy in Afghanistan try to inform, educate, and persuade people who work with and on behalf of children by providing the most reliable information on current issues, trends, and GoA's policies that affect children and their families. The focus of the Advocacy works has been on kids' stories, believing that kids are people, have needs, ideas. Through outcome of these process, NGOs are asking adults (officials in this case) to understand children and Advocate for them. There has been the process of child to child groups and interaction where children from one area/school are meeting another group of children from another area and exchange views.

Children Protection Network (CPN) is a network of organizations working with the ministry, traffic police, MoE, UNICEF helping the ministry to start to learn how to deal with kids problems. Within this theme, the Advocacy focus is also on street children and their problems, alternative forms of behaviors towards children by the teachers and school staff etc. Save the Children (US) is in the forefront of Advocacy for the children rights and causes which is a long term work with children from the time they are born. They also work with Christian Child Fund, International Rescue Committee (IRC) on a child protection programme to help families to be functional (parenting education) in Arzan Qimat, Khair Khana and Shamali. Save the Children (US) is also on transitional to

school; development of children from childhood to school age and training of teachers (grade 1 and 2) in basic children education. The examples are:

- Children of Kabul
- Asking the kids themselves, child to child groups.
- Working with street children.
- Maternal childhood health projects.

## **2.6 Disaster:**

Natural and manmade disasters are a major theme which is addressed through NGOs Advocacy interventions, whenever these incidents happen in a particular area. In absence of good information systems and statistics by the government, NGOs are advocating for the disaster affected populations to receive attention and also disseminate information to the government and other relief effort processes. Some of the NGOs also provide information on the disaster damages, number of population affected and other required information about the area to media and public. Christian Aid, through its partners is facilitating this process.

## **2.7 Social Mobilization and Advocacy:**

Social mobilization in Advocacy is the process of bringing together all the groups/ allies to raise people's awareness and demand for a particular development programme in different levels in the country. For example of the strengthening of the Shuras/ Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is a long standing work being carried out by many national and international developmental NGOs in Afghanistan. Social mobilization is the glue that links Advocacy activities to more planned and researched programme activities and that is why carried out as a major part of activities by some major NGOs in Afghanistan. For example Ockenden International is involved in the process of consulting the communities to take initiatives such as contacting the local authorities and the UN to hear their voices and help them with the local initiatives. The history of Social Mobilization through community groups, shuras and others are somehow problematic because there are sometimes taught to be an integrated part of the development process and on other intervals, totally ignored, by focusing on emergency interventions only. Even at the moment where there is a major focus, or interest, on the developmental related issues, the Shuras or Community Based Organizations are being used as a tool for implementation of a project or a goal, a means to achieve an end, not an end in itself. Many major NGOs in Afghanistan, both national and internationals are getting the Advocacy messages from these community groups, through community mobilizers/ activists

### **3. HOW ADVOCACY IS CARRIED OUT:**

During this research, there were several approaches identified where Advocacy was carried out by different NGOs. These mainly depended on the size of the organization, the scope of work and strategy of these organizations that affects their approach of work.

Majority of the organization have embarked on **Issue-based researches** on different major topics e.g. Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, Constitution, Loya Jirga and other events. These researches were the basis for the collecting the facts about a certain theme and then develop strategies or activities for Advocating them.

Some of the **donor agencies** are working with Afghan NGOs who recognize the importance of Advocacy as a crucial element which compliment their development work. They also work with local partners to build their advocacy capacity, to create linkages amongst other stakeholders e.g. government, NGOs, UN and civil society organizations, to monitor the political, social and economical debates/ situation of Afghanistan and to liaise with other international actors in order to make the voices of the beneficiaries heard at many levels. These donors also encourage their partners to get involve in national policy level initiatives, through capacity building. Some of the local partners have been able to include Advocacy as part of their strategic planning and other process.

**Web-based researches** have also been carried out on different issues such as security, postwar reconstruction, especially in other countries for Advocacy purposes. This approach facilitates obtaining the effective data available on the internet. This also creates more space for the organizations that need to produce research information on shorter time, less cost and money involved etc.

Besides doing researches on different themes to be followed up by Advocacy activities, many organizations interviewed are basing their Advocacy initiatives on the first hand **information and from the field experience**. They emphasis on building their colleague's capacity at the field level so they not only get the proper Advocacy themes, but also be able to deliver the proper message to their colleagues at the policy level for further work.

Some of the organizations interviewed during this process take more **dialogue based** rather being confrontational stands on different issues linked to the Advocacy, specially with the Afghan government. In the past different organization's stand on security problems such as murders of their staff members, looting of the offices and others have been different. They tend to involve more with different players for getting their Advocacy messages across for these security problems rather than being reactive for instance closing their offices or stopping operations in a particular affected area. Mercy Corps, for instance while carrying the Advocacy messages from communities to the policy level, tends to be more patient and avoid confrontational means and have a longer strategy for completing their objectives.

As a security risk it is difficult in Afghanistan to find **secure spaces** so people could express, share and consult their views or further work on their Advocacy messages. Some of the organizations interviewed during this process indicated that they are providing secure space for public, within their offices so people can come, share their problems, issues, look for solution and seek advices from the experts.

Many organizations involved in Advocacy works in Afghanistan are part of **technical working groups** with the government on developing policies-making processes. Issues such as ANDS and others are discussed with NGOs through these consultative and technical working groups. This is a common practice for many NGOs working for Afghanistan.

Another commonly recognized practice for promoting the Advocacy initiatives in Afghanistan is the attendance and participation in **seminars and conferences**, regionally and internationally. This practice is boosted by the support of the like minded organizations at the international level who invite the Afghans and internationals involved in Afghanistan to bring-in first hand experiences to these seminars and conference.

As common practices, meeting with **high level delegations** from different institutions and bodies such as the United Nations and representatives of NATO, European Union and country level delegations has been held for bringing across the Advocacy messages. This is mostly to voice up the key messages coming from the people and the communities and giving those delegates an alternative point of view. For instance when the UN Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan visited the country this year, Rights and Democracy had participated in the press conferences and given different point of views to the Rapporteur.

Other way Advocacy is carried out by the NGO interviewed is not only to address the upper and high level ministries and authorities but also **to find partners** either at the government or civil society levels. There has been coordination and cooperation between these NGOs with Kabul University, AREU, HRRAC, through interviews and meetings and through these processes sharing their experience of the field level and linking them to the academia and policy levels.

On different occasions, organizations interviewed mobilize the **communities for a bottom up** approach to involve government in the Advocacy processes, e.g. fathers in a community has approached the local governor for provision of health services on maternity issue to their daughters and wives. There are several examples where the communities approach the local authorities and UN etc, this has been facilitated by the NGOs for attracting different help and support. CPAU's through its established peace council in Badakhshan approached the Badakhshan Municipality for removing piles of rubbish which was creating massive health issues. When the Municipality expressed its inability to do the job alone, the same peace council approached the Agha Khan Foundation for provision of trucks and funds and as a result the pile of rubbish has been removed from the area and now the area is a play ground for the children.

**Disseminating information through international media** has been another tool for the organizations involved in the Advocacy works in Afghanistan. As the donors pledge more money and spend more for Afghan reconstruction, it is necessary to deliver the Advocacy messages for the problems in Afghanistan and strategies to tackle them to international audience and tax payers, through these media. There are different press releases and conferences held in Afghanistan where international media is approached for participation. Also interviews are held by the international media with the key people involved in the aid delivery and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Global Campaign Against Poverty (GCAP) and other campaigns in Afghanistan are also Advocacy examples carried out in the country which links it to the international levels.

Some of the organizations involved in Advocacy works in Afghanistan are using their **websites** for promotion of their messages. Usually articles, press releases, project reports are published in these sites and marketing is done for attracting the audience. The websites are good sources for international and national access to the Advocacy related materials too, as these documents are mainly uploaded and stay in these web spaces for some certain time.

Another way of Advocacy for international NGOs in Afghanistan is through transferring information from **Afghanistan to the HQs** and the HQs disseminating this information and do further Advocacy on it. This is a good approach where mutual support both in the form of support from HQs and also transfer of information and facts from country levels are taking place.

For Advocacy work to be more effective, NGOs interviewed use **networking and coordination** spheres at the national and regional levels. The objective behind coordination and networking at national and regional levels is the share of experience, knowledge, information and resources for collective actions in specific Advocacy themes. Experts from different national and regional levels are asked to facilitate these Advocacy capacity building and other process in other regional country.

In recognition of the GoA role on policy making and developing national level strategies, NGOs recognize the interaction, creating linkages and direct **contact with the government** as an important element of their Advocacy works. These networking and interactions take different shapes, as working groups, consultative groups, conference, meetings etc.

**Lobbying and Advocacy** with the likeminded organizations are one of the approaches for the NGOs working on Advocacy activities in Afghanistan. Different coordination bodies and consortiums are the platforms for such cooperation. It however needs to be clarified that the process for forming these coordination bodies and consortium are not organic, where different factors such as donor pressure, funding and other are the causes for formation of these, not a genuine need and desire at the end of these NGOs to come together and cooperate with each other. We have witnessed formation of many networks but their presence not only makes any visible contribution to a particular process but also

wastes valuable time and efforts of different parties involved. Hence organizations interested in forming these networks and allies, specially donors, need to first generate interest around particular themes and then analysis the cost vs. benefit ratios.

Major activities around Advocacy is carried out around **Event-based activities**; donor conferences, elections. Besides messages coming from the event based Advocacy is taken forward to the policy level and also reflected through media and other sources to the international level like donors countries and other civil societies.

As some of the organizations interviewed, they view themselves and their Advocacy works as a **reflector on people's needs**. Through the community based activities, organizations try to identify and gather peoples' needs and try to link it to the policy level and other bodies and individuals concerned.

Some of the organizations interviewed, increasingly identify the participatory Advocacy initiatives to identify potential partners for their Advocacy works. Advocacy itself therefore is increasingly recognized as involving grassroots to increase both the process of Advocacy effectiveness in bringing about change, and its accountability to those it is intended to benefit. However if planned policy changes are to really benefit the poor, rather than being driven by the interests of particular groups who are already better-off and/or the interests of the advocacy organizations and their funders, then advocacy strategies and professional advocacy organizations need to link more closely that the present practices, with grassroots communities in Afghanistan and NGOs which directly involve the poor themselves.

## **4. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS FOR THE SUCCESS OF ADVOCACY IN AFGHANISTAN:**

In this section of the report we are presenting the findings of our research on the factors that are helping or potentially can help the advocacy works in Afghanistan.

### **4.1 HQ Support:**

The support from the international headquarter to country office was reported to be an important factor, greatly contributing to the success of the organizations involved in the advocacy works in Afghanistan. The research found that most of the international NGOs receive the essential support from their international headquarters. There are full-time qualified advocacy personnel at the headquarters of the international NGOs who devote their time and energy to support the country office staff by providing them with technical assistance, editing and elaborating advocacy messages, and building relationship with media and government departments to make their advocacy works easier

### **4.2 Available Funding and Commitment:**

According to the respondents, funding and commitment both at the headquarter level and country office level considerably contributes to the enhancement of an effective and quality advocacy process. Some NGOs reported to have sufficient funding and full-time qualified advocacy personal at the country office supported by their headquarter-based advocacy staff and the local counterparts in the country of operation. In contrast, the Afghan national NGOs seem to be totally lacking this support and capacity and do not receive the essential support in advocacy related capacity building processes. It also depends on a clear strategy and genuine interest by these Afghan NGOs towards potential Advocacy activities that may attract donor interest. They also need more interaction with International NGOs involved in Advocacy, and look for support from them. Besides coordination bodies such as ACBAR can be of good support in providing a platform for join meetings and relevant source of information.

### **4.3 Clear Organizational Strategy for Advocacy:**

Especially when developed in consultation with the communities, clear organizational strategies for Advocacy were reported an obvious contributing factor for success of the Advocacy initiatives. Without a clear organizational strategy it is naïve to expect a quality/effective advocacy. The strategy can guide the organization, but the strategy alone is not sufficient. There must be a proper mechanism and capacity to ensure the strategy is well implemented at the organizational levels.

### **4.4 Working Together:**

There are a number of national and international organizations working together on advocacy issues in Afghanistan. The general feeling amongst these organizations is that no one can work in a vacuum. In every setting there are people, organizations and groups

that affect each other's work positively or negatively. Building networks, working jointly and encouraging collaborative actions create a situation where opportunities and resources can be maximized and efficiently exploited thereby significantly enhancing the effectiveness of programs and impacts, especially Advocacy works.

The NGOs interviewed believe that by working jointly they are able to share their experience, learn from each other, support and create healthy pressures especially in the field of advocacy. Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC) presents a good example where a total of 15 both national and international NGOs jointly work on issues of advocacy. They share their financial/material and human resources, they organize researches together and do advocacy jointly.

Working together on advocacy with the committed civil society organizations in Afghanistan was confirmed to have greatly contributed to the successes of the Advocacy works. Different organizations confirm the benefits of working together and stress on the need for building mutual partnership with the Afghan civil society organizations so that they can slowly take up the lead in advocacy efforts in the future.

Agency Coordination Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) is another platform through which the advocacy-involved national and international NGOs work together. Working together and mutual cooperation is absolutely essential in advocacy works.

#### **4.5 Capacity Building Department:**

Capacity building department within organizations to provide capacity building opportunities on Advocacy and other related issues for staff of organization is one of the important factors found out during this research. This thus contributes to increase the capacity and knowledge level of these organization's staff, their commitment and competency in the Advocacy related works. The majority of the respondents strongly stated capacity building an important and vigorous factor in ensuring provision of quality and effective services.

#### **4.6 Field Capacity:**

Qualified field level colleagues who can take the advocacy issues from the field and link them to colleagues at the strategic levels of the organization is also a success factors in the Advocacy works in Afghanistan. The advantage is that it can facilitate a process of collecting reliable information from the field without involving major costs to involve external researchers who may not necessarily enjoy the full trust of the community and somehow lack the basic knowledge of the people and of the area.

But such a process will largely depend on the will and the capacity of the field staff. For example, a very competent agriculturist working in the field of agriculture will unquestionably needs to have analytical capacity to analyze the political, economic and social environment properly and sufficiently. Staff members must have the ability to identify the root causes of the problems, collect the data and transform the data into

analytical information. Thus the valuable first hand field-based information can then be used both for community level advocacy and policy advocacy.

#### **4.7 Working in a Consolidated Manner:**

Some of the respondents view the success of advocacy on the approach to work in a more focused and in consolidated manner especially in the process of choosing an advocacy theme. The idea is that the advocacy themes must be attractive to the media and other stakeholders. Though there are advantages and disadvantages to this approach. The advantage is to remain focused on one or two themes and continue doing advocacy systematically with a proper follow ups till the situation is really influenced by the advocacy efforts.

On the other hand the disadvantage is to pick or choose an issue which may not be attractive and important to the media or other powerful stakeholders such as government and donors, but it may be very important for a community.

Drawing the attention of powerful stakeholders on an untapped issue, particularly when it is seen very important by the people in a community, can become a very powerful and interesting advocacy theme.

#### **4.8 Security Improvement:**

Current political and security environment seems to be relatively improving which in turn provides a better space and opportunity to further the advocacy works in Afghanistan. Equally, the desire for change amongst the Afghans for peace, involvement in the political, economical and other spheres of the country and over-viewing the government activities was perceived to have significant role in attaining successes in the field of advocacy works in the country.

## **5. MAJOR ADVOCACY CHALLENGES:**

The findings of this research confirm the fact that the advocacy works in Afghanistan are confronted with huge challenges. It ranges from security risks to cultural sensitivity, low capacity, low funding, lack of reliable information and many more.

The challenges identified by this research are enormous and not easy to overcome in a short period of time, rather they will remain for years to come. In order to positively influence these challenges, individuals and organizations involved in the field of Advocacy will require longer term commitment, funding, steadiness and consistent works.

The challenges identified here are discussed in details with an attempt to provide deeper insights and stimulate strategic thinking amongst the NGOs either directly involved or planning to be engaged in the field of advocacy for the future.

### **5.1 Security Concerns:**

Though Afghanistan has just come out from years of war and violent conflicts. There are still parts of the country where violent conflicts happen quite often. Despite a lot of efforts by the Afghan government and the international security forces, the general security situation still remains unstable and as yet the security environment in Afghanistan is not totally favorable for development, including Advocacy works.

For the last 3 years the NGOs personnel have been targeted mainly for political reasons. The NGOs staff (both nationals and internationals) were indiscriminately killed, beaten and/ or kidnapped.

The security threats posed to NGOs are not only from the warning groups but also from the criminals in Afghanistan. In the current context, the risks of security to NGOs are obviously very high particularly when getting involved into the business of highly sensitive advocacy works in Afghanistan. At the meantime the current political environment and the security situation do not seem to be totally favorable for full-fledged advocacy works in Afghanistan.

### **5.2 No Systematic Advocacy Approaches:**

The research found that so far no systematic or proactive approach to advocacy works by NGOs have been carried out in Afghanistan. The advocacy works in Afghanistan have been done on an ad hoc basis and not in a coordinated manner. The approaches have been more reactive, with limited follow ups on advocacy events. Therefore, the impact of the advocacy works in Afghanistan has also been very minimal. Insufficient level of communication and coordination amongst civil society organizations also exists which reduces the effectiveness of advocacy works in Afghanistan.

### **5.3 Less Developmental Focused:**

For years, the situation in Afghanistan was seen as a complex political emergency where emergency aid poured into it, while no or little development aid was considered for it. The attention of the majority of the national and international NGOs remained focused on the emergency assistance and the delivery of relief services. In such an environment of limited donors' funding and low level of interest for long term development, the scope for advocacy works remains very limited.

Despite the recent changes in the scope of the aid delivery and donors support which tends to be more development oriented, it is not very clear sustainable this approach is and for how long this process will last. This is from the experience of the past where donors changed their commitment and stand on the level of funding and the scope of the developmental works, very frequently.

### **5.4 Focus on People's Basic Needs:**

Years of war and violent conflicts have destroyed the country's infrastructure and reduced the production capacity to a very minimal level. The physical needs in Afghanistan are still huge, demanding the national and international NGOs still to continue with the provision of basic needs for the majority of the population desperately needing help. This reality on the ground brings the NGO sector under tremendous pressure to consider implementation of more tangible projects, not showing much interest and concern for the intangible types of projects and services such as advocacy. This situation creates a very difficult environment for the NGOs sector to properly establish the advocacy works in Afghanistan.

Since advocacy is a less visible comparing to the other types of service and at the meantime doesn't attract much funding from donors, the interest in advocacy among the NGO community, especially Afghan NGOs also remains very low in Afghanistan.

However, working in the filed of advocacy doesn't necessary requires abandoning other sectors of work rather it requires integration of advocacy into other sectors. The NGOs working in other sectors will have greater advantage because of easy access to the reliable information and will be placed in a better position to do both community advocacy and policy advocacy at the same time.

### **5.5 Afghan Capacity on Advocacy:**

Low capacity for advocacy works, particularly among Afghan NGOs, was identified as a major issue limiting the scope for initiation effective advocacy processes in Afghanistan. The issue of insufficient analytical capacity amongst Afghan NGOs was repeatedly brought up. There is also limited capacity to conduct quality research, produce analytical information and create concrete advocacy messages. The ability to present the messages rightly is also limited.

As yet no proper investment has been made for building the Afghan capacity on advocacy. Basic understanding of advocacy by Afghans was reported to be missing. Most of the Afghans see implementation of the project and service delivery as the only way to solve the issues. Advocacy is seen less important as a programme component. None of the Afghan NGOs interviewed had the assigned or dedicated staff to carry out the advocacy works and integrate advocacy into the program components. Advocacy by the Afghan NGOs are done on ad hoc basis and in a reactive manner. Advocacy was not found to be the core aspect of work in the Afghan NGOs. Lack of interest amongst Afghans on advocacy is another challenge limiting the advocacy initiatives in Afghanistan.

There always been very limited Afghan presence in the advocacy processes in Afghanistan. A clear example of this is the very low participation of Afghans in the ACBAR advocacy meetings. It is believed that most of the advocacy processes are currently led and followed by the expatriates only. Though there are some interest for advocacy at the top level but there is very little interest or understanding of advocacy at the lower levels in the Afghan NGOs.

Limited or no funding for advocacy, insufficient capacity, low receptivity especially in the Afghan government, cultural sensitivity, war mentalities; trauma and distress caused by war, lack of trust were also mentioned to be the main reasons lowering the interest and participation in the advocacy initiatives in Afghanistan.

## **5.6 Less Reliable Information:**

Lack of reliable information for advocacy was reported to be a major issue in Afghanistan. The information on certain issues is not always based on scholarly scrutinized process or proper field-based quality research/findings. The information is usually based on surface observations and opinions expressed by some. The challenge remains as how to ensure the information is reliable and available for effective use in advocacy.

## **5.7 Afghan Analytical Capacity:**

The lack of Analytical Capacity at the Afghan end is a major issue and will stay as a major issue in the future. The main reason given is that it requires an extended capacity for the Afghan to build analytical skills and abilities. It is sometimes very much linked to a systematic education and experience, which is widely missing in Afghanistan.

## **5.8 Lack of Literature on Advocacy:**

Lack of sufficient and adequate literature on advocacy in local languages in Afghanistan is a major problem. The term advocacy is even not meaningfully translated into Dari or Pashto, the local languages. The availability of literature on advocacy in local languages will greatly increase the understanding and knowledge of the people about the topic. There are a lot of materials available on advocacy around the world in English, but not

enough in Afghanistan. Reading materials about advocacy and knowing about best practices will give new insights to the subject and inspire Afghans to consider working in this very important field of work.

### **5.9 Problem with Advisors:**

There are concerns about monopolization of ideas by advisors, both at the government or NGO levels. It was reported that sometimes the advisors both Afghan and international monopolize the good ideas and don't want to share them with others. It was not very clear in this research to see whether monopolization of ideas was on advocacy related issues only or also in the other areas or both. Such a mentality and attitude certainly lowers the level of cooperation and discourages collaborative actions consequently limiting the scope for expansion of effective advocacy works in Afghanistan.

### **5.10 NGO Place:**

Some NGOs are receiving funds from the governments sources, which some people find such arrangements somehow very delicate. In these circumstances, the challenge is how to maintain independence as NGO from the government influences through their funding, coming with the conditionalities. Principally, the NGO sector is to be independent from government. The issue is how to keep balance and limit the influence of the funding sources. This will require self-control on the part of NGOs not to compromise on their principles.

### **5.11 Advocacy Receptivity:**

One of the major challenges identified by this research is the low level of receptivity for advocacy works especially in the Afghan government. The respondents mentioned the problem of little capacity and low interest of the government employees about these issues. The knowledge and understanding of the key government employees about the current development thinking and approaches was mentioned to be quite outdated. Therefore, the government employees find it very difficult to adjust and adapt to this rapidly changing environment. Conservative attitude amongst the Afghans working with the government was also reported to be an issue. Unavailability of right persons in the ministries to work with on certain advocacy issues is again adding to this problem.

### **5.12: Advocacy Culture Less Developed:**

Additionally, Afghanistan has a very little experience of the advocacy works and the advocacy culture has not yet promoted desirably in the country. The challenge is how to promote participatory approaches to development so that it can allow space for effective advocacy works to take place in Afghanistan.

### **5.13 Weak Civil Society:**

Weak and disorganized civil society in Afghanistan was mentioned to be a problem limiting the effectiveness and scope of the advocacy works. There is no clearly defined

space for civil society in Afghanistan (neither well recognized nor being supported by the government). Among the other civil society groups the NGOs are seem to be having more established and formal structure and functions, but as yet they are not well organized and the coordination among them is poor.

#### **5.14 Bad NGO Image:**

Despite the valuable contributions the NGOs are making in the process of reconstruction, they have failed to present its true image to the government and the general public. The Afghan government does not see NGOs as partners to have complimentary and supportive role. The NGOs' image in front of the Afghan government is currently at stake.

#### **5.15 Overall Lack of Capacity in community level Advocacy:**

The NGOs interviewed mentioned to have very important role both in policy advocacy and community advocacy in Afghanistan. According to the respondents the community level advocacy in Afghanistan has received lesser attention than the policy advocacy. There is a strong need to increase the effective policies at the organizational level, for the community advocacy in Afghanistan.

#### **5.16 Advocacy without Research and Research without Advocacy:**

There is a very close and strong link between research and advocacy. Advocacy is often done based on reliable information in hand and it can be obtained through conducting quality research. The problem identified by this research was the issue of advocacy without research and research without advocacy.

#### **5.17 No Deep Understanding of the Problems:**

Understanding of problems based on surface observations and perceptions was also reported to be a big issue while carrying out Advocacy works. Then the challenge will be how to ensure the quality researches are conducted in Afghanistan and the findings of the researches are then utilized for systematic advocacy purposes.

#### **5.18 Prioritizing Problems:**

It is often believed that the emergency phase in Afghanistan has passed and the country is in transition to peace and development stage. Even if to accept this, the country is not yet fully ready for development activities. The needs remain great and the problems are too many. Thus the advocacy work is faced with the challenge as how to prioritize the problem and decide to work on a particular advocacy in a more focused and consolidated manner.

### **5.19 Cultural Sensitivity:**

Cultural sensitivities on certain issues were mentioned also challenge for advocacy works in Afghanistan. There are issues in Afghanistan that require strong advocacy but due to cultural sensitivity the NGOs decide not to do much because they think so much of advocacy on sensitive issues will have repercussion and will jeopardize other processes and activities of these organization and the community. For instance the continuous support of Christian Aid (CA) in Herat province for its partners to work on self-emulations is mostly marred by the cultural sensitivity by the local communities since it involves women of their families.

### **5.20 Male Domination:**

Male domination was identified as a challenge for advocacy works in Afghanistan. Working on advocacy in a male dominated society not only restricts involvement of women in the process but also reduces the receptivity and effectiveness of the advocacy works particularly when the advocacy theme is related to women issues which again in some cases are too culturally sensitive.

### **5.21 Lack of Free Media:**

Media plays a very important role in advocacy. The potential for advocacy through media is very high; however the media should be free and independent. The concern expressed by NGOs was that in Afghanistan there is no or insufficient number of free press to deliver the true advocacy messages across.

### **5.22 Finding a Balance for Risk:**

Finding a balance between censorship of the information and putting the NGOs/partners at risk was mentioned to be a challenge. The respondents mentioned that there are certain issues that are very sensitive and needs to be reflected for advocacy but due to security risks they are censored. Too much of censorship of the information or messages makes the advocacy works useless, however, full reflection of the sensitive information also involves risks especially in the current insecure environment of Afghanistan.

There are further challenges to the works of Advocacy in Afghanistan as follows:

- The advocacy works in Afghanistan is not linked from local to the national levels.
- Link missing between NGOs and other Civil Society Organizations in Afghanistan
- Self-centered individuals only concentrating on their own interests
- Preventive processes missing in Advocacy works, where the issues can be prevented through other developmental interventions and no Advocacy may be required to take the issue further to the policy or other levels.
- Battling rear-guard fronts and addressing only the surface issues, not tackling the root causes.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **6.1 Choosing the Right Topic:**

Organizations to be strategic and rational in choosing Advocacy topics and partners. By Strategic, the organizations interviewed meant taking into account social, economic and political/ security climate, being aware of capacity, opportunities and challenges in the area. This specially includes understanding the political, economic and social climate in Afghanistan and choosing partners based on different realities, not personal feelings.

### **6.2 Improving Environment for Advocacy:**

It is imperative for effective Advocacy to have suitable environment within which to operate effectively. Improvement of the environment for Advocacy in Afghanistan is essential. This covers a whole range of not only security or political<sup>1</sup> environment but also economic environment which includes what are our constraints in terms of budget for Advocacy? Do we want expansion, new initiatives? The other aspect of concern is the social environment which needs to identify problems such as do we have public will in Afghanistan for our Advocacy? Have we made our issues known to potential stakeholders? It is a whole compassing theme for the NGOs to work with the government and the local communities in facilitating the improvement of the environment for the Advocacy works.

### **6.3 Forming Advocacy Groups:**

As a major recommendation, many NGOs involved in the Advocacy initiatives in Afghanistan are emphasizing on forming Advocacy groups (not only organizations, but individuals as well dedicated to the Advocacy works). The belief is that no Advocacy can be carried out in a vacuum, involvement with other organizations on this field in Afghanistan is a very important aspect for successful Advocacy. There are different ways for forming such groups; Finding out through different ACBAR, AREU, HRRAC and other sources about who are working on Advocacy in Afghanistan, receiving email circulations, newsletters, magazines are also important factors in knowing other like minded organizations. Different people like leaders of organizations, Advisors at the Afghan ministry levels, local Afghan and international researchers, and not to forget friends, are the people who can very much support our Advocacy works. This also can come through support for ACBAR, HRRAC and like minded consortiums and bodies for joint actions.

### **6.4 Provision and Finding Accurate Information:**

Provision and getting accurate information is also another recommendation coming from some of the organizations interviewed. It is very important to get accurate information not only about the topic of the Advocacy but also on different government policies. If

---

<sup>1</sup> Do we have political will at the organization level? Or are we building awareness for a day in which the security/ political environment is more favorable in Afghanistan for our Advocacy?

community level advocacy, knowing the local Afghan customs/ norms/ laws, learning about the traditional systems e.g. Shuras or other local authorities in the area. On the other hand getting information about the Advocacy topic itself is an important for success of the Advocacy works. Though it is very difficult to trust the national government sources for provision of information, coordinating bodies, regional office of other aid organization, local and international media can provide good support for providing that needed information, not to exclude researches. It is very important that the information for Advocacy works be obtained through people's engagement

### **6.5 Facilitate Creating Impartial Media:**

It is also very important to facilitate and promote creation of an impartial and aware media in order to provide good information for the Advocacy works and also be able to reflect the messages of Advocacy to different sources such as government, public and international levels.

### **6.6 Improved Coordination:**

More coordination is needed between NGOs and other civil society organizations on Advocacy works. Even though part of Civil Society, NGOs have not been able to meaningfully coordinate their work and action on Advocacy with other Civil Society organizations. This is mainly due to lack of communication channels, lack of interest, lack of organizational and communication capacity both at the NGOs and other Civil Society organizations and others. Promotion of Civil Society take a long time, however without a powerful Civil Society the holistic approaches to Advocacy, strategies and plans can't be widely implemented.

### **6.7 Facilitate Improving the Security:**

For most process involved in the Advocacy process, the security very much comes to play especially in Afghanistan. Hence improving the security situation in the country is one of the major factors where NGOs, people and other bodies can feel safe and secure to deliver their messages across freely and without any fear. Unless there is not a drastic improvement in the security situation, it is very difficult for the organizations and individuals to freely do their work without fear of being killed, tortured, and kidnapped for what they say.

### **6.8 Developing Strategies:**

For the NGOs who are interested to shift their focus to Advocacy as their programme activity, it is necessary that they develop strategies to work in a more focused and consolidated manner. Over the years, donors, aid delivery mechanisms and the policies of the implementing NGOs has been to treat the situation in Afghanistan as emergency. This caused many major Afghan and International NGOs to loose focus from their field of expertise and engaged them in implementing projects from variety of sectors irrelevant to their expertise.

## **6.9 Community Involvement:**

In order to increase the people's stake in bringing across our Advocacy messages, we need to conduct inclusive community based surveys with a continuous process of sharing the results of the research with the community. This is how the community's interest increases. Their continuous involvement in different processes of these surveys also increases the awareness and capacity of the communities.

## **6.10 Targeting Different Government Authorities:**

One common practice with the Policy Level Advocacy is that NGOs normally target the top level government authorities removing other layers of authorities from our lists. It is usually the practice that either minister or the head of major companies or departments are the target and mid level bureaucrats are easily bypassed. If these mid level bureaucrats are not involved from the beginning either they don't know the message correctly or don't wish to properly implement these processes.

## **6.11 Advocacy and Research as a Continuous Process:**

Advocacy and Research to be seen as a continuous process not a one off activities. It was noted that some of the organizations involved in major Research and Advocacy projects see the process task oriented rather than process oriented. Once the research is carried out and the Advocacy is done, the chapter is closed and no follow up on the issues done. There are instances that Advocacy themes are changing very quickly within the organization.

## **6.12 Right People for Right Research:**

For success of long term Advocacy works, research components are necessary. For doing these research qualified personal is also needed. Though it is easy to find international staff coming in for short assignments and leaving the country after their research. For successful Advocacy process what is needed though is local capacities for Research and Advocacy who know the realities in the ground and remain in the country and can follow up the process in a more sustainable and cost effective way. However, there is immense need for the capacity building of the locals on Research and Advocacy processes.

## **6.13 Dedicated Afghans for Advocacy Positions:**

Persons dedicated to the Advocacy works in the Afghan NGOs can be resources for developing Advocacy strategies and implementing these strategies. At the moment there is a total absence of the dedicated Advocacy personnel from the Afghan NGOs. Most of the Advocacy works in these organizations are carried out on adhoc basis by different personal. As an example, Afghan NGOs are represented in the Advocacy coordinating meeting by programme department staff, who in turn have enough other programme related duties and once they go back to their offices, they either forget the message or are unable to follow up on these issues.

#### **6.14 Budget Allocation for Advocacy:**

Organizations both national and international in Afghanistan need specific budget allocations at the organizational level for the Advocacy initiatives and works. Advocacy requires dedicated staff, time and resources and getting these are not possible with budget allocations from the donors. It also include donors interest for such budget line items. Most of the time donors show less interest in funding Advocacy or related programme since it is difficult to have clear indicators for impacts on these activities, comparing to constructing a bridge or providing wheat.

#### **6.15 Institutionalizing Advocacy in Afghanistan:**

In Afghan context Advocacy needs to be institutionalized. Also internalization of Advocacy is needed. At the moment there is little practice or understanding of the topic even at the national level. A strategic process taken forward by the NGOs, both national and international about awareness and understanding the effectiveness of Advocacy at the Government, Civil Society and other public spheres are very much needed.

#### **6.16 Advocacy Response to the Emergencies:**

While carrying out the Advocacy works in long terms basis, carrying out research is an important factor for successful implementation of these activities, however, in emergency situations like earthquakes or natural disasters the organizations can base their Advocacy on media and information through local organizations.

#### **6.17 Political Will in the NGOs:**

Advocacy requires political will within the NGOs since without it, the organization can't carry out proper Advocacy programs by pressures or persuasions from donor or community. Organizations need to be willing to commit their resources and energies in developing sound Advocacy strategies and commit staff and resources to form proper mechanisms for implementation of these strategies.

#### **6.18 Inclusive Advocacy:**

Because advocacy works to influence systems or laws, it requires a long-term, sustained effort by a number of people which can include government and other officials as well. To change the policies of these agencies, organizations or departments which are part of government or are established by government and operated under laws or governmental rules and policies, continuous contacts, coalition and building trust is necessary with the government departments.

#### **6.19 Non-English Speakers and Advocacy:**

Mechanisms need to be developed for simple information sharing amongst non-English speakers to know the terms and concepts of Advocacy. One of the major issues sidelining the presence and participation of Afghans to the Advocacy meetings and other processes

is their command in English. The terms used for Advocacy and during these processes are complex and for people with standard command on English, understanding these terms are difficult. Hence mechanisms need to be developed e.g. de briefing after or before Advocacy meetings on terms used etc.

As a major step for the organization to feel the ownership of the Advocacy process, ACBAR and other organizations should rotate the chair of the Advocacy meetings so others take the lead and responsibilities and get more involved in these processes.

### **6.20 Transfer of Knowledge:**

Mechanisms need to be developed for Afghans to work with expatriates and expatriates to transfer their knowledge and experience. This is to enable Afghans to slowly take the lead. At the moment it is difficult for Afghans to take the lead in environment with expatriates are coming afresh with the new ideas with Advocacy, good salaries and dedicated jobs to this field.

### **6.21 Coordination:**

Coordination is very necessary for the NGOs involved in Advocacy in order to have their messages should not confuse the public. Different times conflicting Advocacy messages confuse the general public about the facts and which way to choose for their benefits.

### **6.22 Long Term Funding:**

Donors not only need to feel the need for funding the Advocacy related works in Afghanistan but they also need to realize that usually long term funding is needed for Advocacy works. This is because we need to see Advocacy as a long and sustained process, with different follow ups and continued support.

### **6.23 Indicators for Advocacy Evaluation:**

At the moment the effectiveness or failures of the Advocacy in Afghanistan could hardly be measured. This is mainly because indicators for the evaluating the Advocacy works has not usually been developed. Despite that the impact of Advocacy is hard to measure in short term, practical indicators needs to be developed in order to assess where the work carried out has any positive or negative affect on the lives of the beneficiaries.

### **6.24 National Advocacy Plan:**

NGOs with the involvement of the other Civil Society players need to develop a National Advocacy Plan for Afghanistan. Through this plan the role of different actors, responsibilities and other processes can clearly be identified and Advocacy activities can have more visible impacts on the lives of Afghans.

### **6.25 Crafting Proper Advocacy Messages:**

One of the successes of Advocacy is that the Advocate be able to craft a proper message. Crafting proper Advocacy messages is not easy task as language, concept and other factors comes into play. In order to address this factor, plans for continuous capacity building needs to be developed and implemented in special language, specially English language etc.

### **6.26 Afghans need Natural/ Organic Growth in Advocacy:**

For Afghans to come to the driving seat and take the lead, there should be organic/natural development of nationals on Advocacy issues. This is possible through continuous transfer of knowledge by expatriates, rigorous involvement, capacity building and other processes.

### **6.27 Focusing on Major Advocacy Themes:**

For beginner like national organizations it is necessary to be focused on major advocacy issues, rather than small issues. This is not to lose concentration on different smaller issues and focus only on one or two major issues. Though the general capacity building needs to be carried out through a process of skills, processes and systems development for implementation of strategy at the Afghan level in order for these Afghan NGOs to embark on these Advocacy themes.

## Annex I

### *List of Individuals/ Organizations Interviewed for Advocacy Research:*

No	Name of the Organization	Persons to Meet	Position	Date and Time	Appointment Status
1	Mercy Corps	Michael Bowers	Country Director	Confirmed: 6th at 9am September at Mercy Corps Office	Met
2	Care International	Paul Barker	Country Director	Sunday 18th with Paul Barker at CARE office, 10am	Met
3	ACBAR	Barbara Stapelton	Advocacy and Policy Advisor	Cancelled	Cancelled
4	Christian Aid	Sultan Fazil	Advocacy Officer	Confirmed: Monday 12th September at 4pm, CPAU	Met
5	Government Advisor	Paul O'Brian	Advisor	Confirmed: Tuesday 27th September at the Prime Minister's House	Sent via email
6	ADA	Esmat Haidary	Managing Director	Cancelled	Cancelled
7	Rights and Democracy	Royan Rahmani	Country Director	Confirmed: Wednesday 14th at R&D	Met
8	AWEC	Shinkai Karokhail	Director	Confirmed: Sunday 25th September at AWEC	Met
9	AREU	Roxana Shapoor	Advocacy	Confirmed: Tuesday 13 September lunch time	Met
10	Ockenden International	Lubna Bahayani	Programme Funding Coordinator	Confirmed: Saturday 8th at 30pm her house	Met
11	Save the Children (US)	Lesli Wilson	Country Director	Confirmed: 19th September at Save the Children US	Met
12	Swedish Committee	Wiiu Lillesaar	Gender Coordinator	Confirmed: 25th September, 3pm at CPAU	Met
13	ACSF	Eng. Aziz	Director	Confirmed provisional on Wednesday, 3.30pm at ACSF	Met
14	FES	Dr. Almut Weiland Karimi	Country Director	Confirmed: Tuesday 20th September at 11am at FES	Met

<b>15</b>	YLF (Young Leaders Forum)	Rohullah Niazi	Project Coordinator	Cancelled	Cancelled
<b>16</b>	BBC/ AEP	Shiraz Siddiqui	Project Director	Not in the country	Cancelled
<b>17</b>	Oxfam GB	Christian Dennys	Policy and Advocacy Advisor, OXFAM GB	Wednesday 7th September 9am	Met
<b>18</b>	Action Aid	Grant Walton	Advocacy Officer	Confirmed Provisional Sunday 2nd October at 2pm at Action Aid Office	Met
<b>19</b>	Asia Foundation	Qazi Fazil Rabbi	Programme Officer	Cancelled	Cancelled
<b>20</b>	CPAU	Kanishka and Suleman	Managing Director and Programme Director	Condcuted the Survey	Conducted the Survey
<b>21</b>	HRRAC	Horria Musadiq	Project Director	Confirmed on Thursday 20th October	Met
<b>22</b>	Hamkari	Wassey Arian	Director	Confirmed: 21st September at 2pm Hamkari Office	Met
<b>23</b>	AIHRC	Fahim Hakim	Deputy Director	Confirmed: 8th October at 10am, AIHRC Office	Met on two occasions
<b>24</b>	Care International	Scott Braunschweig	Advocacy Coordinator	Confirmed: 18th September at 1.30 at Care	Met

## Annex II

# **Terms of Reference: Study on Advocacy Works in Afghanistan**

## **I. Background**

It has been the characteristics of NGOs (national and international) over the years in Afghanistan to concentrate their efforts on providing assistance focused on relief and physical infrastructure development. This was due to the fact that the NGOs were operating in an environment of complex political emergency and collapsed state. Having said this we need not to forget the imperative contribution of some national and international humanitarian organizations in carrying out the limited development services throughout these years.

Based on the features of the post conflict situation, there have been some shifts in policies and approaches that further encourage the process of strengthening the role of civil societies in Afghanistan. This includes enhancing the role of civil society organizations in advocacy initiatives as a vital prerequisite for effective reconstruction efforts in a post conflict situation.

Presently, CaBARP makes a vital contribution in the process of facilitating capacity building for the civil society organizations in Afghanistan. This year, CaBARP capacity building initiative on advocacy would focus with partner organizations such as CHA and ADA. Prior to the capacity building, it is considered important by CaBARP to seek the help of an expert organization to conduct a study and to prepare a background information paper. This study will help the process of designing, planning and implementation of the capacity building on advocacy issues in the future.

For this study CaBARP has approached the Research and Capacity Building Department of CPAU, a semi independent department of the organization, directly involved in carrying out research and capacity building activities in Afghanistan. Based on the mutual understanding between CaBARP and CPAU, the later is mandated to conduct the study.

## **II. Objective of the Service**

- To conduct the study through identification and interviewing the organizations involved in Advocacy works in Afghanistan since 2001.
- To conduct the study in order to find out information on Policy Advocacy and Community Level Advocacy.
- To prepare background information paper to give insight to CaBARP for its future involvement in the capacity building of CHA and ADA on issues of Advocacy.

## **III. Scope of Work**

The study will focus on Policy Advocacy and Community Level Advocacy. This will be done through identifying of organizations and individuals who are engaged in advocacy works in Afghanistan since 2001. This study will look at the sorts of Advocacy initiatives taken place so far.

The Research and Capacity Building Department of CPAU will provide analytical information on effective and failed approaches of Advocacy carried out in Afghanistan.

The out put of this study, in terms of a report, will contribute to better shaping the capacity building initiatives of CaBARP for its partner organizations.

#### **IV. Methodology**

The Research and Capacity Building Department of CPAU will take the responsibility for developing a strategy to conduct the study. This strategy will include developing a questionnaire as part of its research methodology, review the available literature, interview the target audience, collecting data from different available sources, analyzing the data and producing the comprehensive analytical report to CaBARP.

#### **V. Time Frame**

The whole process of conducting this study will take a maximum of 19 days, with different interval starting from 4<sup>th</sup> of September to the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2005.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE ADVOCACY RESEARCH**

CPAU is conducting a research on behalf of CaBARP/ NOVIB on Advocacy activities of NGOs amongst the civil society in Afghanistan. The purpose of this research is to prepare a background information paper for CaBARP so that it can help the process of capacity building for CaBARP partner organizations on issues of advocacy. CPAU has been assigned to carry out this research which would cover the advocacy works in Afghanistan from 2001 to date. A number of national and international NGOs have been identified beings involved in advocacy works in Afghanistan and your organization is amongst them. In all this process your valuable experience and contribution will positively influence the result of this research. Therefore, we are here to ask you questions and hear your views.

### **PART I: BRIEF ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE:**

**Question 1:** Can you briefly explain the work of your organization (sector of work, geographical coverage, working involvement in Afghanistan since?)

### **PART II: ADVOCACY RELATED QUESTIONS:**

**Question 2:** What are your organization's major advocacy related works in Afghanistan since 2001?

**Question 3:** What type of advocacy programme you have been involved (types of Advocacy: policy level, community level, internal and external)?

**Question 4:** How you do your advocacy works?

**Question 5:** What were the most successful aspects of your advocacy works? (Examples)

**Question 6:** Can you tell us the success factors?

**Question 7:** What were the major challenges you faced since 2001 in regards to your advocacy works in Afghanistan?

**Question 8:** How did you overcome the challenges?

**Question 9:** What do you see as a current and future challenges for your organization in this field?

**Question 10:** Based on your experience, what do you see as future challenges for advocacy work in Afghanistan?

### **PART III: LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Question 11:** What are your suggestions and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the advocacy works in Afghanistan?

Note: what materials (soft and hard) can you provide us in order for us to enrich our understanding with regards to your advocacy works (strategy, advocacy paper, research, press release, feedback).

## Annex IV

### Literature Review

A good number of resources on Advocacy related themes have been donated and received from a good number of partners organizations, colleagues and friends both national and internationally. The research team had an extract of most relevant and useful materials from the following resources:

1. Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scope Study by Jennifer Chapman and Amboka Wameyo, ACTION AID
2. Advocacy Study Pack: TEARFUND Case Study Series, by Andy Atkins and Graham Gordon
3. Advocacy Skills Training Programme by Ian Chandler of INTRAC for UPPAP, funded by Oxfam GB
4. Afghanistan Policy Briefs, CARE International
5. Afghanistan Advocacy Initiatives Activity Report
6. Whistling in the Dark: Civil/ Military Cooperation and the New Wars by A. John Watson, President CARE Canada
7. Report by the Afghanistan Advocacy Initiative by CARE Afghanistan Office
8. A Handbook for Planning Advocacy by Save the Children
9. An Introduction to Advocacy by Ritu R. Sharma, SARA
10. Advocacy and Debt: A Practical Guide, TEARFUND
11. Promoting Policy Change, CARE International
12. Material on a Training Course by Christian Aid to its Afghan Partners, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005, Afghanistan

The followings are the extracts from the above sources:

#### *1. What is Advocacy?*

**1.1 Advocacy:** is a strategy to influence policy makers when they make laws and regulations, distribute resources, and make other decisions that affect people's lives. The principal aims of advocacy are to create policies, reform policies, and ensure policies are implemented. Policy makers are typically government officials or those with formal

political power, but they also can be leaders in the private sectors whose decisions and behavior affect communities.

Several Advocacy strategies can be used to influence the decisions of policy makers, such as discussing problems directly with them, delivering messages through the media, or strengthening the ability of local organizations to advocate. Advocacy is on more option in a wide range of programme strategies for reducing poverty, and appropriate when you want to influence policies that are at the source of poverty and discrimination. Advocacy is essentially all about three things:

1. Creating policies where they are needed when none exists.
2. Reforming harmful or ineffective policies.
3. Ensuring good policies are implemented and enforced.

All together it is referred as Policy Change.

**1.2 Advocacy:** is a deliberate, systematic effort to influence public policies. a) Deliberate: Involving well thought intentional actions, clearly defined goals and not random or haphazard activities. b) Systematic: it entails an organized efforts following well defined stages and making use of defined tools. c) Public: means Government. d) Influence: policies and decision, choices and actions and all those systems that affect the people.

**1.3 Advocacy:** The term “Advocacy” has its origins in the legal profession where it refers to the role or profession of an “Advocate” namely someone who pleads or argues on behalf of someone else. Nowadays, it is used in a variety of situations and with a diverse range of approaches each with a slightly different contextual relevance, embodying different values, political views and goals. However, in a general sense, Advocacy refers to the process of actively engaging in activity to support, plead or argue in favor of a cause with the view to influence and facilitate change. In basic terms, this equates telling your story to a decision maker, through various means, with the express purpose of compelling them to do something. Ultimately, Advocacy is a process of communication which facilitates change.

**1.4 Advocacy:** a) Action aimed at changing the policies, positions and programmes of governments, institutions or organizations. b) An organized, systematic, and intentional influencing process on matters of public interest. c) Putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem, and building support for acting on both the problem and the solution. d) A social change process affecting attitudes, social relationships and power relations, which strengthens civil society and opens up democratic spaces.

**1.5 Advocacy:** Advocacy is the process of using information strategically to change/influence the policies that affect the lives of disadvantaged people. It often involves lobbying, dialogue, negotiations and many other tools and strategies to influence policy outcomes.

**1.6 Advocacy:** Is a strategic series of actions designed to influence those who hold governmental, political, economic or private power to implement public policies and practices that benefit those with less political power and fewer economic resources (the affected groups). An Advocacy campaign is a long term set of activities that includes research, planning, and acting, monitoring, and evaluating our Advocacy efforts. Alleviating poverty, fighting oppression, challenging injustice, or supporting sustainable development is all common themes of Advocacy campaigns. No matter what kind of public policy change we seek, all successful Advocacy campaigns share the same characteristics. They are: **a) Strategic:** We must research and plan our campaign carefully. **b) Series of Actions:** Advocacy is not simply one phone call, one petition, or one march but a set of coordinated activities. **c) Designed to Persuade:** We must use ideas or provide arguments that convince people that the desired change is important and they will support it. **d) Targeted:** We must aim our persuasion efforts at specific people who have the power to make our Advocacy campaign successful. **e) Build Alliances:** We must work with many stakeholders to increase the impact of our campaign. **f) Result in Change:** Our Advocacy campaign must result in a positive change in the lives of the people affected by the problem. For our Advocacy to be effective we must persuade the targets or our Advocacy campaign that; **What we want is what they want!**

**1.7 Advocacy:** First and foremost, Advocacy is strategy that is used around the world by (NGO), activist, and even policy makers themselves, to influence policies. Advocacy is about creation or reform of policies, but also about effective implementation and enforcement of policies. A policy a plan, course of action, or set regulations adopted by government, business or an institution, designed to influence and determines decisions or procedures. Advocacy is a mean to an end, another way to address the problems that we aim to solve through other programming strategies.

Advocacy involves delivering messages that are intended to influence the actions of policy makers. Advocacy can be direct, like asking a policy maker in person to take action, or indirect, such as trying to influence public opinion through the media. There is wide range of advocacy activities such as providing information, working in coalitions, mobilizing constituencies.

Since advocacy aims to change policies, it has the potential to reach a large number of households and to widen the cope of programme impact. Advocacy does not intend to replace other programme strategies; it rather expands the menu of effective strategies available. Sometimes it will be an appropriate strategy, sometimes it will not. This will depend on whether policies and their enforcement were identified as an important cause of a problem. A wider range of strategies will help us to increase the depth and breadth of our impact on poverty. Advocacy can be a means of convincing policy makers to fulfill their human responsibilities to others.

## 2. The Advocacy Cycle:

**a)** Your aim: What do you want to change? **b)** Analyze the situation: how can change be brought about? What events and opportunities are there? **c)** Identify Who: Who are you trying to influence? Who can help? **d)** Choose approaches: what approaches will work for each? What is your 'message' for each? **e)** Adapt the Plan: modify aims? Change tactics? Revise timescales? **f)** Plan Activities: who will do what? When? What resources will you need? **g)** Evaluate: what new events have happened? Do you need to change your approaches? What improvements are needed? **i)** Implement: Carry out planned activities.

## 3. What Advocacy is not?

According to CARE, the following is either not or not meant to be used as Advocacy:

- a) Extension Work:** Encouraging households to change their agricultural or health practices is an important programming strategy used in many CARE programmes. However, extension work is designed to influence individual decisions made at the household level not the behavior or decisions of policy makers that affect many households at once.
- b) Information, Education, and Communication:** Advocacy is not about launching a public campaign to change specific practices – such as social marketing encouraging people to use contraceptives. Rather, an advocacy campaign is intended to change public opinion about a policy issue. For example, an HIV/ AIDS advocacy campaign might promote more funding for it or more humane government policies toward people living with AIDS.
- c) Informing Government about CARE:** while becoming an effective advocate requires you to establish your credibility with policy makers, advocacy is not just about informing the government about your programmes. In advocacy information sharing is used as a deliberate strategy to influence specific decisions of policy makers. Still, building good relationships with policy makers is an important way to lay the foundation for advocacy.
- d) Raising public awareness about CARE and its programmes:** Often, CARE disseminates information through the media to raise its profile or visibility. The same techniques can be used for advocacy, but the purposes are different. In advocacy, CARE uses the media to deliver policy messages, to encourage people to take a certain view on an issue and, hopefully, to communicate their views with policy makers.
- e) Fundraising:** The primary purpose of advocacy is not to increase budget. Some advocacy may involve asking policy makers to allocate more resources for relief and development priorities, and sometimes this may benefit the organization. More often, however, it involves trying to influence a governmental agenda, corporate behavior, a specific public policy, or the implementation of a policy.

#### 4. Why Advocacy?

- Enables people's views and wishes to be heard
- Stimulates active debate, problem solving and change, promoting self awareness
- Promotes better identification of real needs and effective solutions
- Creates power or empowerment from effective representation
- Enables effective feedback of existing interventions between communities and external change agents, thus allowing the performance and progress of such interventions to be documented.
- Facilitates the evaluation of previous objectives, the extent to which they have been achieved and what still needs to be done.
- Facilitates systematic analysis of the relationship between processes and outcomes across a sample of communities.
- Advocacy forms an essential part of long term sustainable development.
- Scaling up the impact of:
  - Co-operation with government
  - Operational expansion
  - Linking the grassroots together
  - National and international lobbying and advocacy

**4.1 Advocacy and Society:** Understanding Advocacy requires that we understand democracy. Ideally, all societies have three spheres of influence: The State, the Private Sector and Civil Society. In a working democracy, the three spheres share power and work together. We will focus on Advocacy that is conducted by Civil Society in order to change a government policy or practice and advance the public interest. Some call this approach "people-centered Advocacy" or "social justice Advocacy".

**4.2 Advocacy and empowerment:** The process of advocating is itself empowering, since it is about increasing people's choices and increasing the number of people influencing decisions.

**4.3 Policy Change Process:** Policy change process is all about: **a)** Creating policies where they are not existing. **b)** Reforming harmful, ineffective and restrictive policies. **c)** Ensuring enforcement and implementation of good policies

#### 5. Types of Advocacy:

- Policy advocacy
- Issue based advocacy
- Interest based advocacy
- Ideological advocacy (Freedom movement, totalitarianism)
- Mass advocacy (Global issues, like peace, poverty, environment)
- Bureaucratic advocacy (Researcher, consultants, table based advocacy)

## *6. The Advocacy Approach:*

**6.1 Abolitionist approach:** which target the political level of institutions. This approach attempts to influence:

- Global processes
- Structures
- Ideologies

**6.2 Reformist approach:** which targets the technical and regional levels of institutions. This approach attempts to influence:

- Specific policies
- Programs
- Project

## *7. Planning an Advocacy Initiative:*

### **7.1 Analyzing Policies:**

- Identify a policy issue
- Identify key actors and institutions
- Analyze the policy environment
- Summarize policy findings
- Identify options for policy change

### **7.2 Outlining an Advocacy Strategy:**

- Select a policy issue
- Select target audiences
- Set a policy goal
- Identify allies and opponents

### **7.3 Refining an Advocacy Strategy:**

- Select roles
- Identify key messages
- Define advocacy activities

### **7.4 Framing a Plan:**

- Set a timeline
- Prepare a budget
- Prepare a logframe
- Plan for monitoring and evaluation

## *8. Implementing an Advocacy Initiative:*

Once you have an advocacy strategy in place, you can start to make more detailed decisions about how to achieve your policy goals. Some of the most important decisions you will make when implementing an advocacy strategy are:

### **8.1 What messages you will send to your target audience:**

- Develop clear and compelling messages
- Deliver messages effectively
- Reinforce messages

### **8.2 How you will work with others in advocacy:**

- Build local capacity for advocacy
- Organizing constituencies
- Working through coalitions

### **8.3 How you will employ advocacy tactics, such as negotiation or using the media, to achieve your aims:**

- Communicate effectively
- Negotiate
- Use the media
- Manage risks

## *9. Common concerns about Advocacy:*

Many people have concerns about becoming involved in Advocacy:

- We are too small and can make no difference ourselves
- We do not know enough about the situation
- Advocacy is confrontational
- Speaking out will threaten ourselves or those we speak for

## *10. Top tips:*

- Don't underestimate the time needed – advocacy is long term, policy change is slow and subject to reversal
- Work as a team. Successful advocacy requires a range of skills, including research, communication, project management and policy skills
- Have very clear objectives. Link your activities very closely to those objectives
- Check that you are not kicking at an open door before taking up other people's time and setting and setting up a confrontation
- Think carefully about the potential implications of what you are doing for your partners, especially if you are asking them to put their head above the parapet

- But beware, successful advocacy work is complex, the numbers of stakeholders are often huge and each has a different perspective on how the issue should be approached. It is essential to establish early on whose agenda (north or south, within a coalition etc.) You are working to and what this means in practice.
- Define your primary targets, as those people who are in the best position to achieve what you want done. If your chosen route to the decision makers is not working, take a step back and look for a new 'way in'.
- Spend time nurturing relationships with your targets. Think about targets in terms of individuals not institutions. Learn as much as you can about the individual, and about their organization.
- Follow up on commitments you think people have made in other words, beware of paper victories and false starts.