



5.4 Planning a campaign

STAR national works with other refugee organisations so you can join in campaigns already planned by experts. This means that as a STAR group you usually won't need to plan your own campaign from scratch, but instead can concentrate on making an impact.

However, it's still useful to know some basics about campaign planning so you understand your role in a national campaign. And a lot of the advice below will be helpful in planning individual campaign actions or events as well as whole campaigns.

Introduction

Campaigning is about making a change. It usually involves trying to influence someone to change a policy or rule.

To run a successful campaign you need know the answer to the following questions:

- ★ What is the change I want to make?
- ★ How can this change be made?
- ★ What can I do to make this change happen?

Each action you take needs to contribute towards the change you want to make. If you don't know how it will help make that change then it might not be worth doing.

Thinking through the following **5 steps** will help plan your campaign and keep you focused:

1. Set Aims & Objectives

Your aim should be a clear statement about the purpose of the campaign. What do you want to happen?

A good aim will:

- ★ be simple for anyone to understand
- ★ be a statement supporters can agree and sign up to
- ★ motivate people to get involved and keep trying
- ★ keep you focused on what all this campaigning is for!

(e.g. 'To end the detention of asylum seeking children')

You then need to break down your aim into smaller objectives, which will be steps along the way to achieve your aim. An objective is just a specific aim to use in your planning.

A good objective will be:

- ★ Specific – what exactly are you aiming to do?

- ★ Realistic – can you really achieve it with your current resources?
- ★ Timed – when will you do it?

(e.g. ‘To get the Labour Party to commit to a policy of ending child detention in its General Election manifesto by January 2010’)

2. Identify your Target

Ask yourself 3 questions:

1. Who has the ability to make the change?

It may be a Government minister, MPs, university Vice-Chancellor, or an immigration detention centre. Who makes the decisions? They are your target.

2. How am I going to reach my target? Who do they listen to?

Can you contact them directly by phone, email or meeting? Do you need to get the support of another person or organisation before going directly to your target?

3. How will you persuade your target? What is their position on this issue?

You need to know what will convince your target. Do they need to know the public support the issue? Are they concerned about the cost?

3. Check your Resources

Before you start campaigning, check what capacity you have to make it a success.

You might want to consider:

- ★ Number of volunteers and how much time they have
- ★ Money available
- ★ Influential contacts
- ★ Skills in your group (e.g. making a video!)

Another extremely important resource is other organisations. Working with partners is often crucial to any campaigning success. Partnerships can:

- ★ Provide strength in numbers and can increase your legitimacy
- ★ Enable the campaign to reach groups and decision makers you wouldn't be able to reach on your own
- ★ Enable you to focus on your strengths
- ★ Increase your campaign resources

Allies and partners may include local refugee-led organisations, other societies such as Amnesty, your Students Union or local community groups.

4. Plan your Strategy & Actions

Now you know your aim, your specific objectives, your target and the resources you have, you can finally plan your strategy.

Try and write down in a few steps how you will achieve your objectives.

The ideal plan would have a series of steps starting with your actions and ending with the change you want, with each step following on from the last one.

Your overall strategy will show you what practical actions you need to take. Now make an action plan: write a list, look at the resources you need, identify who will do what and put it in a timeline.

It's vital that each action you take fits into a planned series of actions resulting in achieving your campaign aim.

5. Remember to Evaluate

How will you know you are progressing towards your campaign aim? How will you know if you need to change your tactics or adjust your timeline?

You need to monitor how your campaign is going and review your progress at regular intervals.