

Advocating for Children's Rights and Well-Being

An Interfaith Approach

A Guide Jointly Developed by the
Prayer and Action for Children and
Global Network of Religions for Children
Initiatives of Arigatou International



COMPANION TOOLKIT

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Structure of the Companion Toolkit	4
Who is this Companion Toolkit for?	5
Ethical Considerations	6
Activities	9
1. Identifying and prioritizing the advocacy issue	9
Change game	9
Red, yellow, green traffic lights	10
2. Analyzing the root causes	12
The problem tree	12
3. Identifying key stakeholders and partners	14
The stakeholder map	14
4. Advocacy action planning and implementation	16
The advocacy hot-air balloon	16
5. Monitoring, learning and adapting	21
Target game	21
Circle analysis	22
Annexes	24
i. Advocacy plan template	24
ii. Press release template	26
iii. Introduction letter template to address potential partners	27
iv. Petition template	28
v. Relevant sources on violence against children	29
vi. Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children	30
References	32



INTRODUCTION



The interfaith approach in the Guide *Advocating for Children's Rights and Well-Being* represents an effective way for diverse faith communities and faith-inspired organizations to express the inward, contemplative dimension of prayer and meditation, and the outward volitional dimension of action in joint efforts to catalyze sustainable and transformative change for children.

It is about bringing together faith communities and faith-inspired organizations of diverse religious and spiritual traditions to build upon their common call to service and put the values they have in common into action to drive positive change for children.

This Companion Toolkit to the Guide was jointly developed by two of Arigatou International's initiatives, Prayer and Action for Children and the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), to provide GNRC members and faith-inspired organizations with practical tools to inform and develop their advocacy action plans. The toolkit includes participatory activities designed to facilitate collaboration between adults and children when planning and carrying out advocacy. It also provides some useful templates that can be adapted for broader engagement and mobilization.



STRUCTURE OF THE COMPANION TOOLKIT

The activities included in this Companion Toolkit follow the five stages of the advocacy cycle described in the Guide (see Chapter 3.2):

1. Identifying and prioritizing the advocacy issue
2. Analyzing the root causes of the issue
3. Identifying key stakeholders and partners
4. Advocacy action planning and implementation
5. Monitoring, learning and adapting

For each of the stages, the toolkit suggests one or more activities that could be considered for deeper reflection, planning, and implementation of advocacy actions while applying an interfaith approach.

Please review all the activities before starting to use them. Each describes the objectives, materials, suggested time, and practical steps. Please bear in mind that the activities may take less or more time depending on the group and the reflections that result from the process. In order to increase effectiveness, it is recommended to use the activities following the **same order** as the five stages of the advocacy cycle.



WHO IS THE COMPANION TOOLKIT FOR?



This Companion Toolkit was designed for GNRC members and organizations who come from diverse faith communities, spiritual traditions and faith-inspired organizations. For practical purposes throughout the guide and companion toolkit, we refer to them as GNRC members and faith-inspired organizations. The participatory approach used for the development of the activities is based on our hope that the advocacy action involving planning and implementation engages both **adults and children**.



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Everyone who uses this Companion Toolkit with children is expected to follow [Arigatou International's Child Safeguarding Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#), thus aiming to provide ethical and meaningful participation of children that does no harm to any child, but rather ensures their safety and effective participation at all times. See [section 3.2.1](#) of the Guide for further information on the importance of collaborative participation between adults and children, and the application of the Nine Basic Requirements for Effective and Ethical Participation of Children.



Use the following checklist to ensure meaningful and ethical participation of children in advocacy:

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IS BEING...



Transparent and informative - children were provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely, and how this participation would take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact.

Voluntary - children were never coerced into expressing views against their wishes, provided their and their parents' informed consent, and were informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.

Respectful - children's views were treated with respect and children were provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working for and with children also respected children's views with regard to participation in public events and activities.

Relevant - the issues on which children were consulted and invited to participate are of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities.

Child-friendly - environments and working methods were adapted to children's capacities. Consideration was given to the fact that children need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities.

Inclusive - participation means being inclusive, avoids existing patterns of discrimination, and encourages opportunities for marginalized children, children from different religions, ethnic groups, and minority groups, including both girls and boys, to be involved.

Supported by training - adults have the preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with children and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities.

Safe and sensitive to risk - in certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults must take responsibility towards the children with whom they work and take every precaution to violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation.

Accountable - a commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. Children were informed later as to how their views were interpreted and used and the children were provided with the opportunity to give feedback.



7 Tips from the Advocacy Guide

Tip 1

Using **evidence-based approaches** to identify the advocacy issue, analyze the root causes, and develop key advocacy messages increases opportunities to engage more substantially with diverse stakeholders that can influence change.

Tip 2

Mapping your target audience ensures that your key messages and actions are addressed to the right stakeholders with an increased probability of success.

Tip 3

Working with other stakeholders has an enormous potential to amplify your voice and convey your message further and faster.

Tip 4

Using an **interfaith approach to developing advocacy messages** makes them more powerful when they emphasize the importance of spirituality in a child's development and highlight the role of all faith communities in supporting the child's ecosystem.

Tip 7

Planning and responsible use of online platforms are the key to successful online mobilization.

Tip 5

Selecting the **right format to communicate your advocacy message** is key to impactful actions.

Tip 6

Success in addressing UN agencies or funds as partners depends on several factors including **reaching out to the most relevant organizational area/unit**, introducing a **results-oriented and evidence-based collaboration proposal**, and addressing **common advocacy goals**.



ACTIVITIES

1. Identifying and prioritizing the advocacy issue

Change game¹



Objective:

To recognize the advantages of focusing advocacy efforts on one or two specific changes, rather than trying to address multiple changes together.



Time needed:

20 minutes



Materials:

None

Practical steps:

1. Ask the participants to pair up. Ask the participants to face their partners and spend one minute observing each other.
2. After one minute, ask the participants to turn so that they are back-to-back and cannot see each other. While they are back-to-back, instruct them to quickly change two things about their appearance *for example, they may take off their watch or change their hairstyle.*
3. Then ask the participants to face each other again and each should try to identify the two changes to the other's appearance.
4. Now ask the pair to turn again so that they are back-to-back and cannot see each other. This time instruct them to quickly change five things about their appearance.
5. Then ask the participants to face each other again and each should try to identify the five changes to the other's appearance.
6. After two minutes, ask the participants to think about and share their views on:
 - a. Whether it was easier to make two or five changes in their appearance
 - b. Whether it was realistic to make five changes in a short time
 - c. Whether it is sustainable to make lots of changes in a short time
7. Take a few minutes to encourage reflection on the added value of planning advocacy actions that focus on few, concrete and realistic changes. It does not mean that one change is enough to transform the broader issue but if efforts are invested in making it well, this will certainly contribute to a lasting, transformative change.

¹ Adapted from O'Kane, C., Barros, O. (2019). *Time to Talk—Children's Views on Children's Work. Toolkit II: Supporting collaborative and child-led advocacy.* Kindernothilfe and Terre des Hommes. Duisburg, Germany.



Red, yellow, green traffic lights²



Objective:

To identify, discuss, and prioritize an issue affecting children that GNRC members and faith-inspired organizations want to influence to bring about transformative change.



Time needed:

45-60 minutes



Materials:

Three large circles, in red, yellow, and green, Post-It Notes, pens, markers.

Practical steps:

1. Ask the participants to sit in a circle and use the large red, yellow, and green circles to simulate traffic lights and place them on the floor at the center of the group.
2. Explain that the red, yellow, green traffic lights will help reflect on the issues affecting children's rights and well-being in their context and identify their advocacy priority.
3. For GNRC members, the broad priority is the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children.³ Explain that some thematic areas within that broad priority include protecting children from violent extremism, gang violence and organized crime; nurturing spirituality and ending violence in child upbringing; ending sexual exploitation and abuse of children, including online; ending child poverty; and supporting vulnerable children.
4. Encourage the participants to think of *three* thematic areas/advocacy issues they consider more relevant to their context and work.

Some questions that could support this reflection process include:

- What is the unique role of faith communities and faith-inspired organizations in protecting children from this form of violence?
- How can our prayer and interfaith advocacy action specifically help to protect children from the forms of violence we aim to address?
- Why is this a good time to focus on these particular forms of violence?
- What are the risks associated with taking action on these particular forms of violence in our community/city/nation?

² Adapted from Landsdown, G., O'Kane, C. (2014) *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation, Booklet 3 How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation*. Save the Children.

³ See annex vi on the [Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children](#).



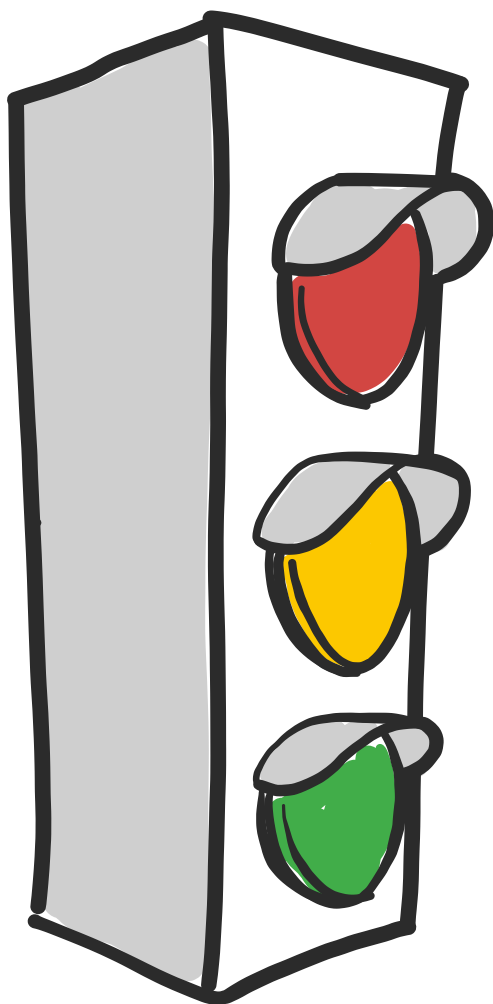


Figure 1.

Practical steps: (cont.)

5. Ask the participants to use Post-It Notes to write down individually the three thematic areas/advocacy issues they prioritized and to place the notes on the colored circles, depending on the level of priority they assigned (or would like to assign) to them where:

Red represents high priority;

Yellow represents medium priority, and;

Green represents low priority.

6. Give the participants some time to have a look at the diverse thematic areas/advocacy issues that were prioritized, and the level of priority assigned to each of them.
7. In plenary, share thematic areas/advocacy issues that were given high priority and build on the reflections from the Change Game to encourage agreement on one or two thematic areas/advocacy issues that, according to the group, may require higher priority for attention in upcoming advocacy actions.
8. Refer to Chapter 3.1.3 of the Guide to reflect on the [levels of change](#)⁴ that could be influenced by applying an interfaith approach to advocacy for children.

⁴ Attitudes, social norms, and behaviors, including those about or towards children; socio-economic systems and community safety nets; and legislation, policy and budgets.





ACTIVITIES

2. Analyzing the root causes

The problem tree⁵



Objective:

To analyze the root causes of the prioritized advocacy issue in order to inform advocacy planning and implementation.



Time needed:

45-60 minutes



Materials:

Flip chart paper, markers, and pens.

⁵ Adapted from O’Kane, C., Barros, O. (2019). *Time to Talk—Children’s Views on Children’s Work. Toolkit II: Supporting collaborative and child-led advocacy*. Kindernothilfe and Terre des Hommes. Duisburg, Germany.

⁶ See [annex v](#) of the Companion Toolkit for relevant sources on violence against children. For evidence-based data on violence against children visit: [UNICEF data](#)

Practical steps:

1. Explain that the problem tree will help the participants explore the root causes of the advocacy issue they prioritized. For the case of the Panama Commitments, its focus is on violence against children.
2. Draw the outline of a large tree ([see figure 2](#)) on a page of flip chart paper and write the priority issue on the trunk of the tree (e.g., *child sexual abuse and exploitation*).
3. Encourage the participants to discuss the immediate causes of the problem and record them next to the roots of the tree (e.g. *What are the immediate causes of child sexual abuse and exploitation?*).
4. For each immediate cause, again ask the participants, ‘Why?’ and record their responses. For example, if the participants say that one reason is a history of exposure to sexual violence, then ask the participants ‘*Why does that exposure to sexual violence exist?*’ This helps to explore and document the underlying cause(s). Prior to the session, remember to review the available evidence on the potential issues that could come up.⁶



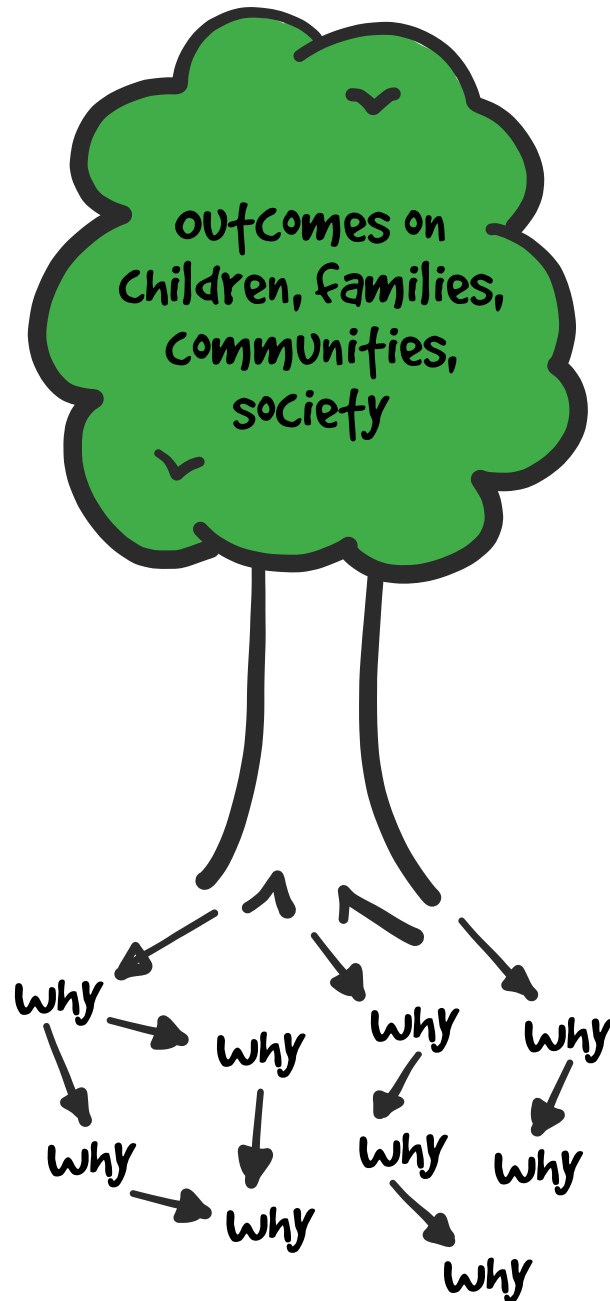


Figure 2.

Practical steps: (cont.)

5. When one cause clearly contributes to another, draw a line connecting them.
6. Encourage the participants to discuss the impact of violence against children on children's lives, their dignity, families, communities, and society at large and then to record those points near the branches and shoots of the tree.
7. Take some time to reflect on:
 - the role of faith communities, their leaders, and faith-inspired organizations in preventing and ending violence against children;
 - the opportunities in building a shared vision that allows them to take their efforts further. Refer to the [three components of the interfaith approach to advocacy](#) proposed in the Guide; and,
 - the actions needed to bring about transformative change for children's rights and well-being.





ACTIVITIES

3. Identifying key stakeholders and partners

The stakeholder map⁷



Objective:

To identify key stakeholders and partners, and the extent to which their power can influence change.



Time needed:

45-60 minutes



Materials:

Stakeholder's table from [Chapter 3 of the Guide](#) – stage three of the advocacy cycle, flip chart paper, markers, and pens.

⁷ Adapted from Tunyogi, R., Schuurman, M. (2018). *Training tool on engaging children in advocacy on their right to participation in decision-making processes*. Advocacy Toolkit. Eurochild.

⁸ Attitudes, social norms, and behaviors, including those about or towards children; socio-economic systems and community safety nets; and legislation, policy and budgets.

Practical steps:

1. Explain that the stakeholder map will help the participants explore answers to the two “Who” questions described in the Guide:
 - a. Who we want to influence? and;
 - b. Who to partner with to influence change?
2. Use the stakeholder's table included in Chapter 3 of the Guide – stage three of the advocacy cycle, to identify and record on a flip chart:
 - a. Who has the power to make the desired change happen? (This should answer ‘**who we want to influence**’).
3. Continue by asking and recording participants' views on:
 - b. Who could we join forces with to influence change? (This should answer ‘**who to partner with to influence change**’).
4. Use a flip chart page to draw a stakeholders' power grid map (see figure 3) to measure their power to influence change and their level of openness to collaborate.



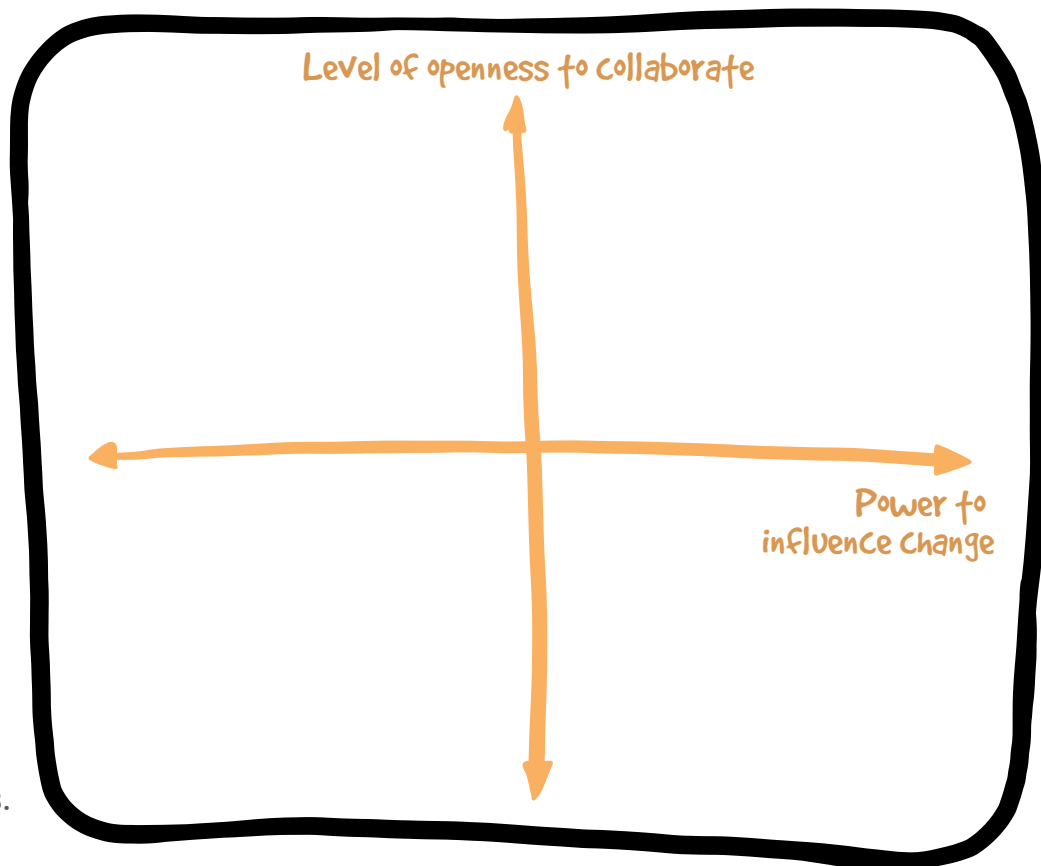


Figure 3.

5. Ask the participants to discuss and agree on where to place on the power grid map each of the stakeholders they mentioned for questions on steps 2 and 3 and consider the levels of change described on the Guide.⁸ (Ask the participants to use two different marker colors to distinguish stakeholders from allies).
6. Build on the results from the power grid map to reflect with the group about which stakeholders could be more strategic to address and based on their level of power to influence change and hopefully, their high likeliness to collaborate or support the desired change.





ACTIVITIES

4. Advocacy action planning and implementation

The advocacy hot-air balloon⁹



Objective:

To enable participants to develop their interfaith action plan for advocacy.



Time needed:

90 minutes



Materials:

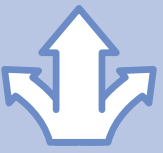
Flip chart paper, different colored pens and crayons. In advance, prepare the parts of a visual image of a hot-air balloon (see figure 4)

Practical steps:

1. Explain that the advocacy hot-air balloon will help the participants put together an action plan that reflects the three components of the interfaith approach to advocacy while addressing the level(s) of change they aim to act upon.
2. Introduce the visual image of the hot-air balloon (see figure 4) to the participants. Ask them if they have ever seen a hot-air balloon and explain how it flies in the sky. If they have never seen one, use [this short video](#) to introduce it to them. Then explain that we are using this visual image of a hot-air balloon to represent their interfaith participation in advocacy, where they can collectively scale up transformative change for children's rights and well-being. Even so, the pegs in the ground may prevent the hot-air balloon from taking off, and there may be challenging weather conditions to overcome during the journey.
3. Again, share the visual image of a hot-air balloon and explain: the balloon is a large circle divided into segments, attached to a basket with people inside. The basket is held to the ground by pegs. Above the hot-air balloon, there are clouds in the sky and above the clouds there is the sun and a rainbow. Next to the balloon, there is a signpost and a suitcase.

⁹ Adapted from Tunyogi, R., Schuurman, M. (2018). *Training tool on engaging children in advocacy on their right to participation in decision-making processes*. Advocacy Toolkit. Eurochild.





4. Prepare in advance the pieces of the hot-air balloon and use the following questions to help participants develop their advocacy hot-air balloon:
(Depending on the number of participants, some sections could be developed in plenary and some parts could be developed through sub-groups.)

a. **Signpost:** Reflect on the **destination/goal** of your advocacy efforts. Think of what you are trying to achieve through your advocacy action(s) and write the desired change you are trying to contribute. Remember to set SMART goals that contribute to effective impact, accountability, and learning:

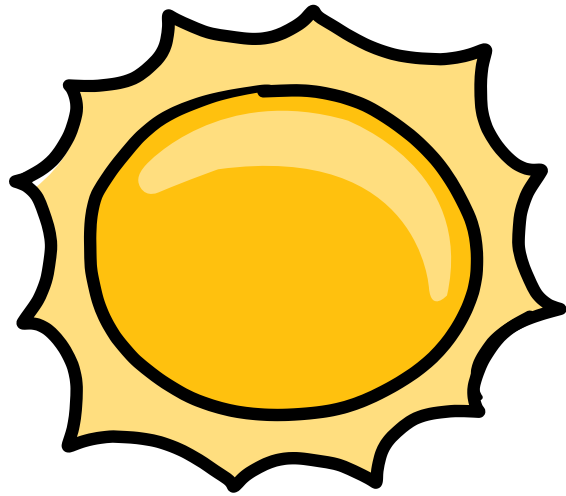
Specific	What change do you want to achieve?
Measurable	How will you know the change happened? What specific results contribute to that?
Achievable	Is the change that you want to advocate for realistic and achievable?
Relevant	How would your advocacy goal contribute to a significant change for children?
Time-bound	By when do you want that change to be accomplished?





- b. **Basket of people:** Review the results from the stakeholder map to write down on the basket a) the **stakeholders that the group wants to influence**, and b) the **stakeholders that the group wants to partner with** to influence change.
- c. **Pegs:** The pegs represent the **obstacles and barriers** that may make it difficult to undertake our advocacy. Write these obstacles and barriers by the pegs.
- d. **Suitcase:** The suitcase represents the **strengths** and support that you can draw upon that will help to undertake advocacy. Think of the three components of the interfaith approach to advocacy proposed in the Guide and reflect on the added value of having a shared vision of children's rights and well-being and the opportunity to join efforts for that common goal.
- e. **Balloon:** Review the pegs and suitcase and reflect on the **type of advocacy actions** that could help you take your advocacy message(s) further. Take into consideration the actions described in the Guide, including interfaith prayer services, campaigning and awareness raising, capacity building, policy development and lobbying, and platform building and mobilization. For each action, remember to specify What? When? Where? Who? And with what resources? (See annexes for templates that could support advocacy actions).





OPPORTUNITIES
that can be used

- f. **Sun:** Reflect on the **opportunities** that will help you reach your destination. These should be external factors that could benefit the change you aim to influence (e.g., a potential political/legal/cultural momentum around the issue prioritized; upcoming events; campaigns; funding, etc.)
- g. **Clouds:** Think of and record some of the **risks** that could arise. These include possible risks that the group may face before, during, or as a result of their participation in these actions.
- h. **Rainbow:** Review the findings from the sun (opportunities) and clouds (risks), before adding the rainbow and reflecting on **ways to minimize and overcome the identified risks**.

- 5. Put together all the pieces of the advocacy hot-air balloon and reflect with the group on the key findings from the exercise, and the important role that each member of the group has in making the interfaith action plan a reality.
- 6. Use the advocacy action plan template ([see annex i](#)) to record the results of the advocacy hot-air balloon activity .





Figure 4.





ACTIVITIES

5. Monitoring, learning and adapting

Target game¹⁰



Objective:

To reflect upon the importance of monitoring and learning in order to adapt and increase the relevance and effectiveness of the advocacy action plan in local contexts.



Time needed:

15 minutes



Materials:

None

Practical steps:

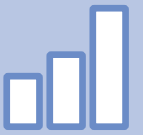
1. Explain the importance of monitoring the advocacy actions, as it allows the group to identify what works well, what could be improved, and what was learned. Such sharing contributes to adapting the plan for an increased chance of success, as well as to strengthen the shared vision and interfaith collaboration.
2. Explain that the target game is a simple but effective way to reflect on the importance of having clear goals, working together, and learning together in order to reach a common goal.
3. Ask the participants to close their eyes and stretch their left index finger out in front of them. This represents their signpost (their goal of having a clear advocacy target). But they may currently be quite far from achieving their goal. With their eyes closed, ask the participants to stretch out their right index finger behind them. Now instruct them to move their right index finger to touch their left index finger.

If they do not reach their target the first time, encourage them to try again, to support one another (if needed), and to learn from their strengths and weaknesses in order to keep moving forward to advocate for their goal.

4. In plenary, take some time to reflect on how they felt while doing the activity, what helped them reach their goal, what obstacles did they face, if and how they supported each other, and what did they learn from that experience.

¹⁰ Adapted from O’Kane, C., Barros, O. (2019). *Time to Talk—Children’s Views on Children’s Work. Toolkit II: Supporting collaborative and child-led advocacy*. Kindernothilfe and Terre des Hommes. Duisburg, Germany.





Circle analysis¹¹



Objective:

To assess the implementation of the advocacy action(s) including aspects that worked well, that could be improved, and ideas for future actions.



Time needed:

45 minutes



Materials:

Flip chart paper and markers

Practical steps:

1. Explain that the circle analysis is helpful for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the advocacy actions, and to develop suggestions to improve on-going advocacy efforts while strengthening interfaith collaboration.
2. Introduce the circle analysis format (see figure 5) by drawing it on the flip chart.
3. Make sure the advocacy goal/destination is written in the smallest circle of the diagram.
4. Ask the participants to use the bigger circles to indicate how close they think the advocacy action(s) took them to their advocacy goal. *They could use markers to indicate their answer.*
5. Then draw a happy face in the circle immediately next to the circle with the advocacy goal, a sad face in the next circle and a bright bulb in the biggest circle.
6. Explain that the circle with the happy face is for the group to record the strengths and successes that took them closer to their advocacy goal; the circle with the sad face is where they could write the weaknesses and challenges that prevented them from reaching their advocacy goal; and the circle with the bright bulb is where they could share their ideas and suggestions to improve future advocacy efforts.
7. Take some time to build on the positive aspects identified by the group, and the opportunities for improvement they could consider for future actions. Encourage adaptation of the advocacy plan as needed, depending on the stage of the advocacy action in which this activity takes place.

¹¹ Adapted from Landsdown, G., O'Kane, C. (2014) *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation, Booklet 3: How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation*. Save the Children



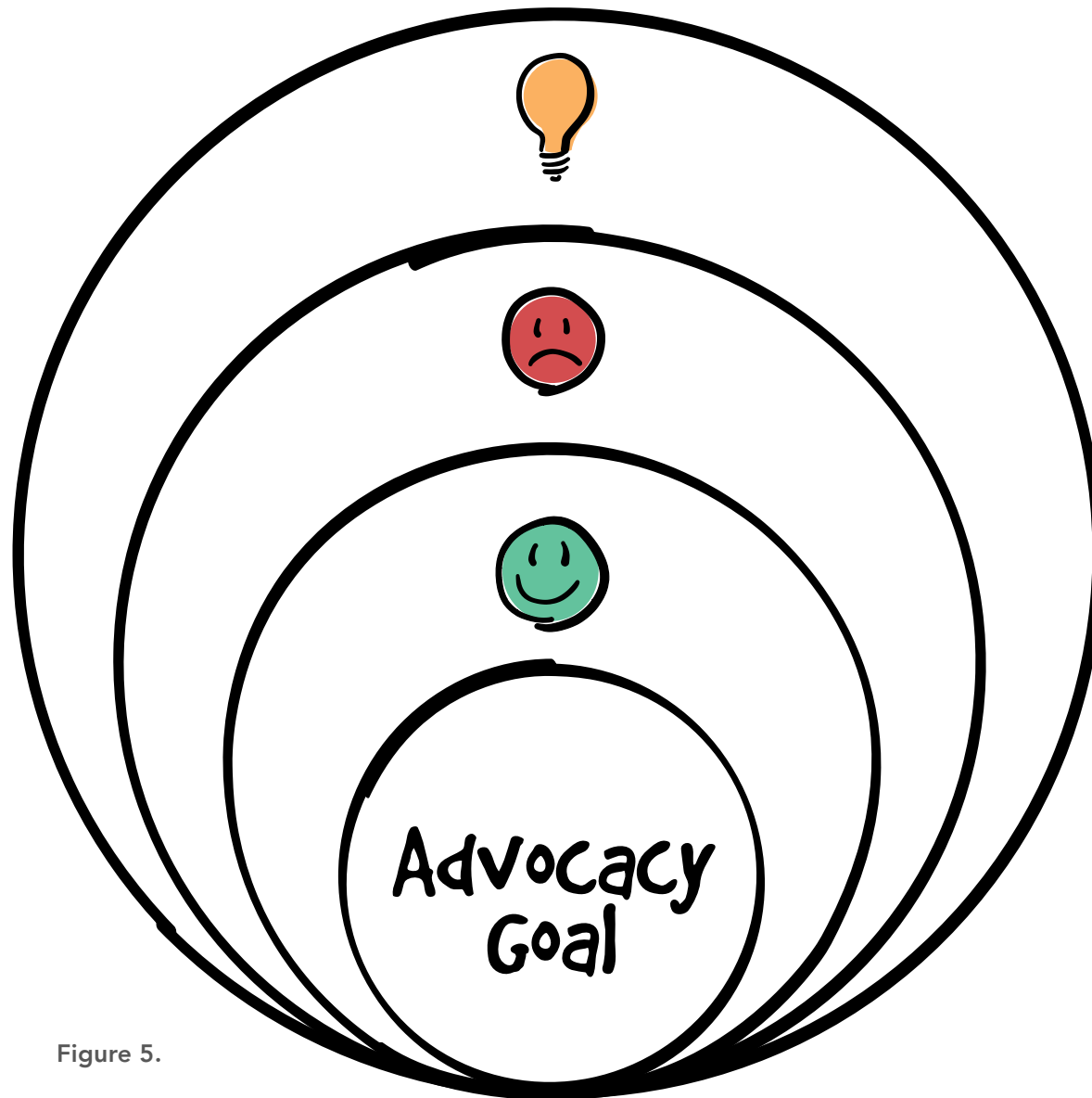


Figure 5.

i. Advocacy plan template

Goal (Signpost)	
Strengths (suitcase)	
Obstacles and barriers (pegs)	
Opportunities that can be used (sun)	
Risks to bear in mind (clouds) and ways to overcome them (rainbow)	
Key advocacy messages (the asks-see page 71 of the Guide)	



i. Advocacy plan template, cont.

Key stakeholders (power grid map)						
Key partners (power grid map)						
Activities (balloon)	What?	When?	Where?	With whom?	With what resources?	Responsible



ii. Press release template

This is a press release template that is available for download.

DOWNLOAD

PRESS RELEASE

Name of organization (*issuing press release – e.g., GNRC member organization, GNRC Committee*)
Email address
Phone number
Website URL

City, Country
Date

Headline (Title)

Paragraph 1 -
Is a synopsis of the press release. Make it in three or two lines, in italic format.

Paragraph 2 -
Write the most important information, make it very clear. You need to grab your reader's attention here.

Paragraph 3 -
In the press release, keep sentences and paragraphs short, about three or four lines per paragraph. The first couple of paragraphs should provide answers to the who, what, when, where, why and how aspects of the communication.

Paragraph 4 -
The rest of the news release expounds on the information provided in the lead paragraph. It includes quotes from GNRC members, religious leaders, or experts on the subject matter. It contains more details about the news you have to tell, which can be about something new, a statement, an event, an opportunity for fundraising, a prominent person, place or thing, etc.

Paragraph 5 -
In this paragraph add a relevant quote related to the subject of the news or the purpose of the organization.

Paragraph 6 -
Use the second to last paragraph to restate and summarize the key points. This paragraph can also include acknowledgements.

Final paragraph -
Include a short corporate backgrounder about the organization – for GNRC, please strictly follow the information available on the [website](#).

Signature (e.g., GNRC coordinator, GNRC member organization, or GNRC Committee).

For GNRC members, please remember to ensure the appropriate use and combination of logos.
[Click here](#) for further information.



iii. Introduction letter template to address potential partners

This is an introduction letter template to address potential partners and is available for download.

DOWNLOAD

Name of organization (e.g., GNRC member organization, GNRC Committee)
Email address
Phone number
Website URL

City, Country
Date

Name of the person to whom you are writing
Title (e.g. Country Representative)
Organization (e.g. UNICEF)

Subject: Refers to the topic and purpose of the letter (e.g. invitation to collaborate for the celebration of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children).

Dear (Use the title and name of the person you are addressing)

Paragraph 1 - *Introduce the opportunity*

Make sure you introduce your organization and thank the recipient of this letter for his/her time and attention to your request.

Paragraph 2 - *Describe the purpose of this letter*

Start by clearly explaining what your organization is doing and what actions you are looking to enhance with the participation of new partners (or of him/her). Giving a brief summary of the objectives of your organization, your actions, and what you have accomplished, will be a good statement in order to catch the reader's attention. For GNRC members, remember to mention the purpose of the network, the key outcomes of interfaith dialogue and collaboration in your country, and the priority areas of work.

Paragraph 3 - *Issue the invitation*

Be clear about what you are looking to obtain from the person you are writing to. This should be an invitation to join you in your effort to contribute to a better world for children, particularly through the prevention and end of violence against children. Your reader should be able to identify with your initiative values and goals in order to be willing to join you as partner. Remember, the more specific you are, the better. Therefore, make sure to mention specific goals of collaboration by addressing specific areas of work (e.g., one or more of the Panama Commitments), projects (e.g., capacity-building), or opportunities for collaboration (e.g., the celebration of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children).

Paragraph 4 - *final remarks*

Make a final point of why having your reader as a partner would benefit both parties. And if possible, encourage him/her to visit and follow your organization's social media platforms and website to find regular updates. Invite him/her to contact you for more details. (Thank him/her again, briefly.)

Sincerely,

Signature
Name

Name of organization (e.g., GNRC member organization, GNRC committee)
Position at the organization (e.g., GNRC coordinator)



iv. Petition template

This is a petition template that is available for download.

DOWNLOAD

TITLE OF PETITION
(keep the title short, informative, related to your goal)

Name of organization (e.g., GNRC member organization, GNRC Committee)
Email address
Phone number
Website URL

Name of the person to whom you are writing
Name of the organization
Address

City, Country
Date

Dear (Use the title and name of the person you are addressing)

Paragraph 1 - *Details of the petition*
Opening Statement – Influence the recipient in the opening. The initial sentences should state the purpose of the letter clearly. You can start with a simple request or state the issue with an appealing request. You can use quotes or phrases to achieve this.

Paragraph 2 - *Reason for petition, its outcomes: provide solid reasons to have a strong effect.*
Explain the importance of the appeal. Why should he/she get involved?

Paragraph 3 - *Call for action* (e. g. request for joining your cause by signing the petition; immediate response to the issue including specific actions needed for the desired change).
Please consider using an online petition platform such as [change](#), [avaaz](#), or [open petition](#).

Subscription - Thank you for supporting and signing this petition.

Yours sincerely, or Yours truly, (or another closing that is usually used in your country)

Signature



v. Relevant sources on violence against children

- For an overall primer, read [A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents](#) by UNICEF, and [Violating Children's Rights](#) by the International NGO Council on Violence Against Children. Also read [UNICEF annual report 2018: For every child, every right](#).
- Review the situation of children 30 years since the adoption and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by reading the report by Child Rights Now [A Second Revolution: Thirty Years Of Child Rights, And The Unfinished Agenda](#).
- Read the executive summary and full study of Arigatou International's [Faith and Children's Rights: A Multi-religious Study on the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).
- Explore faith actors' involvement in the prevention and elimination of violence against children through the [Ending Violence Against Children Scoping Study](#) published by the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities (JLI)
- Learn about the rise of Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. See UNICEF's [study](#) on the risks children encounter while using the internet, ECPAT's [guide](#) for religious leaders, and the SRSG-VAC's [study](#) on minimizing the harms of technology. See the [summary](#) of the Panel on Online Sexual Exploitation of Children held in May 2017 in Panama, featuring remarks from diverse faith leaders.

[Read the statement](#) of His Holiness Pope Francis, and the [Declaration](#) from the 2017 World Congress: Child Dignity in the Digital World.
- Learn about the importance of registering all births through [Prayer and Action's ideas for action on birth registration](#).
- For information on cyberbullying, read [the report](#) by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children on tackling this problem, UNICEF's report [The State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a Digital World](#), and UNICEF's most recent publication on [violence in schools](#), its consequences, and alternatives to end it.
- Learn about the situation of children on the move and the role of faith communities and faith-based organizations through the [UN Global Compact on Refugees](#); the inter-agency policy note [Implementing the Global Compact on Refugees from a Faith Perspective](#); and the Joint Learning Initiative learning briefs on [The Role of Faith in Building Peaceful Societies and Combating Xenophobia](#); [Spiritual Support to Children on the Move and their Caregivers as a Source of Healing and Resilience](#); and the [Role of Faith in Strengthening the Continuum of Protection for Children on the Move](#).
- Discuss the importance of Positive Parenting. See Prayer and Action's [Note On Positive Parenting and Non-Violent Discipline](#), these tips from the [CDC](#), and this pamphlet based on Hinduism.
- Read the [guide](#) by Save the Children and partners to learn how to end the widespread and harmful practice of Corporal Punishment for working with and within religious communities, and [Ending Corporal Punishment of Children – a handbook for multi-religious gatherings](#).
- Learn about the worldwide problem of Child Marriage through ECPAT's [comprehensive overview](#), UNICEF's helpful [data sheet](#) and Prayer and Action's ideas for action to end child marriage.



vi. Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children

About the Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children

The GNRC 5th Forum built on the work that GNRC members from diverse faith traditions had been doing since the year 2000, working for and with children, to build a better world for children. Working locally, nationally, and globally, GNRC members have addressed several of the key challenges facing children, prioritizing areas such as child rights, education, poverty, and violence. The Forum was attended by 64 children and 526 religious leaders, members of diverse faith communities, leaders of faith-inspired organizations, United Nations officials, and representatives of international and grassroots organizations, from 70 countries. Participants unanimously adopted the Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children, making ten commitments that reaffirmed the key role that religious leaders, faith communities, and faith-inspired organizations have in preventing, healing, reducing and ultimately ending violence against children.



vi. Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children

- 1 Listen to children with empathy and respect, welcome their wisdom and gifts, and continue to work side-by-side to address violence against them;
- 2 Ensure that our religious places are safe for all children, and especially for the victims of violence and abuse, and vulnerable children such as those with disabilities;
- 3 Increase our personal and institutional commitments to take concrete actions to address the challenges voiced by children at this forum;
- 4 Educate our leaders and communities about the different forms of violence against children and deploy resources to prevent and address it within and beyond our communities; educate children about human sexuality and what they can do to keep themselves safe; work to safeguard children from harmful media content and engage the media in preventing violence against children;
- 5 Partner with global programs such as End Violence and make the most of existing tools for addressing the root causes and drivers of the violence children face, with a special focus on countering violent extremism, gang violence, harm to children by organized crime, and sexual exploitation and abuse;
- 6 Strengthen local communities by offering education in positive parenting and ethical values to help families and children develop empathy, become more resilient, and grow spiritually;
- 7 Identify and challenge patriarchal structures and practices that perpetuate violence against and sexual exploitation especially of girls;
- 8 Embrace internationally agreed strategies and mechanisms to address violence against children, including the Sustainable Development Goals 16.2 on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children; 5.2 and 5.3 on ending violence against women and girls; and 8.7 on ending economic exploitation of children;
- 9 Strengthen cooperation and partnerships across Arigatou International initiatives, the wider religious and spiritual communities and strategic players at local, national, regional and global levels;
- 10 Work to generate greater social and political will for legislation, policies, and increased funding of programs to protect children from violence.



REFERENCES

Global Network of Religions for Children (2017). *Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children*. Arigatou International.

Landsdown, G., O’Kane, C. (2014) *A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation, Booklet 3: How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children’s participation*. Save the Children.

Adapted from O’Kane, C., Barros, O. (2019). *Time to Talk–Children’s Views on Children’s Work. Toolkit II: Supporting collaborative and child-led advocacy*. Kindernothilfe and Terre des Hommes. Duisburg, Germany.

Tunyogi, R., Schuurman, M. (2018). *Training tool on engaging children in advocacy on their right to participation in decision-making processes*. Advocacy Toolkit. Eurochild.



CONTACT US

Arigatou International- Prayer and Action for Children

250 Park Avenue, 7th Floor

New York, NY 10177, USA

Tel. +1 212 739 0811

 arigatouinternational.org

 prayerandactionforchildren.org

 newyork@arigatouinternational.org

 @PrayerandAction

 @prayerandaction

Arigatou International – Global Network of Religions for Children

Crawford Business Park, State House Rd,

P.O. Box 43546-00100, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel. +254 20 2573920/1

 gnrc.net

 gnrc@arigatouinternational.org

 @ArigatouGNRC

 @ArigatouGNRC



“Religion has been one of the most powerful engines for changing human attitudes and behavior. Speak up for all children, and especially those who might need more help or support”

— Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Buddhist children aged 14-17 (Sri Lanka)

Arigatou International
arigatouinternational.org

