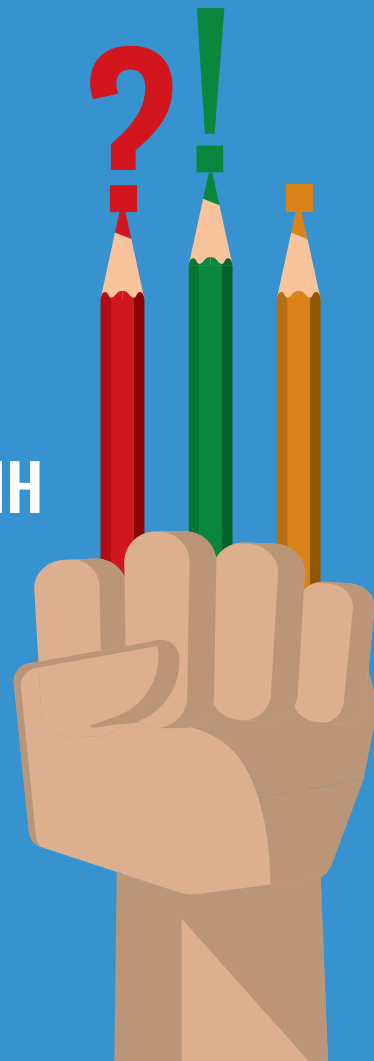


# ADVOCACY MANUAL FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND CITIZENS IN BIH

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Banja Luka, July 2022



## **Advocacy manual for Associations and Citizens in BiH**

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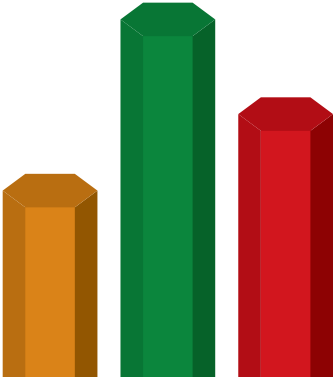
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# CONTENT:

## ADVOCACY MANUAL FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND CITIZENS IN BIH

- 1. INTRODUCTION .....5
- 2. SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT.....6
- 3. PREPARING FOR ADVOCACY.....11
- 4. ADVOCACY TECHNIQUES & CASE STUDIES.....16
- 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVOCATES.....39
- 6. RESOURCES.....42





## 1. INTRODUCTION

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In many conversations with associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have heard that civil society is weak and unable to create meaningful change. Our research shows that many people in associations feel ineffective because they feel trapped in a triangle of apathetic citizens, inefficient and bureaucratic institutions and donor agencies seeking irrelevant results. Although local institutions like municipalities can be more responsive, many know that institutions are often driven by corrupt interests and built on maintaining ethnic division. This constellation of interests makes them only weakly accountable to the concerns of citizens and civil society. Donor agencies meanwhile also appear focused on priorities irrelevant for citizens including superficial policy results (what some called 'dead letters on the page' (mrtvo slovo na papiru). Our goal in writing this manual is to provide a more nuanced picture – one that focuses on the advocacy methods most used by BiH associations and the results that they have been able to achieve.

We use advocacy to refer to non-violent activities designed to influence policies, practices and behaviour of public institutions. This definition includes lobbying which despite its frequent negative connotation involves the advocacy of an interest that is affected, actually or potentially, by the decisions of government leaders. Direct and in-person lobbying is one of the many techniques that will be discussed in this manual and is a technique used by successful advocacy initiatives in BiH.

This manual is intended for registered associations, informal groups and activists. In direct language we aim to describe advocacy techniques that have been used in BiH and "successful" cases in the last 10 years. We write "successful" because success where it occurs has several levels, and formal acceptance of a policy change is often followed by a long struggle to see it implemented (for example, for the necessary regulations to be adopted or money to be allocated).

## 2. SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

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The political set-up of BiH is highly complex and asymmetric. The country consists of two entities (Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska) and the Brčko District of BiH. Republika Srpska is divided only into municipalities and cities, while the Federation of BiH consists of 10 cantons, which are each further subdivided into at least three municipalities/cities. Responsibilities and relations between state, entity and Brčko District institutions are governed by the BiH Constitution, but its provisions are often subject to different interpretations in daily political life, which has a direct bearing on whether laws and other public policies (such as strategies and actions plans) will be adopted or not.<sup>1</sup>

At the state level, the position of head of state is held by a three-member Presidency, with the chairmanship rotating among the members every eight months. The state-level executive consists of the Council of Ministers with one chair and nine ministries. State institutions are responsible for foreign, financial and monetary policy; border control and management; foreign trade; immigration; refugees; and asylum regulation. One of the ministries in the BiH Council of Ministers is the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, with the BiH Agency for Gender Equality operating under it. At the BiH level, there is also the BiH Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman – a national institution for the protection and promotion of human rights, consisting of three ombudspersons – which is responsible for the whole of BiH and for all levels of government. The ombudsman institution acts as a mediator between citizens and institutions. The legislature (Parliamentary

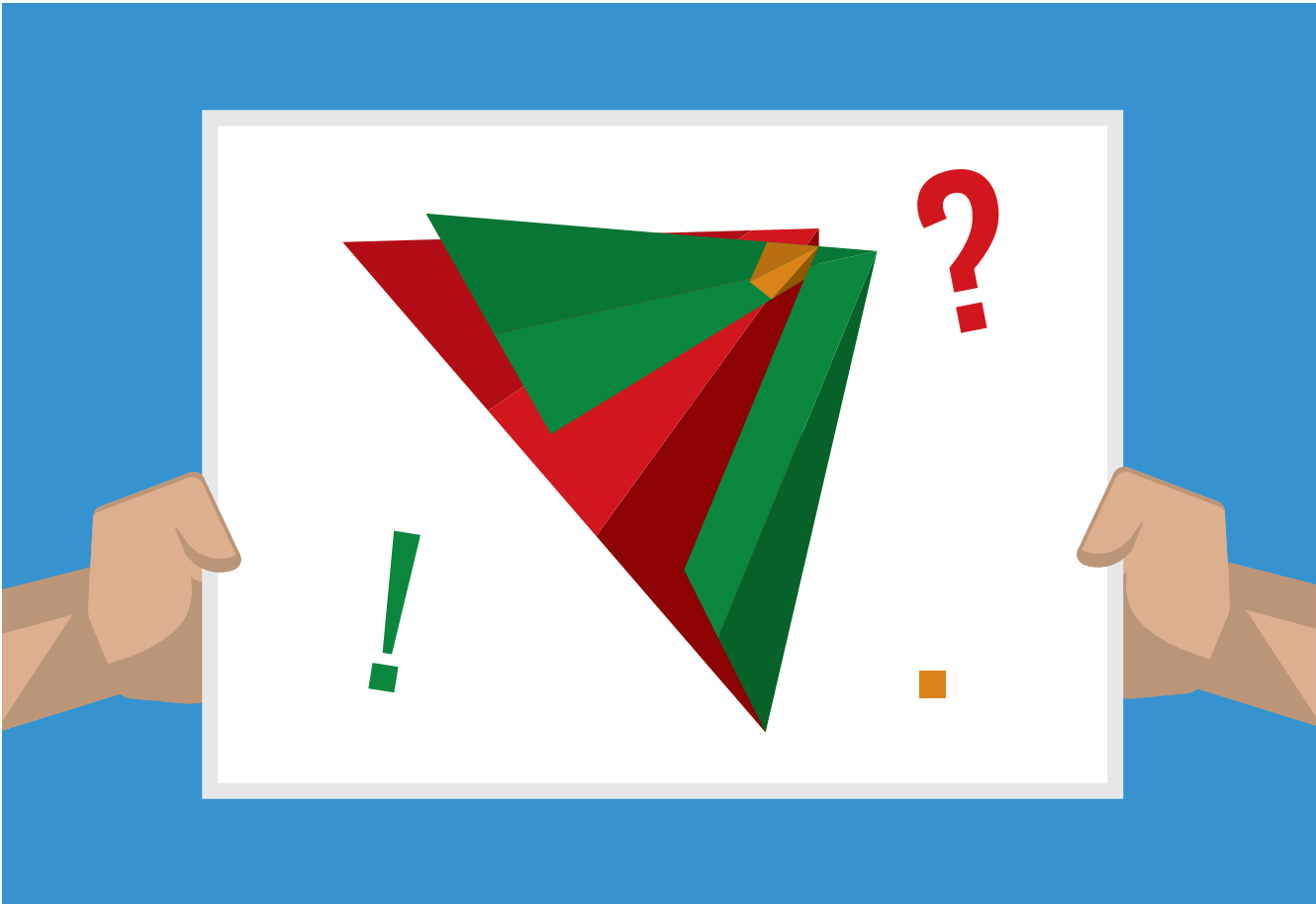
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<sup>1</sup> The first part of this section is adapted from Saša Gavrić et al., *Zalaganje, zagovaranje, lobiranje: Feministički priručnik za aktivistkinje/aktiviste i zaštitnice/zaštitnike ženskih prava u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Fondacija CURE, 2020), [http://zenskamre-za.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/KVINNA\\_zalaganje-B5-final-CIP.pdf](http://zenskamre-za.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/KVINNA_zalaganje-B5-final-CIP.pdf). We also recommend the publication for more detailed information about the political system and institutional arrangements: Saša Gavrić, D. Banović, and C. Krause, *Uvod u politički sistem Bosne i Hercegovine- izabrani aspekti* (Sarajevski otvoreni centar i Fondacija Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Predstavništvo u BiH, 2009).

Assembly) is bicameral, with the House of Representatives serving as the lower house and the House of Peoples as the upper house. Operating under the BiH Parliamentary Assembly is the Joint Commission for Human Rights, and there is also the Commission for Gender Equality in the House of Representatives. Both entities have one president and two vice presidents, both of whom must be drawn from the ranks of the other two constituent peoples. The entity governments have a prime minister and 16 ministers. Although the powers of their upper chambers differ, the entities, too, can be described in simple terms as having bicameral legislatures comprised of a house of representatives and a house of peoples. Entity parliaments have parliamentary working bodies for human rights and/or gender equality/equal opportunities. While there are no specialised government centres or offices for human rights in the entities, there are entity centres for gender equality (Gender Centre of the FBiH Government and Gender Centre of the RS Government).

The cantons of the Federation of BiH (ten in total) are granted significant autonomy. They have their own governments and unicameral legislatures. Despite being the third tier of government, cantons have the status of federal units and, consequently, their own competences (in such areas as education at all educational levels, employment and health) and powers to pass laws and other public policies. Although the Federation of BiH is hierarchically superior to the cantons, the cantons often enact regulations that are at odds with those of the Federation or simply fail to implement the existing regulations of the Federation of BiH.

Despite being a form of local community, the Brčko District is effectively on par with the entities in terms of competences. It is governed by a mayor who chairs the Brčko District Government with 10 departments. Laws and other regulations are passed by the Brčko District Assembly.





The highest courts in the country are the three constitutional courts, one for each entity and one at the state level. BiH does not have a Supreme Court. Law enforcement is the responsibility of the entities and the Brčko District, with each canton in the Federation of BiH also having its own police. Many books have been written analysing the potential and limitations of civil society advocacy in BiH since the Dayton constitution described was adopted. We will therefore limit ourselves here to describing some of the most important characteristics and conclusions of this literature.

- The BiH constitution includes both human rights (for example, it includes the European Convention on Human Rights) and ethnic group rights (for example, the 3-member Presidency elected on an ethnic basis). In addition, courts are backlogged and often are slow to address powerful interests. Both of these factors limit the potential for advocacy based on human rights.
- The multiple levels of governance described above make it difficult to know when you are targeting the most relevant one(s). For example, both the Federation and cantons are responsible for health, environment, social welfare, transport and tourism. This complexity is sometimes used by institutions to avoid responsibility for addressing important concerns. Also, relevant institutions may not coordinate or collaborate together. This means that advocating organizations need to become experts in many laws and regulations, which sometimes contradict each other, and sometimes out of necessity take over the government's coordination role.
- Political institutions often do not function very well as a result of their low accountability to citizens, corruption, lack of appointment and advancement of the most qualified candidates. By not functioning well we mean that they do not follow through on policies and strategies and impose increasing bureaucratic requirements for most citizens while permitting those with inside connections to go around them, all of which make achieving real advocacy outcomes more difficult.
- Trust in BiH society remains low. Many political institutions like the parliament and political parties have the least trust by citizens. This is also true of the press which has the absolute lowest level of trust. Finally, religious institutions that do have higher trust of citizens are often closely linked to

particular political parties and are therefore not often allies and may be opponents of advocacy efforts.<sup>2</sup> These factors have deep implications for the potential of mobilizing citizens and cooperation among associations and between associations and public institutions.

- After more than 25 years, international organizations and donors are frequently not outside actors working for change but in fact have become part of the status quo, with their own interests and resistance to change.
- One of the problems is a 'fragmentation' of civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina and NGOization (a phenomenon characteristic of almost all post-socialist countries), which has led to strong competition among civil society organizations (CSOs) and to the heavy dependence of their advocacy activities on foreign donors.<sup>3</sup> While professionalism has indeed improved, in particular among "successful associations", it has been accompanied by a strong focus on funding needs, often at the expense of initiating real advocacy results and social change.
- Despite the large number of associations, civil society is considered fragile and limited in its scope of action.<sup>4</sup> In the meantime, many organizations have shut down or become inactive. Of the 23,000 registered NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, only 6,600 are active.<sup>5</sup>
- Membership in religious, sports, youth and humanitarian organizations is the most common form of membership in NGOs. This means that the NGO sector is politically irrelevant in terms of democratization because it is largely made up of non-political organizations that do not engage in political processes.<sup>6</sup>

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2 Jadranka Kolenović Đapo and Jelena Brkić Smigoc, eds., *Vrijednosti u BiH: Prikaz rezultata Evropske studije vrijednosti 2019* (Sarajevo: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2020).

3 Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović, *Ženski pokret u BiH: Artikulacija jedne kontrakulture* (Sarajevo: Sarajevo otvoreni centar; Centar za empirijska istraživanja religije u Bosni i Hercegovini; Fondacija CURE, 2013).

4 Srđan Puhalo and Stefan Vukojević, "Kako građani Bosne i Hercegovine opažaju nevladin sektor" (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015), 63.

5 Michael Mayer et al., eds., *Patterns in Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe: A Synthesis of 16 Country Reports and an Expert Survey*, 2017, 20.

6 Puhalo and Vukojević, "Kako građani Bosne i Hercegovine opažaju nevladin sektor", 209.

### 3. PREPARING FOR ADVOCACY

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This section includes tools for preparing yourself for an advocacy campaign. Credibility, Legitimacy, Accountability, Service orientedness and Power based (CLASP) is a way to put yourself in the position of those that you want to influence. This is followed by a list of questions to make sure you can answer as you prepare for an advocacy campaign. The next exercise is power mapping to help make you more aware of potential allies and how to overcome opponents of the policy change that you seek. Finally, we will introduce the idea of how you frame your aims and what this means for your chances of success.

**CLASP** is a framework for putting yourself in the position of citizens, a decision maker, or a person in a government institution those that you want to influence. You can use it to prepare and strengthen your case. CLASP stands for Credibility, Legitimacy, Accountability, Service orientedness and Power based.<sup>7</sup>

- **Credibility** is about the trustworthiness of your organisation in other people's eyes and may relate to the information and data you use. You can increase your credibility by doing fact finding and research on the issue. In addition, you as a person believing in your message (based on facts and conviction) while bringing the message across is an important component.
- **Legitimacy** for advocacy looks at how legitimate or representative you are or your organisation is in taking a certain position. It also looks at if and how you have involved the people on behalf of whom you are allowed to speak.
- **Accountability** is the way you prove to all stakeholders that you are reliable as an organization or a person to represent their interests. Examples of actions taken by BiH associations to increase accountability include regular member assemblies (skupštine) with substantive discussion and decisions and making financial reports available to members and interested citizens.

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<sup>7</sup> Roebeling, Ger and Jan de Vries, *Zagovaranje i lobiranje u svrhu društvenih promjena* (Sarajevo: SIPU International, 2011).

- **Service orientedness** is more than just delivering a service, it is also your attitude when influencing policies and, thus, representing your beneficiaries. It is about you taking up the role of a leader. It also has to do with your attitude towards your political targets by respecting their personal integrity and fulfilling part of their needs.
- **Power based** advocacy means to be aware of diverse forms of power – both those of people in public institutions but also that of associations. Power can be analysed based on Power over (based on formal hierarchical position in society, like a political leader or the head of an organisation), Power to (based on capabilities), Power with (for example beneficiary consultation, alliance building and networking) and Power within (based on convincing others based on believing in your own message).

Our research shows that in addition to establishing legitimacy and credibility for decision makers and people in institutions, associations in BiH also take actions to influence how they are viewed by citizens. When citizens were asked what makes a particular organization that they know legitimate and credible, they frequently mentioned that they “solve concrete problems” and address “everyday needs.”<sup>8</sup> Among 16 possible characteristics, the most common answers were based on their interests, particularly whether they provide important services, have good results, represent its members/beneficiaries, and have professional skills and capacity. However, the most common was based on the values of the organization, namely if they follow and mission and vision supported by each citizen. These answers can help you to build the case for your advocacy and increase the chances of success. It is helpful to think about how you will show and communicate the importance and relevance of your desired change to citizens and decision makers.

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<sup>8</sup> Randall Puljek-Shank, *Iznad okvira projekata: Lokalni legitimitet i zagovaranje civilnog društva u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2020), <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sarajevo/16325.pdf> .



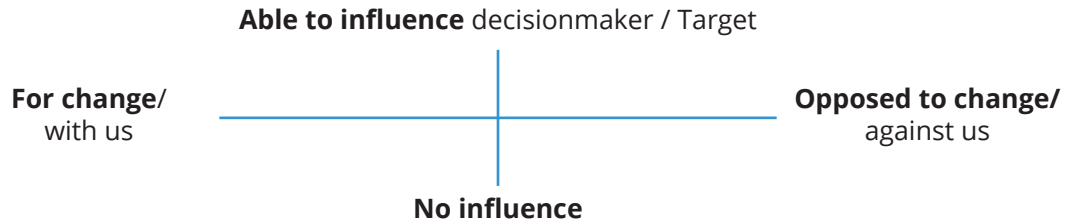
The following list of **important questions** can be used to prepare for an advocacy initiative:<sup>9</sup>

- Identify one or more areas where action is required to bring about the desired change
- Consider what needs to be done to effect change – whether adopt new or change existing laws, policies, strategies, etc.
- Define very specifically and realistically what you want to achieve! The more specific the goal, the greater the chances of success!
- What is to be achieved – short-term (e.g. 1 year) and long-term (e.g. up to 3 years, or more)
- What must be accomplished in order to bring about or ensure the desired change? What are you not willing to give up, and what can you compromise on?
- Research the area where action is required, such as relevant legislation and policies or regulations in preparation, regional legislation and policies, international and other relevant standards, field data – this may also be needed to build the case for your advocacy. Consult relevant studies by other bodies, organizations and institutions, especially in the field that you are addressing.
- What can be achieved in the current social and political situation?
- Investigate who is in charge of solving the problem
- Are there procedures in place for influencing decision-making in the field in which advocacy is undertaken, and if so, what are they, etc.

**Power mapping** is an exercise to make you more aware of potential allies and how to overcome opponents of the policy change that you seek. As a group (the more diverse perspectives that are included in the process, the more helpful the result), position any relevant actors on the grid below based on their level of influence and degree of support for the change that you seek.

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<sup>9</sup> Fedra Idžaković, Diana Šehić, and Zoran Ivančić, *Priručnik za antidiskriminacijsko zagovaranje* (Sarajevo: Prava za sve, 2016).



It is common for there to be disagreement about where to position each actor. The resulting discussion can help you to reach agreement about who you want to influence and how. Once you have completed the mapping, decide which actors you can influence and how – either to bring them closer to your desired policy change or to increase or decrease their influence.

**Framing** refers to how advocates and opponents describe their aims. Choosing the right framing has been found to relate to the success or failure of advocacy initiatives. For example, during 2008 Sarajevo protests, the protesters framed their actions in terms of the citizenship values, a local identity focused on Sarajevo rather than on ethnicity, and anti-politics (staying away from politics in order to resist corruption and political manipulation). The authorities responded by discrediting counter-frames, labelling protesters as an uncivil and violent mob directed by political parties and supported by foreigners. Although you cannot control how the opponents of your advocacy initiative will describe it, and they may have better access to media to promote their narrative, still you do control how you describe your aims and to anticipate the counter-arguments that you may encounter. For an example of this, see the Jajce MHE case study in section 4.

## 4. ADVOCACY TECHNIQUES & CASE STUDIES

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This section will introduce the techniques that have been applied by associations in BiH. It is divided into two sections, the first of which focuses on techniques that use citizen participation in one way or another to achieve desired advocacy results. Some common examples in this category include petitions, building coalitions with other associations, advocating for common interests and protest. However, it is also important to cover techniques that by which associations aim to directly influence institutions. Some common examples include pressure by international donors and organizations, expertise and direct lobbying. Throughout these techniques we will present case studies of advocacy campaigns and how the techniques were applied.

**Petitions** are one of the easiest forms of participation for citizens to engage in, since it only requires a few minutes for supporters of your advocacy campaign. In 2019, one-third of respondents in BiH said that they had already signed a petition, while almost half would be willing to do so.<sup>10</sup> Delivering a stack of petitions to an institution has been used as a way to communicate that citizens care about the issue and to create an event of interest for the media. Moreover, the number of signed petitions can be used in communication with politicians to show this level of support. Petition websites like [change.org](https://www.change.org) make it easy for supporters to encourage their social media friends and followers to sign a petition. However, while making it easier at the same time this means that those you are seeking to influence may take this less seriously as an indicator of the level of citizen concern. Petitions as a result are infrequently used as an advocacy technique. If you wish to use it, use the opportunity to get the supporters' contact information so that you can inform them and get their support for other advocacy techniques.

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<sup>10</sup> Kolenović Đapo and Brkić Šmigoc, *Vrijednosti u BiH: Prikaz rezultata Europske studije vrijednosti 2019*.



A second advocacy technique based on citizen participation is to mobilize supporters to participate in **participatory mechanisms**. One of the best known are the hearings held in local communities prior to the adoption of municipal budgets. Other participatory mechanisms include parents' and students' councils, youth councils organized from the local to higher levels for youth associations. Many municipalities, cantons and entities allow citizens to propose initiatives via referendums, citizen gatherings, and citizen initiatives.<sup>11</sup> In addition, numerous laws and conventions require citizen participation for issuing permits for issuing permits for particular activities or facilities, developing plans and programs (for example development strategies) and preparing regulations.

Authorities at all levels of government in BiH generally follow this norm and notify the public that a proposed regulatory document, environmental permit, strategic plan or piece of legislation has been presented for public hearing. However, this participatory mechanism is not fully utilized in decision-making processes, for several reasons: sometimes the public misses an invitation to a public hearing published in a daily newspaper or on the relevant ministry's website (it is advisable to check the websites of competent institutions at least twice a month); sometimes the public is insufficiently informed and thus remains uninterested; and sometimes a document under discussion requires a high level of technical knowledge that the general public lacks. In such instances, public engagement is reduced to a mere formality, and the opportunity for timely action is lost.<sup>12</sup>

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11 Alma Midžić, *Smjernice za samoupravu* (Sarajevo: Udruženje za kulturu i umjetnost CRVENA, 2017), <https://crvena.ba/smjernice-za-samoupravu/>.

12 The following section is adapted from Samir Lemeš and Dajana Cjetković, *Priručnik za zagovaračke kampanje prema kompanijama* (Sarajevo: Centar za promociju civilnog društva, 2020), <https://misliprirodi.ba/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Priru%C4%8Dnik-za-zagovara%C4%8Dke-kampanje.pdf>.

Although forms of citizen participation are often pro-forma, nonetheless they offer mechanisms which have been used to create advocacy success. They are best suited to advocacy goals related to a change in regulations (for example, a proposed micro-hydroelectric plant as described below that requires the agreement of the municipal council) that can be opposed. They are also well suited to more local issues where the number of affected people is relatively smaller, making it easier to mobilize enough of them to participate.

## **Case study:**

### ***Blocking a Micro-Hydroelectric Plant (MHE) close to the Jajce Waterfall***

*In October, 2020, an investor requested permission to build two MHEs less than 300m away from the Jajce waterfall. This request appears to have been well timed, since municipalities only have 60 days to respond to such requests. The elections had just been held and the expectation was that that as in the last election cycle, the first session of the municipal council might take many months to be called. If the period for the municipality to give its agreement passed with no response, then the Central Bosnian Canton would proceed with issuing the concession. The newly-elected mayor Edin Hozan later confirmed that he knew and had previously worked with the investors.*

*The first response of the activists opposed to these new MHEs was to create a petition to oppose the MHEs. They organized via social media using the name „Crisis HQ for the fight against MHEs on the Pliva River“ in this way drawing on the language of government anti-Covid efforts and avoiding using any formal CSOs that could be pressured. They organized public stands to collect signatures on the petition and emphasized that the new MHEs were not included in Jajce's zoning documents. They used the local portal JajceOnline to inform people about the*

*issue and how they could sign the petition and quickly were able to have the issue covered by national and regional media. The N1 channel hosted a debate between the mayor and an activist. This visibility brought support from international actors and other NGOs. Via the media, they called on the newly-elected but still not officially named municipal councillors to sign the petition and 23 out of 25 did. First the Franciscans and later imams signed the petition and encouraged their believers to sign as well. The activists called out the mayor for not having signed the petition. Eventually they were able to collect 6.000 signatures on paper and an additional 2.000 online.*

*Probably in response to the initial successes of the opponents and attention by international media, the investor announced that they were withdrawing their request until the new municipal council is established. The activists assessed that the investors were waiting for public pressure to die down, but pressed the case for a negative decision by the new council. The opponents proposed the declaration „Municipalities without dams“ and a formal City Council resolution confirming that the Jajce municipal council would reject any future proposal from investors for a MHE to be built on the territory of the municipality, and met with the mayor to advocate for their adoption.*

*On the day of the municipal council vote in November 2021, the opponents arranged a TV appearance on the N1 channel in order to keep up the pressure. The appearance included both a local activist and a representative of the national Coalition for the Protection of Rivers to create pressure on both the local, entity, national and international levels. The speakers used the information about the 6.000 physical signatures on the petition to show that many citizens are opposed to this idea. They also provided information about the number of MHEs in the Central Bosnian Canton and to argue that there are more than elsewhere in BiH, as well as information about the small amount of revenue that is generated for the municipality. To help citizens relate, they communicated that the municipality generates more revenue from fees on birth certificates. With the adoption of the declaration and resolution, the door was closed to this and future MHEs in Jajce.*

**Working with the media**, whether through press releases, interviews, or appearances in radio and TV programmes, is a crucial aspect of advocacy. The media may be both allies and adversaries. In any case, close contacts with the media are crucial. Take advantage of the reality that governmental institutions are generally disinclined to offer timely information. You will win an invaluable ally if you are always available to the media to make a statement or comment on a government action. Journalists frequently look to people who readily respond to their enquiries because of the time constraints they face when reporting. If, on the other hand, you compromise yourself by providing inaccurate information, slander and false news, you will lose both your alliance with the media and your own credibility. There are media outlets that are controlled by political entities or simply rely on advertising money from opponents of your advocacy efforts. Identify such outlets and exercise caution when making press announcements to them. Be conscious of the fact that the law on media ownership transparency has yet to be passed in BiH, making it difficult to determine which power centres are behind a media outlet. Whenever possible, ask for authorization of articles before they are published, so as to make sure that the message you are trying to convey is not accidentally misreported, harming both you and your campaign. If this happens, contact the outlet (editor and journalist) and request that they issue a denial. If they fail to do so, contact media organizations/bodies that act as mediators between the media and the public, such as the Press and Online Media Council (enclosing proof that you have contacted the editor). In professional journalism, the rules of 'hearing the other side' and 'public interest' apply, and if information appears in the media that is intended to discredit you or your organisation by misleading the public, refer to the journalistic code of ethics and request a correction or denial. The Communications Regulatory Agency (RAK) is responsible for electronic media (TV and radio), and the Press and Online Media Council is responsible for print media and web portals. Be aware of the fact that in BiH there is no competent body in charge of regulating content on social media, so in the case of any inappropriate content posted on social media such as Facebook, you can contact their administrators.

In the age of social media, the role of the traditional media has shifted dramatically. Young people under 30 hardly read newspapers at all, rarely watch the news, and rarely visit web portals, despite spending most of their time online. The demographics of social media users have shifted as well. Facebook and forums have remained effectively exclusive to those over 30, while younger people have turned to Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok to 'escape' from their parents. Young people lack the patience to read long texts, and even adults who read beyond headlines are uncommon. Curiosity often drives people to immediately go to the comments section, where they are more interested in what a friend of theirs posted than what the author of the piece meant to communicate. According to research, television remains the most popular medium among the middle-aged and older people in BiH, which is important to have in mind if you want to diversify your target audience. Given that the media sets the agenda for what will be thought about and discussed in general, it is essential to ensure that the issue you are addressing in your advocacy efforts attracts wide media coverage and that you are actively engaged in shaping it.

Despite the numerous problems that the Internet produced in BiH, most notably the failure to regulate and control hate speech in online spaces, it enabled the transition from one-way to two-way communication (media-recipient vs media-recipient-media). It also allowed citizens to create their own media content, as evidenced by the recent phenomenon known as citizen journalism.<sup>13</sup> Because this phenomenon is still in its infancy in the country, and as more and more citizen journalism workshops and trainings are being organised, it is certainly helpful to become thoroughly acquainted with this new and valuable tool for creating media material.



13 Vuk Vučetić and Borislav Vukojević, *Uloga i značaj građanskog novinarstva u BiH* (Sarajevo: Centar za promociju civilnog društva, n.d.).

There is no point in trying to reverse this trend as it is part of the natural evolution of human communication. Only time will tell whether this is a transient fashion, but advocates must be aware of it if they wish to communicate their messages and ideas to a specific target group.

Videos and infographics are excellent modern media for communicating information and ideas. Young people generally lack the patience to read extensive texts, but they will watch an entertaining video. Copyright should be considered while making a video because platforms like YouTube recognize music background in videos and will restrict such content until the copyright for its use is secured.

All advocacy manuals stress the importance of **networking with other organisations** that are potential allies. In BiH, too, cooperation with other organisations can be instrumental to the success of advocacy campaigns. Some organisations have expertise in a particular field, others have access to resources you do not (literature, measuring equipment, access to information, participation in international projects or media contacts), still others have a large number of volunteers and activists, and others have experience running campaigns or preparing project proposals. All of these resources can be helpful in an advocacy campaign and organizations are often willing to share them with others. Any local initiative has a better chance of succeeding if the public and media are shown that it is supported by other organisations that are not directly affected by the problem but are concerned and sympathetic. Support may be tangible (e.g. lending measuring equipment) or intangible (e.g. sending a letter of support, posting photos and sharing information on their websites and social media).

In addition to tangible and intangible support, local initiatives may benefit from networking in a variety of other ways. Organizational networks provide access to a wealth of very useful information as well as opportunities to build capacity and share experiences, and the collective voice of a network is far more powerful than the voice of a single organisation.

Our research also shows the limitations of networking and networks for associations in BiH. Networks have been created and led by professional NGOs that serves as a secretariat, and there is frequently a tension between the organizational interest of the secretariat or the strongest members, and the interests of the member organizations. Networks also require the investment of time and resources by the members in order to function, and there is an incentive to be a 'free-rider', that means to be inactive and benefit from the network without actively contributing. Finally, it is also difficult to establish democratic governance of networks. Networking is best suited as an advocacy method when there are sufficient interested and relatively strong organizations that share your goal (or can be brought to share your goal). It is also most effective if you have already established yourself as a credible organization.

A missing link for citizens to achieve their rights is often that they lack the necessary knowledge (which government body to appeal to, what documents are required, how to explain their situation in a technical or bureaucratic way). Many initiatives have therefore advocated by **providing this information, by providing legal aid and by empowering** marginalized groups such as women, displaced people, handicapped or Roma to achieve the rights that they have on paper and see the benefits in reality. This technique is most relevant when there is a clear right that is being violated and in situations where the responsible institutions function at least on a minimum level.

## **Case study:**

### ***Advocating for Compensation to Preschools in Banja Luka***

*The Transparency International Center for Legal Aid was contacted by the owners of preschools (kindergartens, clubs) in Banja Luka. Private preschools had not been included in a list issued by the RS Ministry of Education and Culture for tax measures to reduce the economic effects from Covid-19. The Ministry justified its decision because their work had not been banned. However, the Center for Legal Aid conducted research and discovered that both public and private preschools had been included on the list in other municipalities and that this decision only applied to Banja Luka. The Center then composed an appeal to the office of Ombudsman for Human Rights. The Ombudsman's finding was in favour of the preschool owners and recommended that the Ministry enable equal access to all preschools. However, this was not enough to achieve success even after more than 2 years.*

*Private preschool owners formed an association to advocate on their behalf. In an initial meeting with representatives of the association, Ministry staff were able to dismiss the owners based on bureaucratic rules which the owners did not know. The Center for Legal Aid helped the owners to know their rights and prepared them with relevant laws and regulations in the event of certain objections. Also, the many parents that use the private preschools were informed about the issue. The second meeting went much better and the Ministry officials were not prepared for their well-justified objections. The owners were able to receive support and in addition can now receive subsidies from the City of Banja Luka, which may have been brought about by including the parents and raising awareness about the importance of private preschools in Banja Luka.*



**Demonstrations** are often seen as one of the few techniques available for those without formal power. Demonstrations attract a lot of public attention and are a very effective way to run a campaign and engage the general public. However, account must be taken of the risks involved. The first risk is that a significant number of citizens will ignore your call for a protest gathering. This may indicate that you did not carefully consider all relevant factors such as your rally's venue, timing, theme or objective. It is not advisable to organize a protest rally until your demands have been clearly stated (who, what, from whom and when). Another risk is that the person against whom the protest is directed responds by sending provocateurs or persons who will cause an incident in exchange for a little cash. Even if you did not cause the incident, you are answerable as the organiser before the law and law enforcement agencies, and you may be held legally liable for any damage that may occur (damage to property, personal injuries, disturbance of public order and peace). Therefore, when organizing a protest rally, it is recommended that you have your own wardens (trustworthy individuals) on hand to oversee the behaviour of the demonstrators to some extent with a view to preventing provocations and escalation into violence.

Nonviolent direct action seeks to balance uneven power by creating a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. The purpose of direct action is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. An example of direct action from BiH happened during the 2013 JMBG protests when activists surrounded the parliament building and prevented parliamentarians from leaving the building. This moment was experienced by some as a moment of shifting power.

The following section will focus on advocacy techniques that aim to **directly influence government institutions and political actors**. Although these techniques are also used in many other contexts, our research shows that how they are used and which techniques contribute to advocacy success is different in a

socio-political context like BiH. One reason for this is that BiH since the Dayton Agreement has limited sovereignty which is subject to the authority of the High Representative and the presence of numerous foreign embassies and international agencies. In addition, foreign donors are an important source of resources which are frequently used to pay for achieving some advocacy results like drafting strategy documents and to interest both civil servants in events and trainings and which give politicians media exposure and present them in a positive light. As a result, the most significant examples of advocacy success have been achieved together with international support and pressure. A second reason is that BiH while elected officials often use their positions for personal gain or to reward their supporters, at the same time BiH is a highly bureaucratic state which hides corruption and rewarding cronies with many regulations and rules which are used to limit and direct the actions of citizens.<sup>14</sup>

One of the techniques that associations often say is necessary for successful advocacy is **direct lobbying** of decision makers. While this is often true in other contexts as well, it may be more so in BiH because neither elected officials nor civil servants are very directly accountable to citizens. Many elected officials also question whether associations are really representing the interests of the groups that they advocate for. Direct lobbying is a way to convince them of this. In addition, many cases of successful lobbying depend on key allies inside government based on relationships of trust that take time to develop. Direct advocacy/lobbying of decision makers and policy makers through strategically designed, planned and informal activities. For example: personalized letters sent directly to MPs, one-on-one meetings, informal contacts, working visits, development of joint strategies and appearances.

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<sup>14</sup> See Puljek-Shank, *Iznad okvira projekata: Lokalni legitimitet i zagovaranje civilnog društva u Bosni i Hercegovini*

Direct lobbying of decision makers, such as legislators or ministers, is a powerful advocacy technique. Lobbying entails talking directly to politicians and can take various forms, including meetings, forums, press conferences and open letters addressing the decision maker's policy or area of activity. Lobbying experiences of women's human rights organizations demonstrate the importance of direct communication with women's forums of political parties or parliamentary committees, as well as informal communication with the proposers of certain amendments. To that end, it is important to understand law-making and policy-making procedures, as well as know which actors are relevant in which part of the process. It is also a good idea to draft in advance the solutions that can be adopted, and to do so in the appropriate form (e.g. amendment, law, article of the law being lobbied for).

Direct lobbying thus often achieves success based on positive relationships. Direct pressure through what can be called **naming and shaming** is also seen by some in BiH as a technique that leads to success. In some cases, this means naming the person who is not fulfilling their responsibility or is guilty of some criminal or anti-social action, via public statements or the media. Although this can be a risky strategy because of the potential of increasing rather than decreasing resistance, its power is if there are clear signs of broad public support for your advocacy cause. This makes it also potentially damaging for your target to continue avoiding to respond or to take the action that you seek.

A third and also infrequently discussed technique used by associations in BiH is foreign pressure. Foreign pressure can mean visibility of your advocacy cause in foreign media, with ambassadors or international organizations, or even with foreign celebrities. Many of the most well-known successes of advocacy have been supported by some of these international actors. Savvy advocates keep international actors informed and use them at certain moments.

## **Case study:** **Preventing Building 350 Mini Hydroelectric Plants (MHEs)**

*This coalition was formed in 2016 by environmental associations and individuals who realized that more than 350 mini hydroelectric plants (MHEs) were planned in BiH. Although seen by some as a source of economic development based on BiH's water resources, the members of the coalition oppose them because they destroy river climates, reduce water supply, make the rivers inaccessible for recreation, and provide almost no jobs but rather profit for the investors enabled by a charge paid by citizens for renewable sources of electricity.*

*In 2022, the coalition has 30 member associations and individuals. Within the coalition the Aarhus Centres in Sarajevo and Zenica provided legal assistance and understanding of the concession and approval process and Eko Akcija from Sarajevo created a database and map of the planned projects. There have been a few successes, for example in Kruščica close to Vitez where women engaged in nonviolent direct action by bravely blocking bulldozers that were ready to begin building a planned MHE from August 2017 to December 2018. Other MHEs have been blocked by closely following the announcements of public hearings and getting citizens to show up in opposition, or a citizen's initiative. A smaller number of concession contracts have been cancelled. However, in many cases the concession contracts are still in effect, meaning that the owners may attempt to begin construction in the future. Moreover, legal challenges to enforce the terms of the concession contracts or to force the required public hearings and support of the local community are often ineffective because courts are slow. In one case, the court ruled in favour of the opponents after the MHE had already been built. Since both government institutions and even courts do not follow the law and government institutions often pass off responsibility to other levels, members of the coalition have to be well informed in order to know and respond when this happens.*

*Because of the difficulties described above, the coalition has shifted to advocacy at the cantonal and entity levels to fight against all MHEs. The RS has eliminated subsidies for all MHEs (less than 10 mw), which may make them less profitable, and a similar initiative is also underway in FBiH. The FBiH House of Representatives passed a resolution banning building MHEs and a review of those that have already been built and requested that the Federation government propose the necessary legal changes to implement this resolution. The coalition joined with interna-*

*tional allies in the 'Blue heart of Europe' campaign. This enabled them to mobilize international support, most notably by actor Leonardo Di Caprio who called out Federation Premier Fadil Novalić repeatedly on social media by name, likely leading to action on the part of the Federation government. In the Federation the coalition is presently focused on a change to the Electricity Law to prevent issuing new permits for MHEs.*

*Activists recommended to others engaging in advocacy that it is worth fighting and that it is important to find allies who have the necessary information and expertise.*

BiH is a signatory to numerous **international conventions** which have been used as a basis for advocacy campaigns. For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the basis for official BiH reports and shadow reports by women's associations.<sup>15</sup> The Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters connects the environment and human rights and can be summarised as "every person has the right to be informed, to be included in decision-making and to have access to justice regarding the environment". Referring to these conventions can be used for advocacy directly in communication with the government, and many of them also have regular reporting for which civil society is consulted and in which your advocacy issue can be identified. Appealing to conventions works best when advocating for a group or category whose rights are addressed in the convention.

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15 Reports on this and other UN Conventions are available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/BAIndex.aspx>

## **Case study:** **Support to Victims of Domestic Violence**

*Financial support by the RS and FBiH governments to victims of domestic violence can be considered one of the biggest successes of civil society lobbying based on the amount of funds that is allocated in these entity budgets yearly, money which is provided to shelters and services provided by associations. Other successes have included criminalization of domestic violence, and improved responses to victims by state institutions such as the police, schools, and centres for social work. Each of these outcomes was opposed by various means, including not budgeting legally-required funds and imposing bureaucratic regulations. In addition, this required overcoming the opposition of the police and some politicians who believed that it is better to keep families together even despite domestic violence. The process to achieve these results has taken more than 15 years, so that the description here will only focus on an overview of the process.*

*One key point was an early decision to seek state funding rather than donor funds to purchase and equip the safe houses and, in this way, to systematically address the needs of victims of domestic violence. This advocacy has included different advocacy techniques at different periods. One technique has been responding to invitations to participate by providing comments on draft laws and regulations as part of a working group. At times this meant disagreeing openly with other working group members, for example regarding the question of criminalization. Direct lobbying via female parliamentarians with whom positive relationships had already been established was often a key. When regulations for shelters that were required by law to be created within 6 months had not been created after 5 years, the Banja Luka organization Udružene Žene convened the relevant institutions to help overcome this obstacle. Women's organizations have also created agreements between actors working with domestic violence victims including the police, centres for social work and the CSOs that run shelters. When the agreements haven't been implemented, the CSOs have organized trainings for the relevant staff.*

*One recent result of this advocacy includes a new RS Criminal Law which is consistent with the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. The position of victims of domestic violence was also improved through the revised RS Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. Victims of domestic*

*violence are also eligible for free legal aid without demonstrating financial need.*

*In addition to the advocacy techniques mentioned above, international pressure has also been instrumental in advocacy. They have used the visits of ambassadors to bring the mayor to the site of a safe house and strengthen their visibility and municipal support in this way. The relevant CSOs participate in several national and regional networks and support and use each other's knowledge and expertise in this way. They participate in reporting on the implementation of the CEDAW and Istanbul Conventions and also create a 'shadow report' on both conventions. They also use the EU accession process, by participating in study visits and educating the staff that work at the BiH desk in Brussels about the issue of domestic violence.*

The importance of advocacy techniques such as lobbying and international pressure does not diminish the need for you and your organization (coalition) to prepare **accurate and reliable information, where expertise in a particular field remains an important advocacy resource**. That is why it is important to rely only on verified, scientifically proven information. If you are not familiar with manufacturing methods in a company that pollutes the environment, look for a retiree or former employee of the company who can introduce you to the details of the production process. If you suspect that 'scientists' or 'experts' are corrupt or that their integrity is compromised, do not rely on their advice and suggestions. Enquire about the references of people you approach for professional advice. A quick search of publicly accessible scientific databases, or at the very least scholar.google.com, can help you assess the credibility and expertise of experts and tell the difference between the real and purported ones.

## Case study:

### ***Improving the situation of people with disabilities and their families***

*The association “Dajte nam šansu” has been operating for 11 years. Recognizing the fact that similar associations focus on direct beneficiaries of services (e.g. children with disabilities), the association decided to shift the focus to empowering families of people with disabilities. They say that this has contributed to changing the framework and approach to the problems and rights of this marginalized group. In 2014, the first Service Centre in Sarajevo (Novi Grad Municipality) was established for people with disabilities regardless of age, form and degree of disability and their families, with the support of USAID and the Municipality of Novi Grad. In 2017, the second such centre was opened in the Municipality of Stari grad. The centres provide 14 different services completely free of charge. The Association initiates changes at all levels of government (local, cantonal, entity) as well as in other local communities and the country as a whole through transfer of knowledge and replication of models. The important changes that they have helped bring about include the empowerment of parents through various training workshops and psychological support, as well as the provision of mediation services in cases of marital disputes (there are far more divorces in this category of parents). In cooperation with the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Education, university students in appropriate study programmes received practical training, resulting in over 300 assistants trained to work directly with children and youth. Also, there has been an upsurge in student interest in working with this group. In the past, there was a reluctance to work with children and youth with disabilities, mainly due to fear resulting from lack of experience and direct contact with them. In cooperation with the local and cantonal governments in Sarajevo, a Day Centre for Persons with Disabilities is to be opened in 2022, because it is recognized that once people with disabilities reach 18 years of age and finish school, parents and the family face a big problem causing them to further withdraw into themselves, which is compounded by limited access to employment options. The change that the association is particularly proud of is the passage of the Parent-Caregiver Law at the level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2021, which had been pushed for since 2019. The Law is intended for parents of children with the most severe forms of disability (they cannot move and eat on their own, they require complicated therapy and are excluded from both inclusive and special education because they are unable to acquire even basic skills) and who rely heavily on their parents’ assistance for even the most basic life functions.*



*Among the advocacy tactics used, they emphasise the importance of knowing and being able to refer to the many conventions that BiH has signed and ratified. It is critical to always back up your arguments with evidence and statistics. The association keeps a detailed database of the families served and the types of disabilities involved. They believe that decision makers should not be approached critically from the start (criticism should be used only as a last resort) because most people lack sufficient knowledge about these problems (unless when they become parents of children with disabilities or have a familial or friendly relationship with such parents), and the same is true of politicians. They feel that it is important to advocate for change gradually because, when they see a positive shift, decision-makers will be inspired to keep working on the problem. The association hosts open days for decision makers to come in, learn about the services and beneficiaries and get actively involved in an activity. Furthermore, the association calculated how much precisely the parent-caregiver law 'costs' and presented the data to decision-makers. They see the media as being instrumental to successful advocacy, accounting for half of the work. They have succeeded in establishing themselves and becoming recognized as relevant interlocutors by the media, and they are frequently invited to participate in programmes debating and reporting on both every day and more complicated issues affecting this group of people.*

*The association encourages other civil society organizations (in particular those focusing on the rights and concerns of people with disabilities) to support each other more and have a broader picture of the problem. It is important to remember where we live (that we are not Switzerland or Sweden, and probably never will be), but if everyone works together to improve the system, it will eventually change. And projects come and go.*

**Request for access to information** is a document on the basis of which a natural or legal person has the right to access information guaranteed by law. The request must be made in writing in one of the official languages in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and some institutions have request forms available for download from their websites. The request does not have to state why the information is needed, but it must include the following:

- Preamble indicating that the information is sought “in conformity with the provisions of the BiH/FBiH/RS Law on Freedom of Access to Information.”
- Full name of the institution from which the information is sought
- Information on the natural or legal person seeking the information (name, address and contact details)
- Precise information sought, described in sufficient detail

The request is submitted in person or by post to the authority that you believe holds the desired information. If the authority you contacted does not have the information, the law requires it to refer the request to the appropriate competent authority and to notify the applicant.

The laws on freedom of access to information in BiH, FBiH, and RS stipulate that the authorities must respond to a submitted request within 15 days. Exceptionally, the period may be extended by another 15 days if the competent authority must decide whether the information sought affects confidential commercial interests of a third party and/or establish the existence of a public interest. If the authority cites these as the reason for refusing to grant access to the information, this reason must be described in detail and linked to the public interest in order for the applicant to have a chance to appeal.

When the authority fails to provide access to the requested information within the statutory deadline ('administrative silence'), the appeal is first lodged with the head of the authority within 15 days from the deadline's expiration due to administrative silence. The public authority is required to respond to the appeal within the deadlines set by law (30 days in FBiH, 60 days in RS) from the date of receipt of the appeal. If there is still no response, the applicant has the right to send a reminder letter to the second-instance body. If no response is received within seven days from the date of submission of the reminder letter, a request for supervision of the administrative authority is submitted to the administrative inspector, who is required to respond within 30 days from the date of receipt of the request, and if he/she fails to do so, or if the party is dissatisfied with the second-instance decision, an administrative lawsuit may be brought.

If access to information is denied in part or entirely, the competent public authority must issue a decision stating the legal basis for the exemption and the available appellate remedies, indicating the relevant appellate authority, time period for filing the appeal, amount of appeal costs, and the right to address the ombudsman. If the party is dissatisfied with the decision, the procedure for exercising the rights in this case is identical to the procedure initiated for 'administrative silence'.

## Case study:

### **Promotion of human rights, especially the position and human rights of LGBTI people**

*The Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC) has been working for 15 years to promote human rights, especially with regard to the position and human rights of LGBTI people and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by interpreting, presenting and representing authentic experiences of people who have been victims of human rights violations and inequalities, as well as advocating political, economic, social and cultural change in all areas of life. Among the positive developments they have helped bring about, they highlight the fact that issues surrounding LGBTI rights and culture are no longer taboo. These can now be discussed both in institutions and in public discourse, no longer from the standpoint of prejudice, shame and disgrace, nor from the traditional view of gender and sexuality, but through the lens of human rights, inclusion and diversity (change of framing). Since 2015, the fruits of many years of work by SOC and other organizations have begun to materialize, and one of the key factors for successful advocacy was patience and dedicated patient work. The most visible effect is the Pride Parade (which is not an end in itself, but rather a means) in that it has sent a clear message that things have changed for the better when it comes to the position of LGBTI people and the human rights situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another big change is in how institutions approach this issue: SOC notes that in the past they had to “urge” institutions to do their job, while nowadays institutions such as the Agency for Gender Equality address LGBTI concerns as part of their mandate. There are also local social welfare and mental health centres, which have become more sensitized to LGBTI people and their concerns. Changes in the quality of life for LGBTI people, who now live much more openly than they did in the past, are also important. It is vital to remember that not all changes happen evenly across the country. According to public opinion polls, the general public’s attitude toward the LGBTI community is improving.*

*One of the most important advocacy tactics employed by SOC has been to establish themselves as an organization with the credibility to speak about LGBTI rights. This credibility stems from the numerous SOC-run programmes aimed at communicating directly with the community and responding to their problems, ranging from psychosocial support and legal counselling to activist-artistic events (such as Merlinka). By engaging regularly with the community, it is possible to identify their needs and concerns at the aggregate level, and not only at the individual level. This goes hand in hand with the SOC’s ongoing monitoring and research of the human rights situation, which is also a valuable source of information when formulating demands addressed to decision makers. The authorities*

*take the organization seriously because it has always approached institutions with concrete, meaningful and well-founded proposals, such as legislative amendments and the development of public policies. Requests to institutions were framed in the European integration narrative, making it simpler to reach decision makers.*

*SOC claims that its understanding of Bosnia and Herzegovina's complicated political system and competences of different levels of government was instrumental in formulating and addressing their concerns. Although they are an ideologically positioned organisation, they did not hesitate to approach decision makers who are on the opposite side of the ideological spectrum, but who have the power to change things. They often contacted them individually, pointing out that what they were demanding was a civilizational achievement. It is not sufficient to send letters to decision makers; what matters also is to maintain direct contact, meet informally over a coffee, etc. They managed to get decision makers involved in their activities, such as the Academy of Political Equality, where they discussed feminism and gender equality in general, as well as presented other relevant ideas that directly concern LGBTI people and made proposals on how to move forward. Decision makers were invited to speak on some of the panels organized by SOC, which had a positive effect on them and made them eager to participate. SOC describe their approach as follows: "When we present our ideas, we are often met with a well-that's-never-gonna-happen-here attitude, but when you work in parallel to talk to decision makers, engage with the community and increase public awareness, it becomes a matter that other organizations or political parties may as well take up as their own initiative." With regard to the media, they point out that journalists are very eager to report on these stories as they are regarded as something that is thrilling and sensational, so SOC took advantage of this media interest. In doing so, they made sure that the media was not the primary creator of the content, but rather a conduit for SOC messages. It is essential to ensure that an issue of broader social importance receives appropriate media coverage because the first thing decision makers ask is who this issue concerns, how many people will benefit from it and who is interested in it.*

*SOC advises against starting from the assumption that those in authority should deal with the challenges we are dealing with, because unfortunately they do not. There is not much that can be done unless there is sustained pressure to change things. We need to guide and direct the behaviour of decision makers, and this does not happen overnight. It is important to arm yourself with patience and persevere! Another crucial factor is forming coalitions and engaging with partners who might not appear as "obvious" allies, because the broader the front, the more effective the advocacy efforts. One key message from SOC is to never try to do things alone!*

A final source of relevant information for advocacy can come from associations that **monitor government and function as watchdogs**. A watchdog is an individual or CSO that keeps an eye on a particular entity or a particular element of community concern, and warns members of the community when potential or actual problems arise. Watchdogs may be concerned with anything from the actions of a single individual to national policies. Some examples in BiH include following the actions of Parliamentarians, reporting on subsidies and property of government officials, and following tendering processes.

Simply publishing these results can have some limited advocacy effect, because it makes the information public and this may result in changes. More often monitoring needs to be combined with the other advocacy techniques described above to yield changes. Some watchdogs may lobby, engage in direct action of some sort, or go to court to stop actions or reverse conditions that endanger or otherwise harm the community or its members. Watchdog advocacy actions are best suited when the exposed information is deemed relevant for key stakeholders (for example, if citizens care enough to respond publicly and vote on the basis of information that is exposed).

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVOCATES

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### Seek out allies and build coalitions

Our research shows that coalitions between different kinds of organizations can contribute to the success of advocacy initiatives. Informal groups and social movements can be strengthened by sympathetic professional NGOs. That is because they bring necessary resources like access to experts and the ability to cover costs like transportation, communication, and printing. Those associations that enjoy legitimacy among citizens and donors are better able to mobilize member-based and grassroots organizations, allowing them to achieve broader policy outcomes. The identification of these “intermediary” organizations matters because they are not only focused on their interests but are also focused on strengthening the respective members. Coalitions led or supported by intermediary NGOs can achieve better results because they are more representative, credible, and autonomous. Coalitions are built around mutual interests and identity – you may need to invest time and resources in other associations before they are willing to help you.

### Foster international allies and use them tactically

By international allies we mean both foreign organizations (embassies, OSCE) but also foreigners and diaspora who are sympathetic to your cause. Fostering allies means keeping them informed. Using them tactically means asking for a show of support when it might make a difference -- can they issue a statement of support, seek a meeting with a key decision maker (for diplomatic organizations) or send letters to your mayor, respond on Facebook, share your posts (for individuals).

## **Don't engage in participation theatre**

By participation theatre, we mean efforts that use citizens in a superficial way. For example, one effort collected petitions but never delivered them to the institution that they were addressed to, and it wasn't even clear what action they were seeking. Participation theatre reduces rather than increases the desire of citizens to participate, and contributes to the low legitimacy of associations among citizens in general.

## **Build relationships with allies inside institutions**

Our research shows that successful advocacy efforts often depend on finding sympathetic allies inside institutions. Maintaining a simple story that all politicians or all civil servants don't care doesn't help to achieve success. It may take time to identify your allies and you may need to work with them for them to understand what you want and want to help you.

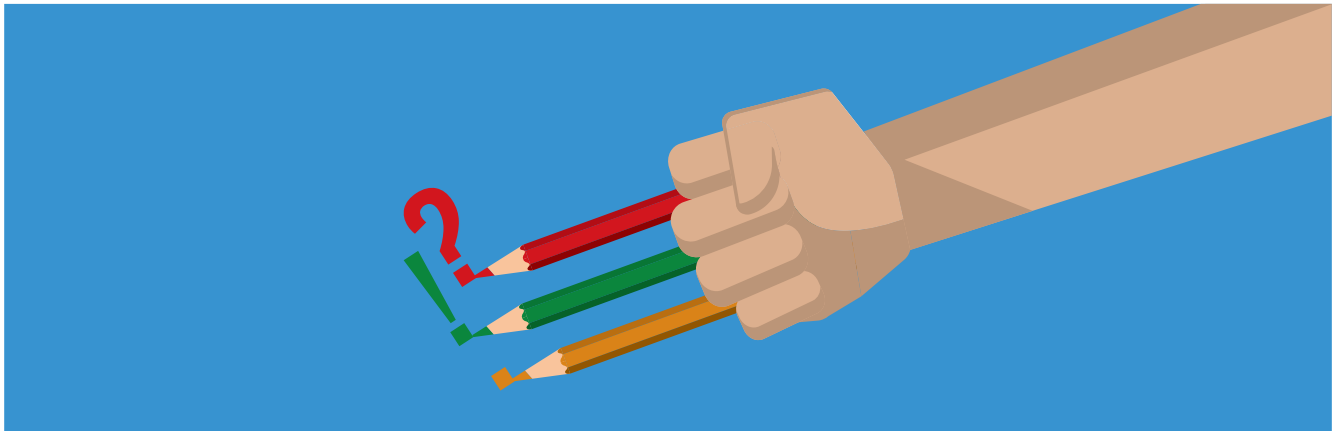
## **Be tactical in relationship to political parties**

Even when executed by organisations, advocacy campaigns are usually led by individuals, typically those with the most knowledge of the issue and the biggest media exposure. These individuals' risk being 'recruited' by political parties on the lookout for 'new names,' individuals of 'unblemished character,' who have earned their reputation via activism and who may potentially bring in a large number of votes in the next election. Political engagement does not necessarily conflict with activism; activists have even created/written policies that were incorporated into party election platforms, drafted legislative amendments, proposed initiatives, etc. However, because of their political involvement, they lose the support of the majority of people who do not vote for that political party or are apolitical (with the attitude "I have no one to vote for, everyone is the same"). This has the potential to undermine widespread support for the proposed idea. It is difficult to demonstrate to the public that the motivation for engaging in politics is the desire to change something or carry an idea through; most people will believe that the motivation is to build a political career.



## Providing services with government funds can limit your advocacy

Many associations working to improve the quality of services to citizens advocate for government to provide the associations funding to do so. They do this because they know their members' and beneficiaries' needs better, because they are less bureaucratic and more flexible and because they provide high-quality programs. However, receiving government funding can also limit the ability to be a critical voice and remain active as advocates. Moreover, in our research in BiH we have seen that even when some advocacy outcomes are achieved, maintaining these outcomes and keeping them implemented can draw associations into a long-term struggle and make it difficult to focus on new advocacy needs. Ultimately, providing services on behalf of the government may require that you fulfil bureaucratic requirements and limit your flexibility and autonomy as an association. Associations at times out of a desire to help government and push them undertake work that the government needs to do, like drafting strategy documents, but which then remain unimplemented.



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