

CAPACITY TRAINING MANUAL



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENCE, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Powered by
CODAF

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is a guide to equip oil producing communities on their rights as a people, how to protect their rights, how to channel their grievances and the best ways to communicate their stories to the world. It is therefore, peculiar to all oil impacted communities in the Niger Delta region.

Most oil producing communities in the Niger Delta are beautiful riverine settlement where the livelihood of the people is dependent on its waters and lands, as fishing, farming and basket weaving are the major sources of income for the people. So far, with the crude oil spillages, chemical discharge and gas flaring from the oil producing companies, the most important parts of the lives of the people which are their lands and waters, are being damaged more each day.

The effects of these very dangerous activities can be seen in the loss of fertile land, dying of crops and medicinal plants, and fishes running deeper into the river, because of these harmful chemicals. This has greatly slowed down the living conditions of the people, dragging them deeper into the lines of poverty.

In order for such affected communities to survive, they need to tell their own stories and make the world to hear about the plight of the rural people, provoking the appropriate authorities to swing into action and to stop these harmful industrial activities that against the environmental rights of the people..

This training manual is made up of three (3) Sections. Section 1 gives insight on Human Right, Environmental Rights, how the rights of the people can be violated, and how to defend our rights. Section 2 highlights the meaning of Advocacy, its importance and how communities can advocate for their rights. The third section of this document looks at Communications and Media Reporting of advocacy content. It gives a breakdown of the types of communication, the power of social media, and how the Community Radio can be used as an efficient advocacy tool.

Section 1

HUMAN RIGHT

1.0 -- **What is Human Right?**

- According to United Nations Human Rights Office, Human Rights are the rights we have simply because we exist as human beings. These human rights are also known as “Universal Rights” because they are not granted by any state or government.
- Generally, human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death.
- You are entitled to these human rights, regardless of where you are from (your nationality, national or ethnic origin, language), who you are (colour, gender, profession, status), what you believe in (religion, political affiliations) or how you choose to live your life.. These rights range from the most fundamental like the right to life- to those rights that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health and liberty.
- The rights can never be taken away, but can be restricted in cases of national emergency or if one breaks the law.
- The basic rights are based on shared values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence. These values are defined and protected by law.

1.1 – **How to identify your Right**

The basic human rights include:

- The Right to Life
- Liberty
- Freedom from slavery and torture
- Freedom of opinion and expression
- Work and Education ... and many more

No matter who we are or where we are as humans, we have to always remember that the factors listed above are what we deserve as humans who are breathing. Therefore, any action that goes against these, have gone against our human right.

1.2 -- Environmental Rights and How they can be violated?

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

- Environmental rights are the protection of natural resources the access to the use of natural resources, and how the access to and the use of these resources affects the surrounding population and the resources themselves.
- Environmental rights are an extension of the basic human rights that mankind requires and deserve. Adding to the right to food, clean water, suitable shelter and education, having a safe and sustainable environment is very important because all other rights depend on it.
- The fundamental human rights to life and human dignity as explained above, have also being linked to the need for health and safe environment to give an effect to these rights.
- Section 20 of the Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes the importance of improving and protecting air, land, water, forest and wildlife of the people.

HOW ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS CAN BE VIOLATED

- All human beings depend on the environment in which we live. A safe environment is important to the full enjoyment of our human rights, including the right to life, health, food, water and sanitation.
- Without a healthy environment, especially in this part of the world where people depend on their environment for their daily survival, the right to life has been cut short. Environmental rights have been violated.
- Any action or activity that has a negative effect to air, land, water, forest and wildlife of a particular people is a violation to their Environmental rights.

(gas flaring destroys the air. oil spills destroys land, water and wildlife. Chemical discharge destroys the environment. The environmental rights of odimodi people are being violated daily)

1.4-- How to defend your Right.

- With the ever growing activities of multi-national companies who are solely interested in profit generation, it has become very important to empower individuals, people and communities on how to fight against the violation of their environmental rights without the use of violence or other actions that can cause further damages to the people.
- These rights can be protected and defended by exploring several actions including:
 - Education and Information: Sensitizing the people on the environmental issues that affects them
 - Collaboration: Building unity and collaboration between the units of the community. (traditional rulers, men, women, youths, community development groups etc)
 - Advocacy and dialogue: Organizing meetings and conversations with relevant government authorities, companies, stakeholders etc.
 - Legal Actions: Seeking actions through the court and judiciary.
 - Media Engagement: Creatively using mediums of information dissemination to document and create awareness of the environmental damages and human right violations around you.

Section 2 **ADVOCACY**

2.0 --- What is Advocacy?

- Advocacy can be defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of a people.
- Advocacy refers to any activity that gives voice to issues that affect a group. It is aimed at influencing the decisions within political, economic and social institutions.
- Advocacy can include many different solutions. It can mean:
 - researching new solutions,
 - creating coalitions of likeminded people,

- public campaigns to raise awareness and much more.
- Advocacy means taking action to create change.

SOME ASPECTS OF ADVOCACY

- Building evidence on what needs to change and how that can happen.
- Raise attention about important issues and give voice to those affected.
- Influence those in power to provide leadership, take action and invest resources.
- Create positive change towards greater social justice and equality.

2.1 --- **What is the importance of Advocacy?**

- Advocacy enables people to be heard
- It supports the protection of human rights
- Advocacy influences laws and policy
- It enables people to better understand each other
- It promotes problem solving and participation
- It highlights available resources and services
- It educated the community on issues of importance
- Advocacy promotes respect for a course
- Advocacy makes the people stronger
- Advocacy helps the unit of the community to grow

2.2 --- **How to Advocate**

- Advocacy can be done through a wide range of techniques including
 - campaigning,
 - social media campaigns,
 - demonstration,
 - launching petitions and
 - Mobilizing others to take action.
- Advocates work to find ways to organize evidence, attention and action to create positive change.

RESEARCH

- One very important aspect of advocacy is research. Before advocacy can start, the facts about the issue, the problem it causes and possible solutions need to be researched on.
- Before you can persuade people to understand and accept your way of thinking, you need all the relevant information about that issue.
- Good advocacy speaks to the “hearts, minds and hands” by making people care about the issue, understand the facts and know what they can do.

SOME FAMOUS ADVOCATES

- Mahatma Gandhi challenged injustice and advocated for India’s Independence from British rule, and later inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.
- Martin Luther King spoke out for the civil rights of black people in America.
- Nelson Mandela fought for the end of the apartheid in South Africa.
- Malala Yousufzai advocated for education in Pakistan. She won the Nobel prize at the age of 17, making her the youngest Nobel prize winner.

Section 3

COMMUNICATION/ MEDIA REPORTING

3.0 --- **What is Communication?**

- Communication can be defined as the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or using other mediums.
- It can also be defined as the simple act of transferring information from one place, person or a group to another.
- A means of sending and receiving information can also be seen as communication.
- Every communication has three (3) parts:
 - sender,
 - a message and
 - a recipient.

- Communication is said to not be complete without a feedback or a response from the receiving end.

3.1. -- **Types of Communication**

The different types of communication include:

- **Spoken or Verbal Communication** – This involves face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media.
- **Non-verbal communication**- this covers body language, gestures, how we dress or act, where we stand, and even our scent. This involves delicate ways of communication like the tone of the voice, mood or emotions, hand signals and gestures can be added to spoken messages.
- **Written Communication**- This includes letters, emails, social media, books, magazine, newsletters, internet and others.
- **Visualization**- Visual aids such as graphs, charts, maps, logos, art and other visuals can be used to communicate messages.

3.2 --- **Advocacy and Communications**

- Every successful advocacy depends on the development of a required message, communicating this message and for the message to get to the target listener.
- Through advocacy communication, we translate our advocacy goal into a compelling case for action to policy makers.
- The aim of advocacy communication is to package our passions and concerns into an understandable message and passing this message to the target audience through relevant or available channels.
- Advocacy communication focuses on influencing a specific audience with a specific message to deliver a change in policy.

3.3. -- **How to Develop Content for Advocacy**

To create an effective and strong advocacy message for any audience, the following steps can be taken:

- **Open with a statement that engages your audience-** make a statement that will catch the attention of your audience immediately they come in contact with your intended message. You can use a dramatic fact or issues that can touch their humanity.
- **Describe the problem-** Present the problem as clearly as possible by explaining the problem, stating who it affects and the level of impact involved.
- **Provide facts and data about the problem-** Accurate data is important to demonstrate that a problem exists and to support your position. Look for facts that are relevant to your audience
- **Share s story that gives an example of the problem-** A story as an example puts a human face on the issue and makes it real in the mind of the receiver. Use stories that are relevant to your audience such as experiences and recorded impacts.
- **Connect the story to the values, concerns and self interest of your audience-** Demonstrate to your audience how this interest fits with what they care about, want or need. You can do this by learning about the target audience, their interests and concerns.
- **Make your request-** Your advocacy message cannot be complete if you don't "ask" for something. Clearly state what you want the person to do, and the outcomes you expect from the message you have passed across.

3.4 --- **Media Reporting of Advocacy Communication**

- The media is one of the fastest ways to get advocacy messages to the appropriate authorities and policy makers.
- Media reporting becomes more relevant when the target audience is unreachable, or where one-on-one advocacy communication has failed to yield the required results. In such cases, the mass media can be brought into the picture, to disseminate advocacy messages until it reaches the target.
- In media reporting, conventional media such as radio, television, newspaper and magazines can be used to spread the message.

- This can be done by writing press releases to media houses, organizing press briefings, inviting media representatives to cover advocacy actions, paid adverts and jingles etc.
- This conventional media are very effective but are also financially tasking. Hence, a more comfortable media reporting of advocacy communication can be done using SOCIAL MEDIA and COMMUNITY RADIO

3.5 --- **The Power of Social Media Advocacy**

- The introduction of the internet and social media has opened a wider window of communication that makes it easier to reach a wide range of audience and to explore all types of communication in a simple message.
- The list of social media platforms seems endless and is constantly growing as people find it easier to access information at their finger tips, using their smart phones and other ways of connecting to the internet.
- On social media, you can find all categories of people; young, old, student, working class, business men, politicians, organizations, companies etc.
- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok etc are fast and easy ways to communicate.
- Social media advocacy means taking advantage of social networks to promote your cause and to connect with supporters.

3.6 --- **How to use Social Media for Advocacy**

In order to use social media for advocacy, some things have to be put into consideration:

- **Decide on what social media platform you want to use-** To select the right platform to use, you have to make a list of the people you want to reach with your message. With the list, you can research on the platforms they use often and leverage on them.
- **Know your audience-** Knowing your audience will help you to package your message in the right language and manner that your target audience will appreciate and understand.

- **Connect with policy makers on social media-** Social media gives easy access to policy makers, politicians and government officials. There is a better chance of getting a response or interactions with a policy maker if you engage them on their social media platforms, as social platforms can be a more unfiltered, informal way they communicate with their followers.
- **Develop a strategy for your message and content-** Before you start posting on social media, you have to create a compelling message and develop a thoughtful content strategy. Plan how often you will post and set goals for engagement and goals. As you learn more about your audience, your strategy evolves.
- **Engage with supporters-** Don't just engage with only policy makers and politicians. Take the time to know who your supporters are and engage with them. Respond to their comments and questions. If they post something about your organization, react to it and reshare. These actions will encourage your supporters and mobilize more.
- **Develop relationships with members of the media-** Since social media gives us easy access to people, we can also use the opportunity to engage members of the media like journalists, TV and radio stations, local influencers, industry leaders etc. You can create a relationship by responding to their posts, resharing and reacting.
- **Use '#' hashtags relevant to your message-** A hashtag is a word or phrase that has this “#” symbol. Examples of hashtags are; #community #advocacyaction #speakup. These little links allows users to find similar content and group together.
- **Become a Thought Leader in Your Topic-** Social media gives the opportunity to showcase yourself or your organization as a thought leader in your area of interest. Consistently posting thoughtful commentary, sharing timely and relevant news, and adding value to conversations sets you out as a Thought Leader.

TOOLS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY

- Facebook groups and pages
- Instagram Stories

- Live Videos
- Twitter hashtags

3.7 --- **Community Radio as a tool for advocacy**

- Your community happens to have a very important toll of communication that only a handful of community possesses. That tool is the COMMUNITY RADIO.
- Advocacy starts with a group of likeminded individuals who have identified a problem in their surrounding and have decided to take actions to solve that problem.
- The community radio is a good place to start in your advocacy journey as it can be used for the following actions.
 - Inform and educate the community on their rights as a people.
 - Creating awareness about the environmental challenges they are facing
 - Encourage community members on the need to speak
 - Organize people into advocacy groups
 - Mobilizing for meetings, campaigns and advocacy actions

CONCLUSION

The industries in your community have damaged your environment in so many ways that violates your rights as a people and has the potential of pushing you further into poverty. In other to protect your livelihood and to save your children and your children's children from enduring such damages to your environment, you have to come together and speak up.

Whether you are a man or a woman, the fate of your community is in your hands. Its starts with knowing what you deserve as a people and speaking up until your message gets to the policy makers and government officials.

You have what it takes to present your message and your story to the world. Use it.

THANK YOU!!!

- **Exercise**

About CODAF

Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF) is a non-governmental organization that is registered in Nigeria, with focus on environmental advocacy work in Nigeria, to bridge the communication gap between policy makers and the grassroots. CODAF is working towards the attainment of sustainable rural development with rural community people to defend their rights to development, and the environment. CODAF is also known as Rural Community Empowerment Initiative (RUCEi). Our aim is to embark on community development advocacy work, carrying out research and assessment on the environment, livelihood of the rural people and embark on direct intervention projects, initiate capacity building among rural people, to influence government policies, acts as a voice for rural people especially women and children at local, national and international levels, and raise the level of awareness on issues of community health, environmental governance and human rights.

Our Stand

Value Nature

Value Humanity

Value Community

Our Focus

1. Community Action

- Community Health Advocacy
- Education Right Advocacy
- Community Development Advocacy
- Conflict Management

2. Environment

- Environmental Governance
- Energy Democracy and Governance
- Climate Change
- Waste Management
- Land Degradation

3. Agriculture

- Land Grabbing
- Deforestation
- Sustainable/Organic Farming
- Persistent Chemicals

4. Gender and Youth Action

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