

To raise awareness and generate support for the campaign, we need to partner with and influence all sorts of people and organizations to help achieve our goals. Advocacy will be a crucial part of the 15andCounting campaign.

## How do I identify possible campaign advocates?

Your first step should be to identify possible advocates and ascertain their position on a map such as the one below. While every advocate is important, some have a more powerful and influential voice than others. If every single person you target spreads the message about 15andCounting it will provide a groundswell of support for the campaign and will help us all achieve our goals together.

This section concentrates on four main areas of advocacy. You might not want to get involved in all these areas – just choose what suits you best.

## Further information

A Youth Activists Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Health (English)  
<http://youthcoalition.org/site08/attachs/SRR%20Guide%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf>

A Youth Activists Guide to Sexual and Reproductive Health (Spanish)  
<http://youthcoalition.org/site08/attachs/Guia%20activista%20DSDR%20with%20cover.pdf>

1. Targeting decision-makers
2. Targeting other organizations
3. Targeting the community
4. Targeting young people/your peers

This section of the resource kit will help you identify potential advocates (influencers), give you tips on how to approach them and ideas about how you might work together.



1. Brown = decision makers
2. Gray = organizations

3. Pink = community
4. Blue = young people/your peers

# 15andCounting advocacy

## 1. Targeting decision makers

By trying to influence and get support from politicians and lawmakers (such as MPs, senators, councillors, government departments) we can help influence decisions made by government.

Generally the most powerful stakeholders are those ministers who head relevant government departments. Think about targeting ministers from departments that cover the following areas:

**Finance**  
**Health**  
**Education**  
**Families**  
**Community**

Before starting an advocacy activity it is important to identify and determine which policymakers or opinion leaders should be central to decision-making about the issue you are advocating for. Being prepared is important and as part of the preparation, try to assess people's position on the issues. You can do this by looking at:

- the kind of comments he/she has made in the media (local newspapers, on TV etc.)
- the kind of events they attend (local activities, conferences, speaking opportunities)
- their political affiliation, past policy decisions and how they have voted on these or similar issues

Opinion leaders like to know which other leaders and organizations support the campaign – so provide them with this information if possible.

### **APPGs/ Parliamentary Groups/ Networks/ Local Party Groups**

Individuals may form into groups, sometimes within a political organization, political party, a trade union, or any other group with a political purpose. These groups are referred to by various names, for example the Uganda Chapter of the Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians or the United Kingdom's 'All Party Parliamentary Groups'.

These kinds of groups are made up of individuals with a particular issue of concern. They band together as a way of achieving these goals and advancing their agenda and position within the organizations.

These groups are an effective way of bringing together parliamentarians and interested parties who have shared concerns. Therefore you should include them when targeting decision makers and politicians to try and get their support for the 15andCounting campaign – they may already be supporting similar issues and would be ready to support your activity!

# 15andCounting advocacy

## 2. Targeting organizations

Joining forces and working in partnership with other organizations such as NGOs, charities and activist groups provides opportunities to reach many more people with your messages.

### Top tips on working in partnership with other organizations:

- Set goals and objectives so you're clear on what all partners are trying to achieve
- Be sure to outline clearly the mutual benefits that will come from the partnership
- Be focused and concise – although you might want to provide your potential partner with as much information as possible, too much information can be overwhelming and confusing
- Make sure you agree clearly the roles and responsibilities of each partner – who is doing what, who is paying for what and who is communicating what to whom and when

### Exercise:

Think about possible partners who can help support the 15andCounting campaign. Here are a few examples to get you started...

- Local health organizations
- YMCA/YWCA
- Faith based groups or communities
- Police department
- Local family planning or sexually transmitted infection clinics
- Local businesses

### What do you want them to do and how can you engage them to do it?

The following methods will work for both targeting decision-makers and organizations.

### Step one – starting a dialogue/getting them on board

#### Sending letters/emails

See the *Template* section for a template of a letter to organizations. This will need to be amended depending on who you are talking to.

#### Face to face briefings

A face to face briefing could range from a formal meeting to an informal conversation at an event. Meeting people face to face is a great way to engage, build trust and begin to establish a relationship.

Some examples of what you might want to discuss at such briefings:

- Tell them about the 15andCounting campaign, the background of the campaign and what we're trying to achieve
- Explain how certain issues affect you/ your community. For example, "The current lack of access to information on sexual health/ reproductive health means that young married couples/ young people/ women in the community are not able to make informed choices" or "The current school curriculum does not include any sex and relationships education. This means that the next generation are not receiving an important part of their education that would help them make informed decisions later on in their lives"
- Encourage them to sign the petition and then ask their peers to do the same

See the *Supporting Materials* section for tips on running a meeting/ briefing session with a potential advocate/ stakeholder/ politician/ community leader/ organization.

## Step two – mutually beneficial activity

### Round table discussions

Discussing issues with a range of representatives from organizations around a table can be an effective way of engaging people and generating debate. Create an agenda to be discussed and circulate to all attendees for their input in advance, this way you will get more out of the meeting.

### Photocalls - with local politicians/ celebrities and sport stars/ famous local people/ young people

Get politicians and other organizations to publicly show their support by organising a photocall for media. Their endorsement will particularly help your campaign on a local level. This might be a photo with a politician at a sexual health clinic, or maybe a celebrity helping distribute condoms to young people - or perhaps members of a partner organization signing the Count Me In petition. Be as creative as possible with your photo ideas to maximise media interest.

### Joint press work

Teaming up with another organization to write joint press releases, opinion polling, photocalls and supporting each other's events can add weight to your campaign activity. You can utilise their communication channels such as their website and newsletters to get your messages across.

## Step three – the call to action

### Signing the petition

Underlying all your advocacy activity is the challenge to get as many supporters as possible to sign the petition. When you're working with partners, see if you can get them to target their own members/ staff to sign too.

Although the focus of the petition is young people, the signatures of high profile organizations and political figures will give the petition more influence when we present it to the UN Secretary-General.

## Using advocacy to increase reproductive health supplies in Uganda

Due to the advocacy work of Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), the Finance Minister pledged additional funds for reproductive health and supplies.

### How?

The RHU invited Members of Parliament to attend a meeting to learn firsthand about the effectiveness of reproductive health supplies (e.g. contraceptives).

They learnt that reproductive health supplies can help reduce maternal mortality rates and contribute to meeting the ICPD goals. These MPs pledged to support the RHU in parliament.

### Result

Recently, MPs proposed a bill to divert resources from public services to reproductive health supplies.

A passionate debate followed resulting in the Minister of Finance pledging an additional 100 million shillings (\$62,500) for reproductive health supplies, an increase of 13%

**Visit Reproductive Health Uganda:**  
[www.fpau.or.ug](http://www.fpau.or.ug)

## **Peru – promoting sexuality and relationships education**

In Peru, an IPPF Member Association, INPPARES, successfully established comprehensive sexuality and relationships education as an important priority for the country's government. Using the 2006 presidential elections as a natural starting point for change, INPPARES created the ¡Si Podemos! (Yes We Can) project that led a group of 25 youth, health, and women's organizations to establish sexuality and relationships education as a topic to be addressed by candidates and the new administration.

Previous to this the national programme for sexuality and relationships education in Peru, which included comprehensive curricula and teacher training, had been cut. Advocacy efforts highlighted high adolescent pregnancy rates as well as young people's rights to information. INPPARES also contributed to significant positive media coverage of the issue, including having young people as spokespersons. Youth were involved in every aspect of the campaign, participating in planning sessions and meetings with legislators.

With the newly elected government, the advocacy campaign succeeded in including comprehensive sexuality and relationships education within a new law on equality between men and women.

Materials developed by INPPARES were used to craft the law and define sexuality and relationships education as scientifically and ethically based. As a result of the campaign, INPPARES is also collaborating directly with the Ministry of Education to ensure the participation of civil society in developing sexuality and relationships education curricula at every level of public education.

INPPARES's advocacy initiative shows how young people can be included in developing and implementing advocacy activities that are effective. The Member Association in Panama was involved in a similar project including creative campaigns on Valentine's Day, sending all relevant stakeholders of the Ministry of Education and Health, Teacher Association and Parent organizations a rose with a Valentine's card attached demanding better sexuality and relationships education to be able to love safely.

**Visit INPPARES in Peru:  
[www.inppares.org.pe](http://www.inppares.org.pe)  
(English and Spanish)**

# 15andCounting advocacy

## 3. Targeting the community

'Community Activism' is the involvement of the public in decisions which affect them.

When we think about communities we often think of groups of people living in the same area but this is only one type of community. Other communities include people who have something in common; people of the same age, sex, ethnic origin or faith; or people who share an experience, interest or cause.

### Why is community activism important?

Community activism can be a very effective way of giving people the opportunity to share their views – it is by listening to the experiences and ideas of people in a community, that solutions to problems can often be found.

Being able to demonstrate that members of the public support your campaign and have provided their own views on the issues, gives you a powerful tool with which you can approach political figures and other advocates.

### How do I start?

Community activism can vary from organizing formal activities to talking to someone in the street about the campaign.

You first need to identify who it is you would like to engage and what feedback or support you would like to get from them. For example, in addition to the general public, you may want to talk to other groups too such as teachers, health workers or religious leaders.

You could arrange to run an activity at a meeting that's already taking place – such as parent and teacher/ governor meetings at schools, neighbourhood community meetings or religious gatherings, or

organize your own meetings such as focus groups (where a group of people are brought together to assess their opinions on certain issues).

*If it's other young people you want to talk to, check out the next section on targeting young people and your peers.*

### So what exactly are you going to say to them?

A good place to start is by explaining what sexual and reproductive health and rights mean to young people and the impact policies relating to these issues have on young people's lives. Then it's important to explain what the 15andCounting campaign is and what it is trying to achieve (*see the campaign overview section*).

You could then provide them with some questions to answer to stimulate discussion and debate. *See the Supporting Materials section for an idea of questions to ask.*

We need to capture this information to support the campaign and help establish the extent of the problems and issues faced in your country. Find out if any of the people you ask would mind having some of their comments on the website, either with a photo or anonymously. You might want to film them talking about it and upload it onto the 15andCounting website (with their permission of course!) or perhaps write up a case study (*see the Supporting Materials section*).

# 15andCounting advocacy

## 4. Targeting young people/ your peers

### Section a) for adults recruiting youth advocates

Young people are at the heart of this campaign – they are experts on the issues that affect them and how they live their lives – and are invaluable campaign advocates. Young people are in a strong position to influence their friends, peers, community leaders and decision-makers and encourage them to sign the petition.

It is important to work with young people as equal partners on all aspects of the 15andCounting campaign. In fact, we have consulted with a number of youth advocates in developing this campaign. Young people are directly affected by these issues and are probably more passionate about them because of that - build on that passion.

Sex, sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health are important issues in the lives of most young people. Young people should play a key role in developing programmes on sexual and reproductive health in your community.

To make youth participation successful, we need to understand that:

- Young people need to feel valued and involved
- Youth participation is not about handing over all the work or responsibilities but it's about working together in equal partnership
- Youth participation needs continuous listening and learning
- Competent adults with the right attitude towards young people and youth participation need to be involved in the process

### Further information

UNFPA youth participation guide:  
<http://www.unfpa.org/public/publications/pid/1325>

Youth Leadership: recommendations for sustainability:  
<http://www.worldaidscampaign.org/en/Constituencies/Youth/Resources/Youth-Sustainability>



### Section b) for young people reaching out to your peers

Sex, sexuality, relationships and sexual and reproductive health are important issues affecting the lives of many millions of young people.

Young people are at the heart of this campaign – you are experts on youth issues and how young people live their lives – and are invaluable campaign advocates. By influencing your friends and contemporaries, and encouraging them to sign the Count Me In petition, you can make a real difference to the success of this campaign.

## Ideas for targeting your peers

### Social networking

Are you a regular internet user? Do you use websites where you can chat to other likeminded people? If so, this is a great way of spreading the word about the 15andCounting campaign. You might want to set up your own group or page on a networking site such as Facebook or MySpace or Twitter. Email a link to the petition to all your friends and ask them to sign it.

Your peers may be interested in writing about their experiences and views on issues relating to sex, sexuality, relationships and health – you could then send their comments (with their permission of course) through to us to upload onto the 15andCounting website to generate debate and discussion.

### Role-play

Role-play and other practical exercises provide a useful forum to discuss issues around sex – this might be in a drama class or a youth club.

You might want to produce a video – perhaps think about contacting a local TV station, media consultant, or a university film school and ask for some free advice. They may conduct a free workshop for you on video production.

### T-shirts

You and your friends may want to design t-shirts with educational messages on – or perhaps a call to action to sign the petition. Contact local shops ask for free t-shirts and encourage your friends to wear them.

## Exercise

Take a look at the following list of ways of communicating with your peers. Some of these may work for your community, some might not. Work with a friend or colleague to make it most relevant to you.

Possible Channels to target your peers:

- Friends
- Teachers
- Videos
- Radio
- TV
- Movies
- Theatre
- Posters
- T-shirts
- Assemblies
- Health clinics
- Doctors/nurses

- Advertisements – on radio, TV, public transport
- Hotlines

Possible locations to engage your peers:

### School

- Cafeteria
- Lockers/ hallways
- Outside grounds
- On the way home

### Community

- Restaurants
- Athletic events
- Shopping centres
- Playgrounds/ parks
- Parades
- Youth centres
- Church, mosque, synagogue, etc.
- Music concerts
- Stores

**Don't think that change is going to happen overnight. It won't. But there is potential to make a real difference both in your own country and on a global scale if you choose the right people and organizations to target and engage them in the right way.**

### **Don't forget!**

Although young people are sexual beings, many may not be comfortable talking about sex, or their sexual experiences. Always approach conversations with young people on this subject with respect and sensitivity.

Similarly, be very aware of the laws in your country and sensitivities around certain issues – such as abortion.



## **Nicaragua – PROFAMILIA – Working to fulfil young people’s right to be themselves**

In Nicaragua, IPPF’s Member Association worked with local communities, youth organizations, human rights organizations and UNFPA representatives to raise awareness of the fact that young people have a right to be themselves and make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives.

The current restrictions in Nicaragua are violating this right because they focus on power relations among different groups, emphasizing machismo which limits women’s participation and hampers the involvement of men in making changes in society. It is essential to challenge the power relations among these groups, in order to promote adolescent and young people’s rights.

The young people designed posters and T-shirts on youth rights with a special focus on decreasing stigma and discrimination for young gay men and lesbians.

Profamilia and local communities valued the experience of working in partnership. They felt that the exercise was an opportunity to strengthen personal and institutional links, and learn about the work done by other organizations and the lessons learned by other people and teams. This was also an excellent opportunity to share work experiences, and discuss the relationships between adults and young people in the community.

This experience also turned out to be a good exercise in respecting different opinions and diversity.

**Visit PROFAMILIA in Nicaragua:  
[www.profamilia.org.ni](http://www.profamilia.org.ni) (Spanish only)**

## Advocating for safe abortion - Ireland

### Background:

Building on the Irish Family Planning Association's (IFPA) campaign for 'Safe and legal abortion in Ireland', the overall aim of this project was to build awareness and support for less restrictive abortion laws in Ireland. The project's objectives aimed to increase and mobilize socially and politically active young people to advocate for a change in the Irish abortion laws, and to maintain a high level of activism among youth members of IFPA.

### Getting young people involved:

The project focused on the idea that young people have a fundamental right to autonomy when making decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. Four capacity building workshops on issues related to abortion were held as part of the campaign, and the result was the formation of a group of 17 young pro-choice activists dedicated to promoting sexual and reproductive rights, including the provision of abortion services, in Ireland. The group is called 'BODY' – 'Bold, Open, Decisive Youth'.

### The Action:

BODY introduced itself with a demonstration outside the Dail (the Irish parliament) that featured 17 activists imprisoned in a cage made from coat-hangers, representing the estimated 17 Irish women forced to travel to Britain for an abortion every day. The demonstration called for the legalization of abortion in Ireland and was well attended, indicating public support for the provision of abortion services in Ireland.

### Conclusion:

It is clear that young people care about these issues and can be mobilized and supported to drive the agenda and campaign for increased access to safe abortion in Ireland by advocating effectively on an issue that affects them so fundamentally.

**Visit the Irish Family Planning Association: [www.ifpa.ie](http://www.ifpa.ie)**

