

C2. How to plan budget advocacy with an impact

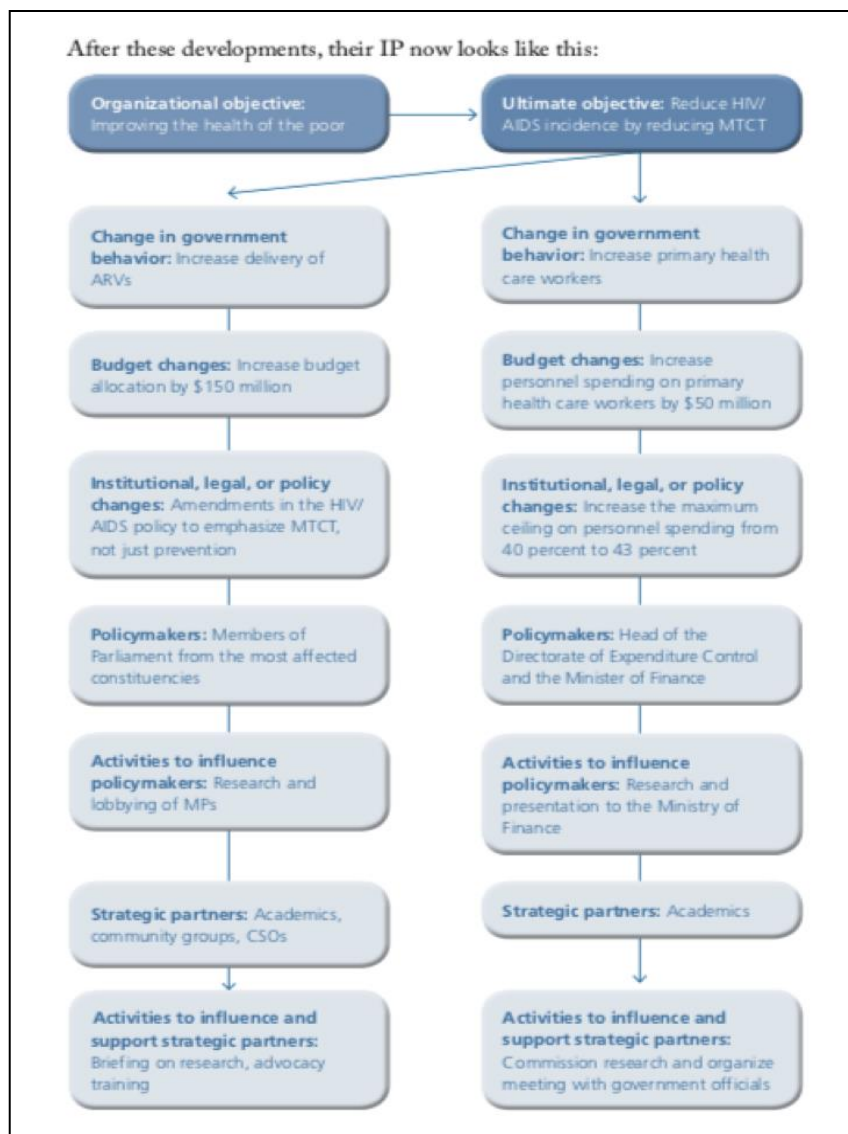
IBP, one of the main international budget advocacy organizations, has prepared methods for CSOs to plan budget analysis and advocacy strategically. They call the method “impact planning”, which is summarized in the [“Super duper impact planning guide”](#) (94). The guide was designed for 45 CSOs in 18 countries to guide theories of change for budget advocacy, including health budgets. The tool has been used by a wide range of civil society activists and has proven effective in developing strategic thinking on budget advocacy problems and objectives. The IBP describes an impact plan as:

... an explanation of how you expect your organization’s strategies or campaigns to work. It shows the chain of cause and effect between the strategies that your organization uses and the ultimate results that you hope to achieve.

Any advocacy strategy already assumes that such a chain of cause and effect exists. An IP is just an explicit statement or graphic representation of the sequence of changes that you hope to contribute to through your work. This guide will help you use IPs as a tool for formulating and implementing strategies for campaigns or projects. IPs can help you to unpack the assumptions implicit in these strategies. Understanding and improving these linkages can help you reach the objectives of your work.

The tool includes a strategy based on answers to guiding questions and analysis of contextual, institutional and issue-specific elements, allowing CSOs to construct a visual map of their budget advocacy work. An example of an impact plan flow chart is given in Box 12.

Box 12. Impact plan flow chart



Source: reference 94, with permission

A key component of this approach is “the ultimate objective”. For the impact plan to be adequate and lead to an impact, the objectives must be strategic and well defined. Definition of the strategic objective is perhaps the most complex but most amusing and important part of any theory of change or impact planning, as the entire trajectory to be followed is based on its clarity. A commonly used method for developing strategic objectives that is readily

applicable to planning UHC budget advocacy is the SMART approach (see Table 6). A budget advocacy objective that is SMART therefore sets a clear path towards change and provides a vision of what is to be changed, who will change it, how the change will materialize, by how much and by when. If the budget advocacy objective is SMART, so will be the research and actions.