

Section 1: Setting objectives

With a problem in mind, you are ready to choose objectives for your campaign. This section will help you define what you want to accomplish, who you will need to work with, how you will proceed, and what messages you can use to influence decisions.

From evidence to policy

After researching the issue and identifying how certain changes could cause major benefits, the way forward may seem deceptively obvious. But as you have no doubt noticed, it takes more than a good idea to change policies, and the links between evidence and policy development are often complex.

Consultation: engaging with other voices

Before defining your strategy and taking actions, it may be useful to consult with some of the stakeholders you have identified or with others working on similar advocacy campaigns. One of the key elements to campaigns is uniting a variety of actors towards a shared vision. Engaging early with individuals or organizations you may want to partner with is critical for success.

Meeting with others will help you look at the problem from a new perspective and understand how others see the issue. You may or may not agree with them, but it is important to know what others believe. These meetings might yield detailed information about current anti-malaria efforts or the political climate that could help you define your approach. Additionally, you may learn about ideas others have had for possible solutions. Rather than starting from scratch, you may find out about work already in progress that you can build on.

As you develop the campaign, you will want to develop partnerships, which can either be formal arrangements or cooperative working relationships. Partnerships with government institutions, companies, community organizations, and individuals will allow the campaign to have a greater influence in your country. Having the right partners can raise the profile of an issue, transforming it from an individual's idea to a subject of national concern. The campaign will have a stronger voice and a greater ability to influence others. Partnerships also lend more credibility to the issues that you raise, giving the campaign more legitimacy. Through partnerships, the campaign can eventually rally a "critical mass" behind the issues, making change much easier to achieve.

When looking for partners or collaborators, seek to develop the right mix. A strong Zero Malaria Starts with Me-style campaign will have a diversity of actors united to end malaria. Including different types of partners will broaden the skills, knowledge, influence, and resources available to support the campaign, and allow it to reach new audiences and networks. By including both community-based and high-level political partners, for instance, the campaign will be able to promote behaviour change interventions and affect national policy decisions simultaneously.

There may be other health-related campaigns active in your country. If possible, it could be useful to join forces and share experiences with them. Ultimately, advocates for health should not view each other through a competitive lens, but rather seek to work together toward the ultimate goal of a healthier population.

The methods you use to engage potential partners will vary considerably. Conferences, World Malaria Day, and other events may offer an opportunity to meet others working on malaria. When you have a chance to discuss their thoughts about your chosen issue, be sure to ask open-ended questions that will allow them to explain their view, rather than guiding their response through closed questions (Example: "What do you think about current drug procurement policies?" versus "Should we change drug procurement policies?")

If meeting with a new stakeholder for the first time, you may also want to learn more about their interest, alignment, influence, and potential for engagement (see Stakeholder Analysis tool, module 1) to determine where they stand before offering a partnership. While a range of views and opinions is welcome in a coalition, you want to ensure that partners share a vision for Zero Malaria.

Choosing objectives: What will the campaign achieve?

Many changes may be needed to eliminate malaria, and by now you may have an idea of what specific changes your campaign could target. When defining your objectives, consider using the SMART tool below, using the right language and being very clear about your objectives will lay the foundation for a successful campaign. Once you achieve them, you can always add new, more ambitious objectives later.