

# Strategies for Effective Advocacy in Education

## Lessons from Todos pela Educação & Movimento pela Base

The successful experiences of Brazilian organizations like Todos Pela Educação (TPE) and Movimento pela Base (MPB) demonstrate that **effective advocacy depends on a combination of coordinated strategies**, ranging from direct dialogue with public authorities to broad societal mobilization. This document details some of those strategies, hoping to offer a pragmatic guide for organizations seeking to influence the prioritization, formulation, implementation, and sustainability of structural education policies.



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Building Global South exemplars for government-led education reform

# 1

## Direct Advocacy: Dialogue & Qualified Influence

This strategy involves direct and ongoing engagement with decision-makers, informed by data and evidence to elevate the quality of the debate.

### 1.1 Maintain Permanent Dialogue with Public Authorities

Build a constant communication channel with legislators, government teams (ministries, secretariats), election campaign teams, and oversight bodies at federal, state/province, and municipal/district levels.

**TPE Example:** The organization lists **direct advocacy** as one of its three pillars of action. Its president, Priscila Cruz, highlights a "strong dialogue with the Ministry of Education," governors, and mayors as a continuous practice to influence teacher policies and other agendas.

**MPB Example:** In 2022, the movement held meetings with hundreds of stakeholders, including government executives and members of the legislative branch. During the election cycle, it engaged with presidential and state campaign teams to ensure the continuity of education policies.

**KEY MESSAGE:** **Building trustworthy relationships and continuous, non-partisan dialogue with decision-makers is fundamental to keeping the issue on the agenda and ensuring its long-term sustainability.**

### 1.2 Support Decisions with Applied Knowledge & Technical Recommendations

Produce and present technical notes and evidence-based recommendations to inform and guide the formulation of public policies. The objective is to qualify the debate and offer concrete solutions.

Be sensitive to policymakers' needs and political timing, responding to government demand, but also anticipating key issues and debates.

**TPE Example:** The production of "applied knowledge informed by evidence" is a central part of its direct advocacy pillar. The Education Now initiative combined the efforts of strategic stakeholders from different sectors and political positions to create a series of documents with practical recommendations, which were presented to candidates and elected members of government, influencing how policies were conceived, planned and implemented since the beginning of each political term.

**MPB Example:** The organization produced recommendations for pedagogical policies as part of the Education Now initiative (led by TPE). It also produced technical analyses and recommendations on the alignment between the National Learning Standards (BNCC) and national assessments, textbooks, and teacher training.

**KEY MESSAGE:** **Well-founded technical proposals increase the cause's credibility and the likelihood of positively influencing public policy formulation.**

# 2

## Monitoring & Knowledge Production: The Power of Data

The collection, analysis, and dissemination of data and evidence are crucial for planning the advocacy strategy, for providing transparency on policy progress, for holding officials accountable, and for qualifying public debate. This data and evidence must also encompass a clear understanding of the political and institutional context. This includes mapping potential risks – such as electoral transitions, changes in government priorities, misinformation, and political polarization – that may threaten policy continuity. By anticipating these dynamics, organizations can design mitigation strategies, maintain non-partisan credibility, and adapt their messaging to different political cycles, ensuring long-term sustainability of education reforms.

## 2.1 Monitor Policy Implementation & Impacts

Systematically track the implementation of public policies, collecting data to inform society and guide decisions. Transparency about progress helps prevent setbacks and can create a sense of "inevitability".

**TPE Example:** **Public monitoring** is the second pillar of its work, aiming to track the formulation (as in the example below), implementation, data, and impacts of policies.

**MPB Example:** The movement created the **Observatory of the Implementation of the BNCC and the New High School**, a platform that gathers indicators and information on the progress of policies nationwide. In 2022, the Observatory received over 448,000 visits and became a key reference for managers and educators.

**KEY MESSAGE:** Continuous and transparent monitoring generates positive pressure on public managers, informs society, and helps sustain policies over time.

## 2.2 Produce Research & Analysis to Qualify the Debate

Invest in producing research, case studies, and analyses to deepen knowledge on the topic and overcome ideological barriers with concrete data. It is important to include the equity perspective throughout the process, in order to ensure that advocacy efforts promote not only systemic improvement but also inclusion and equal opportunities for all learners.

**TPE example:** Todos Pela Educação is currently contributing to the construction of the National Education Plan (a 10-year structural plan built by the National Congress in broad consultation with society) through analysis of the original National Education Plan Bill, of subsequent amendments to the bill, and the construction of recommendations to improve the document.

**MPB Example:** Before the first version of the BNCC was even drafted, MPB conducted over 30 studies and research projects on curricula both worldwide and in Brazil to inform the discussions. It also conducted surveys to gauge the perceptions of teachers and managers, with results showing that 79% of teachers noted positive effects from the BNCC, which strengthened the cause's legitimacy.

**KEY MESSAGE:** Continuous and transparent monitoring generates positive pressure on public managers, informs society, and helps sustain policies over time.

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## Connection & Communication: Building Public Will

No complex reform moves forward without a broad base of support. It is essential to connect multiple actors and communicate strategically with society to generate engagement and protect the agenda from political instability.

### 3.1 Promote Co-Creation & Broad Engagement

Involve a diverse group of stakeholders in the policy formulation process, especially those most affected by it, such as teachers and school managers. Mechanisms like public consultations, seminars, and hearings are crucial for ensuring legitimacy.

**MPB Example:** MPB actively worked to ensure the construction of the BNCC was a highly participatory process, pressuring the federal government to involve teachers in the writing groups and mobilizing the active participation of teachers, scientific entities and specialists in the public consultation processes promoted by the government.

**KEY MESSAGE:** Involving stakeholders in policy co-creation from the beginning generates buy-in, improves the quality of the proposal, and increases the chances of successful implementation.

### 3.2 Connect Coalitions & Act as a Bloc

Join forces with other organizations around a common purpose to widen and diversify perspectives, strengthen knowledge production, complement expertises, coordinate actions, and increase collective impact.

**TPE Example: Promoting coalitions** is the third pillar of its strategy. The organization coordinates around 40 civil society institutions that, in this joint effort, have an impact that no single entity would have individually.

**MPB Example:** During a severe political crisis (a Presidential impeachment) in 2016, 44 members of the coalition from different political spectrums co-signed an op-ed defending the continuity of the BNCC as a state policy.

**KEY MESSAGE:** Effectively involving diverse stakeholders and organizations broadens and deepens an essential diversity of views on the subject, amplifies the cause's voice, increases pressure on decision-makers, and strengthens both the technical and political legitimacy of the proposals.

### 3.3 Use Strategic Communication to Mobilize Society

Use the media and communication channels to give visibility to the agenda, disseminate quality information, take public stances, and mobilize public opinion.

**TPE Example:** The organization uses communication as a tool to hold public officials accountable and increase the "political cost and benefit of prioritizing education". Different members of the TPE team are frequently interviewed on national TV and publish opinion articles in a wide range of media, besides posting frequently on social media.

**KEY MESSAGE:** Consistent and strategic public communication creates a social environment favorable to change, protects the agenda from setbacks, and holds managers accountable for results.

### 3.4 Engage Ambassadors & Strategic Opinion Leaders

Use influential individuals across various sectors and political spectrums—including high-level government leaders, coalition members, and organizational representatives—to build consensus, lend legitimacy to the agenda, and amplify the cause's message to the broader public.

Secure high-level political buy-in and continuity by maintaining trustworthy, continuous, and non-partisan dialogue with high-level decision-makers, such as governors, mayors, and ministry leaders, as well as engaging with election campaign teams, to influence policies and guarantee the long-term sustainability and continuity of the agenda.

Utilize public figures for media visibility, leveraging the platform of organizational representatives and spokespeople to participate frequently in national media interviews and publish opinion articles (acting as multiple voices with aligned messages), which gives visibility to the agenda and helps mobilize public opinion.

**KEY MESSAGE:** Leveraging influential spokespeople and diverse strategic leaders amplifies the cause's visibility, generates broad consensus, and protects the agenda from political instability by ensuring continuity.

The information on this document was compiled with the support of AI, using the sources listed below. Centro Lemann holds full responsibility for the content.

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