

# PLANNING A CAMPAIGN

**Changes do not happen overnight. If you want something to change, you have to show passion and commitment. As an MYP you have the opportunity to make some serious changes to improve the lives of yourself and young people in your constituency.**

**Use this section to guide your first few months in campaigning, whether it is on a local, regional or national basis.**

## WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?

Getting people with power to make the decisions you want. Campaigning is a necessary function within any democratic society, focusing on the right of the individual to make his/her voice heard. It is particularly crucial to the lives of young people who are often ignored or not taken seriously. It gives young people the opportunity to make real improvements to

their lives and those around them.

As MYPs you all have the opportunity to make some great changes. A campaign can be local, regional or national. If there is something that you feel passionately about, something that you feel should be improved or changed then there is a campaign there waiting to be planned and carried out.

## THE GOLDEN RULES FOR A CAMPAIGNER

### 1. What is your ask?

Know the difference between an issue and campaign. What is it that you're asking for? What do you want and why? This is the campaign and what you ultimately need to focus on. Looking at last year's campaigns, the issue of transport was a big one for young people across the UK. The campaign however had



to be something specific, an ask, so MYPs lobbied the Government for national concession cards for all young people using buses.

## 2. Identify your targets

Identify who you want to persuade. Who you should be working with and who you can get to support you? Is there anyone already working on the same cause? It might benefit you to speak to them and find out how you can help each other. Do you want to persuade the Government to pass a law?

Once you have identified who or what you are up against, it will make the rest of your planning a lot easier.

## 3. Show why it matters - get your facts

Above all, know your campaign. Do the research behind the issue, learn the history and the people involved. If you don't know your campaign, you can't expect anyone else to care. This is especially important as you will come up against a lot of people wanting to prove you wrong. If you want to be taken

seriously then you need to have the facts to back up your argument.

- Speak to people. Get your local council and local businesses involved (e.g. Family Planning Clinic / bus company). Ask for their views and other useful information. There's nothing better than first hand research.
- Of course the internet is your most accessible resource. Use it as much as you can and keep an eye on the UKYP campaign web pages for recent news.
- Don't forget about the library; it is a myriad of resources. Most libraries have either print, CD-ROM, or online indexes of magazine, journal and newspaper articles (referred to as periodicals) available for users.

#### 4. Find your niche

No matter how big or small your campaign, decide what's different about what you're doing and use this to your advantage. It will make you stand out above other campaigners, and will help your ultimate goal.

#### 5. Recognise your limit

Being over-ambitious is a fatal flaw when it comes to picking your campaign. Don't let the issue become overwhelming to the point that it is difficult to manage and no progress is made. Breaking down the campaign into small manageable steps will help you measure your success and give you more focus.

A good way of doing this is planning your campaign according to specific date's affecting the issue. The Sex and Relationships Education campaign planned certain movements around days such as World Aids Day and National Condom week.

#### TACTICS

There are loads of campaign tactics you could use to achieve what you want, but not everything will apply to your specific needs, so, after doing a SWOT, have a brainstorm and decide what the best plan of action could be. Here are some ideas;

- Demonstrations
- Petitions

## SWOT It!

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a planning tool used to evaluate your campaigns and will make it easy for you to decide how to tackle the campaign in the most effective way. You can use it on any campaign idea to assess the potential, therefore it is a great tool to use when deciding on UK Youth Parliament’s national campaigns.

Doing this with a few people is a good idea as you’ll get more thoughts bouncing around. You could do it with your school, fellow MYPs or your region.

### Strengths

- What is your advantage?
- What are you contributing that others aren’t?
- Identify where you are stronger and more able than anyone else campaigning on the issue.

### Weaknesses

- Is there anything that may be harmful to your campaign?
- Think about resources, how much you, your region, the organisation could take on.

### Opportunities

- Are there dates coming which you could take advantage of?
- Is there a celebrity who may be interested in the campaign?
- What outside aspects are there that could be helpful in achieving your objectives?

### Threats

- In the same way as opportunities - are there any outside aspects that could be harmful to achieving your objectives? (Outside influences such as what’s high on the political/ media’s agenda.)
- Is there anyone that may stand in your way?

Once you have looked at these aspects of your campaign, it will be clear where to focus and which **tactics** to assume.



- Protest
- Letter to local MPs/ Ministers
- Boycott

Employing suitable strategies for the different people you're trying to persuade is wise as not everyone will respond to the same thing. So think about who you are targeting and what you want to achieve.

## **ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING**

It goes without saying that the

internet is the most accessible and possibly your biggest, most valuable resource. It reaches people of all ages, cultures and regions and you have a lot of freedom to be creative with your ideas.

With the arrival of sites such as Facebook, Bebo, MySpace and YouTube, the online world has fast become a tool for quickly spreading news/messages. Use it to create a large network to support your campaign. It can be very influential if used to its advantages.

## YOUNG CAMPAIGNERS

Use your term in office as an opportunity to make some real changes in the world you live in.

“Sometimes speaking out can be scary – at one conference I had to talk in front of 400 people – but someone has to stand up for teenagers. I’ll do everything I can to change things. I’d love to be Prime Minister one day, but in the meantime I’m going to continue to fight for teen rights. After all, we’re the future.” Katrina Mather, MYP for East Sussex 2005-07, being interviewed by

Sugar magazine.

Remember, that if it is something you believe in, be positive and fight for it, because if you don’t make those changes, who else will?

## FINALLY

Be sure to let the UKYP office know what you’re up to. They can give advice and help promote your campaign on the UKYP website.

Email: [campaigns@ukyouthparliament.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@ukyouthparliament.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7553 9895

## MORE CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

Louder is the new home for e-campaigning for people who want to change the world:

- [www.louder.org.uk](http://www.louder.org.uk)

Find out more about the UK Youth Parliament’s campaigns and get involved:

- [www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk)