

# Discussion Series Summaries: Government engagement and advocacy

## What is the discussion series?

The discussion series is a monthly peer-to-peer sharing and learning event for UK Aid Direct and UK Aid Match grant holders and their downstream partners. Based on grant holder topic requests, each month two grant holders, or downstream partners, who have relevant experience on the topic present their work and answer questions from fellow grant holders and downstream partners, before a wider discussion on the topic is held in smaller groups.

This summary is based on the session held in February 2021 on government engagement and advocacy.

## Presenters

### Village Water (VW)

VW work with local partners and district, provincial and national authorities in Zambia and Mozambique to improve health and opportunity by supporting local solutions to reach everyone with water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

### Presentation

VW's UK Aid Match project works in partnership with existing WASH networks and community volunteers, aiming to improve the health within informal communities in Lusaka through WASH education, enterprise, and advocacy. COVID-19 impacted on planned activities designed to build trust and transparency between communities and local water duty-bearers and embed the repeat hygiene messaging. Adaptive responses included call-in radio Q&A sessions with local decision makers and service providers to discuss WASH issues raised by the community and messaging with loudspeakers on trucks. This helped to overcome barriers around illiteracy and access to information. VW's efforts resulted in the development of a collaborative WASH action plan.

### Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities (AIPG)

Through education, training, and technical assistance, AIPG supports governments to develop or strengthen policies and practices for the prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities.

### Presentation



AIPG's UK Aid Direct project prevents identity-based violence (IBV) in the Great Lakes Region through government engagement. Through advocacy and negotiation, AIPG signs MOUs with inter-governmental bodies such as the African Union to implement prevention projects within member states. These are used as an entry point for engagement with state and civil society leaders. AIPG helps leaders to operationalise protocols at the national level and builds regional mechanisms where interventions are discussed. AIPG summons training and capacity building forums with government, civil society, religious and academic leaders on IBV policy options, legal instruments, and early warning systems. AIPG opens space for discussions between stakeholders on issues and responsibilities around prevention, which establishes shared objectives of building peaceful communities.

[Please find a link to the presentations here.](#)

### Key takeaways from the session

- Encouraging a sense of ownership of policy or advocacy by stakeholders at the local level improves engagement.
- Action plans developed collaboratively by stakeholders are tangible and useful outputs to guide work and measure success toward more sustainable outcomes.
- It is effective to work in partnership with existing community networks and governance systems and use existing instruments as entry points. Working within the local system, strengthening it, and making room for engagement in existing institutions can support change.
- Measuring / demonstrating impact and reach is challenging in policy and advocacy focussed work aimed at addressing major structural issues. This includes inherent difficulties in attributing achievements to one player in very complex, multi-stakeholder policy processes, and being realistic about what can be achieved within a project timeframe.
- In terms of community and government collaboration, each country has its own context and success is dependent on the development of a good relationship between government entities, communities, CSOs and other key actors in each country.

### Resources

- [Advocacy Planning guidance videos produced by AmplifyChange Fund](#)

- [Project case studies on changing policies and laws on the AmplifyChange Learn platform](#)
- [Theory of change for advocacy and campaigns from Bond](#)

[More learning resources from the Discussion Series and from UK Aid Match can be found on the website.](#)