

The Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWMENA) Project

Focus on Lebanon | Lobby Training Manual

*A project by the International Foundation
for Electoral Systems (IFES) with funding
from the Canadian International
Development Agency (CIDA)*



Lebanon: Lobby Training Manual

IFES: Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa Project
Funded By: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Chief Contributor:

Terry Rogers (Author)

Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to thank Richard Chambers at IFES for his input into the Lebanese legislative process, Joseph Hall and Ayman Georges Mhanna at NDI for the information contained in the CCER case study, and Sylvana Lakkis at LPHU for the information contained in the LPHU case study. The author also thanks Marguerite El Helou for her review and input into the manual.

Chief Contact at IFES:

Ambar Zobairi

Program Manager

Middle East and North Africa

IFES

1850 K Street NW, Fifth Floor

Washington, DC 20006

Tel: 202.350.6755

Email: azobairi@ifes.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION	5
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION	5
INTRODUCTION TO THE FACILITATORS	5
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	5
GROUND RULES FOR THE WORKSHOP.....	5
ICE-BREAKER EXERCISE	6
SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE LOBBYING	7
WHAT IS LOBBYING?	7
THE FOUR QUESTIONS THAT YOU MUST ANSWER TO BE AN EFFECTIVE LOBBYIST	7
THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF LEGISLATORS -- YOUR LOBBYING AUDIENCE.....	8
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC INTEREST LOBBYIST	8
IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC INTEREST LOBBYING	9
USING THE VOICES OF CONSTITUENTS - THE STRONGEST FORM OF PRESSURE ON ELECTED OFFICIALS	10
SECTION III: SPECIFIC TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF LOBBYING	11
TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH POLICY MAKERS AND LEGISLATORS.....	11
TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH GROUP MEMBERS AND ALIGNED ORGANIZATIONS	14
SECTION IV: DEVELOPING SKILLS OF PERSUASION	16
UNDERSTAND HOW OTHERS CAN HELP YOU	16
UNDERSTAND OTHERS’ STARTING POINT, ASSUMPTIONS AND PRIORITIES.....	16
PAY ATTENTION TO CORE EMOTIONAL CONCERNS	16
INTERACTIVE EXERCISE.....	17
SECTION V: EXPERIENCE SHARING	18
SECTION VI: LEBANESE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS	19
THE MAJLIS AL-NUWWAB (NATIONAL ASSEMBLY).....	19
HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW	19
THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT: COMMITTEES AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS	21
SECTION VII: LOBBYING CASE STUDIES	25
CASE STUDY I: CIVIL CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTORAL REFORM	25
CASE STUDY II: LEBANESE PHYSICAL HANDICAPPED UNION	26
SECTION VIII: S.M.A.R.T APPROACH AND PRIORITIZING CURRENT ISSUES	28
THE S.M.A.R.T. APPROACH TO PLANNING	28
SHARE CURRENT PRIORITY ISSUES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION	28
SECTION IX: APPLYING THE S.M.A.R.T APPROACH (GROUP EXERCISE)	29
SECTION X: WRAP-UP	30
REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP	30
REVIEW OF WORKSHOP CONTENT	30

FOREWORD

Lobbying is a critical component of the democratic process. The essence of representative government is that policymakers should be *representing* the needs of their constituencies when they pass laws.

In practice, however, policymakers often do not equally consider and weigh the needs of their various constituencies. Legislators have limited time and many commitments to attend to, and it is often difficult for them to acquire and analyze all of the information they should have in order to make fully informed policy decisions.

Given these constraints, policymakers frequently end up obtaining most of their information and influential guidance from a select group of the strongest political voices among their constituents: the voices of party leaders, high-profile media, religious leaders, and leaders of substantial commercial interest blocks, as well as doctors, lawyers, and trade unions.

This workshop is designed to build the capacities of the participants to lobby more effectively for the public interest on any important social issue.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

- Welcome
- Introduction of the Facilitators
- Program Objectives
- Ground Rules for the Workshop
- Ice-breaker Exercise

SESSION LENGTH: 1 hour

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- Day One will focus on getting to know each other, learning the basics of lobbying, and reviewing the Lebanese legislative process.
- Day Two will focus on applying Day One's learning. We will examine some real-life case studies of lobbying in action, and will together craft lobbying strategies for real issues that program participants are currently facing.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FACILITATORS

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this workshop are to enable participants to:

- 1) Understand the basics of legislative lobbying
- 2) Understand the Lebanese lobbying context
- 3) Prioritize key real-life issues for lobbying
- 4) Plan lobbying strategies for some of the most important current issues

GROUND RULES FOR THE WORKSHOP

In order to have a productive and enjoyable two days together, it is important for all program attendees to agree to certain baseline norms for working together:

- **Take responsibility for your contributions**
 - Speak in the first person (“it is my understanding that,” or “in my experience...” as opposed to making statements like “people say” or “as everyone knows...”)
 - Help to maintain a calm working environment
- **Respect others' contributions**
 - Listen attentively
 - Don't dominate the group conversation: choose your own contributions thoughtfully and try to allow equal time for all participants to contribute
 - Do not interrupt others
 - Respect differences of opinion
- **Maintain confidentiality**

- Please respect the confidentiality of the personal experiences and strategic plans that are shared during the program

ICE-BREAKER EXERCISE

- 1) Distribute name badges and markers and have the participants write their first names on the badges
- 2) Have each person stand up and take one minute to:
 - Introduce herself
 - Share a bit about her background
 - Explain why she is here and what she hopes to get out of the workshop

SECTION II: OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

- What is lobbying?
- The four questions that you must answer to be an effective lobbyist
- The five categories of legislators -- your lobbying audience
- Personal characteristics of a successful public interest lobbyist
- Important professional skills for effective public interest lobbying
- Using the voices of constituents - the strongest form of pressure on elected officials

SESSION LENGTH: 1 hour

WHAT IS LOBBYING?

Lobbying is the use of a variety of tactics in order to educate and influence legislative decision makers so that they will change existing laws or enact new laws. Put in different words, lobbying is influencing the people who make decisions that directly affect our lives.

Lobbying is a subset of the term “advocacy.” “Advocacy” is a much broader term covering a range of activities designed to change public opinion, programs or policies. “Advocacy” refers to a broad set of communication, research and educational activities that aim to raise overall societal awareness of a problem, but are not necessarily specifically targeted at influencing legislative reform.

Lobbying requires three different types of ongoing communications:

- 1) **Direct communication with policymakers and legislators**, e.g., phone calls and meetings.
- 2) **Coordinating public, grassroots efforts designed to influence legislators “from the outside,”** e.g., leading petitions and letter-writing campaigns, issuing press releases, organizing rallies, etc.
- 3) **Internal communications with lobby group members and supporters** in order to clarify your message and build the strength of your collective lobbying voice. Many people think of lobbying only in the sense of direct communications with elected politicians. However, these communications usually represent the smallest portion of a lobbyist’s time; a far greater proportion is devoted to gathering information, preparing for direct communication with politicians, and communicating with lobby group members.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS THAT YOU MUST ANSWER TO BE AN EFFECTIVE LOBBYIST

- **WHAT** are you trying to achieve? (e.g., amend existing legislation, write new legislation, or get the government to implement existing laws or uphold treaty obligations)

- **WHO** exactly are you trying to influence? (e.g., a specific individual or the majority of a large political body)
- **WHEN** do you want to see your change occur? Is your goal realistic?
- **HOW** do you propose to achieve your goal? Good strategy is critical to a successful lobbying campaign. You must create a detailed campaign plan for each issue that takes into account the realities of the political process.

THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF LEGISLATORS -- YOUR LOBBYING AUDIENCE

There are five main categories of legislators to think about, each requiring its own special strategy:

1) Champions

All issues need a group of lawmakers dedicated to being tireless, committed advocates of your cause. Lawmakers can make the case to their colleagues, help develop a strong “inside” strategy, and be visible public spokespeople. What they need is correct and adequate information, and visible support outside of Parliament.

2) Allies

Another group of legislators may be sympathetic to your cause, but can be encouraged to be more vocal advocates, for example, to speak up in party caucuses or on the floor. These people need persuasive reasons to work harder for you.

3) Uncommitted Legislators

Some legislators will be uncommitted on the issues, potentially able to vote either way. Your lobbying strategy is about putting together the right mix of “inside” persuasion and “outside” pressure to influence them to support your position.

4) Mellow Opponents

Another group of legislators will most likely vote against you, but are not inclined to be active on the issue. With this group, it is important to keep them from becoming more active, lobbying them just enough to make them pause, but not enough to make them angry.

5) Hard-Core Opponents

Finally, there are those lawmakers who are leading the opposition. In this case it is most effective to isolate them, to highlight the extremes of their positions, rhetoric and alliances, and to give other lawmakers reason to hesitate about joining them. You should not waste time trying to convince them to change their position.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC INTEREST LOBBYIST

You will be most successful and fulfilled as a public interest lobbyist if you have or can acquire the following personal characteristics:

- A genuine belief in the representative democratic process and the important role of professional lobbying within this process.
- A belief that “every little bit of effort” does make a difference in the long run.
- A willingness to challenge existing power hierarchies and to work against prevailing social norms.
- Flexibility - the ability to re-assess and adjust your working strategy as circumstances change.
- Dedication and stamina for the long haul.

IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC INTEREST LOBBYING

1) Practical Skills

Being a successful lobbyist requires that you stay constantly informed and that you be a strong communicator. You will have the greatest impact if you have or can acquire the following skills:

- Ability to read, write and analyze information very quickly (in order to be able to process large quantities of constantly changing information).
- Ability to write quick memos and briefing papers for your lobbying group, politicians, and the media.
- Comfort with using modern technology, especially email, PowerPoint, and information databases.
- Ability to communicate well in public and private meetings and before the media.

2) Relationship and Management Skills

Your influence as a lobbyist (which includes, of course, your influence as a leader within your lobbying organization) is directly related to your charisma, the confidence that you instill in others, and the credibility of your messages. You will have the greatest impact if you have or can acquire the following skills:

- **A good memory for names and faces, and the ability to keep track of lists of contact** information, group members, people to contact, etc.
- **Ability to lead by example and to motivate other members of your organization** through your own passion and commitment to your work.
- **Ability to attract commitment and loyalty based on professional respect** so that even when you do not agree completely with a fellow lobbyist or a politician, you can still work together to achieve common aims. The keys to earning respect are to always behave in an ethical way, to follow strong principles, and to always do work of the highest quality, on time.
- **Establishing and maintaining a good reputation is particularly important to being an effective lobbyist.** As a lobbyist, your voice and your message will only have an impact to the degree that you are perceived as being trustworthy, savvy, intelligent, and well-informed about your issue areas. Thus, it is critical that you make a point of never giving people reason to perceive you in any other way. If

you are not prepared to offer an informed comment on a topic, it is probably best to say so, become better informed, and get back to the person later.

3) Communication skills

These are the most important skills for effective lobbying. It is critical to understand the nuances of communicating and negotiating with specific individuals. Getting “face time” with a politician or someone else that you hope to influence through in-person conversation is only the first step toward actually impacting how they think and what they will do. What you do during your time with that person is what will “make or break” your success. Many people do not think carefully enough about precisely how they engage and communicate with others, starting from the very first handshake. There will be a separate, brief training session on communication skills.

USING THE VOICES OF CONSTITUENTS - THE STRONGEST FORM OF PRESSURE ON ELECTED OFFICIALS

Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected to office by voters in their districts. Consequently, legislators care, or should care if they want to be re-elected, about their constituents and the issues that constituents feel are important. The voices of their home constituents are the greatest source of lobbying pressure on these legislators. A national level lobbying organization can be most effective in getting through to these legislators by mobilizing the support and pressure of their local constituents at the appropriate times in the legislative process. To do this, the national level lobbying organization must create a network that can be contacted on a moment’s notice to take appropriate action.

SECTION III: SPECIFIC TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF LOBBYING

- Tactics for communicating with policy makers and legislators
- Tactics for communicating with group members and aligned organizations

SESSION LENGTH: 1 hour

TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH POLICY MAKERS AND LEGISLATORS

Successful lobbying requires a multi-pronged approach to influencing legislative decision-makers. Which tactics you choose at a given point in time will depend on where you are in the legislative timeline, who you are trying to influence, and exactly what message you are trying to communicate. Common tactics for influencing legislators include:

Position papers	Other direct contact approaches
Supporting information packets	Postcard campaigns
Formal testimony	Press releases
Letters to legislators	Press conferences
In-person meetings with legislators	Letters to the editor
Telephone calls	Marches/rallies
Emails and faxes	

Position papers

Position papers are the backbone of lobbying. A lobbying effort will only be successful if it is perceived as being deeply informed and highly credible, and if lobbyists communicate in a clear, coherent, and consistent way. Writing strong position papers is the key to developing credibility and ensuring that your message is clear and well-founded. A completed position paper serves as a communication guide for speaking about the issue to various audiences (the press, members of your organization, and legislators).

- 1) Content - A good position paper should cover the following, as concisely as possible:
 - **Explanation of the problem**
Describe the social problem for which you are suggesting legislative reform. Use as much quantitative, comparative data as possible.
 - **Historical context**
Briefly explain how the problem has grown or changed over time and why the law was adopted in its current form.
 - **Argument for reform**
Outline clearly the desired legislative reform. Be sure to anticipate and address likely objections.

- **Clear timeline**
Emphasize the urgency of the needed reform, and be specific about the precise dates by which you hope to see legislative action.
- 2) Format - In most cases, you will need to create multiple versions of a position paper:
- **Original long version for internal use**
The original, long-form position paper can be used for sharing with members of your organization and for guiding the writing of articles for press releases and speeches for conferences.
 - **Short version for legislators**
MPs simply do not have a lot of time for reading. For MPs, the most important information in your position paper must be condensed into at best one page, at most two pages. Bullet points are often easiest to read through quickly.
 - **Translated versions**
Depending on where you are working, you may need to translate your position papers and documents into more than one language.

Supporting information packets

One easy way to build rapport with and support from a legislator is to provide him/her with research related to the issue that you are working on beyond merely providing a shortened version of your position paper. Legislators who have been placed on specific committees are often responsible for presenting bills about which they might know very little, and if you can help ease their workload by preparing presentations related to the issues you are working on, you will increase their trust, respect and support for your lobbying efforts.

Formal testimony

If possible, your group should try to have an expert invited to testify at a Committee hearing on your issue. Testifying can also help to establish you as an authority on the issue and will make your organization better known among Committee members. Additionally, testifying can give you a chance to “leave behind” quotations for others’ speeches, press articles, etc. If you want to testify and have not been asked by the Committee, contact Committee staff or the Chairperson and request to testify. Sometimes you will need to ask a MP to contact the Committee Chairperson on your behalf in order to secure an invitation to testify.

Letters to politicians

A letter to a politician should draw on your position paper for the issue you are writing about, but should be much shorter and more to the point. Personal letters, especially if they are handwritten on stationery, tend to have a much greater impact than impersonal, form-printed letters. They may be mailed or faxed.

In-person meetings with politicians

It is important to be strategic about in-person meetings with legislators given the limits on their time. In some cases in-person meetings will have the greatest impact when they are informal and one-on-one (for instance, a breakfast meeting), and in other cases they will have more impact when they are more formal and involve a small delegation from your organization. At all times, your lobbying group should keep careful track of who has spoken to which MPs, when the last contact was made, what was discussed, and what each party promised to do.

Telephone calls

Telephone calls directly to legislators from their constituents can be a very powerful lobbying tool, especially during the time period immediately before a vote. Ten to twenty calls can really have an impact. Telephone calls from constituents who personally know the legislator can be particularly influential. If you are calling right before a vote you must be very brief with your message, as short as two sentences, one to explain the action you want and another to explain why.

Other direct contact approaches

There are a number of other ways that you can directly contact a legislator to lobby for an issue:

- Send an email.
 - This is generally much less effective than sending a physical letter, but it can be better than nothing.
- Host an event and invite a legislator whose support you are seeking.
 - If you can help create a valuable opportunity for a legislator to speak and be heard, you may go a long way in getting his/her support.
- Invite the legislator to visit a place or a group of people, which will drive home the message that you want to send.
 - This kind of vivid experience, if it is possible to provide for any of your group's issue areas, can be one of the most powerful lobbying tools of all.

Press releases

Press releases are not addressed directly to legislators, but they can help in creating an overall environment that pressures legislators to enact legislative reform. Many legislators are sensitive to the media coverage that issues receive in their home districts. A good press release should be concise, with the most important information covered in the first paragraph, and should answer the five W's (Who, What, Where, When, Why), and also, usually, "How."

In order to maintain your organization's credibility, you should be sure to only send news to the media that is truly newsworthy and completely accurate. The press loves "highly quotable" sources, so the more you can become known for being able to make pithy, memorable, clear statements, the more likely you are to have press support and the more likely they are to seek you out for commentary when your issues come up in the news.

Press conferences

Press conferences can be a good way to get press attention, but to be successful it helps if your spokesperson is well-known and the issue is important and timely. Some tips for hosting a successful press conference are:

- Have a press statement and background materials available as handouts (reporters often pick them up and leave without staying for the actual conference).
- Know the information that will help increase attendance:
 - When reporters are most likely to be able to attend (what times) and what venues will be most likely to attract their attendance.
 - How far in advance to notify them and how to do so.
 - Which journalists are assigned to your issue area at the major newspapers, TV and radio stations.
- Always take note of who attends for future reference.

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor can sometimes be helpful, especially if they come from a well-known supporter.

Marches/rallies/demonstrations

One obvious form of direct mass action is to lead a march, rally or other type of demonstration, for instance, in front of a government building during a critical session. This kind of activity can be a strong expression of broad public support, however, it can also alienate politicians whose support you are trying to obtain through direct contact and should be used carefully and agreed upon by your membership before going forward.

Postcard campaigns

In anticipation of an important upcoming legislative session or other decision-making point, your lobbying organization can send postcards both to members of the public (including your own organizational members) and to politicians, depending on what your goals are at that point in time. The best postcards display a catchy message that clearly references the campaign you are working on. The goal is to have as many people as possible sign and send the postcards.

TACTICS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH GROUP MEMBERS AND ALIGNED ORGANIZATIONS

A lobbying effort is most powerful when it is supported by large numbers of people. Therefore, a good lobbying organization must not only communicate with legislators, but must also stay in close communication with organizational members to ensure that the right issues are being addressed and to continually increase the impact of the lobbying effort. Activities aimed at keeping members of your lobbying organization informed and well-connected to one another include:

- Information packages/lobbying kits
- Annual reports
- Newsflashes and legislative alerts
- Conferences

Information packages / Lobbying kits

When information is put together in a folder it is called a ‘lobbying kit.’

A lobbying organization can provide support to members and sister organizations by consolidating and sharing information such as:

- Background information on an issue
- Recent developments in the lobbying process at national and/or district levels
- Tactical tips for lobbying a particular issue in a particular political context
- Press releases

Annual reports

Distributing annual reports to the members of your organization enables your members to feel connected and engaged and helps to encourage further involvement. You should include in an annual report updates on all major activities by your organization over the past year and note key trends in membership levels, impact achieved, etc. Photographs are also good to include when possible to break up the heavy text sections and to encourage a sense of camaraderie and familiarity.

Newsflashes and legislative alerts

Using “newsflashes” to share important updates and commentary on key issues throughout the year helps to build and maintain member support and involvement. Newsflashes can be over email or in print form.

Separate **legislative alerts** should be used when you need to mobilize immediate support from members of your organization to contact their local MPs. If you do not separate these alerts from ordinary newsflashes, you risk their being missed or ignored by your members at times when immediate action is very important. Depending on your organization’s budget, you can also use SMS alerts.

Conferences

Person-to-person contact and group work are critical to building commitment and involvement. At least once a year, a lobbying coalition should convene with representatives of the full membership body in order to review progress, discuss focus areas, and strategize next steps.

SECTION IV: DEVELOPING SKILLS OF PERSUASION

- Understand how others can help you
- Understand others' starting point, assumptions and priorities
- Pay attention to core emotional concerns
- Interactive exercise

SESSION LENGTH: 30 minutes

UNDERSTAND HOW OTHERS CAN HELP YOU

There are two primary ways in which the person you are trying to build a relationship with might be helpful to your campaign. The person might have:

- **Direct, formal power** - This is the power to actually make something happen through direct authority (e.g. the ability to command a policy research report or the ability to pass a vote). The most direct way to achieve legislative reform is to influence the people who have direct authority to introduce or pass legislation. Sometimes, however, you will need to work through informal networks in order to reach and influence these individuals.
- **Information access** - There may be people with whom it is important to build a relationship as allies who have neither strong opinion-shaping power nor direct formal power, but who have access to information that is useful to your campaign, e.g., information about where your bill is in the legislative process or who you should talk to next.

UNDERSTAND OTHERS' STARTING POINT, ASSUMPTIONS AND PRIORITIES

To actually change someone's perspective on a given issue, you need to tailor your argument to be compelling within that person's interpretive framework. You need to understand the other person's starting point, assumptions and personal and career priorities, and you need to emphasize how what you are asking for can serve those priorities directly.

PAY ATTENTION TO CORE EMOTIONAL CONCERNS

In addition to understanding the other person's starting point, assumptions and priorities, it is important to understand what the other person has at stake emotionally in the conversation.

- Would supporting you and your organization help the other person to feel more important, independent, and appreciated? Or is the political support that you are asking for likely to make them lose status in the eyes of peers, or likely to make their role as a politician be perceived in a way that they do not want to be perceived? If so, they are unlikely to want to support you, and you may need to brainstorm a different way for them to help you. You may even need to look elsewhere for support.
- Alternatively, would being involved with your campaign perhaps help the person you are speaking with to feel more integrated with other politicians,

more affiliated and appreciated by his or her peers? If so, this could help your cause.

- Either way, you should be aware of the core emotional concerns of the people you are speaking with and understand how they are likely to impact your ability to influence them.

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

Ask participants to raise their hands and brainstorm suggestions regarding the following hypothetical situation: Your lobby organization has an appointment with a MP who is opposed to the 20% quota for women in elections. You want to persuade him/her that this will benefit women's participation in politics in the long run.

SECTION V: EXPERIENCE SHARING

Participants will break into small groups and record their group's combined experiences on a flip chart and report back to the larger group.

SESSION LENGTH: 45 minutes

Lobbying is a multi-faceted process that involves many different skills. Program participants will share their own past experiences with lobbying or related work and learn from each others' experiences.

Participants discuss:

- Working directly for a lobbying organization
- Writing a letter or postcard to a politician
- Participating in a protest or rally
- Writing a policy recommendation paper at work or in school
- Anything else that participants consider to be a form of lobbying, in light of the discussions so far in the workshop, or which has helped them to build lobbying skills and relevant experience

SECTION VI: LEBANESE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

- The Majlis Al-Nuwwab
- How a Bill Becomes a Law
- The Lebanese Parliament: Committees and the Legislative Process

SESSION LENGTH: 1 hour

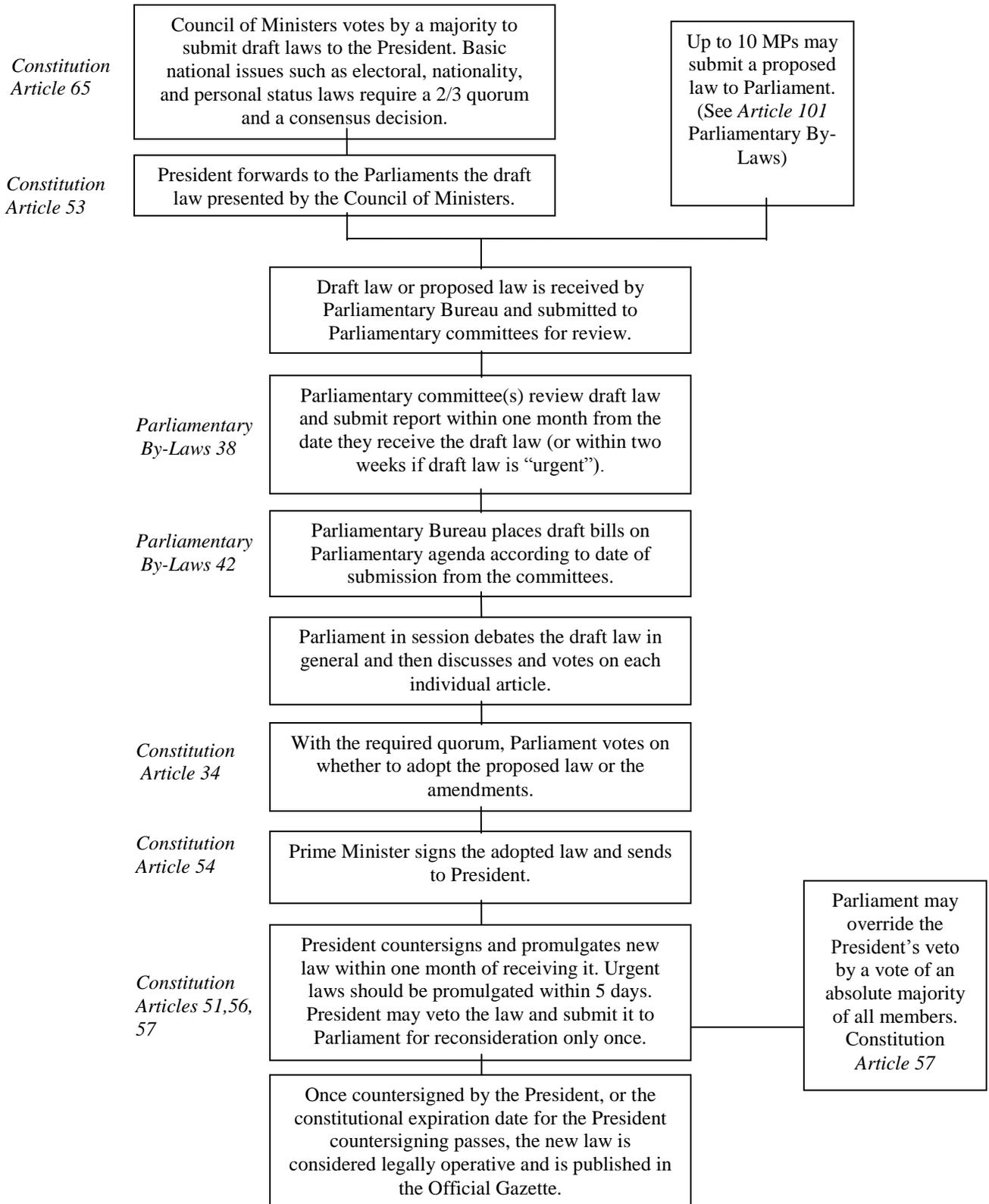
THE MAJLIS AL-NUWWAB (NATIONAL ASSEMBLY)

- The National Assembly is a unicameral body consisting of 128 members. Members are elected from 26 multi-member constituencies.
- Currently, four women are MPs (3.13%)
- The term of office is four years.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

(next page)

Lebanon: How a Bill Becomes a Law



THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT: COMMITTEES AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Proposing laws to Parliament

Laws must be initiated by the Chamber of Deputies and/or the Council of Ministers. No law shall be promulgated until it has been adopted by the Chamber (Article 18 of the constitution).

Cabinet initiated legislation

A law proposed by the Council of Ministers is called a project law or draft law. The Prime Minister calls the Council of Ministers into session, sets its agenda, and informs the President and the Ministers beforehand of the subjects to be included on the agenda and the urgent subjects that will be discussed. A decision regarding an electoral law requires the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Council of Ministers (Article 65 of the Constitution). The President shall forward to the Chamber of Deputies bills that are delivered to him by the Council of Ministers (Article 53 of the Constitution).

Deputy initiated legislation

A law proposed by a deputy is called a proposal of law or proposition. No more than ten deputies can submit a proposal of law to parliament (Article 101 of the parliamentary by-laws).

The role of the Parliamentary Bureau

Parliamentary by-law Article 1 specifies that the Parliamentary Bureau consists of the speaker, the deputy speaker, two secretaries, and three commissioners. The Parliamentary Bureau writes and publishes the agenda of every meeting for the members, directs meetings and voting, declares voting results, prepares the annual budget of the parliament, controls its execution, approves staff appointments, and studies petitions and complaints.

As soon as the draft laws, propositions and other legislative matters reach the Parliamentary Bureau, the Speaker of the Parliament sends them to the appropriate specialized committees, unless the rules stipulate that they should be examined by the parliament first (see Article 25 of the parliamentary by-laws). The speaker should also formally provide a copy of the law to the government.

Parliamentary legislative sessions

The Lebanese Parliament convenes every year in two ordinary sessions for ten weeks (Article 32 of the Constitution). The first session begins on the first Tuesday after March 15th and concludes by the end of May. The second session begins on the first Tuesday after October 15th and concludes by end of the year (December). The main objective of this session is related to the budget.

The President of the Republic, in consultation with the Prime Minister, may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions by a Decree specifying the dates of the opening and

closing of the extraordinary sessions as well as the agenda. Also, the President of the Republic is required to convene the Chamber if an absolute majority of the total membership so requests.

Parliamentary Committees

Every deputy can attend committee sessions, even if he is not a member, and can intervene in the discussions but is not allowed to vote (Article 33 of the parliamentary by-law).

The committee meetings, agenda, and minutes are secret, unless decided otherwise by the committee (Article 34 of the parliamentary by-law).

The committees shall start studying the bills according to their incoming dates except for urgent bills. Committees can decide to prioritize some subjects (Article 35 of the parliamentary by-law).

Committees shall stop discussing the bills and send their reports within a maximum of one month from the incoming date. However, in the case of urgent bills, the committees shall study the bills and send their reports within two weeks. At the end of the deadline, the speaker can send the bill to a joint committee or to the general assembly whether the parliamentary committee has finished studying it or not (Article 38 of the parliamentary by-law).

If the bill is within the purview of more than one committee, the speaker can call the committees to a joint meeting over which he/she presides. If each committee separately studied the bill and the speaker finds that the difference among the proposed papers would complicate the discussions in the General Assembly, then the speaker will form a joint committee from all the committees and the speaker or the deputy speaker will head this committee. The joint committee will again study the bill and present one common report (Article 39 of the parliamentary by-law).

After the discussions, the committees adopt the draft law by majority vote (Article 36 of the parliamentary by-law).

The committee's reports are sent to the Parliamentary Bureau to be added to the general parliamentary agenda according to their incoming dates, while giving priority to urgent bills (Article 42 of the parliamentary by-law).

Parliament has the following permanent committees:

1. Committee of Finance and Budget (17 Members)
2. Committee of Administration and Justice (17 Members)
3. Committee of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (17 Members)
4. Committee of Public Works, Transport, Power and Water (17 Members)
5. Committee of Public Health, Labor and Social Affairs (12 Members)
6. Committee of National Defense, Interior and Municipalities (17 Members)

7. Committee of Displaced People (12 Members)
8. Committee of Tourism and Agriculture (12 Members)
9. Committee of Environment (12 Members)
10. Committee of National Economy, Trade, Industry and Planning (12 Members)
11. Committee of Information and Communications (12 Members)
12. Committee of Youth and Sport (12 Members)
13. Committee of Human Rights (12 Members)
14. Committee of Women and Children (12 Members)
15. Committee of Technology (9 Members)

The heads and members of each committee are elected at the start of every parliamentary term. The head of the committee convenes the members. The quorum requirement for the first session is more than half of the members. In the following sessions at least one-third of the members must be present (Article 36 of the parliamentary by-laws).

Voting in Parliament

Every law must be passed by the Chamber of Deputies. The parliamentary session is opened if the majority of the members attend the session and voting can take place if there is a legal quorum. No quorum is needed during debate.

Before putting the whole draft law or proposal of law to a vote, Parliament has the right to return it to the committee that studied it, to another committee or to a joint committee to reconsider it. After the committee submits its report, the draft law will be again put on the agenda (Article 83 of the parliamentary by-law).

After the end of the general discussions, the parliament starts studying the articles and voting on them one by one.

Article 34 [Quorum]

The Chamber may not be validly constituted except with the attendance of the majority of the members legally composing it. Resolutions are adopted by majority vote. In the event of a tie the matter under debate is rejected.

Article 36 [Voting Process]

Voting is expressed in a loud voice or by sitting and standing, except in the event of an election, in which case the ballot is secret. On laws as a whole and on the matter of votes of confidence, voting is always by roll call and in a loud voice.

Voting on the bills is done by voting on each article separately by raising hands. After voting on all the articles, a vote on the whole law starts by calling the deputies by their names.

If Parliament passes the law by a majority, the law is then referred to the Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister and concerned ministers must sign the law and refer it to

the President in order for the law to be promulgated and published in the Official Gazette (Articles 51 and 54 of the Constitution).

Article 51 [Promulgation of Laws]

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws after they have been approved by the Chamber in accordance with the time limits specified by the Constitution. He asks for the publication of these laws, and he may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions.

Article 56 [Promulgation Time Limits]

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws, which have been adopted within one month of their transmission to the Government. He must promulgate laws that were declared urgent by a special Decision of the Chamber within five days.

The President may issue decrees and request their promulgation; he has the right to ask the Council of Ministers to review any Decision that the Chamber has taken within fifteen days of the decision's transmission to the Presidency. If the Council of Ministers insists on the Decision or if the time limit passes without the Decree being issued or returned, the Decision or Decree shall be considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 57 [Presidential Veto]

The President of the Republic, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, shall have the right to request the reconsideration of a law once during the period prescribed for its promulgation. This request may not be refused. When the President exercises this right he shall not be required to promulgate this law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of all the members legally composing the Chamber. If the time limits pass without the law being issued or returned, the law shall be considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

The Prime Minister shall countersign the decree calling for extraordinary session, the decrees issuing laws, and the decrees requesting reconsideration of laws (Article 64 of the Constitution).

SECTION VII: LOBBYING CASE STUDIES

- Case Study I: Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform
- Case Study II: Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union

SESSION LENGTH: 1 hour

CASE STUDY I: CIVIL CAMPAIGN FOR ELECTORAL REFORM

The Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER) was created in June 2006 to lobby for electoral reform after the Boutros Commission issued a draft electoral law. Unfortunately, in July 2006, war intervened and Parliament was deadlocked for one and a half years. In May 2008, the Doha Conference took place to achieve reconciliation. The Doha accord stipulated that parliamentary elections be held in 2009 according to a new electoral law.

CCER prepared and presented a packet of recommendations on electoral reform to every political leader going to Doha. The Conference produced a national unity government charged with reforming the election law and holding elections.

After the Doha Conference, UNDP and CCER co-sponsored a conference on election reform. This event, attended by civil society organizations (CSOs) and politicians, helped establish CCER's credibility. A key player was Ziad Baroud, a lawyer and CSO activist, who later became the Minister of the Interior. Robert Ghanem, a Member of Parliament and Chairman of Parliament's Administration and Justice Committee (AJC), attended the conference and committed publicly to involving civil society in committee sessions.

Ghassan Moukheiber, MP (and an election expert), co-introduced (with MP Ghassan Tueni) a private member bill on election reform so that the AJC would have draft legislation to consider. The AJC, composed of 17 MPs, met more than 30 times over a period of eight weeks to consider amendments to the draft election law. Ziad Baroud and experts from CCER were invited and attended every session. CCER usually presented policy papers to the committee on the day's topic, e.g., voting abroad at Embassies, printed ballots, etc.

The day after the AJC completed its draft election law it went to the floor of Parliament. There was only time for hurried personal visits and telephone calls to MPs. Members of CSOs sat in the gallery and watched the debate and voting (one can attend sessions of Parliament by getting an invitation from a MP). Reforms that passed Parliament included:

- Voting on one day
- Using an ID card or passport to vote
- Media regulations
- Campaign finance
- Accessibility of polling stations for people with disabilities
- A supervisory committee for election campaigns

Reforms that did not pass included:

- Paper ballots
- A quota for women MPs
- Proportional representation electoral system
- An Independent Election Commission

(Note bene: the last three reforms were not approved by the AJC and thus were not voted on in Parliament.)

Once the election law was passed, the member organizations of CCER focused on the election itself and the domestic observation efforts led by the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE). After the elections, CCER turned to the reform of the municipal election law. It prepared a comprehensive draft law, which it presented to the Cabinet. The Minister of the Interior Ziad Baroud also presented a draft law (similar to CCER's draft), many elements of which the Cabinet approved. The draft legislation was passed to Parliament with the Cabinet approving reforms including proportional representation, 20% women's quota on lists, and pre-printed ballot papers. While Parliament did not pass these reforms in time for the May 2010 municipal elections, the CCER will likely appear again before the AJC as experts on the bill in the near future. CCER has already sent letters to all MPs on the need for reform of the municipal election law.

CASE STUDY II: LEBANESE PHYSICAL HANDICAPPED UNION

The Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU) launched a campaign in 2005 when Parliamentary elections were pending, called "My Rights Campaign," to include rights for the disabled in the election law. LPHU partnered with several other organizations, including the Youth Association for the Blind, and prepared amendments to the election law to insure the rights of the disabled, which it submitted to the Boutros Commission.

The campaign was launched eight months before the elections and had focal points in each region of Lebanon so that local communities could be educated and mobilized. Numerous workshops were held on the rights of the disabled to vote and be heard. LPHU also networked with local NGOs focusing on other human rights issues so that they would be aware of (and not ignore) disability rights. They worked with political parties to include disability rights in their platforms and held candidate forums to educate candidates for Parliament. They then monitored the party platforms and the statements made by candidates. LPHU also conducted a major media campaign, which included TV, radio, posters and billboards. The slogan used was "Respect Their Rights to Vote: Don't Disable the Law." Trainings were held for the media and many interviews were aired.

LPHU lobbied Hassan Al Sabah, the then Minister of the Interior, so that he would prepare properly for the election, but unfortunately he was not cooperative. Al Sabah even suggested that there be only one handicapped accessible polling station in all of

Lebanon and all disabled people would go there to vote. LPHU estimates that approximately 10% of the population is disabled and, of course, they are spread throughout the country. LPHU demanded that the largest polling stations in each region be made accessible with ramps, operating elevators, and handicapped parking spaces near the polling stations. They also suggested using playgrounds and erecting tents to create accessible polling stations. Two weeks before the election, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) began constructing ramps at a few polling stations.

LPHU then prepared to monitor the elections and construct six model polling stations (with donor funds). The models had appropriate layouts, signage, operating elevators (they were often closed on election day), Braille ballots, and ramps.

The media was invited to observe the model polling stations on election day. Sylvana Lakkis, the Executive Director of LPHU, held a press conference and announced the number of disabled people who could not vote. The adverse publicity forced the MoI to hold two press conferences explaining why most disabled people were not able to vote that day.

In 2006, the Boutros Commission worked on reforming the election law. The Commission included all of the suggestions presented to it by LPHU in its recommendations. The war in 2006 interrupted further action on a new election law.

After the Doha Conference, the Administration and Justice Committee of Parliament convened to work on a draft election law. Ziad Baroud and the Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER) attended every session as expert witnesses. Mr. Baroud put forth LPHU's recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Committee. LPHU also met with individual MPs on the Committee to lobby their recommendations.

The election law that passed Parliament contained requirements that:

- Within one year, all polling stations be accessible to people with disabilities;
- People with disabilities could take helpers into the polling station with them; and
- Parking spaces near the polling stations would be reserved for the disabled.

After the election law passed, Ziad Baroud became the Minister of the Interior. LPHU worked with Mr. Baroud to implement the new law. LPHU wrote the first draft of a decree for the MoI to issue. The decree addressed technical issues and included the creation of a steering committee composed of relevant ministries and representatives of civil society. LPHU then mapped all 1,641 polling stations in the country. The mapping is being used by the MoI in a long-term plan to make all polling stations accessible. The MoI funded LPHU to make 19 polling stations accessible and gave LPHU the right to monitor elections (by being able to enter the polling stations). LPHU is now lobbying to reform the municipal elections law to make similar changes.

SECTION VIII: S.M.A.R.T APPROACH AND PRIORITIZING CURRENT ISSUES

- The S.M.A.R.T approach to planning
- Share current priority issues for your organization

SESSION LENGTH: 1 hour

THE S.M.A.R.T. APPROACH TO PLANNING

When planning a lobbying strategy for a given issue, use the S.M.A.R.T. approach. Make your plans:

- **Specific:** What is your aim? What is your hoped for lobbying outcome? BE PRECISE.
- **Measurable:** How will you know how to do it? What are your benchmarks? LIST THEM.
- **Achievable:** Make your targets achievable. Commit only to actions you have the resources/skills to actually carry out.
- **Resource-linked:** What human, financial, and skill resources do you have? Are there essential ones you don't have?
- **Time-bound:** What is the timeframe for the process you are trying to influence? What are the stages in that timeframe? Make sure that you don't miss the boat, or if the boat is already gone, wave it goodbye and start on a new strategy for the next opportunity.

SHARE CURRENT PRIORITY ISSUES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

Discuss what the target areas are for your organization at the time of the training, or brainstorm other issues.

SECTION IX: APPLYING THE S.M.A.R.T APPROACH (GROUP EXERCISE)

SESSION LENGTH: 2 hours

In groups, craft each portion of the plan below to make sure it meets the S.M.A.R.T. criteria.

Topic: Lobbying strategy on _____

At Local or National level: _____

Make sure to answer the following questions:

- **What?** – What do you want to achieve? (lobbying aim)
- **Who/Where?** – Who do you need to influence and in what specific setting?
- **When?** – What is the overall time-frame and key milestones?
- **How?** – What are the best tools to use / realistic actions?
- **Resources?** – Time, people, money, practical lobbying resources
- **Expected outcomes?**

After all groups are done, share your S.M.A.R.T plans. Participants should report back to the plenary with a presentation of a flipchart sheet by each group.

SECTION X: WRAP-UP

- Review the objectives of the workshop
- Review of workshop content

SESSION LENGTH: 30 minutes

REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

- 1) Understand the basics of legislative lobbying
- 2) Understand the Lebanese lobbying context
- 3) Prioritize key real-life issues for lobbying
- 4) Plan lobbying strategy for some of the most important current issues

REVIEW OF WORKSHOP CONTENT

Section II: Overview of Effective Lobbying

- What is lobbying?
- The four questions that you must answer to be an effective lobbyist
- The five categories of legislators - your lobbying audience
- Personal characteristics of a successful public interest lobbyist
- Important professional skills for effective public interest lobbying
- Using the voices of constituents - the strongest form of pressure on elected officials

Section III: Specific Tools and Techniques of Lobbying

- Tactics for communicating with policy makers and legislators
- Tactics for communicating with group members and aligned organizations

Section IV: Developing Skills of Persuasion

- Understand how others can help you
- Understand others' starting point, assumptions and priorities
- Pay attention to core emotional concerns
- Interactive exercise

Section V: Experience Sharing

Section VI: Lebanese Legislative Process

- The Majlis Al-Nuwwab
- How a Bill Becomes a Law
- The Lebanese Parliament: Committees and the Legislative Process

Section VII: Lobbying Case Studies

- Case Study I: Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform
- Case Study II: Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union

Section VIII: S.M.A.R.T Approach and Prioritizing Current Issues

- The S.M.A.R.T approach to planning
- Share current priority issues for your organization

Section IX: Applying the S.M.A.R.T Approach