

Tool 1C

Briefing note on creating champions for synergized programs

How to Use this tool

- This tool provides guidance on identifying when champions could be useful, how to identify a champion, what champions do, and ideas for ways to support them
- Champions can be useful at various levels and within various institutions such as at different levels within the government, within development partners, etc.
- Recognize the different contributions of political, administrative and technical departments and how champions may be useful within the different sections
- Recognize that both 'offices' and individuals can be champions
- To start the process, decide if your context would benefit from a champion. Would one push forward the agenda for synergized programming?
- Pick your champion based on the context and the characteristics provided
- Not all champions would necessarily be ready to take on the role immediately, therefore decide what sort of initial and ongoing support is required
- Provide the support and monitor the process to assess for success

Champions = agents of change

Champions are often used within the humanitarian aid and development community to place special focus on a key issue and to promote positive change for that issue. Bringing sectors such as WASH and Nutrition together is a complex undertaking and the identification and development of champions for synergized WASH and Nutrition programs could help support buy-in in many forums.

How do you know where and when champions are needed?

Support and attention for synergized programs is required at many levels and forums — government, partners, internally in UNICEF, donors, sectoral working groups, clusters, etc. So are champions required in all these places? The short answer is — probably not. To know where and when they are needed, consider the following.

- Which level or forum requires additional advocacy or attention for synergized programs?
- Which level or forum already has a natural champion (someone who is already voicing support and convincing others of the necessity for synergized programs)?
- At which level or in which forum will having a champion make a difference or be practical? (For example, if the forums are ad hoc and have little influence over any outcome then they may not be ideal.)
- Are there upcoming or current opportunities within specific levels or forums which would be ideal for influencing programming to consider synergized actions?

In addition, consider that champions can be individuals, offices (for example, the Office of the President) or even institutions. Think about what will have the most impact (who will have the most authority) for the audience that you are trying to influence. Champions will work within different contexts and settings, and their identification and roles should be suitable to the context for which they are chosen.

What are the characteristics of a champion?

Champions

- ✓ Have a good (but not necessarily expert) understanding of the topic
- ✓ Are passionate about the topic
- ✓ Are effective and maybe inspirational communicators
- ✓ Have the capacity to effectively influence others (especially decision makers and opinion leaders)
- ✓ Are themselves opinion leaders
- ✓ Are willing to give time to support the synergized program agenda
- ✓ Are self-driven and results-oriented

It may also be practical to consider champions who are not transitory within a level or forum and whom can be trusted for consistency and commitment. While technical people at lower levels are often overlooked as champions, they need to know how to lead and manage change. Technical people can be trained as change agents and hence can become champions for synergized programming.

What do champions do?

It can depend a little on the level or forum the champion is involved in but generally, champions can

- ✓ Help in advocacy when reaching out to a specific group (within which they have authority) — specifically around the evidence for synergized programming as well as the possible options for synergized actions
- ✓ Clarify any misconceptions about synergized programming such as time, cost, effort, options, etc.
- ✓ Help to connect to remote stakeholders or audiences for whom purely technical reasons will not be sufficient
- ✓ Help to propagate or accelerate commitment to synergized programming
- ✓ Ensure that synergized programming is given due attention during planning or decision making processes
- ✓ Be an interlocutor between their own level or forum and others
- ✓ Contribute or promote policy change and the allocation of resources for synergized programs

How do you support champions?

Natural champions (those who already have all the skills above) may require little support; however, other identified champions may need a little more investment. The type of support provided can be identified by assessing the audience you are trying to reach, the objectives co-set with the champion and the skills of the champion themselves. Also, when deciding on the type of support, consider the situation of the office or individual. For example, training would not be appropriate for a high-level individual but advocacy tools and talking points would be.

Some options for supporting champions include:

- ✓ Provision of resources such as advocacy packs, PowerPoints, talking points or technical support
- ✓ Training to increase technical knowledge
- ✓ Support for communication or advocacy skills
- ✓ Support for stakeholder analysis and targeting, and networking
- ✓ Support for planning skills