



# Advocacy & Leadership Center

## About ISC

The Institute for Sustainable Communities gives passionate, committed people the tools, skills, and resources they need to make their communities better places in which to live.

Our work has inspired nonprofits to play leadership roles in society by enhancing their ability to effectively advocate for their constituents, address policy and regulatory reform, increase their financial viability, improve their public image, and work to higher standards of professionalism and ethics.

Since our founding in 1991 by former Vermont Governor Madeleine M. Kunin, ISC has managed 67 programs in 18 countries, including the United States.



## Who We Are

The Advocacy and Leadership Center offers training, consulting, and mentoring to established and emerging leaders and advocates. We support a diverse global community of trainers and facilitators with wide-ranging language skills and cultural and topical expertise, and our training materials have been translated into five languages. Our network includes more than 800 Advocacy Fellows from some 60 countries.

Our trainings and tools, including a publicly available curriculum, have been honed over two decades by the Institute for Sustainable Communities and the Advocacy Institute, which merged in the fall of 2006. The Center brings together the Advocacy Institute's pioneering advocacy training and expertise with ISC's groundbreaking work in establishing advocacy as a critical tool for encouraging citizen participation.

## Our Approach

Advocacy is a set of hands-on technical skills and practices needed to effectively press for change. It is also the foundation of active citizenship, a process through which ordinary people learn to participate in decision-making at all levels. Identifying priorities, crafting a strategy, stepping forward, taking action, and achieving results are critical steps to finding one's voice, making oneself heard, and shaping one's future.

Our experience has shown that when people are empowered with the dignity and confidence to act, a world of possibilities opens up. The Advocacy and Leadership Center is dedicated to unleashing the advocate in each of us.

## What We Offer

The Center's programs, trainings, and tools are customized in length and content

### Headquarters

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## Issues We've Worked On

Anticorruption  
Environmental Protection  
Disability Rights  
Economic Policy  
Support for Marginalized Groups  
SME Policy & Support  
HIV/AIDS  
Community Initiatives  
Social Service Reform  
Information Access  
Tobacco Control  
Youth Development  
Energy Efficiency  
Budget Reform  
Decentralization

## Sample Training Topics

Fundamentals of Advocacy  
Strategic Planning for Advocates  
Strategic Project Management  
Message Strategy  
Leadership In Coalition  
Building Effective Coalitions  
Leadership: Foundation for Results  
Monitoring & Evaluation for  
Management  
Advocacy Issue Life Cycle

for each context and set of participants. We recommend a series of trainings that includes opportunities for practice, and offer ongoing coaching and mentoring to help participants apply trainings to their own circumstances. We bring in local trainers and resource persons to work alongside master trainers in delivering curricula, thus expanding the number of skilled advocacy practitioners and trainers around the world. We then help these local leaders form networks of advocacy practitioners who are able to sustain an advocacy movement beyond specific projects.

**Advocacy Leaders Fellows Program.** The Fellows program brings together up to twenty participants for an intensive one- to three-week course designed to deepen understanding of the role of advocacy in setting and achieving an agenda for reform.

Advocates examine a range of advocacy tools, applying both established standards and innovative new approaches to their real life challenges. Participants acquire a sophisticated understanding of how to design complex advocacy campaigns—and leave a much stronger team, returning home ready to collaborate at a whole new level. The Fellows training is consistently cited by participants as having dramatically improved their ability to achieve results.

**Advocacy, Leadership, and Organizational Development Training.** The Center offers a wide range of trainings designed to help both leaders and organizations advance their causes while strengthening

their organizations. Our approach to capacity building challenges nonprofits to rethink fundamental organizational development topics from the perspective of the nonprofit's overall added value to the community.

A core set of transformational trainings—such as Fundamentals of Advocacy, Message Strategy, or Strategic Planning for Advocates—borrows principles from many sources, including the business world, and applies them to issues commonly faced by nonprofits. Because effective advocates must lead, and effective leaders must advocate, the Center bases its leadership development on the premise that true leaders act from a place of authenticity and vision. All Center trainings make the most of new technology tools to help advocates research, develop and disseminate their message.

**The Advocacy Fellows curriculum and the way it was tailor-made for our different levels of experience and knowledge was very useful. The method that facilitators used, the tools, and interactive approach made me conclude that this was the best training in which I ever participated in my life."**

—Mihajlo Lahtov,  
Macedonian Institute for Media

**Measuring for Results.** Our work in monitoring and evaluation is considered among the best in the field. We offer courses to help organizations measure their own progress, and have developed a rigorous system for compiling and reporting qualitative data and the use of surveys and indices to track organizational progress. In addition to our customized Advocacy Index, we offer ISC's signature Seat at the Table Index, an innovative way to measure organizational progress from the perspective of partners and beneficiaries. Organizations regularly cite the assessment process and resulting indices as instrumental to their success.