

CIB Knowledge Hub on Gender Equality & Inclusive Governance

*A Tool for Effective Gender
Equality Advocacy by Local
Government Associations
(LGAs)*

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The Capacity and Institution Building (CIB) Working Group of the world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a technical platform for professionals from Local Government Associations (LGAs) and individual local governments active in the field of capacity development and local government development cooperation.

CIB aims to advance the effectiveness and quality of international policies and programs of local and regional governments and their associations. The work of the CIB Working Group contributes to SDG 16 (inclusive institutions on all levels) and SDG 17 (international partnerships) in particular. Special focus is placed on advancing on SDG 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment).



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Connect & Contribute: We warmly invite you to share your examples, tools, and experiences to help further strengthen this advocacy tool and support others working in the field.

Contact the CIB Secretariat

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Access the Full Toolkit

<https://www.cib-uclg.org/gender-hub/gender-toolkit>

Your contributions will help Local Government Associations around the world advocate more effectively for gender equality.

Table of Contents

Introduction —Why LGAs do Gender Equality Advocacy?..... 6

Section 1 — Defining your Advocacy Asks..... 10

Section 2 — Developing your Advocacy Plan..... 13

Section 3 — Implementing Advocacy Actions.....18

Section 4 — Other tools and Examples to Support your Advocacy.....23

A Tool for Effective Gender Equality Advocacy by Local Government Associations (LGAs)

Advocacy for Gender Equality? Yes, you're in the right place...

Congratulations! Your Local Government Association (LGA) is committed to advancing gender equality and has begun implementing concrete actions. You have likely started exploring the comprehensive [Toolkit to Mainstream Gender Equality in LGAs](#), developed by the CIB Knowledge Hub on Gender Equality & Inclusive Governance. If you have not seen it yet, be sure to check it out! This toolkit is filled with various tools designed specifically for you.

If you are reading this tool, it's because you're particularly interested in advocating for gender equality. This **Tool for Effective Gender Equality Advocacy by LGAs**, presented on the following pages, is designed to support your efforts. Developed by the CIB secretariat in collaboration with the Canadian firm Nexus Cooperation Inc., this tool is to help LGAs effectively advocate on gender equality issues.

As an LGA, you play a major role in influencing your government to support and strengthen your member local governments and their communities. A strong, unified national local government voice is more powerful than many smaller, scattered voices.

In the field of gender equality, advocacy is one of the most impactful contributions your LGA can make. It plays a critical role in shaping a national legal and policy framework that is sensitive to gender issues, fostering opportunities for greater gender equality within the local government sector. Your advocacy efforts can drive the adoption and enforcement of international agreements, as well as national laws and ordinances that promote gender equality and protect women's rights. Your efforts can also influence central government policies, programs, and activities to address gender-based discrimination, both within local governance and across the broader community.

In countries where local government affairs are devolved to provincial or state governments, your advocacy may also focus, in addition to the central or federal level, on influencing policies and frameworks at the provincial or state level. By targeting these levels of government, you can further ensure that gender equality is embedded within the governance structures closest to communities.

Who is this tool for?

This advocacy tool is specially designed for the staff who plan, organize, and carry out your association's advocacy work. Your senior leaders and political representatives play an important role in

representing your LGA during advocacy efforts, and this tool will support them too.

Additionally, it can be helpful for staff who work on integrating gender equality into your LGA's services and operations. By understanding how gender equality advocacy is done, these staff members can better see how to bring their expertise into it, greatly enhancing your advocacy efforts.

What can you expect?

The tool offers step-by-step guidance on various aspects of gender equality advocacy that can be conducted by LGAs. Yes, your LGA is unique. That's why you will find information presented in a generic way about the typical phases to follow when advocating for gender equality. You'll also find examples, through hyperlinks to various useful resources or specific tools we've collected, that can be tailored and adapted to your specific context.

The main sections of the tool you will find below are the following:

Introduction—Why LGAs do Gender Equality Advocacy?

Section 1 — Defining your Advocacy Asks

Section 2 — Developing your Advocacy Plan

Section 3 — Implementing Advocacy Actions

Section 4 — Other tools and Examples to Support your Advocacy

This tool was created through consultations with various organizations involved in gender equality, as well as with LGAs already engaged in gender equality advocacy. As things evolve, the tool will be regularly updated with new examples to ensure it remains a valuable resource for your association. We also encourage you to actively contribute by sharing your own examples of successful advocacy work.

We hope you will find this tool useful to accompany you in every step of the way!

The CIB Secretariat



Introduction - Why LGAs do Gender Equality Advocacy?

Before getting into the phases of the advocacy process itself, let's return to the basics: What is gender equality? What is advocacy? Why should LGAs engage in gender equality advocacy? And why is it important to fully involve your leadership in the process? You'll find some reminders on these points in the section below, along with a tool to conduct a quick self-assessment of your advocacy efficiency to identify areas that may need improvement.

Let's Recall the key Concepts

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a core aspect of social justice and sustainable development. It goes beyond gender balance, aiming for equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities for everyone, regardless of gender. This means all genders, especially marginalized ones like women and non-binary individuals, should have equal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and decision-making processes. Achieving gender equality is crucial for justice and essential for building inclusive and prosperous communities and societies.

If gender equality is the goal, **gender mainstreaming** is the process to achieve it. This strategic approach integrates gender perspectives into all policies, programs, services, and actions across every sector and level of an organization. It systematically addresses the diverse needs, interests, and experiences of women, men, and non-binary individuals.

From the perspective of LGAs, **advocacy** involves representing and speaking on behalf of members—local or municipal governments—on issues that impact them. Advocacy is a term that can be culturally understood in various ways. In other contexts, advocacy can also be described as lobbying, championing, promoting, or campaigning for specific causes or changes. Regardless of what it's called, LGAs strive to effect change by voicing the collective concerns and needs of their members, ensuring that local perspectives are considered in national decision-making processes.

This “advocacy” role is crucial for influencing national policies, legislation, programs, and actions that the national government can implement to address these issues. Advocacy efforts are typically directed at national legislatures and governments, as they are a primary focus for LGAs. In countries where local government affairs are devolved to provincial or state governments, advocacy may instead target the provincial or state level.

There are numerous **examples of gender** advocacy done by LGA. They may promote national programs for gender equality in public services, such as training women for community leadership, ensuring equitable representation in municipal councils, and advocating for equal employment and pay in the public sector. LGAs can also tackle violence against women in politics by campaigning for stricter laws against gender-based political violence, urging police to protect female candidates and officials, and establishing systems for reporting violence. Additionally, LGAs can push national governments to align policies with international gender rights commitments, like enforcing CEDAW and supporting SDG #5 on gender equality.

The Critical Engagement of your Leadership

We all understand that in an LGA, leadership plays a decisive role in driving advocacy efforts. This role becomes even more critical when it comes to specific gender equality advocacy. Unlike general advocacy, these efforts directly challenge deep-seated societal norms and stereotypes related to gender. Active and visible leadership commitment signals that gender equality is not just a secondary concern but a core priority for your LGA.

Therefore, **engaging leaders early in the gender equality process** ensures they become champions who can break down barriers and drive organizational and cultural transformation. Strengthening this championing capacity through targeted training empowers both leaders and staff with the tools needed to create meaningful and lasting change.

As a reminder, Section 3 of the Toolkit to Mainstream Gender Equality in LGAs provides practical tools and resources to support board members and staff as they lead gender equality efforts effectively.

A Simple Self-Assessment of your Advocacy Efficiency

Before we explore steps to enhance your gender-related advocacy, you may wish to evaluate your current advocacy practices and how well gender equality is integrated into these efforts.

To assist you in this process, we have developed a **straightforward self-assessment questionnaire**. This includes a series of simple questions designed to help you assess your effectiveness in gender advocacy.

Figure 1 — A Self-Assessment of Advocacy Efficiency

On your Policy Development Process:

- **Clarity of your policies:** Do you have a clear understanding of your issues? Do you have clear and credible policy on this issue? Are the policy issues your association is focusing on easily understood by all stakeholders you engage with? Have you defined policy issues specifically related to gender equality? Do you regularly review and update your current policies to ensure they remain relevant?
- **Diverse and Inclusive Participation:** Do you encourage diverse and inclusive participation in policy formulation in your LGA to prevent domination by outspoken members? Do you manage your policy discussions in a way that promotes unity and rather than divides? Do you specifically ensure gender representation when you define your policies?

On your Audience and Communication Strategies:

- **Audience Identification:** Are you able to successfully identify and target the right audience for your advocacy efforts? Do you usually ensure gender needs are considered when defining the audience?
- **Communication Strategies:** Are your communication strategies clear and effective? Do they usually have a gender equality dimension?

On your Advocacy Actions:

- **Communication Channels:** Have you established permanent and effective communication channels with the local government Ministry, Parliament and other central authorities? With the women or gender equality ministry if any?
- **Mutually Beneficial Outcomes:** Do you maintain a cooperative relationship and seek mutually beneficial and inclusive outcomes in all your advocacy efforts with central authorities?
- **Member Involvement:** Do you ensure active participation of all your member local authorities in your advocacy activities?
- **Collaboration with Strategic Allies:** Do you actively collaborate with other stakeholders or strategic allies to strengthen your advocacy efforts?
- **Results:** Is your LGA usually successful in influencing policy changes because of your advocacy?

On the resources you have at your disposal:

- **Financial Resource:** Do you have the budget to undertake advocacy?
- **Personnel Skills:** Do you have personnel with the right skills to develop clear policies and implement advocacy activities, including data and research, policy development, advocacy work, communication, and a knowledge of gender issues?

Reflecting on these questions, presented in Figure 1, could provide valuable insights into your strengths and areas for improvement. This self-assessment can then serve as a foundation for developing more effective strategies to promote gender equality.

Examples and Tools

If you are looking for additional tools that **define gender advocacy concepts** and further **assess your LGA's internal capabilities**, you can refer to Section 1 and Section 2 of the full [Toolkit to Mainstream Gender Equality in LGAs](#) and to Section 4 — Other tools and Examples at the end of the tool.



Section 1—Defining Your Policy Ask

You want your LGA to advocate for the gender equality issues your members struggle with or care about. But what exactly should you be advocating for? The first step in a gender equality advocacy process is to **clearly define what change you are seeking**.

This Section 1 explores the initial phase of a successful advocacy process, emphasizing the importance of clearly defining and documenting your gender equality “policy asks” to effectively influence central authorities and other stakeholders.

In the specific domain of gender equality advocacy, the issues you wish to change require well-defined asks. Specific gender-related policy asks, such as promoting women’s leadership in local government or addressing gender-based violence against local women leaders, unfortunately often demand more rigorous research and stronger arguments because they often challenge deeply ingrained societal norms and biases. Achieving **policy change in the area of gender equality is more challenging** than traditional requests, such as increased infrastructure funding or enhanced tax-levying capabilities.

There are several steps you can follow to well define your policy ask: a clear definition of the issue to address, thorough research, establishing your targets, and preparing compelling position papers.

Identify the Challenges or Issue

The first step in our advocacy effort is to clearly identify and define the gender equality issue at hand. What **specific challenge or issue** do you wish to advocate for a resolution of?

For instance, in the local government sector, one common and pressing issue is the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Despite making up a significant portion of the population, women are often underrepresented in decision-making roles, which limits diverse perspectives and hinders the development of inclusive policies. This imbalance not only affects governance but also impacts the delivery of municipal services that meet the needs of all community members. Another example related to gender equality is the gender pay gap in the local public sector. Despite performing work of equal value, women often earn less than their male counterparts, perpetuating economic inequality and affecting workplace morale and motivation.

Gender equality can also sometimes **intersect with other policy issues**, creating additional challenges. For instance, when national governments develop new infrastructure funding programs or revise planning laws, it is important to consider how these policies might inadvertently contribute to the gender gap. For example, infrastructure funding programs that do not consider the specific needs of women, such as safe public transportation or adequate street lighting, can exacerbate gender inequalities. Similarly, planning laws that fail to consider the diverse needs of different genders may result in urban environments that are less accessible or safe for women and other marginalized groups. It is essential for LGAs to conduct gender impact assessments when they work on more traditional policy issues, not just on those specifically related to gender policy.

Those are just examples of gender related challenges that could become policy issues that need to be addressed. There are many others, and the ones you choose to advocate for will be related to your specific context.

Do Your Research

For change to occur, your central government needs to be convinced through well-founded arguments and persuasive advocacy. Weak arguments or mere assertions will not suffice. Therefore, your LGA's advocacy must be grounded in **solid research on the challenge or issue you wish to change**. This means that your policy ask needs to be well-defined, which includes understanding the real needs and limitations that local authorities face in the policy area you are addressing, as well as how central authorities and other stakeholders currently address or fail to address these needs.

To do comprehensive research and analysis you will have to gather diverse perspectives and document the lived experiences of those affected by the gender inequality issue you have identified. It is important that your LGA demonstrates that your research aligns with the genuine interests of your members, as this will lend greater legitimacy to your advocacy efforts. LGAs typically have mechanisms in place to gather and integrate the diverse perspectives of their members, such as policy committees, consultation processes, and formal procedures. For instance, by conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews with women leaders, you can also gain a deeper understanding of the barriers women face in accessing leadership roles and the broader context in which these challenges exist.

In addition to qualitative insights, it is crucial to **gather evidence and data through statistical analysis**. Typically, a LGA will rely on secondary data rather than developing its own. This approach involves utilizing existing data sources, such as government reports, academic studies, and data from non-governmental organizations, to support the findings. Establishing relationships with research centres and academic institutions, specialized on gender equality, can be invaluable in accessing high-quality gender-related data and expert analysis.

By leveraging these resources, a LGA can compile robust evidence that highlights the extent of gender inequality in—using the same example as above—leadership positions and its impact on governance and service delivery. This qualitative and data-driven approach will provide a solid foundation for your advocacy efforts, ensuring that your proposals are grounded in reality and supported by empirical evidence.

Target the Change Expected

Once you have identified the problem and gathered strong evidence, it is essential to clearly define the changes you want to see. Setting specific targets is crucial.

Understanding current national policies and priorities related to gender equality is vital for aligning your efforts with broader governmental objectives. By studying existing policies, laws, or programs, you can identify gaps and areas for improvement, as well as opportunities for collaboration with the national government. These gaps and opportunities are your policy targets.

For example, if you aim to advocate for policy changes that promote gender parity in local government leadership to use the example of the above, your targets might focus on implementing gender quotas, providing leadership training for women, and creating mentorship programs to support aspiring female leaders. It is important to be clear about which legislation you want to change and what programs you want to see put in place to bring about these changes.

Write all of this in a Position Paper

Now that you have identified the issue, gathered evidence, and determined the changes you want to see, the next step is to document your findings and proposals.

To effectively communicate your “asks,” it is essential to prepare a well-founded **position paper**. Such a document should outline the issue at hand, present the supporting evidence, and explain your proposals, emphasizing their benefits for both the national government and the municipal sector.

A position paper is not meant to be lengthy or resemble a thesis. Instead, it should serve as a **concise document that “makes the case”** for your gender policy asks, rather than acting as a comprehensive research document. This position paper will be a key tool in your gender advocacy efforts, providing a compelling case for change and demonstrating how your proposals align with national priorities. Additionally, do not forget to conduct a gender impact assessment in position papers about more traditional asks. This ensures that gender considerations are integrated into all your policy papers, even those not explicitly related to gender issues. Figure 2 presents an example of the content of a position paper.

By carefully planning and aligning your advocacy objectives with the content derived from your Position Paper, and by defining actions based on your audience, you will be able to create a more focused and effective advocacy plan that addresses the needs of your LGA.

Examples and Tools

We have gathered a set of tools and examples designed to support the strategies and insights discussed in this section. They can be found in *Section 4 — Other tools and Examples* at the end of this tool.

Additionally, if you have examples or tools that could supplement this section, we invite you to share them with the CIB Secretariat!



Section 2—Developing an Advocacy Plan

If defining your policy asks was the “what,” then advocacy is about the “how” you will influence your central government to take action to achieve the change you seek.

Successful advocacy, particularly in the realm of gender equality—again because you are often challenging deeply ingrained norms and biases—always begins with getting well organized to address “how” questions: How will you engage with the central government representatives you need to speak with about the change you desire? How will you involve your spokespersons and members in this process? How will you engage other allies to amplify your message? And how will you develop the necessary communication tools to support this effort?

Section 2 provides tips and tools for developing a **comprehensive Advocacy Plan**, serving as a strategic roadmap to effectively engage key stakeholders and influence public policy for meaningful change.

There are several usual parts in such a plan: understanding your environment, defining clearly your objectives, audience, tactics, and timelines, detailing your key messaging, identify, engage, and train your advocates and your allies, and developing your communication material.

Analyze the Political Environment

No advocacy effort exists in isolation. Every advocacy operates within a political, institutional, and fiscal context that can be either favourable or unfavourable, and this context must be thoroughly assessed before launching the campaign. Successful advocacy planning starts by **understanding the environment** in which you want to advocate, to minimize negative factors while enhancing positive ones.

If your central government is supportive of the specific gender equality issue or challenge at hand, your advocacy will likely involve quiet diplomacy and behind-the-scenes collaboration to refine the proposed policy and its implementation. However, if the government is not supportive, your advocacy must focus on building a compelling case.

Additionally, when the public agenda is crowded—meaning the government is already dealing with numerous pressing issues, or the public and media are preoccupied with these matters—it is vital to assess whether your issue can gain enough attention to displace others.

In general, in many cases, gender equality in the local government sector is not about whether the central government is supportive or not, nor if the public agenda is crowded; rather, it is unfortunately simply because it is not considered very important and does not rank high on the list of priorities. In such situations, your gender equality advocacy becomes even more imperative.

Define your Objectives

Based on the environment you are in, then you can set **clear and specific objectives**. These objectives should be directly connected to the findings and recommendations outlined in the Position Paper we discussed earlier.

If, for instance, your Position Paper highlighted the need to increase female representation in leadership roles and included recommendations for how the central government could address this issue, your advocacy action plan should transform these recommendations into specific objectives. For example, your advocacy objectives might include requesting a certain level of investment or funding to create mentorship programs for women. They could also involve advocating for changes to key legislation or policies to ensure that women in leadership positions have access to support, such as maternity leave or reimbursed daycare services, to help them fulfill their roles effectively.

These objectives need to be realistic, taking into account your LGA's capacity and resources, as well as what is feasible within the political environment. Pursuing unrealistic objectives will only lead to frustration and a waste of your LGA's resources.

Identify Your Audience

A critical component in your advocacy plan is also the careful **identification of your audience**. Whom do you need to engage by your advocacy? Identifying the key stakeholders within the central government who have the influence or authority to support your objectives is essential. Understanding their interests, priorities, and potential objections will help tailor your advocacy actions to resonate with them effectively.

When identifying your target audiences, remember that even when your audience is a group, organization, or institution (such as the cabinet, parliament, or a ministry), these bodies are made up of people. It is essential to identify within those bodies the **individuals who are most influential or likely to support your efforts** and cause. Your audiences can range from public officials in a ministry to a specific cabinet minister. They include both those who can support your efforts and those involved in decision-making—influencers and decision-makers. For example, identify the ultimate decision-maker(s); does the decision or outcome you seek rest with the Cabinet, or with an individual minister or official? You will need to identify these individuals.

It will be important to adopt **a partnership approach** with the audience you wish to advocate to. You may want to refine your list of individuals in our audience by describing their level of interest with the issues or challenges you are advocating for. Most central governments are open to collaborating with LGAs to enhance local governance and tackle shared challenges. Often, there is a mutual interest in implementing new policies and legislation effectively when they benefit all parties involved. While central authorities and your LGA may have their own agendas, finding common ground is crucial.

List Your Actions

Once these specific objectives and audiences are defined, the next step is to outline your **specific advocacy actions** to be undertaken by your LGA. What are you going to do to achieve your objectives in front of your audience? Various advocacy techniques will be discussed in Section 3 below, but quick examples include for instance to plan meetings with key government officials or launch a media campaign to highlight the importance of your objectives. Establishing clear timelines is also crucial to ensure that each of these actions of the plan are executed in a timely manner, allowing for adjustments as needed.

By carefully planning and aligning your advocacy objectives with the content derived from your Position Paper, and by defining actions based on your audience, you will be able to create a more focused and effective advocacy plan that addresses the needs of your LGA.

Prepare your Communication Material

When you advocate and implement your actions, knowing how to communicate your message in a way that resonates with your audience is paramount. Developing **effective communication** for advocacy, particularly on complex issues like gender equality, requires an approach that ensures your key messages are memorable and persuasive. These messages should be clear, concise, and tailored to resonate with your target audience, which may include government officials, community leaders, and the general public.

To craft messages that resonate, start by asking key questions: What is most important to your audience? How can you connect your issue to their interests? What specific phrases and words will draw their attention and support? Understanding these elements will help you develop communication materials that support your advocacy plan.

Based on your key messages, then create **template presentations** and concise documents enhanced with visuals to clearly convey your policy asks. Visual aids can simplify complex information and make your arguments more compelling.

Storytelling is especially a powerful tool in advocacy, especially for issues like gender equality that can be challenging to communicate. Good advocacy is good storytelling, and all effective politicians understand this. On every issue that matters to you, you need to tell a story that describes the issue, explain why it matters, and propose a solution. Figure 3 gives you an example of how to develop a good story. stories to tell. Such preparation ensures that the advocacy efforts are coherent and persuasive, maximizing their impact.

Figure 3—Story Telling

Consider this story of a small town that struggled with economic stagnation. In this town, a local initiative aimed at increasing opportunities for women leaders was launched. The initiative focused on providing leadership training and mentorship programs for women in the community.

One of the participants, Amina, was a talented but underrecognized community organizer. Through the program, she gained the skills and confidence needed to run for a position on the town council. She ran in the next local elections and won.

With her fresh perspective and innovative ideas, Amina, now as a local councilor, spearheaded projects that revitalized the local economy, such as establishing a community market that supported local artisans and farmers.

Her leadership not only boosted economic activity but also inspired other women in the community to pursue leadership roles.

This story illustrates the positive impact of increasing opportunities for women leaders. By bringing objectives to life through storytelling, you can effectively communicate the importance of your cause.

Identify Your Spokespersons and Allies

The next step in your advocacy plan is to identify who will carry out your advocacy efforts, your **spokespersons**. This involves determining whether your leaders, members, or staff will be responsible for engaging with the audience you have targeted.

In the realm of gender equality advocacy, **engaging women spokespersons** is vital. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences that can enrich the dialogue and drive home the importance of gender equality. Their lived experiences and personal stories add depth and authenticity to the messaging, making it more relatable and compelling. These narratives can highlight the real-world impact of gender inequality and the urgent need for change, resonating powerfully with diverse audiences.

However, it is equally important to engage male champions of the cause. Male allies can play a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and advocating for systemic change. By standing alongside women, they help to dismantle barriers and promote a more inclusive approach to leadership and decision-making.

It is important to ensure that these individuals are not only passionate about the cause but also equipped with the necessary skills to effectively communicate and negotiate. Providing **training in lobbying and negotiation** techniques can significantly enhance their effectiveness, empowering them to advocate for gender equality with confidence and clarity. You will need to plan these trainings as well.

In addition, collaboration is key to amplifying your advocacy efforts. Before starting on advocacy actions, you will want to determine if you are alone in supporting your agenda, or if there are other

groups or individuals that might share the same views. **Identifying and partnering with allies** within other organizations that share similar interests in gender equality can create a united front, strengthening your message and increasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful change. You can include these allies in your advocacy plan as well.

Examples of allies for LGAs in the area of gender equality advocacy include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dedicated to women's rights, community groups promoting inclusion, educational institutions researching gender and public policy, and businesses committed to corporate social responsibility in equality issues.

Formal coalitions with other organizations can be valuable in supporting your advocacy objectives. Coalitions can create a stronger public image, bring together diverse ideas and resources, and avoid duplication of effort. They can link groups at community, regional, and national levels.

Examples and Tools

Again, we have gathered a set of tools and examples designed to support the strategies and insights discussed in this section. Refer to *Section 4 — Other tools and Examples* at the end of this tool.

Section 3 — Implementing your Advocacy Actions

Now that you have a plan, it is time to implement it. Successful advocacy can be achieved through various techniques, which needs to be tailored to your specific context and cultural setting. Advocacy practices differ across regions and countries, influenced by numerous factors that determine what constitutes successful implementation in your context, such as your political climate, cultural norms, and the level of public engagement.

Section 3 below outlines a variety of **advocacy techniques commonly used by LGAs** to implement advocacy actions. The following paragraphs provide detailed information on these techniques and tools, along with examples you can refer to.

Networking and Regular Meetings

Establishing and maintaining **ongoing relationships** with key national government officials and politicians is the backbone of successful advocacy. In the field of gender equality, this is particularly important. It is critical to prioritize building alliances with policymakers, whether they are staff members or elected officials, who can champion gender equality initiatives.

To effectively build these relationships, LGAs can first identify officials with a demonstrated interest in or commitment to gender equality. This might include members of gender-focused parliamentary committees, ministers responsible for gender affairs, or senior officials and staff in various ministries who have that mandate and have implemented successful gender equality programs.

Establishing a **routine of regular meetings** with these government representatives provides a platform to discuss issues of interest, share insights, and keep lines of communication open. These meetings help build a strong foundation for when your LGA wants to push for a specific ask, such as legislative changes or increased funding for gender equality programs. They serve as opportunities to regularly present your views, share success stories, and explain your association's work in the field.

To prepare for these meetings, it is important to gather information about the context in which these government officials operate. Understanding their political landscape will help present your ideas in a way that will resonate with them.

By maintaining regular contact and demonstrating a clear understanding of government priorities, LGAs can position themselves as trusted partners and advisors in the pursuit of gender equality.

Formal Mechanisms

Successful LGAs make effective use of **existing government consultation mechanisms** established by central governments. Engaging with formal consultations, special committees, and advisory boards allows LGAs to integrate gender equality issues into the national agenda.

Legislative assemblies may invite LGAs to speak at special committee hearings, providing a platform to advocate for gender-focused initiatives and the need for additional investments. For example, during budget planning periods, special committees often convene various stakeholders to discuss allocations and priorities.

In some countries, LGAs and their members have the benefit of having formal mechanisms at their disposal to interact with central government. These mechanisms can include intergovernmental forums, where representatives from various levels of government meet to discuss policy issues. Additionally, some countries establish advisory councils specifically focused on gender equality, where LGAs can participate as members. These councils advise the government on policy development and implementation strategies. Furthermore, task forces may be established to tackle urgent or complex issues, and LGAs can be invited to join these task forces to provide expertise and advocate for gender-sensitive approaches.

Public consultations also offer opportunities for LGAs to engage, as governments often hold these consultations on new policies or legislative changes. LGAs can submit written responses or participate in public hearings to ensure that gender perspectives are included.

By participating in these established channels, LGAs can provide expert input, propose policy changes, and ensure that gender perspectives are considered in decision-making processes.

Figure 4 provides some examples of formal mechanisms established between central government and local governments in various countries.

Figure 4 — Examples of Formal Mechanisms to Interact with Central Governments

In Mexico, the National Municipal Promotion Commission (CONAM) serves as a critical mechanism that allows municipalities to participate directly in the design and implementation of policies affecting their territories. This platform fosters collaboration with the federal government in areas such as social programs, urban development, and fiscal decentralization. Through CONAM, local governments have the opportunity to influence strategic national decisions, ensuring that territorial priorities, including a gender-responsive approach, are considered.

In Kenya, the Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC) plays an essential role in coordinating the relationship between the 47 county governments and the national government. This committee acts as a bridge, facilitating the alignment of policies and programs between the two levels of government. It also ensures equitable resource distribution and promotes cooperation to address shared challenges, such as access to essential services. This mechanism strengthens the voice of local governments in the implementation of national policies.

In Indonesia, Intergovernmental Consultative Committees are formal mechanisms that ensure local government associations can influence national decision-making related to decentralization and local governance. These committees enable local governments to work with the central government to coordinate public policies and ensure that national strategies are consistent with territorial needs. Additionally, they are fundamental in guaranteeing that grassroots interests are represented in national frameworks.

Advocacy Campaigns and Special Actions

Advocacy campaigns are powerful tools for influencing public opinion and shaping policymaking on specific gender equality issues. LGAs can design strategic, time-bound campaigns that focus on key areas such as equal pay, women's political participation, or addressing gender-based violence. These campaigns should be well researched, with clear objectives and targeted messaging to ensure they effectively reach and engage their intended audiences.

In addition to advocacy campaigns, LGAs can organize special advocacy events to facilitate direct interaction between their members and elected officials. One effective approach is organizing **"Days at the Parliament,"** where LGA members visit the parliament to engage in dialogue with legislators. Targeting elected officials who are women or those who are particularly sensitive to gender equality issues can significantly enhance the effectiveness of such events.

These events provide a platform for LGAs to present their concerns, share success stories, and advocate for policy changes directly with decision-makers. They need to be planned well in advance, coordinating with parliamentary staff to schedule meetings and preparing briefing materials and training participants on effective communication strategies. Such events serve to humanize the issues, providing real-world examples and personal stories on gender equality that can influence legislative priorities.

Member's Involvement

The strength of an LGA's advocacy efforts lies in the active involvement of its members. **Engaging members in advocacy** initiatives not only amplifies the message but also leverages their collective support to influence change.

There are various ways to involve your members. LGAs can organize workshops, training sessions, and forums to educate members about gender equality issues and equip them with the skills needed for effective advocacy. Encouraging members to participate in campaigns, attend meetings, and share their experiences can create a groundswell of support that bolsters the LGA's advocacy efforts.

Meeting with their members of parliament in their constituency is another effective strategy. These meetings provide opportunities for direct dialogue, allowing LGA members to present their concerns and advocate for policy changes. Members who have personal connections with ministers can be encouraged to use these relationships to further the advocacy agenda, providing unique access and influence that can be particularly useful in driving change.

It is essential that members engaged in advocacy are well versed in the advocacy asks and have been thoroughly briefed on the key messages to convey. This includes equipping them with stories to tell. Such preparation ensures that the advocacy efforts are coherent and persuasive, maximizing their impact.

Leveraging Traditional Media and Social Media

In today's digital age, the media and social networks are necessary allies in spreading advocacy messages and gaining public support. In doing gender equality advocacy, LGAs must strategically utilize both traditional media outlets, such as newspapers, radio, and television, and digital platforms like social media, blogs, and podcasts, to effectively reach a wider audience.

Engaging **directly with journalists and influencers** allows LGAs to amplify their message and build momentum for change. By fostering those relationships, LGAs can ensure that their messages are consistently communicated, and that the importance of gender equality remains at the forefront of public discourse. It is essential for LGAs to target the media channels that central government officials, legislators, and other key decision-makers use. By doing so, they can ensure that their advocacy messages reach the right audience, increasing the likelihood of influencing policy changes.

To further enhance these efforts, LGAs can encourage their members to **engage with local media**, thereby raising awareness and generating public support for gender equality issues. Municipalities often have media relations staff who can be engaged to help relay the messaging to local media about the work that the LGA does. Training members on effective media communication techniques will also empower them to become strong advocates, capable of articulating the issues and solutions clearly and persuasively.

Social media provides an unparalleled opportunity for LGAs to also quickly and effectively reach a vast and diverse audience. To maximize its potential, LGAs must approach it strategically. A consistent message, carefully aligned with core objectives, is essential across all platforms. Advocacy messages should be simple, clear, and easy to share, with visually appealing content that captures attention. Visual elements such as infographics, short videos, and striking images are particularly effective in explaining gender equality issues and proposed solutions, drawing people into the conversation.

Engaging **directly with followers** is equally important. Replying to comments, asking thought-provoking questions, and encouraging discussions help build a sense of community and trust. Collaboration with influencers, activists, and organizations that share similar goals for gender equality can also significantly amplify the message. Influencers bring established audiences that can expand the reach of LGAs' advocacy efforts.

Ultimately, by integrating these approaches, LGAs can leverage both traditional and social media to effectively advocate for gender equality and ensure their cause reaches the key stakeholders, decision-makers, and communities essential to driving meaningful change.

Monitoring Advocacy Actions

By implementing advocacy actions such as utilizing formal mechanisms, developing targeted campaigns, involving members, and leveraging the media, your LGA can drive significant progress in the field of gender equality.

Monitoring the progress of these initiatives is also essential for learning and continuously improving

advocacy efforts. **Performance monitoring frameworks** (PMFs) need not be complicated. For each objective outlined in your Advocacy Action Plan, you can develop a few indicators of success and determine how and by whom the necessary data will be gathered to measure these indicators. This approach ensures that monitoring remains manageable while providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of advocacy efforts.

Some LGAs create an **internal advocacy** report annually to detail the successes achieved, how they were measured, and recommendations for adjusting advocacy efforts and ways of working. Such a report not only helps in assessing progress but also serves as a communication tool to report back to leadership, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Evaluating the results and impact of your lobbying efforts, along with the lessons learned, provides insights into what works and what does not, enabling you to refine your strategies and enhance their impact. Advocacy is a continuous process, and adapting your approach is key to success.

Examples and Tools

Like for other sections, we have gathered a set of tools and examples designed to support the strategies and insights discussed in this section. Please refer to *Section 4 — Other tools and Examples* in the next series of pages.

Section 4— Other tools and Examples to Support Advocacy

This final Section 4 provides you with a list of tools and examples that can be useful as you implement the various steps in your advocacy journey, as outlined in the previous sections. Some of these examples are directly related to gender advocacy, while others are more generic tools that can be useful as you plan and implement your advocacy actions.

For each of the tools we have gathered in the table below, you will find a hyperlink that takes you directly to it. We have also summarized what they are about to help you see where in your advocacy process these tools could be useful.

We need your collaboration to continue enriching this final Section 4. If you have examples or tools that could supplement the list below, the CIB Secretariat is very interested in learning from you!

Tools & Examples	What will you find?
<u>Plan your Power: A toolkit for women's rights advocacy planning</u>	This toolkit builds on Womankind World wide's Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit (2011). It is based on a women's rights approach to advocacy which recognizes the need for longer-term structural change if women's rights are to be fulfilled. It is intended to support the advocacy planning of women's rights organizations and broader advocacy organizations who want to prioritize women's rights and gender equality in their advocacy work.
<u>A Guide to Being an Effective Advocate for Gender Equality</u>	This brief explores how to be an effective constitutional advocate for gender equality and women's rights. It provides eight tips to support whoever is planning to work on constitutional advocacy. The tips are applicable for advocacy campaigns at different levels and can be used in different regions and countries.
<u>How to do advocacy with a gender perspective?</u>	This tool is developed for policy and advocacy departments who are supporting partners to work on advocacy and how to strongly integrate and mainstream gender in advocacy work. They have used advocacy to climate change as the theme of examples but it the tool is applicable to all themes.
<u>The Advocacy Capacity Tool (ACT!)</u>	A self-assessment tool that nonprofit organizations, coalitions, and groups can use to assess their current capacity—or readiness—to engage in advocacy efforts. You can use this tool to benchmark your skills, identify gaps and opportunities in your strategies, and determine where you need to build capacity to achieve your goals. This tool can also be used as part of an advocacy evaluation plan.
<u>Gender Equality Capacity Assessment Tool</u>	This tool assesses the understanding, knowledge and skills that a given organization and their staff have on gender equality and women's empowerment, and on the organization's gender architecture and gender policy. The tool includes an easy-to-implement questionnaire and guidelines.

Tools & Examples	What will you find?
<u>Gender responsive national communication toolkit</u>	This toolkit is designed to strengthen national government staff's capacity and assist them in integrating gender equality into communication efforts. It is primarily targeted towards government staff, technical experts, and gender specialists advocating for increased gender responsiveness in all national development efforts.
<u>Youth Advocacy Guide</u>	This Youth Advocacy Guide workbook developed by UNICEF aims to lead young people through the process of advocacy, combining clear "how to" steps, with inspirational stories from other young people who are striving to bring about change in their communities.
<u>Advocacy Action Guide</u>	This Advocacy Action Guide provides a roadmap for planning an advocacy campaign, with tools, tactics and lessons learned to help along the way. It is focused on the Global Health Advocacy Incubator's experience. The approach lays out 4 phases of effective advocacy applicable to organizing any advocacy efforts. Each phase includes detailed steps with case studies, templates, and guidance on how to navigate through each step successfully. Available in three languages (Eng, Fr and Spanish).
<u>Saskculture—Writing a Position Paper</u>	This tool provides guidance on how to develop a solid position on an issue or policy as the first step to helping build support from others. It defines a position paper, sometimes known as a case statement or a briefing, to help communicate the key ideas behind an advocacy effort.
<u>LGA position paper on Integration</u>	This example of a position paper outlines the learning from the LGA and its partner organizations on the critical success factors for achieving effective, joined up and person-centred care and support to improve people's experience of care and support and improve their health and wellbeing outcomes.
<u>UCLG Position paper on Aid Effectiveness and Local Government</u>	This example of a position paper, adopted at the 2009 UCLG World Council in Guangzhou (China) seeks to give voice to the local government in aid effectiveness.
<u>A guide to policy advocacy in transition countries</u>	This guide tackles the challenge of policy advocacy in the traditional approaches and puts forward a practical approach to planning advocacy campaigns in which the realities of the target policy context are at the heart of the approach. The manual is focused on the strategic planning level of an advocacy campaign.
<u>Data for Governance Alliance Advocacy Manual</u>	This comprehensive advocacy manual is a resource developed for civil society organizations (CSOs) to distill essentials of advocacy and leadership practised in different parts of the world and in varied cultures. The manual is designed to provide the tools and a conceptual understanding of advocacy that will enable CSOs to deal with the demanding situations experienced in overcoming data resource disparity and achieving evidence-based advocacy for policy reform.
<u>A Ridiculously Simplified Guide to Intersectional & Decolonial Research</u>	This guide focuses on qualitative practice-oriented research used by NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies to advance systemic change

Tools & Examples	What will you find?
<u>Advocacy: a toolkit for small NGOs</u>	It is a concise guide to advocacy intended specifically for use by small non-governmental organizations (NGOs). You can easily adapt it to your LGAs use.
<u>Practical Guide to Strategic Advocacy Planning</u>	This Practical Guide was developed with the aim of supporting NCD Alliance's goal to strengthen NCD (noncommunicable diseases) civil society advocacy efforts to drive transformative change at the global, regional, and national levels. The document presents the eight main steps to advocacy planning, with examples, case studies from the NCD Alliance's network, advocacy tools and other resources. Available in English, French and Spanish
<u>Global Road Safety Partnership</u>	Practical "how-to-guides" around advocacy campaign planning. This includes useful guides to help you during the general advocacy campaign, policy implementation campaign, and media advocacy.
<u>Advocacy Toolkit, "Be the Change You Want to See"</u>	This is a self-explanatory toolkit, anyone working to change situations in their communities or countries will find this toolkit useful.
<u>Online campaigning</u>	This toolkit provides with guidance on creating digital campaigns to help you achieve your goals
<u>Saskculture—Advocacy Strategy</u>	This tool provides examples on how to develop an advocacy strategy as an organization's guide that outlines how it will strategically implement its various advocacy initiatives and campaigns.
<u>Voter voice—Advocacy Strategies for Running a Successful Campaign</u>	This guide provides information on how to formulate an advocacy plan that establishes where you are, where you want to go, and how you're going to get there. It includes 13 advocacy strategies used by top government relations professionals to execute their campaigns.
<u>Fiscal note—How to Develop a Comprehensive Legislative Strategy</u>	This guide is for nonprofits, associations, or corporations that want to develop a robust <u>legislative tracking</u> strategy.
<u>Strategy Toolkit</u>	This Strategy Toolkit is to support the important work of human rights advocates around the world. In each section of this Strategy Toolkit, you will find it includes information developed by New Tactics and members of its community to help create effective strategies for your human rights work. This is a comprehensive toolkit which you can use through the process of your gender advocacy work.
<u>Mapping an Advocacy Strategy</u>	This tool is intended for organizations that want to include advocacy and public policy work among their programmatic strategies. It includes three essential steps to developing an advocacy initiative. Available in French and Portuguese.

Tools & Examples	What will you find?
<u>Evaluation Advancing Advocacy (E2A)</u>	E2A is a set of simple tools that are adaptable to different campaigns and contexts. These tools are designed to support activists and human rights defenders to use evaluation to develop more effective advocacy campaigns.
<u>Deliver for Good</u>	This is an example of an advocacy to drive progress toward gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) In Kenya.
<u>13 Strategies for your Advocacy Campaign</u>	This article provides information on how to develop advocacy campaigns.
<u>Media and online campaigning</u>	This article provides information on how to develop media and on-line campaigns.
<u>Charismatic leaders and influencers</u>	This article provides examples of the advocacy work done by various leaders and influencers.

We Wish you the Best Success

As we reach the conclusion, we hope that this “Tool for Effective Gender Equality Advocacy by LGAs” serves as a valuable guide to empower your LGA in its pursuit of gender equality. Our aim was to provide you with a structured approach to advocacy, offering insights into defining clear advocacy asks, developing action plans, and implementing various advocacy techniques.

As we mentioned earlier, advocacy related to gender equality is not as straightforward as other more traditional advocacy efforts undertaken by LGAs. It often involves challenging long-standing cultural beliefs and prejudices, which can make the process more complex and demanding. This tool is designed to be adaptable, offering examples and resources that can be tailored to your unique context.

Remember, we encourage you to share your own experiences, examples, and tools with the CIB Secretariat. Your contributions will help enrich this resource and support other LGAs in their advocacy efforts.

In closing, we wish you great success in implementing your gender equality advocacy. Your LGA has a significant responsibility to help create a more equitable and inclusive future!



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