



Advocacy AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

What is Advocacy AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL?

Advocating at the national level means influencing the policy process to effect change in your country. It involves contacting members of parliament, ministries for gender, education, equality, innovation, technology, health and employment, programme directors and other relevant policymakers with a view to encouraging governments to commit to defined targets for girls’ and women’s quality, lifelong education. It requires identifying who the decision-makers are, how the policy cycle works and how to approach policymakers within your country, to then establish a plan with goals and specific actions. It involves knowing the facts and being able to put together arguments that support your goals. Campaigns can transfer from a local level to a national level where views and agenda of civil society and local politicians can diffuse to the higher level of national policymakers and authoritative powers. A national advocacy strategy will be required to transfer successful local advocacy to the national level.

Why Advocate for the EDUCATION OF GIRLS & WOMEN AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL?

Advocating at a national level can influence policymakers and stakeholders to prioritise, promote and advance education, gender and human rights nationwide. Advocacy at this level may also seek to influence resource allocation, including how much of the national budget is spent on education. If there is persistent pressure from influential stakeholders e.g. nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), local governments, and communities to close the gender gap in secondary and post-secondary education, national governments will be more likely to pay attention to the issue and may allocate increased budget, which in turn may drive increased human resources. Policymakers at the national level can be urged to adopt significant education and gender benchmarks in order to make a real difference to close the gender gaps and to make commitments to monitor and measure appropriate targets, for example by gathering and publicly disseminating gender and age disaggregated data.

INADEQUATE POLICYMAKING HAS SIGNIFICANT AND WIDESPREAD IMPACTS, INCLUDING:

- Gender inequalities
- Insufficient access of girls to secondary and tertiary education
- Inadequate quality of public services
- Few, no or unsustainable benefits to the intended beneficiaries
- Sections of society excluded from the policy’s intended benefits
- Adverse short- and long-term social consequences

FACT: From 2005 to 2013, 43% of women aged 20-24 in India, were first married by the age of 18. Girls with no education are 5.5 times more likely to marry or enter into union as those with at least 10 years of education.

The issue YOU WANT TO CHANGE

It is crucial that you research and maintain a comprehensive up-to-date understanding of your specific issue. You and your members will have an understanding of the access to and impact of girls' and women's education, or the lack in your communities. It is important that you document this. Research should include identifying stakeholders who are directly involved in policy processes related to girls' and women's education in your country. This information is essential before beginning a successful advocacy strategy. It is advisable to make use of the materials that GWI has available. After completing the background research, the next step is to gather specific information on the priorities of your government in national education and gender issues, and identify specific, evidence-based changes with a clear plan on how these can be achieved with your organisation's involvement.

UNESCO has numerous policy papers and reports that can be used to support your advocacy campaign and are readily available online. In particular, UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring reports, to measure progress towards the EFA goals established in 2000 at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, are an important resource. The measurement of Goal 5 – gender equality – offers data

and lessons learned on access to quality education for girls. The "Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges" published by UNESCO in 2015 offers a wealth of data on specific countries and recommendations on youth and adult skills, adult literacy, gender equality and the quality

of education (EFA goals)¹. You can use data on your country from this report to support your advocacy campaign.

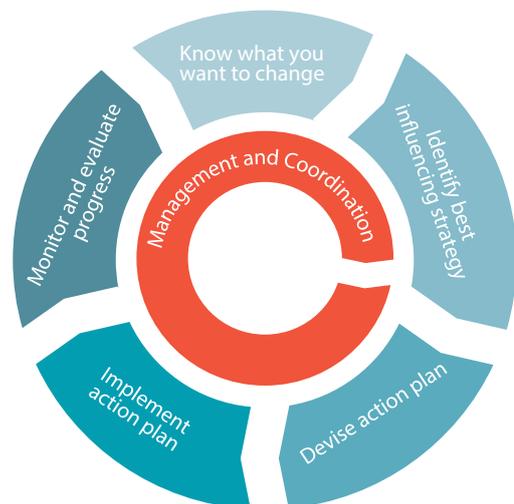


1. UNESCO 2015, Global Monitoring Report – Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf>

How do you ADVOCATE?

The difference between successful and unsuccessful advocacy campaigns is often not how worthy the cause is, but rather how strong your plan is. You must ensure that your strategy is sound, that you have chosen the right target audience, and that you use the right methods to reach that audience. A strong advocacy plan should include the following:

- **Goal (s)** – What exactly do you want to change?
- **Targets and strategies for achieving the goal** – Who do you need to influence? How are you going to influence them?
- **Action plan** – Who will do what, when, how and why?
- **Measurable objectives** – How will you measure success qualitatively and quantitatively?
- **Progress monitoring and evaluation** – How will you know if your plan is on track?



THE ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING CYCLE

Source: Bond, UK.

Effective advocacy is based on the message that you are delivering, how you deliver that message, and the audience you are intending to reach. How you frame the issue will depend on who you are talking to, and their personal and professional experience. Develop tailored messages that are evidence-based with clearly cited facts and statistics. Consider using images such as graphs or infographics to document and support your argument.

GWI has published numerous policy papers which can be presented to policymakers, government representatives and other stakeholders. The policy papers highlight GWI's position on various topics and clarify its recommendations to tackle the underlying concerns. GWI identifies its position on the topics including: Post-2015 Global Education Goals; Child, Early and Forced Marriage; Education for Indigenous Peoples; and Safe Access to Education. Of particular interest, in the context of the Post-2015 agenda, is the policy paper entitled: "Post-2015 Global Education Goals". All policy papers are available to download from the public section of the GWI website.

FACT: In Cambodia a scholarship for girls enrolling in secondary school raised transition rates from primary to secondary school by 30%.



PEOPLE TO APPROACH IN GOVERNMENT

Nota Bene: these are examples to stimulate thinking and may vary from country to country

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/GENDER/EQUALITY

- Education Secretary
- Under Secretary
- Education Minister
- Shadow Education Minister

PARLIAMENT/SENATE

- Members
- Upper House
- Lower House

REGIONAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

- Directors of education
- Regional education officers
- Regional school/university officers
- Regional UN offices

DISTRICT EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

- Directors of educational spending
- District education advisors/managers
- Community education directors

SCHOOLS/UNIVERSITIES

RELIGIOUS/SOCIAL/BUSINESS LEADERS

EDUCATIONALISTS

GIRLS, WOMEN

BOYS, MEN

Identifying THE TARGET AUDIENCE

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Your audience can be broken down into primary and secondary targets. A primary target is the person who has the most power to give you what you want to advance your campaign. It is always a person and not an institution, e.g. the Minister of Education, rather than the Ministry of Education. You will need to decide who has the most relevant influence in your national government ministries. When deciding on your primary target, it is important to evaluate your own influence as well as that of the target. For example, an advocate for women's rights who is a leader in a renowned national university, potentially wields public opinion, has volunteers and supporters who may be constituents of the primary target, and can be considered experts in the field. Attributes such as this will be important for primary targets.

UN Women have compiled a Directory of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality (UN Women, April 2014). This directory consists of points of contact within government, or independent, advisory bodies that are recognised as "national mechanisms for gender equality" by all stakeholders². The country-specific list is available to view and download here: <http://www.ngocsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/DirectoryOfNationalMechanisms.pdf>. You can contact your country representative to discuss your advocacy campaign. You could use relevant GWI and UN Women policy papers or guidelines as talking points to identify political commitments the government is planning to undertake for achieving gender equality.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

Your main audience may be influenced by different actors; therefore it is also important to identify your secondary targets in your advocacy strategy. A secondary target has influence over your primary target and you will need to research the individuals that might have the greatest impact on them. Be creative and look at your organisation's professional and social networks to see who has connections to the primary target. Secondary targets can be widely variable and multi-sectoral; for example, the leading radio station or newspaper, a leading businessperson, or a foreign government representative. For each target, identify your relationship to them (this may be through another contact), and your tactics to reach them. Intergovernmental institutions, such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union, can exert political pressure on national governments to implement legislation. There may be representatives in these institutions, e.g. a UN staff member, working on access to quality education for girls and women, who would be willing to work with you on promoting legislation to support this.

2. UN Women, 2014, Directory of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality, p9: <http://www.ngocsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/DirectoryOfNationalMechanisms.pdf>

A step by step framework would require you to think through the following:

BACKGROUND

- Brief context & situational analysis – what's the problem? Why advocate on the issue? Human rights, commitments, accountability, outcomes...

GOAL

- Long-term goal that you want to contribute towards?

OBJECTIVES

- Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time-bound (SMART) change objectives
- Do these contribute to the realisation of your goal?

TARGETS

- Who has the power to make the necessary changes?
- Who influences those people who can make change?

ALLIES/PARTNERS

- Who can you work with to build momentum and support?

ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

- Policy & research – understanding of context, barriers, opportunities etc.
- Advocacy - what tools and channel to use to achieve goal
- Popular mobilisation – which constituents and how to move them
- Engagement of key stakeholders – what activities with which partners

KEY MESSAGES

- For each audience

TIMELINE

- Moments/opportunities for influence? How to be prepared for these with evidence and advocacy needed?

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Who is responsible for what?

BUDGET

- How much will each action cost? What gaps (incl. capacities)? How to fill them?

MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

- Measure against objectives (remember: advocacy can be a long process)

Who can help you REACH YOUR TARGETS?

Strong partnerships are important to achieving access to quality, lifelong education for girls and women. As you develop your advocacy strategy, be prepared to reach out to people who work in related fields (e.g. education or gender experts) as well as sectors other than education and those with experience working on national policy. There are multiple actors who can affect the issue you are working on, or who work in the same or similar areas; by working together you can increase the chances of being heard and creating change.

ADVOCACY CHECKLIST

The following checklist offers a guide to assist you in developing and carrying out your advocacy campaign. It can be adapted to suit local needs. You can also add to this checklist.

- Carry out extensive research and pull out all relevant data as proof points
- Prepare documentation (e.g. talking points, fact sheets, infographics)
- Develop a strategic advocacy plan
- Identify primary targets and their corresponding secondary targets
- Create an influencing strategy to reach your primary targets
- Begin implementing your advocacy plan
- Write a letter to your primary target and request a meeting and ensure follow up (call, mail etc.)
- Engage your members in your campaign and invite them to sign up to activities such as petitions and campaign events
- Contact your partners and invite them to be involved in your campaign
- Follow up all actions
- Ensure that you are engaged with the prominent actors in girls' and women's education in your country
- Include information on your campaign in your newsletter, member newsletter and on your website
- Use social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter to disseminate the key messages for your campaign and build them into discussion on social media on girls' and women's education
- Involve the general public in your campaign by including information on it in the media e.g. radio and newspaper, and by holding public events
- Send information on your campaign to GWI – gwi@graduatewomen.org
- Monitor and evaluate your progress

"..things are never as complicated as they seem. It is only our arrogance that prompts us to find unnecessarily complicated answers to simple problems." - Muhammad Yunus