



Democratic Republic of Congo Photo: Joakim Roos

How to do Advocacy with a Gender Perspective:

A Guide and a Checklist



**Gender
Mainstreaming
Toolbox**



Diakonia
People Change the World



A What does ‘advocacy with a gender perspective’ mean, and why is it important?

Diakonia works for a just, equal and sustainable world free from poverty, oppression, inequality and violence. Such a world is only possible if both women and men regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity are able to exercise their rights and make decisions about their lives and bodies. In other words: only with gender justice can we have human rights, democracy, and peace.

To make sure that Diakonia can contribute to this vision, we work for gender equality in two ways: On the one hand, through **standalone** / specific **gender work** – like the gender projects we support across the world that focus on issues like gender based violence, sexual and reproductive rights, LGBTI rights, etc.

On the other hand, through integrating – or mainstreaming – a gender perspective in all our work regardless of thematic focus. **Gender mainstreaming** means that when we work on issues like human rights, social and economic justice, conflict or disaster risk reduction; we should always do it with a gender perspective so that this work contributes to gender equality, too. This is true for our development projects, our humanitarian response, and our advocacy work.

In other words, **advocacy with a gender perspective means that even if an advocacy intervention is focused on a seemingly non-gender related topic, the activities should still be based on a gender analysis and aim at improving gender equality as a result of the policy asks put forward.**

Diakonia supports partner organisations in different countries who do advocacy to influence the policies and institutions that shape conditions for people living in poverty. In some countries, not least at Head Office, we also develop policy and do advocacy under our own name.

Policy is a plan or course of action by a government, political party, or business; intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters.

Advocacy is actions which seek to influence such policies and practices.

Diakonia’s advocacy should be rooted in the realities of rights holders. Advocacy at Head Office should complement the programme work by addressing global policy frameworks that have an impact on rights holders’ lives. Since gender inequalities are present in all contexts where Diakonia works, it is important that this perspective is also included in the advocacy work.

For example: Imagine that you are doing advocacy under the Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. If you know that women and men have different roles in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation, you will articulate policy asks in a different way. For example, you might see the need to ensure targeted funding for adaptation projects that are designed by and implemented by women, and which are based on an understanding of their specific needs and interests.

Please note that this guide/checklist discusses policy advocacy work aimed at decision-makers and the general public. It does not discuss other types of influencing work like aid dialogue with donors (which many Diakonia staff are involved in) or awareness raising at the community level.

B Who should use this guide/ checklist?

Some Diakonia staff – especially those based in country offices – support partner organisations who do policy advocacy work on their own or as part of big alliances. Some other Diakonia staff – including the Policy and Advocacy department at Head Office – do policy advocacy work themselves, in Diakonia’s name. This guide/checklist has been designed to help both of those groups integrate – or mainstream – a strong gender perspective into advocacy work.

If you support partner organisations, the Checklist will give you a good overview of the steps that partners should have taken to integrate a gender perspective in their advocacy work. The Guide will help you ask the right questions of partners when assessing and monitoring advocacy work.

If you are directly involved in advocacy work, follow the Checklist to ensure that you are able to mainstream a gender perspective in each step of your advocacy work. The checklist should be seen as a ‘buffet’ of tools – each advocacy intervention may not require that you go through each of the steps. Pick and choose!



Cambodia Photo: Charlotte Pert



Checklist: Integrating/mainstreaming a gender perspective in each step of policy advocacy

In order to make sure there is a strong gender perspective in our advocacy work, there are certain things that we need to think about during each step of the way. The questions below will help you build a strong gender perspective in your advocacy work – or review the advocacy work of partner organisations with a strong gender perspective. The components are based on a typical methodology for designing and implementing an advocacy strategy.

Analysis & Strategy Formulation

1. Problem identification and selection of focus of advocacy topic
2. Setting objectives
3. Stakeholder/power analysis
4. Building alliances/networks
5. Policy monitoring and analysis
6. Articulating policy options/positions/asks
7. Messaging

Implementation and Monitoring

8. Policy dialogue
9. Mobilisation
10. Campaign
11. Monitoring and evaluation

Each step includes examples. We have used examples on climate change advocacy throughout the document for consistency, but the guidelines apply to all thematic issues.

1. When you identify the Problem you want to change...

Designing an advocacy intervention starts with identifying the problem that we want to address and the change that we want to see. When you do this, **it is important to ensure that a gender perspective is part of the problem analysis, so that it becomes an integrated part of the advocacy strategy.**

In order to do that, ask yourself these questions:

- a. How does gender inequality relate to the problem that we want to change?
- b. How are women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons affected differently by the problem we want to change?
- c. What different perspectives do they bring on this problem?
- d. How could gender inequality keep us from achieving results with regard to the policy issue in question, if it is not properly addressed?

Example: Due to gender roles, women and men, boys and girls, will each experience the impacts of climate change in different ways. And because of traditional gender roles and discrimination, women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons all have different possibilities to influence the development of climate change adaptation and mitigation. If you ignore this, you will get an incomplete picture of the problem.

Example: In contexts where women and girls have the main responsibility for water and energy management in the household, they are the best positioned to identify which interventions are needed to reduce the negative impacts of climate change. At the same time, they are also on the frontline when water resources are depleted or access to energy is limited. If you ignore their perspectives, you will get an incomplete picture of the problem.

Example: If you collect information about effects of current climate change adaptation practices among communities, make sure that you speak with/collect answers from both women and men, boys and girls, under circumstances that allow them to express themselves freely. If you do not do this, you risk missing out on important information.

2. When you set objectives...

When you have identified the problem you want to change, you need to set objectives¹ in terms of what changes in policy that you want to see, as well as change for the rights holders.

When you do that, ask yourself these questions:

- a. In the given context, in what way can your policy advocacy help improve gender equality?
- b. How will the policy change that you will advocate for contribute to improved conditions for women and men, respectively?
- c. Design gender-sensitive indicators² so that you will be able (at a later stage) to measure whether the intervention has achieved its objectives.
- d. Can a gender perspective help you narrow down / give a specific angle to your advocacy, within the given topic?

Example: You are planning advocacy on financing for climate change adaptation. Your problem analysis has found that women and girls bear the brunt of climate change impact. You have also observed that women and girls have important experience with energy management. Therefore, you include an objective on 'reduced vulnerability for the most impacted groups'. You also advocate for women's participation in local energy committees.

1 For examples of objectives with a gender perspective, please see Diakonia's Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

2 For help on how to design gender sensitive indicators, please see Diakonia's Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

3. When you do stakeholder/power analysis...

A stakeholder and power analysis should enable you to determine 1) who are the main actors that you should include when you collect information about the effects of current policy (rights holders) and 2) who to target with your advocacy (duty bearers / target group)

- a. When you analyse which duty bearers you should target, analyse how aware they are of gender inequality and consider if their awareness level has an effect on the policy issue in question. Is your primary target audience positive, negative, or neutral to the gender issues observed in the context or the gender issues raised in the policy document?
- b. When you do a stakeholder/actor analysis and when you map power relations, make sure that you have considered power relations between men and women, boys and girls of the same group, as well as gender dimensions of power relations between groups/actors.
- c. When you identify allies/opponents to target with your advocacy, consider also how they will respond to arguments related to gender equality. Use the link between gender inequality and your advocacy issue to motivate them to take action.

Example: Your analysis shows that women have less access to decision making spaces than men. But you know that the picture is more complicated, so you also ask questions about the differences between women (Do women from the ethnic majority and women from ethnic minorities have the same access? Do rural women and urban women have the same access? etc.) and also questions about the differences between men (Do men who live in poverty and men with resources have the same access? Do old men and young men have the same access? etc.).

Example: Your stakeholder analysis identifies religious actors as influential in the situation that you are addressing. Therefore, you need to analyse if the attitudes and actions of religious actors on various gender issues, so that you can understand how they could help or hinder your advocacy work.

4. When you build alliances/coalitions/networks

Working with others through alliances, coalitions and/or networks can enhance the voice and impact of advocacy work. Which alliances, coalitions or networks that you work with will vary depending on the topic and the objectives. When you work in alliance, keep these points in mind:

- a. Are there alliance members who are strong on gender issues? Are they able to influence the work of the alliance (do they have a voice in the alliance)? If there are no existing members who have gender capacity, can we build new alliances with strong gender actors?
- b. Discuss the results of your gendered context analysis to influence with the other alliance members and ensure that they are reflected in the policy positions.
- c. Representation is important! Make sure that spokespersons of the alliances are both women and men
- d. What opportunities exist to build strategic relationships with decision makers and influences with regard to gender equality?

Example: When you do advocacy on climate change, creating alliances with ‘unexpected’ partners like a women’s rights group will make your work more strategic since your alliance will include several different perspectives. It may also draw attention to your initiative and make you stand out from most other groups that try to influence decisions in that area.

5. When you monitor and analyse policy

Policy making is an iterative and on-going process with many actors who come and go. Therefore, it is important to monitor the policy development continuously.

- a. When you monitor the effects of current policy, pay attention to different effects on women and men, and incorporate this in your conclusions. If such information does not exist, you can commission studies to capture how a particular policy influences women and men respectively.
- b. Gender disaggregated data: Ensure that questionnaires, surveys, case studies or other analysis methods that you use distinguish between answers and examples collected from men and women respectively, and analyse them accordingly.

Example: If you are following policy development on climate change adaptation, keep track of how available finance is allocated to different organisations and groups – are they targeting both women and men, boys and girls, and do they take gender inequality into consideration? To what extent are gender assessments integrated in adaptation interventions?



6. When you articulate policy options, positions and asks

The objectives of your advocacy need to be broken down into concrete action that a policy maker or other advocacy target can support or implement. They should be articulated as positions, policy options and/or asks.

- a. When you articulate asks, policy options, positions: include any relevant tailoring to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men, boys, girls, LGBTI persons, respectively.
- b. Consider if the voices/perspectives of discriminated groups (e.g. women, LGBTI persons) would appeal to specific target/duty bearer.
- c. Articulate specific asks/positions/policy options that will enhance gender equality through the policy issue that you are working on.

Example: If you aim to increase climate change resilience, advocate for women's equal participation in relevant decision making bodies; for adequate finance to climate adaptation initiatives identified and/or run by women; and/or for revision of inheritance laws that restrict women and girls from owning land and other productive resources.

7. When you develop your messaging...

Policy positions and campaign messages need to be articulated to fit different target groups. The message may be different depending on whether you are targeting decision makers, rights holders, media or the public.

- a. Ensure that messages explicitly address gender equality.
- b. Make sure to portray both women and men as actors with practical needs and strategic interests. Do not use gender stereotypes.
- c. When you articulate messages, take into account the attitudes and possible prejudice that targets may have on gender issues. Tailor messages so that targets cannot ignore or reject them.

8. When you carry out policy dialogue...

In order for your positions, policy options and/or asks to have any influence, they must be communicated to decision makers. The dialogue with decision makers can take place through direct (formal or informal) meetings; seminars; opinion pieces in media; letters; publicly asked questions; questionnaires, etc. Whichever channel you choose for the dialogue, keep this in mind:

- a. When you communicate with the target group, ensure that the gender perspective (as identified in previous steps) is clear;
- b. Identify allies that can help further your issue based on a gender perspective.
- c. At events or meetings, allow participants/target group ample time to reflect and discuss on the issue from a gender perspective;
- d. Make sure to create equal opportunity for women and men to participate in events/meetings (by finding out what might restrict or discourage the participation of either women or men).
- e. Representation is important! Diakonia should be presented by both women and men, as and when possible. Unequal representation stops different groups from having a voice, and it undermines your credibility.

9. When you mobilise and organise...

Mobilising and organising rights holders, supporters among the general public and media contributes to creating a public opinion and pressure on decision makers and is an important part of most advocacy strategies.

- a. When you inform and train target groups (through running workshops/trainings for activists, congregations, journalists, seminars for parliamentarians, etc.), ensure that the gender perspective (as identified in previous steps) is clearly communicated; allow participants/target group ample/designated time to reflect and discuss on the issue from a gender perspective; make sure to create equal opportunity for women and men to participate in events (by finding out what might restrict or discourage the participation of either women or men).
- b. Representation is important! If you organise panels or seminars, make sure to have a diverse group of people on stage including both women and men.

10. When you do campaigning...

Campaigns are undertaken during a defined (often short) period of time, to fill a particular purpose in relation to your advocacy asks. It can consist of marches, petitions, sending letters to decision-makers, or other actions that demonstrate public opinion. Campaigns are a tool for mobilisation. Campaigns should build on the messaging developed for the advocacy strategy and strengthen policy dialogue by demonstrating public opinion.

- a. See '7. When you develop your messaging...' and '9. When you mobilise and organise...'
- b. Ensure that messages are gender sensitive so that both women and men can relate to them.
- c. Ensure that women, children or LGBTI persons are NOT used as tokens in a symbolic way or without a real voice.
- d. Representation is important! Are there both women and men in the campaign photos? Are the experts that you feature or interview both women and men? Are the spokespersons of the campaigns both women and men?

11. When you carry out monitoring and evaluation...

While policy monitoring is continuous, follow-up of results of the advocacy work should be planned for certain intervals. It should follow up on changes in policy as well as in the lives of rights holders.

- a. Use the gender-sensitive indicators that were developed when you set the objectives of the intervention
- b. Analyse new policy (the topic of your advocacy) with regard to how it addresses the practical needs and strategic interests of women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons and to what extent it incorporates your asks/positions/policy options related to gender equality.
- c. Design follow up questions, questionnaires, surveys or other methods used for monitoring and evaluation in order to capture the different views, experiences and ideas of women and men, respectively. Make sure the results are reflected in documentation.
- d. Through dialogue with country offices and partners, follow up on the real change for rights holders, both women and men.



Guide: how to assess and monitor the gender perspective in partners' advocacy work

When you read an advocacy project proposal or write a report about a partner's work, search for answers to the questions below. When you do monitoring, whether through field visits, office meetings or otherwise, follow up on the questions below with the partner representatives.

Context analysis and objectives

1. Has the partner identified and described the link between their advocacy topics and the gender issues in the concerned community or population?
2. Have the partners considered how the proposed policy changes will affect and respond to the basic needs and strategic interests of women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons, respectively?
3. Has the partner analysed and described the different effects of current policy on women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons respectively?
4. To what extent have the partners based their analysis on gender disaggregated data?
5. Does the partner's advocacy work help to address the links identified?
6. When doing a stakeholder analysis, has the partner considered power relations between men and women of the same group?
7. Has the partner considered the gender dimensions of power relations between and within target groups?
8. Has the partner articulated advocacy objectives that take into account the different practical needs and strategic interests of women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons, respectively?

Strategy and activities

9. Are the policy options/positions/asks proposed by the partner tailored to the practical needs and strategic interests of women and men, respectively?
10. Does the partners' messaging reflect awareness of gender issues linked to the policy issue at hand?
11. Are campaign messages gender sensitive, so that both women and men can relate to them?
12. Are the partners' spokespersons or external representatives both women and men?

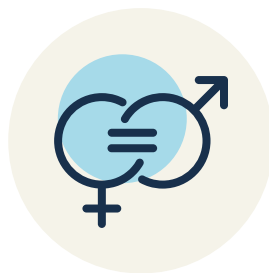
13. Does the partner create equal opportunity for women and men to mobilise support for policy change, and to participate in mobilisation events?
14. Are rights holders represented by both women and men?
15. Do both women and men have equal opportunity to participate in campaigns?
16. Is there enough gender expertise in the alliances/coalitions/networks that partners are part of?
Can alliances/coalitions/networks collaborate with gender organisations?
17. Does the partner speak to a variety of actors, and ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to participate in their events, including both women and men?
18. Are the advocacy communication channels (whether digital or otherwise) tailored to reach women, men, boys, girls and LGBTI persons).

Monitoring and Evaluation

19. Does the partner have indicators to describe/report on how the new policy addresses the practical needs and strategic interests of both women and men?
20. Does the partner have indicators that describe/report on how policy change impact on rights holders, both women and men?
21. Are all indicators gender-sensitive?
22. Make sure that all data / information is disaggregated by sex / gender.

Capacity building

23. What additional research or support that is needed to build the capacity of the partner to address the links between gender inequality and the issues they are doing advocacy on?
24. How can the capacity of networks/alliances/coalitions help be strengthened with regard to gender inequality? Are there other partners in Diakonia's network that can help?



Gender Mainstreaming Toolbox

www.diakonia.se/gendermainstreaming-toolbox