

A photograph of three women sitting at a table, likely in a meeting or workshop. The woman in the center is holding a pen and looking towards the right. The woman on the right is also looking towards the right. The woman on the left is partially visible, looking towards the center. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

OXFAM'S GUIDE TO FEMINIST INFLUENCING

A group of women and children are sitting on a patterned rug in a room with a woven wall. The women are wearing headwraps and patterned dresses. Some are holding infants. The room has a thatched roof and a woven wall. The scene is dimly lit, with a purple tint.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION



WHAT IS A FEMINIST APPROACH TO INFLUENCING?

Welcome to the Oxfam Guide to Feminist Influencing, designed to help Oxfam staff apply feminist principles and practices to campaigning (including digital and public campaigns), policy, and advocacy. It will help you translate “putting women’s rights at the heart of all we do” into clear simple steps, ideas and actions, with an emphasis on transforming unequal gender and power relations. The ideas, strategy and tools presented here are applicable to any issue area and so can be used to either integrate gender, or create gender-focused work, across all the themes and issues we work on.

This guide is for everyone working in the policy, advocacy, and campaigning space; you don’t have to be a gender specialist to challenge oppression and contribute to gender equality. Staff at all levels and in any role can use this guide to make their influencing work more feminist. While focused on influencing, which in Oxfam largely comprises of policy development, advocacy and campaigning, including alliance and movement building, many of the themes presented here are also relevant for programs. This guide builds on and can be used alongside other Oxfam resources for policy, advocacy and campaigns, many of which are linked to throughout. We begin with an overview of what it means to have a “feminist approach” to influencing, and why it matters, then address internal organizational culture, which is where a feminist approach really starts.

A FEMINIST APPROACH:

- Takes a rights-based, transformative approach to eliminating poverty. Gender, power and wealth inequalities exacerbate each other and as a result, women and girls make up the majority of living in poverty, and poverty affects women, men, boys and girls differently. Policy, campaigns, advocacy and influencing with a feminist approach recognizes this and responds to it.
- Means making sure that any research or strategy development reflects the reality that poverty affects men and women differently.
- Ensures that a gender analysis is at the core of influencing objectives and tactics, and not just an add-on or afterthought.
- Is not “instrumentalist”, framing women’s issues in service of another goal (economic growth, etc). Instead, the issues women face should be framed in terms of the importance of women’s rights and backed up by international commitments.
- Means basing your advocacy in the legal standards defined by Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which relates to oxfam’s rights-based approach.
- Puts strong partnerships with women’s rights advocates and their organizations/networks at its heart.
- Requires making sure your team has the time, capacity, knowledge, budget and resources to integrate gender from start to finish. Staff must be held accountable for their commitments to integrate gender.
- Isn’t just about including women and girls: it’s about ensuring that women and men’s specific needs and experiences are understood and accounted for.
- Requires an examination of the way people’s intersecting identities (class, gender, race, ability, etc) impact the ways that they have power and privilege, and the ways they face marginalization and discrimination.
- Ensures that no one is left behind and the poorest and most marginalized, men, women, boys and girls, are given an equal voice and opportunity to shape the future.



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese Oxfam/International

WHY DOES ADOPTING A FEMINIST APPROACH TO INFLUENCING MATTER?

WHAT WILL A FEMINIST POLICY, ADVOCACY, OR CAMPAIGN STRATEGY LOOK LIKE?¹

- It is rights based and informed by a gendered power analysis
- It aims to transform gender power relations, norms and structures
- It incorporates an understanding of how multiple identities (gender, age, class, ethnicity etc.) intersect to create and sustain discrimination, marginalization and violence
- It facilitates and supports individual and collective capacity for sustainable change
- It supports women's own voice and agendas, and seeks men's backing as allies
- It creates an enabling environment for women's leadership at all levels and domains (family, economic, political, social)

1.) Adapted from the Guidelines on engendering policy & advocacy work ([here](#)) and OI Gender Guidelines on Southern Influencing ([here](#)).

Example:

At a face-to-face meeting in Indonesia, the Oxfam LAC Women's Rights Advisor suggested that the Enough Campaign should support the International Women's Day strike initiated by a number of women's rights movements, including #NiUnaMenos – "not one less" – a LAC movement against gender inequality including gender-based violence. The strike, which took place on International Women's Day, used the slogan 'Solidarity is our Weapon' with more than 40 countries joining the strike. Other worldwide campaigns (GROW, EIU) worked with the Enough team to support the strike. Countries from each region participated in the action by either going on strike, wearing black in solidarity, taking pictures of their actions and posting them on social media, writing blogs and tweets or using Facebook to support the strike. In LAC, there were Facebook calls to strike and participate in events in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. As part of the Enough Campaign support for the strike, the worldwide budget provided funding for "Ni Una Menos" to engage in Facebook advertising – the advertisements reached 1,071,611 people and managed to engage more than 75,000 people. In addition, the general message about the reasons to strike and link to the event map reached almost 50,000 people and engaged 2,000.

[Source: WIN in Practice: Learning from the Enough Campaign]

Integrating a feminist approach is critical both because it's the right thing to do and because it's fundamental to understanding and addressing the inequality and power imbalances that both cause and are caused by poverty and inequality²:

- A feminist approach creates more opportunity for impact. People rally around issues that are personal. Applying a gender lens can motivate more people to join a cause, and can make their participation more meaningful.
- Fundamental to adopting a feminist approach is a strong gender analysis. A gender analysis gives a fuller, more complete understanding of the issues you're tackling, the targets, and the blockers. Without a gender analysis, you're missing a big piece of the puzzle.
- Having a campaign or strategy that includes women and responds to their concerns is fundamental to getting and keeping women engaged. It sounds obvious, but if you don't authentically address people's concerns and the issues that matter to them (as a result of their intersecting identities, including race, gender, class, etc.) and speak to their lived experiences,

you are not going to succeed in bringing women along with your mission and risk alienating potential partners and allies.

- Knowing more about how the issue you are working on affects a broad diversity of people in different ways increases your legitimacy, builds trust, and helps you defend your points down the line.
- Having a feminist approach means that you are not participating in the same discrimination you are fighting against. A feminist approach helps you avoid unintentionally creating negative consequences (for example, if you marginalize certain voices it may make it easier for your influencing targets to marginalize them as well)
- When you bring a gender lens to your influencing work, you make things better for everyone (not just women- everyone!)

When we don't pay attention to gender in our influencing work, there are negative consequences. We can expose people to risks, lessen our impact, and in some cases, we can actually cause harm to women and men if we ignore gender³.

2.) Adapted from [Organizing with a gender frame](#)

3.) Adapted from [Oxfam's Gender Justice Policy Compendium](#)

Additional Reading:

- [Stronger Together GenderWorks Toolkit](#) is designed for women's groups to successfully campaign on issues of gender, poverty & social exclusion. P.66 offers a business case for gender mainstreaming.
- [Organizing with a Gender Frame](#) from the Make it Work Campaign sets out the importance of an intersectional approach
- [Ten Steps Towards Integrating Gender Equality into Campaigns](#) from the Gender and Development Network provides a straightforward introduction

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A FEMINIST APPROACH TO POPULAR MOBILIZATION AND DIGITAL CAMPAIGNING?



Image courtesy of Percy Ramírez / Oxfam America

The content of this guide is relevant to all of Oxfam's influencing work, which includes popular and digital campaigning. The same risks, questions, and approaches are relevant regardless of which stakeholders you are looking to target, and whether you work online or offline. If an online audience factors into your strategy, you can assess the relevant values and risks of potential strategies, tactics or messages with those stakeholders using the feminist approaches shared in this guide.

If you are using this guide to instruct digital or public campaigns, you may want to ask these additional questions:

- What additional risks might you be imposing on women and girls by virtue of reaching a broader audience through popular or digital mobilization? How can they be mitigated or addressed?
- How can your digital or public campaign adapt messaging that builds on feminist approaches to leadership, such as community ownership, trusting the ideas and expertise of women, framing women as leaders rather than victims, etc.? (see [UN Women's Knowledge Center for more ideas about feminist campaign messaging](#))
- [How can you support and amplify existing feminist activists, movements or organizations that already exist in the public space, without co-opting them?](#)
- [How can you adapt intersectional approaches, that value and amplify the multiple ways people face marginalization?](#)

Example:

The Change.org Foundation conducted research around grassroots women activists who were trained to be champion campaigners (who could lead successful campaigns with little support from staff). Their research found that the most important factor that led to women becoming 'champion campaigners' was the activist's belief in their community's ability to create change. This was more important than any other factor (including individual self-confidence or technical skills). Belief in community is the strongest enabler of independent, impactful campaign leadership.

(Source: Belief in the Power of Community, Change.org Foundation)

Additional Reading:

[Community Mobilization, Outreach & Mass Media is part of UN Women's Knowledge Center on Ending Violence Against Women & Girls. It provides guidance, examples and case studies.](#)

[Women's Resource Center: Social Media, Campaigning & Influencing](#) offers guides, case studies, tools and resources on digital & social media campaigns with a focus on women's rights.

[Tactical Tech's Women's Rights Campaigning Info-Activism Toolkit \(Created with CREA\) provides guidance about how to use digital tools and technology in women's rights or feminist focused campaigning.](#)

STARTING WITH OURSELVES: HOW CAN WE EMBED FEMINISM IN OXFAM'S INTERNAL CULTURE?

Oxfam staff come from different contexts and backgrounds. You may share some experiences of privilege or oppression with others, and at other times our backgrounds and understanding may be very different. Oxfam's influencing is about advancing transformational change for women and men, supporting people-powered influencing and co-creating influencing with allies. As a result, we need to be aware of and respond to the fact that:

- On an individual level, your ability to effectively jointly campaign and influence with allies is stronger when you are aware of the experience of and attitudes towards power and privilege that you bring to the table (for example, noticing the way your age, gender, class, race, ethnicity, religion, or geography, impacts the way you see the world). These identities often indicate how you might understand gender issues, and how you relate to and are perceived by other staff and partners.
- On an organizational level, Oxfam's internal culture is partly shaped by individuals, but it also has its own systems and practices of power and privilege. The way Oxfam is structured, the processes it uses, and how staff are treated, all speak to the internal culture of the organization. More specifically, this includes: the acceptable and valued ways staff interact with each other, whose voices are regularly listened to, which groups or individuals have the power to influence and make decisions (informally and formally), and which kinds of behavior are valued throughout the influencing cycle. Each team and country office will also have their own cultures.

Oxfam's influencing is stronger when the internal culture directly reflects the gender equality sought through the work itself. There are several risks of not paying attention to Oxfam's internal culture, and your role in it:⁴

- Your biases and deeply held beliefs about gender identity can limit the analysis and design of a program or policy. For example, if a policy specialist and their team believe that women are solely the victims and never perpetrators of violence in conflict situations, they will promote policies that do not include women combatants, which undermines sustainable peace.
- You may exclude women or other marginalized groups from decision-making. For example, men staff may consistently be assigned direct engagement with government actors, or women staff may automatically be allocated administrative and internal coordination roles.
- Women's rights organizations may not be considered valued stakeholders, and therefore women's voices may be excluded from the campaign or influencing cycle, or brought in only at late stages when framing decisions have been made.
- When Oxfam doesn't 'walk the talk' on gender justice within the organization, we put our reputation at risk. As an organization that puts 'women's rights at the heart of all we do' we are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all our staff and to tackling gender discrimination, inequality and harassment in the workplace.

4.) As noted by Srilatha Batliwala in her work on Feminist Leadership, David Kelleher, Aruna Rao and Rieky Stuart in their work on Deep Structure and echoed in the Oxfam Transformative leadership for Women's Rights Guide.



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

HOW DO WE CREATE A MORE FEMINIST ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT OXFAM?

Like any campaign focused on changing policy and shifting attitudes, beliefs and norms, there is no one activity or checklist that can shift the entire organizational culture. However, some of the key ingredients to incorporate in your campaign structure, design and implementation include:

- **Foster strong leadership and political will to integrate gender.** As a leader you can signal this by creating and enforcing formal organizational policies and making sure staff have the right resources. Oxfam and its allies have invested a lot of effort in promoting feminist & transformative leadership for women's rights (see resources list below), and Oxfam will be a better partner when it's clear that these approaches are practiced and promoted internally.
- **Assess and strengthen staff consciousness** about gender justice. All influencing staff are now required to do the Oxfam e-learnings, [Gender and Power](#) and [Gender Justice at Oxfam](#). Use this training to determine where you need to strengthen your knowledge and understanding, and then discuss a plan with colleagues or managers so that your gender education is a process rather than a one-time event. Also note that many Oxfam gender advisors already have strong knowledge of and networks in the feminist or women's rights space. Make sure to identify and consult with those staff as you embark on your influencing work.

- **Be active participants in learning.** All influencing work benefits from learning and adapting as you go. This includes listening and consulting with allies, updating your gender context and gender-power analyses. Taking a learning-oriented approach starts from being willing to examine and adapt your own practices and ways of working, when mistakes are made, or new information emerges. See the MEAL section for more on this.
- **Invest in the leadership of women campaigners.** This includes support for women's rights organizations, and local women whose voices must be part of shaping, implementing and evaluating the campaign. This toolkit will provide more detail about how to do that.
- **Men in Oxfam** can encourage and influence other men internally, and in partner organizations, to take gender issues on board as they develop, implement and evaluate influencing work.

Additional Reading:

- [Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: An Oxfam Guide](#) explored what distinguishes transformative leadership from other forms of leadership.
- [Transformative and Feminist Leadership for Women's Rights](#) from Oxfam America includes a set of transformative feminist leadership strategies and practices present in organizations that value women's rights.
- [Men Engage](#) has resources for working with men on gender equality, with a feminist approach.

Exercise:

When discussing internal culture, it helps to have a trusted facilitator (either internal or external to the organization). This could be someone from your team, the National Influencing Unit, or an Oxfam gender advisor. Reflect together on the following questions:

Individually:

- What is your personal experience of privilege or disadvantage in relation to your campaign issue? How do your various identities (race, age, gender, etc) shape this experience?
- What kind of power do you hold in relation to the population you are working with, including other stakeholders and key partners?
- When you see a behavior you believe is unacceptable, such as a case of sexual exploitation & abuse, do you report it immediately? Why or why not?

Organizationally:

- Are there gender inequalities in who holds leadership positions in your campaign? Are these discussed and being addressed? How?
- Are there redress mechanisms when abuses or inequalities occur? Does everyone know about these mechanisms and feel comfortable using them?
- Does the leadership pay attention to all forms of discrimination (racial, gender, class, geographical, sexuality, etc), and encourage and support all team members to do the same?
- How are the politics, principles and values of your campaign embedded in campaign decision-making and relationships between campaigners?
- How are you addressing barriers to women's active participation in design, implementation and assessment of the campaign?
- How are you learning and changing your practice when mistakes are made?

CONDUCT A GENDER ANALYSIS OF CONTEXT & SITUATION

WHAT IS A GENDER ANALYSIS OF A CONTEXT AND SITUATION?



Image courtesy of Oxfam Dominican republic

Campaigning and influencing should be based on a good analysis of the context and situation. A good analysis includes a gender analysis, which enables you to understand how power and resources are distributed, accessed and affected by characteristics such as gender, age, disability, caste, class and ethnic differences. We know that women and men experience poverty differently – a gender analysis will help you assess why and how this happens. Sometimes official government policies are gender-blind or exploit women (for example, many countries have laws that prevent women from inheriting land). Often, culture and informal practices determine how laws, policies and structures are put into practice (for example, women may be able to inherit land by law but local traditions may forbid it in practice). A gender analysis will allow you to understand the social, economic and political structures and policies that contribute to inequality and poverty, and will expose how those structures and policies impact women and men in distinct ways. If you miss out on a gender analysis, you miss out on understanding one of the root causes of poverty and injustice. Please keep in mind that the information you collect in your gender analysis will also contribute to your theory of change.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Part 1

Gather data and information

It is important to gather information and data on the context where you'll be carrying out your policy, advocacy, or campaigning work to better understand how laws, policies, poverty, and cultural norms affect men, women, and gender non-conforming people. Note that some of the data you collect for the gender analysis will also be used as part of your MEAL strategy – it may be used as baseline data that will use to compare against data collected after the implementation of your influencing work.

Steps:

- 1 Consult the Oxfam country strategy.** This includes an analysis of the context and identification of issues most affecting local populations. All country strategies should have a gender analysis, and you are encouraged to use and build on it.
- 2 Identify existing data on the situation of women, men, and gender non-conforming people from other sources.** Data includes national statistics and research reports, related to the situation and context, that explain how women and men are experiencing the problem you seek to address differently. Data must be broken down by sex (sex disaggregated) where possible. You should also, when relevant, look at whether there are laws and institutions (i.e. Ministries of Women's Affairs) in place that protect the rights of different populations within that setting and if the laws are being implemented and/or these institutions have the necessary power to bring about change. Additionally, information on the demographic makeup of formal decision makers is important to consider (i.e. How many women are in that nation's government and do they have real decision-making power?). Finally, it is also important to understand informal structures in place within that context that determine power relations between the different members of society. For example, even if women have equal opportunities with men according to national laws, are there cultural practices in place that still inhibit them from accessing these opportunities? Great resources for obtaining this type of information include:

- National Demographic and Health Surveys
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action country reports
- World Bank Gender Data Portal
- UN Women country data
- National gender analyses conducted by other entities like USAID, etc.

3

Identify qualitative information by speaking with people from communities you are hoping to work with and connecting directly with women's organizations. Information from national databases will not usually provide enough information to understand the realities of women's and men's lives. Contact local women's organizations, feminist groups, or other civil society organizations that work on gender equality to discuss issues they have identified. Speak with women who are directly affected by the issue to hear their stories and integrate their perspectives. Consult with Oxfam's gender advisors where possible. When conducting qualitative research, recognize that the household is not a single unit and be aware that women may need space from men in order to talk freely, especially if discussing violence or family planning issues. Note what is missing and identify a plan for how you will address the gaps, e.g. commissioning new research.

Part 2

Prepare your gender analysis

Once you've carried out your initial research, analyze the findings with a focus on gender and the particular issue you're trying to address. This exercise is meant to be participatory. To prepare a gender analysis, bring together your team, members of the community, women's rights organizations or activists and any other key stakeholders affected by the issues you seek to address. It is critical to include local actors in the problem identification stage, in order to have an accurate representation of the issue at hand. This is an opportunity to look together at data you have collected and identify similarities and differences in the lived experiences of men, women and gender non-conforming people, including the multiple ways people experience discrimination as a result of structures, policies and cultural norms. To learn more about this concept (called "intersectionality,") [click here](#).⁵

Steps:

- 1 State the overall aim of your campaign or strategy.** For example: "People in the city of X have increased access to water."
- 2 Identify stakeholder groups** needed to meet your overall aim. List them below in the Gender Analysis Box. In the example mentioned above, your stakeholder groups might include "Local government," and "Water collectors."
- 3 Create categories:** think about the different factors which could have an impact on the objective, for example: culture, resources, laws, policies, structures, work, health or time. These are your "categories." Include them in the Gender Analysis Box below.

5.) Adapted from [Oxfam Gender Mainstreaming Tools](#)

4

Organize the research you collected in Part 1 and determine what will be relevant to your gender analysis. List the key concepts in the “Relevant Research” box below (all research identified should be indicated under the category and stakeholder it relates to).

5

Analyze the research as it relates to gender, each “category,” and each stakeholder. To do your analysis on gender in relation to each factor you have identified, consider:

- What gender roles exist in this context or situation?
- How might those gender roles impact your objective?
- Who is controlling the identified resources? How does gender impact someone’s ability to access or control resources?
- Who has a voice already and whose voices might need support to be heard?
- How might gender roles impact how the stakeholder group connects with or engages with the campaign?

Input highlights of your analyses in the “analysis on gender” boxes below, under the category and stakeholder they relate to.

	Categories of Analysis							
	Category #1		Category #2		Category #3		Category #4	
	Analysis on gender	Relevant Research	Analysis on gender	Relevant Research	Analysis on gender	Relevant Research	Analysis on gender	Relevant Research
Stakeholder Group #1								
Stakeholder Group #2								
Stakeholder Group #3								
Stakeholder Group #4								

	Categories of Analysis: EXAMPLE			
	Category #1 Culture		Category #2: Laws	
	Analysis on Gender	Relevant Research	Analysis on gender	Relevant Research
Stakeholder Group #1: Small farmers in X region	Farmers are 70% women. Women are culturally prohibited from walking to the market so unmarried women have no way of selling their goods unless they employ an (expensive) middleman.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Study • Data set from UN • Interviews with local women’s organization 	Women farmers are prevented from owning or inheriting land.	Legal briefing note produced by local women’s organization

Part 3

Write your gender context analysis

At this stage, bring together the different information you have collected so far (data, stakeholders and key factors identified in the exercise above) to prepare a full gender context analysis of the influencing issue. Discuss the following questions as a group, and then draft a statement of your analysis based on the results.

1 What gaps exist in the available data or research?

2 How do people experience the problem you seek to address differently as a result of their gender? How might they experience the solutions to that problem differently?

3 Which women are most marginalized and vulnerable, due to their class, caste, race, age, or ability? How do these groups experience the problem differently, and how might they experience the solution differently?

4 How do women's and gender justice organizations understand the problem? How are they already working on addressing it?

5 How do the policies/structures/institutions relevant to this issue treat women, men and gender non-conforming people differently? Do women have a seat in formal structures that determine these policies/structures/institutions?

6 How do cultural norms and practices relevant to this issue treat people differently based on gender?

What do I do with my gender context analysis?

This gender context analysis should inform your strategy, activities and MEAL approach – as well as ultimate assessments of what difference your campaign, policy or advocacy work has made. There are several ways to do this. You may want to:

- Take the summary of the key points of the gender analysis and include those in your problem statement
- Use your analysis to identify opportunities that are inclusive of the perspectives, interests and needs of all people (men, women and gender non-conforming)
- Use this analysis to identify issues that affect women or other marginalized groups in particular
- Share what you have found with any organizations and groups you connected with to conduct the analysis, so you can continue to deepen your learning and develop possibilities for future partnership

Additional Reading:

- [WIN Basic Influencing Training Module & Facilitation Guide Topic 3:](#) A detailed facilitation module for a workshop is available in the WIN Basic Influencing Training Module & Facilitation Guide Topic 3.
- [Intersectional Gender Analysis:](#) The Make it Work Campaign offers this clear, simple and easy to use guide to intersectional gender analysis. It is a US focused resource but offers good examples of how gender intersects with other identities to impact how people experience power and access resources.
- [SIDA's overview of gender analysis:](#) This short tool suggests the key things to think about when doing a gender analysis, and some principles to consider when designing your analysis.



Image courtesy of Percy Ramírez / Oxfam America

CONDUCT A GENDER POWER ANALYSIS



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

WHAT IS A GENDER POWER ANALYSIS OF A CONTEXT AND SITUATION?

Oxfam seeks to end abuses of power. Power is about who controls the self, ideology, access and resources. Who holds power changes according to context, culture, and time⁶. Now that you've carried out your gender context analysis, you have valuable information about the multiple roles and relationships, access to and control of resources, and decision-making power that people (as a result of their gender) hold in your context. The next step is to conduct a gender-power analysis, which will make explicit who holds power and whether they are going to champion or block your policies or objectives, or if they can be influenced to come to your side.

By applying a feminist approach to your power analysis, you'll identify the role that gender plays in shaping power as it relates to the change you want to influence. For example, what are the specific barriers for women who want to hold governments accountable for failure to protect their land rights? What power do women already have – individually and collectively – that they can harness to effect change?

The gender power analysis will identify who needs to be influenced, who is an ally, and

how to most effectively engage these different groups. It's important to check and update the gender-power analysis frequently during your influencing work. As with a gender context analysis, the gender-power analysis will help you design a theory of change.

As a first step, it's important to understand the different ways that power manifests in people's lives:

- **Private spaces:** the ways that gender and power intersect is often learned at the household level, and in the private spaces of our lives. Think about the roles of women and men in your childhood home: who took care of the kids, and who controlled the money?
- **Public spaces:** gender and power dynamics are reinforced in public spaces. How power plays out also depends highly on the intersections of different social and economic identities – e.g. gender, age, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion and disability status.

The power that a woman has in one sphere can shift – for instance, even when a woman reaches political office, often she is not as powerful in her own home. Power can be economic, political, social, cultural or symbolic.

People are rarely powerful or powerless in all ways. People's experiences of power depend often on their identities, related to age, gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability status. Oxfam's Gender and Power E-learning includes more discussion on power and can be found in [Learning at Oxfam](#).

This sheet⁷ illustrates multiple ways power is expressed, and potential strategies for change and transformation:

Oppressive power...		Transformative power...		
Power over	Power under	Power with	Power to	Power within
Refers to formal authority and / or control over resources and decisions, and can be a very harmful, dominating form of power.	Emerges when people who have experienced abuse, oppression and trauma gain power and use it in ways that are destructive to themselves and others, such as through sabotage and subversion.	Refers to enabling others and creating solidarity, mutual support systems, & safety nets. This is necessary for transformation.	Refers to collective action and the ability to act together. This kind of power brings people together and mobilizes them towards a collective agenda that builds on individual strengths.	Refers to individual or collective sense of self-worth, value, dignity. It is a source of strength in the face of adversity, and one of the ways people have the capacity to resist challenges.
Examples...				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporations that abuse their power over local communities to unfairly extract natural resources Politicians who make decisions based only on the interests of wealthy individuals Husbands who control decisions about wives' birth control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivors of domestic violence may abuse children or partners Leaders who have experienced war and conflict may emotionally abuse others to get their way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brokering joint campaigns between different groups of marginalized people Coalitions that include public and private sector actors Leaders who initiate and sustain collective processes with peers/ colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coalitions to end violence against women Community members recognizing their ability to influence village leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women human rights defenders who are resilient in the face of backlash Men who increase their consciousness of their roles in sexual or psychological abuse

7.) The concepts of power come from Lisa VeneKlasen and Valeries Miller in A New Weave of Power (2002, page 55). And <http://www.mspguide.org/tool/forms-power>.

Forms of power over can also be visible, hidden and invisible:⁸

- Visible power: the kind of power that we 'see' – policies, laws, regulations, institutions. Example: being King.
- Hidden power: the kind of power where people or institutions maintain their influence by setting and manipulating agendas and marginalizing the concerns and voices of less powerful groups. Those with power see and understand these rules of the game; others don't. Example: a Board meeting where the agenda and proceedings are kept secret from staff.
- Invisible power: the kind of power that comes from people making decisions based on belief systems that are created by those with power. This is when powerlessness is internalized. Example: when someone thinks "I can't be a leader because I am a woman."

This example shows the kinds of power at play, who holds each type of power, and potential strategies for change and transformation:⁹

Our Influencing Issue: Lack of land rights		Our goal: legislation that increases women's land rights	
Form of power over:	Power holders	Strategies to impact, challenge, resist	Strategies to build transformative power
Visible	Policy makers, media	Lobbying, advocacy, petitions, protests, direct action	Supporting women's mobilization in social accountability, brokering relationships between women's groups and power holders, introducing progressive policies
Hidden	Corporations	Protest, scorecards, high level meetings, direct actions	Supporting women's movement leadership, strategic alliances between state and non-state actors
Invisible	Traditional leaders, community leaders, community groups, civil society organizations	Awareness raising campaigns, challenge harmful norms and practices, building alliances	Amplifying women's campaigns and voices, influencing public discourse, attitudes and behavior, develop visions for a better future

8.) These concepts are discussed in detail in [Power Cube Net](#)

9.) This worksheet builds on the JASS Power Analysis worksheet in the WeRise Feminist Movement Building Toolkit

HOW DO I DO IT?

Part 1

Put the building blocks in place
for a gender-power analysis

Steps:

1 Identify the purpose, process and tools to develop your power analysis with a feminist approach. That means:

- Be clear and transparent with your team and partners about how this analysis will be integrated into your influencing strategy.
- Engage a variety of voices, particularly those affected by abuses of power and have ideas about how to influence transformational change (such as women, local communities, and women's rights activists and organizations).
- Decide when/how you involve other key stakeholders in this process.
- Clarify who in your team will lead the process, and make sure to create a gender balance in leadership roles.
- Request support from a gender expert on your team or bring in a consultant if needed.

2 Review the gender context analysis.

Check out what the gender context analysis tells you about power relations between people of different genders (and power relations based on other identities, like race, class, age, etc.). You will need this, along with the different perspectives from your team and the stakeholders you have identified to participate in this process, to formulate your gender-power analysis.

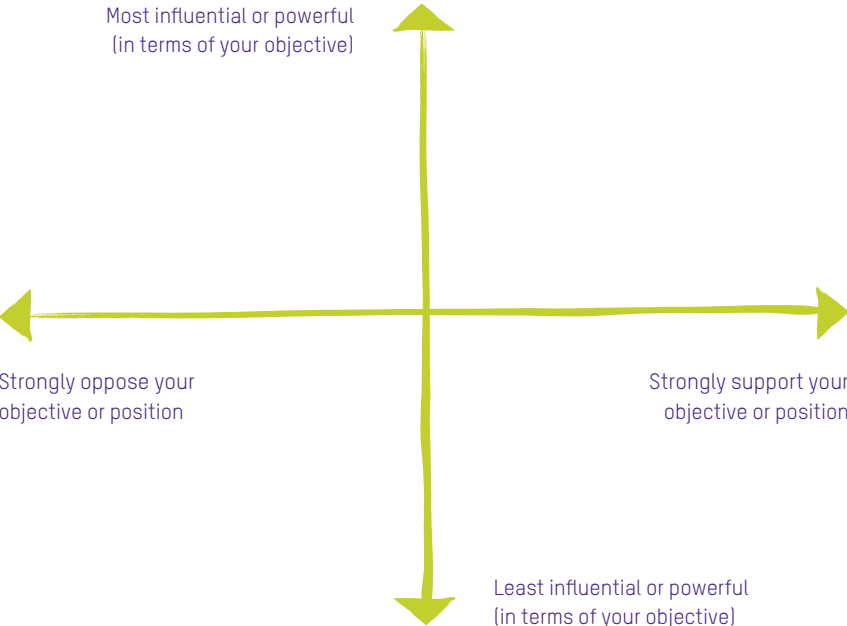
Part 2

Prepare the gender power analysis

Steps:

- 1 **Identify power holders and how they exercise power and influence** Together with chosen allies and stakeholders, identify who has the power to influence change on your influencing issue. These might include traditional leaders, policy makers, corporations, the media, donors or specific men and women. Using your gender context analysis, map the stakeholders on to this chart to indicate which kinds of power they hold.

Oppressive power...		Transformative power...		
Power over	Power under	Power with	Power to	Power within



Another helpful tool is the “power map”¹⁰ which can help you to determine which of the power holders named above is most and least influential in achieving your aims. As you name different power holders, you can map them against the framework. This helps you plot out who are your most supportive (champions), most negative (blockers) or undecided (swing votes).

10.] Developed by the Change Agency and included in Oxfam’s Influencing for Impact Guide.

2 Now you can map out possible influencing strategies which will feed into the theory of change, objectives, and strategy & tactic design. The worksheet¹¹ below can help you identify ways in which transformative forms of power (power within, with, to) can be used to challenge and shift abusive forms of power (power over). Refer to the sheet above for ideas about who and what to put in each section. To begin, brainstorm the following questions in a group, then map your answers below:

- Who holds power? How does their gender or other identities reinforce this?
- Where are decisions made? Which people are excluded or marginalized from these spaces on the basis of their gender? What are the barriers to change?
- Which influencing strategies could address these barriers to change? What strategies will we use to transform power?
- Which women want to lead transformative change? How do we ensure their voices are central?
- How can we shift power imbalances in the way that we campaign with others?
- What forms of transformative power already exist that we can build on or emphasize?
- How do we nurture people to understand and utilize the power they already have for positive, transformative change?



Note the forms of power over that are at play, and note who holds that kind of power in the two left hand columns. Identify potential strategies for change and transformation in the columns on the right:

Our Influencing Issue:	Our goal:		
Form of power over:	Power holders	Strategies to impact, challenge, resist	Strategies to build transformative power
Visible			
Hidden			
Invisible			

A gender power analysis, together with gender context analysis, should not be considered set in stone; political situations shift, social realities change. You may have big campaign wins or your partners may experience significant backlash. It is important to be ready to revisit and learn from, together with your allies, your underlying analyses as well as your theory of change (see next section and the MEAL section).

Additional Reading:

- [DLP Briefing Note, Politically Informed, Gender Aware Programming:](#) A useful guide laying out core lessons from practice of gender and power analysis in the context of political influencing.
- [JASS Power Analysis](#), from the We Rise Feminist Movement Building Toolkit is an activity to help you connect power analysis to strategies for change.
- [CALP Gender, Power and Influencing PPT](#) provides useful basic info on gender and power analysis, and offers important additional gender analysis frameworks for looking at how power plays out in different domains and levels.
- The [Change Agency website](#) has different tools related to mapping and analyzing power.

11.) Adapted from JASS, We Rise Toolkit.

DESIGN A THEORY OF CHANGE



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

A good theory of change should answer these big questions:

- 1 What changes are you seeking to achieve?
How are they connected and/or dependent?
- 2 How will you and others make this happen?
- 3 Who are you seeking to collaborate with and influence to make these happen?
- 4 Where and under what circumstances will this work be done?
- 5 Why do you believe change will look like this?

What is your overall vision for change? And how do you propose to get there? Who are the key actors? How can those key actors most effectively be engaged or targeted? A coherent response to these questions is articulated in a theory of change, which will serve as a compass for the rest of your influencing strategy and work. A theory of change builds on the gender context and gender-power analysis you have already completed and informs the objectives, strategies and tactics you design. It can be very simple or more detailed. Either way, it helps you to be explicit about which changes are desired and how they are expected to occur.

You should include your key allies and stakeholders in designing your Theory of Change – a good TOC results from participation and engagement, not one organization's view of how change happens. Engaging allies and stakeholders will also set the scene for a feminist approach to evaluation (see MEAL section).

The theory of change should also articulate Oxfam's role in the changes you want to catalyze and secure. This will help you to articulate the big ideas about how you, allies and stakeholders think change will happen. It must be revisited regularly, and it is an important reference point in your MEAL approach. Below is a diagram of how to design, monitor and adapt using a Theory of Change.

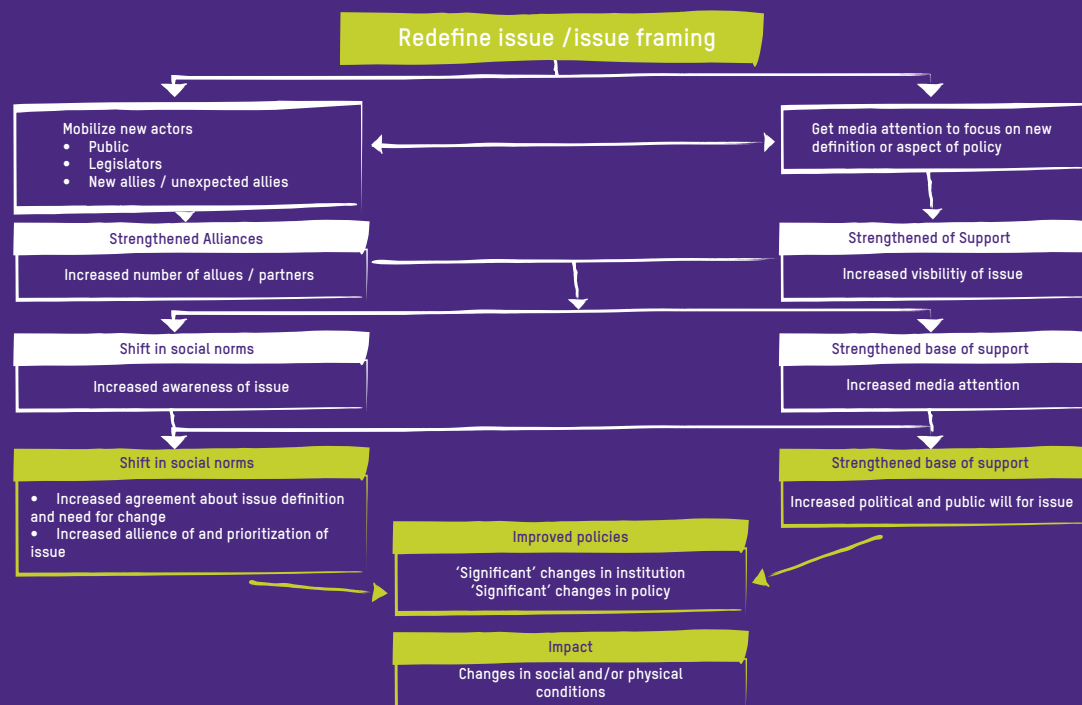


A Theory of Change for feminist influencing might look different to more traditional theories of change for development programming. You can find one example of a Theory of Change template for influencing here¹². You can find others in the references at the end of this section, which reflect different approaches to influencing.

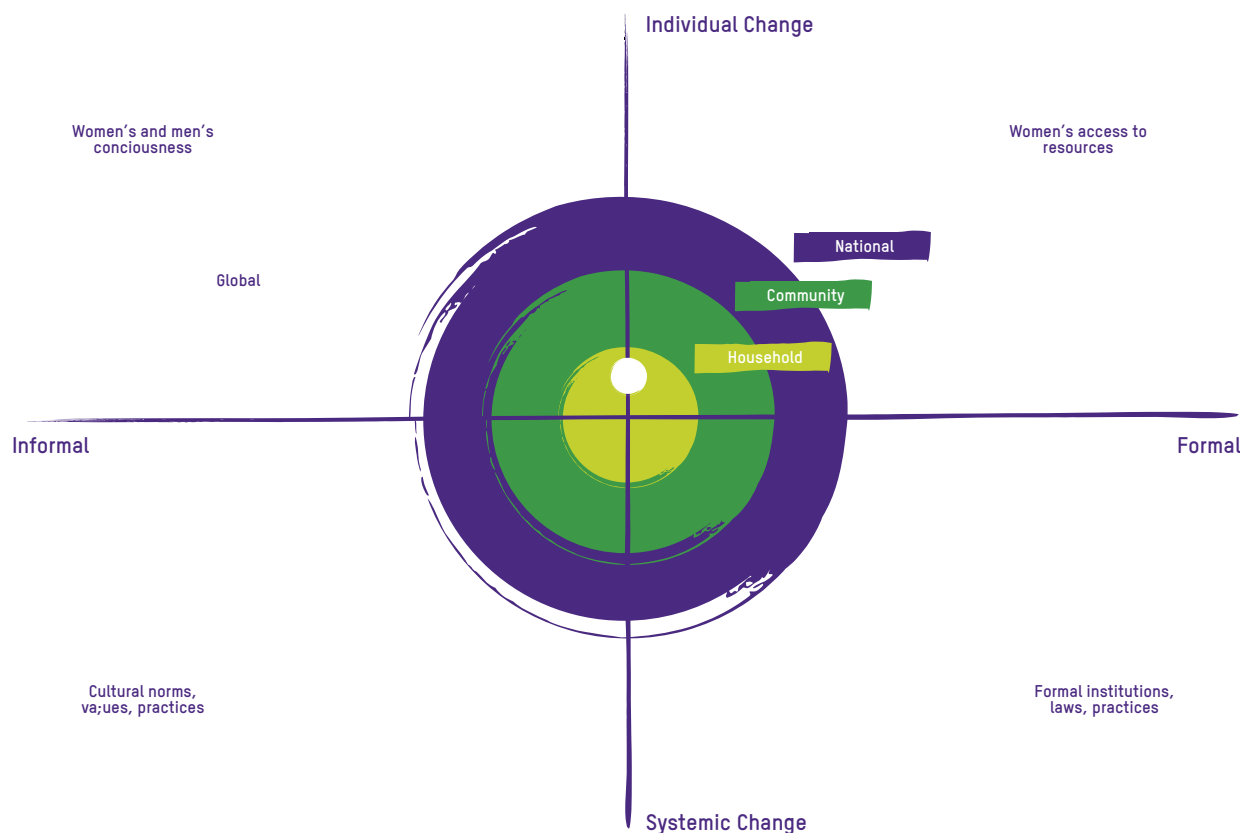
12.) From NCVO: Campaigning for Change; Learning from the US https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/practical_support/campaigning/campaigning_for_change_learning_from_the_US.pdf



Image courtesy of Tineke O'haese/Oxfam



There are many tools you can use, but the Gender at Work analytical framework was developed to analyze the kinds of changes needed to achieve gender equality. This version has been adapted for use within Oxfam and can be used to highlight the many levels and domains where change can occur via influencing:



Steps:

(Ensure that you look at each quadrant when following these steps)

1 Identify the changes you want to see happen

Not just identifying desired changes in policy but also what will change as a result of that policy change and implementation (i.e. what is the impact of policy change). For feminist influencing, this also includes identifying 1) what shifting power and injustice might look like, 2) how you think gender power relations will change and 3) accounting for gendered differences in impact.

2 Articulate your 'best guess' about how those changes will happen.

This is how you think change will come about. What needs to be done to create change? Who needs to think differently? Act differently? How can power be shifted and by whom? What alliances may be needed? What external events might need to take place? Who could drive or block these changes? In what order will changes (in cultural norms, laws, access or consciousness) need to occur to be most effective? This will come directly from the gender context and gender-power analysis. It articulates how you think change will happen (with or without Oxfam) towards your influencing goal.

Additional Reading:

- [What is a theory of change and how do we use it?](#) from Duncan Green.
- [Theory of Change:](#) A website with tools and examples for how to construct a theory of change.
- [Pathways for Change](#) A website with tools and examples for how to construct a theory of change.
- [The Advocacy Strategy Framework](#) A tool for creating a theory of change and strategy for advocacy.

Here is a worksheet designed to help you document the key components of a Theory of Change¹³. You may then want to use the results to create a more visual diagram for internal and external audiences.

IMPACT

What are the fundamental changes you want to see happen?

1

2

3

TARGETS/CONSTITUENCIES

Who needs to think or act differently?

Short term

Medium term

Long term

ASSUMPTIONS/PRE-CONDITIONS

What needs to exist or be in place in order for changes to happen?

Short term

Medium term

Long term

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

What would success look like? How does it contribute to the change(s) you are seeking?

Short term

Medium term

Long term

STRATEGIES

How do you think you (and your allies and partners) can make change happen? How can power be shifted? What are the roles of your targets/ constituencies in creating changes?

Short term

Medium term

Long term

13.) Adapted from Informing Change: [Theory of Change Reference Document](#)

FORMULATE OBJECTIVES WITH A GENDER LENS



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FORMULATE OBJECTIVES WITH A GENDER LENS?

Now that you have a theory of change, it's time to formulate the objectives of your influencing work. An objective is a small stepping stone along the path to achieving your broader campaign aim. Your objectives should address the core issues and logic identified in the theory of change, responding to the different ways that people are affected by policies, structures, and culture on the basis of gender (while also taking into consideration intersecting identities, like class, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, status or race). Your gender-power analysis will have identified what needs to be changed or transformed to achieve your overall aim; your objectives should focus on breaking down those barriers to bring about the change you seek.

For example, if your aim is to improve land rights, and your gender analyses and theory of change indicate that there are good laws in place but cultural norms restrict women from accessing their rights due to discriminatory attitudes and beliefs, then your objectives (in part) will want to look at how to change those restrictive attitudes or beliefs. Note that "addressing these barriers and carving out political space in which to raise gender equality and women's rights issues may be just as important as objectives that focus on changing laws, influencing public policy or increasing resource allocations."¹⁴

14.) GADN Ten Steps: <http://gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/2015/1/20/ten-steps-towards-integrating-gender-equality-into-campaigns>

HOW DO I DO IT?

In determining your objectives, be sure to include representation (and active participation!) from feminists, women's rights organizations, as well as women and men who are part of the marginalized groups that your influencing work will impact. The process of determining objectives must be collaborative with the community you plan to work with and for.

Steps:

1 Take stock and begin to hone your approach

Given your theory of change, and what you now know from your analyses, you may want to ask the following questions in a group discussion:

- As a result of what you have uncovered so far, how has the narrative of your influencing work shifted? What are the new narratives you want to tell?
- Is the narrative convincing in terms of shifting and transforming gender and power inequalities?
- Is your process and your thinking to date in alignment with a "feminist approach"? (see section above for details)
- As a result of your analysis to date, what new issues now intersect with the issues you've been working on? (For example, perhaps your gender analysis points to a connection between disability and gender; women who utilize a wheelchair may not be able to attend community meetings)

2 To construct your objectives with a feminist approach

Answer the following questions (as relevant), building on the information gathered in the analyses and theory of change section¹⁵. The answers to your questions should be able to be turned into objectives, as shown in the example below.

Question	Answer	Draft Objective(s)
What are the public messages that legitimize and facilitate the differences between how men and women experience access to resources, power and control?	SAMPLE: Women are told by community leaders that they don't have a legal right to inherit land from their fathers, despite the law. Women need to understand their legal rights so that they can inherit land and address community leaders to dispel misinformation.	Women understand their legal rights to property inheritance Women successfully engage with community leaders to increase leaders' awareness of and support for women's property inheritance rights
According to your analysis of the differential experiences of women and men, what needs to change in terms of policy?		
According to your analysis of the differential experiences of women and men, what needs to change in terms of laws?		
According to your analysis of the differential experiences of women and men, what needs to change in terms of cultural norms?		
According to your analysis of the differential experiences of women and men, what needs to change in terms of government actions?		
What are the barriers identified in your power analysis, and how can those barriers be addressed?		

15.] Adapted from OI Guidelines on Southern Influencing, Organizing with a Gender Frame from the Make it Work Campaign, 10 Steps Towards Integrating Gender Equality into Campaigns from the Gender and Development Network & Oxfam GB's Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Advocacy

- 3 Use your theory of change and analyses in order to define your objectives and define targets for each objective. This chart, adapted from the Influencing for Impact Guide, provides a helpful way to put it all in one place:

Objective	Priority target	Current position (champion, target, blocker)	Desired position (in support of objective)	Allies/ champions to engage
1				
2				
3				

- 4 Review the objectives from a gender perspective:¹⁶

1 Have you used the analysis of the different experiences and life situations of people with different genders to help define your objectives? Do your influencing objectives address the different experiences and life situations of women, men and gender non-conforming people?

2 Do these objectives increase marginalized women's own sense of power? How?

3 Are these objectives "about" women but not "for" them? An objective that is "about" women may tell women's stories to achieve other ends, such as generating awareness or aligning with a donor agenda. An objective that is "for" women leads to long term change and shifts gendered power relations.

4 Will realization of these objectives benefit women, men and gender non-conforming people appropriately, and specifically promote women's rights and empowerment in the long term?

5 Have specific influencing propositions ('asks') for gender equality and women's rights been articulated on the basis of the answers to the questions above?

16.) Adapted from the Gender and Development Network's 10 Steps Towards Integrating Gender Equality into Campaigns

DESIGN THE STRATEGY & TACTICS



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DESIGN YOUR STRATEGY & TACTICS WITH A GENDER LENS?

Now that you've carried out your analysis, clarified how you think change will happen, and formulated your objectives, it is time to design your strategy and tactics. This is where you articulate your overall thinking about how you will achieve the desired broad aim, including indicating types of activities and budget. Activities might include: research for advocacy, policy development and policy products/reports, work with partners, amplifying citizens voices in the media, popular mobilization, lobby work, policy dialogue, media work, communications and activism online, events etc. Integrating a feminist approach means ensuring that your plans align with the realities faced by women, men, girls and boys, in the context you have assessed. It also means setting aside resources and budget to facilitate the participation of the women's rights organizations you plan to engage.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Part 1

Pre-strategy and tactic planning

Ensure that everything is in place for you to be able to create a strategy and tactics with a feminist lens

Steps:

1 Continue to build partnerships with feminist and women's rights organizations

This is central to a feminist approach and relates to all aspects of the influencing cycle. In this step, these relationships are critical to ensuring that the implementation and outcomes include women's voices and respond to women's needs and issues. Working in strong alliances increases your impact. If you have access to power, share it. If the alliances you're already part of don't make space for women, lobby within them for change. Create opportunities for others to use your access, or help mobilize in support of the campaigns that women's organizations are leading where they want that support. Be sure to distribute any information you gather with the women's organizations and activists you have partnered with.

Question

Have you considered how women and their organizations will be engaged with the strategy as part of your alliances work? Are they co-implementers or are they invited to take part in campaign activities? How will we help deliver their objectives alongside our own?

It is critical to ensure that the process of building partnerships with women's organization isn't extractive (meaning, do not use organizations

for their knowledge, expertise and time and then disregard them or carry out work that goes against their interests). These partnerships must be respectful and mutually beneficial. For more information about principles of partnerships, [see this guide](#).

Check your practices against this transformational partnerships checklist:

- Partnerships are based on an investment in relationships, people, & organizations; not just executing projects.
- Partnerships are based on listening (especially to grassroots women and marginalized voices), reflecting, and learning together.
- Partners come together in collaborative, inclusive spaces where everyone has a voice, is recognized for their added value, and can learn from each other.
- Partnerships give space to partners to innovate, respond to changes in their context, and lead.
- Mechanisms for evaluation are not too demanding, and respect the fact that change is non-linear and there is nuance and complexity in achieving shared aims.

Example

As part of the commitment to support women's rights movements to pursue their own agendas, the worldwide country-led ENOUGH campaign has designated a percentage of funding in the 2017/18 budget to be assigned to young feminist activism.
(Source: [WIN in Practice: Learning from Enough](#))

2 Assess risks for women's rights organizations:

Around the globe, civic space is shrinking and women activists in particular are under threat. Oxfam has a responsibility to assess this risk, in consultation with women activists and their organizations. Start by asking partners and allies if they will face any risks to their safety and dignity by taking part in or being associated with Oxfam influencing activities. Consider whether you have taken measures to reduce these risks (See detailed risk assessment guidance below).

3 Check up on your other partners.

If you are working with an implementing organization, this is the moment to check whether they have intersectional and gender sensitive policies, practices and approaches.

4 Assess the plans for monitoring & evaluation

(See M&E section below for further guidance).

Check to make sure that any impacts or risks facing women are monitored. Make sure the project's potential impact on gender equality been anticipated, including any negative impact such an increase in women's workload, or preferential access to project resources or decision-making for men. Make sure monitoring indicators include ones that will measure changes in gender equality (where relevant) and that baseline data has been collected.

5 Assess your budget

Make sure that funding has been set aside to conduct gender-specific research, objectives, or to retain a gender advisor. Make sure that funding has also been set aside to support the participation of women's rights activists and organizations (make sure you are compensating them for their time, travel and meals away from home). Ensuring adequate resources are available is a critical part of making sure that the vision for gender-integrated or gender-focused influencing becomes a reality, and it's an important part of having a feminist approach.

Use these questions to assess your budget

1

Do budgets reflect gender-specific activities e.g. capacity-building on gender, women-targeted projects, transportation or childcare resources to help women participate?

2

Have financial and staff resources been allocated to ensure that the gender equality objectives in your advocacy strategy can be implemented?

6 Assess your staff, volunteers and campaigners

It's also important to ensure your team has the knowledge, resources and commitment to integrate gender meaningfully into their work, and that they feel empowered and supported to do so. This assessment must happen in the strategy & tactics phase as well as throughout implementation (see section below). This design phase also presents a critical moment to invest in women activists and encourage them to take leading roles. A few key points to consider:¹⁷

- Women are often excluded from participating as active campaigners due to lack of literacy, lower levels of engagement in the public sphere, and lack of time to participate. This means that women's interests are usually underrepresented in policy, advocacy & campaigns. However, these barriers are not insurmountable. If campaign planning is gender-aware and local and national women's networks are strengthened, women can be empowered to make their voices heard, contributing to the broader goal of gender equality
- Positions of responsibility and leadership in influencing work are often given to men rather than women. This can further exclude other women from joining influencing work and movements. By empowering women to take lead roles in movements, other women's needs and interests are more likely to be represented.
- Women must be meaningfully incorporated into discussions and decision-making processes and able to engage with local and national decision makers. Women often need safe spaces to express their views without fear of repression or retaliation from male community

members. By engaging in such movements, women are better able to hold governments accountable, access resources and make their own choices.

7 Assess your plans for media and communications work

Ensure that your media work reaches women as well as men, and that issues are represented in an appropriate manner, which does not reinforce gender-stereotypes. See Communications section for more details.



Image courtesy of Oxfam

17.) Adapted from the [Women's Rights Survival Toolkit for GROW](#)

Part 2

Design your strategy & tactics

Taking into account the objectives and power analysis in the previous sections, formulate a strategy that ensures the necessary coordination, management and resource allocation.

Steps:

- 1 Take the objectives created in the previous section and list them in the column on the left. Using your gender context and gender power analysis, as well as the work you've already done to identify the key actors and stakeholders (and their power and influence). List your influencing approaches below. Be sure to distribute any information you gather with the women's organizations and activists you have partnered with.

Objectives	Influencing approach (tools and tactics)
1	
2	
3	

- 2 Now assess your influencing approaches (tools and tactics) using these questions:

Did you identify and include strategies and opportunities for women to be involved as a way to organize, identify their own issues and priorities, and gain experience and confidence?

Did you identify and include strategies and opportunities to raise awareness of and support gender issues, particularly among men?

Did you ensure your strategies are suitable for people of all genders and do not marginalize anyone, particularly women and gender non-conforming people?

Did you include strategies that reach different groups of people, including the most marginalized (recall here the notion of "intersectionality," such that intersecting identities like gender, class, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability can determine levels of marginalization)?

Have you given thought to the ways your strategy and tactics will engage people in a way that is effective (because it speaks to their issues and needs) and thoughtful (so they are mobilized in a meaningful way) on the basis of gender?



- 3 Now it's time to review your approaches to assess for risk. It's important to keep in mind the different ways that people might be impacted by your plans as a result of their gender and other intersecting identities (for example, ability or HIV status). Use the chart below to assess risk and plan ways to mitigate it. Then, if necessary, ensure that you are accountable to women and women's organizations, and take steps to prevent or respond to any backlash that your campaign may cause. Also note another kind of risk: discussing gender issues can raise issues in people that have experienced trauma in the past or are currently experiencing it.¹⁸

Proposed action/tactic	Potential influencing impact, and how women/men will be differently impacted	Risks (what are the potential risks? How are those risks increased/decreased due to gender and other forms of identity?)	Probability (High, Medium, Low)	Potential impact of risk (High, Medium, Low)	Actions planned to mitigate risk	Weight & Status (does benefit outweigh risk? Yes/no). Proceed with action? (Green/Orange/red)
1						
2						
3						

18.) Adapted from Oxfam's Influencing for Impact guide

Additional Reading:

- [DLP Briefing Note](#) includes a section on management systems that encourage staff and local partners to work in gender sensitive ways.
- [Dealing with Threats, Risks and Safety](#) a facilitated resource on risk assessment for working with women human rights activists.



ACTUALIZE YOUR INFLUENCING



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO INTEGRATE GENDER INTO IMPLEMENTATION?

Now you've carried out your power and context analyses, created a theory of change, identified objectives and designed your strategy and tactics, it is time to implement. It's important to revisit as a team the commitments that have been made to integrating gender, ensure team members are updating their knowledge of gender issues regularly, and are aware of any shifts or changes in power or context. It's also important to ensure there are a balance of men and women implementing the project, that women are not relegated to traditional roles like administration, and that their participation is meaningful (including being actively involved in decision making every step).¹⁹

19.] This section is adapted from various Oxfam and Gender and Development Network resources, including their [10 Steps Guide](#)

HOW DO I DO IT?

Adapting a feminist approach to implementation is a process, rather than an outcome. The implementation phase of influencing requires vigilance from all staff, especially leadership, to ensure that the agreed focus on gender (in the objectives, design, tactics, budget, communications and staffing) is maintained.

Part 1

Steps:

1 Refresh commitments frequently and publicly

Make sure that everyone involved in the campaign or influencing understands why we are integrating gender and is committed to a feminist approach.

2 Ensure staff consistently have the knowledge and resources they need to drive the integration of gender in influencing.

You've already assessed your staff capacity to integrate feminist approaches in the design phase; this is another opportunity to check in and make sure that your team have what they need to do that properly. This may require occasional workshops, trainings, or meetings with a gender advisor throughout the implementation phase.

3 Maintain commitments and share updates with women's rights organizations and community partners

Strengthen the relationships created in the analysis and design phases and ensure that all partners, especially women's rights organizations, are included in implementation or provided with updates where relevant.

4 Respond to the following questions:

Are women stakeholders and women's rights organizations actively involved in the implementation of the project?

Do staff understand why gender equality is important and support the principle of gender-balanced decision-making?

Do staff and stakeholders have equal access to information, resources and opportunities to carry out their roles?

Are there structures in place (workplan check-ins, staff reviews) to ensure that everyone is implementing their gender-focused or gender-integrated work?

Are women actively involved in management decisions?

Is staff capacity on gender analysis and planning being strengthened?

Part 2

Assessing your impact from a risk perspective

During the implementation of your influencing work, the objectives, strategy and tactics should be revisited regularly to ensure progress is being achieved for everyone, regardless of their gender identity. It is also critical to be on the lookout for any harmful effects of your approaches. This should be built into your MEAL strategy (see section below). You may use the Traffic Light Checklist to assess regularly. Alternately, for a lighter assessment, you may want to bring your team together and hold a discussion around the following questions:

- Has our implementation led to any unintended or unforeseen consequences for women and girls?
- Does the implementation of our influencing work align with our objectives and the feminist approaches in our design & tactics?
- Have we updated the gender context and gender-power analysis as needed, and adjusted the implementation to respond to those changes or shifts in context?
- Are we meaningfully including women's organizations in implementation (where possible)?
- Do our communications and campaigning amplify women's and girls' voices, while also accounting for increased exposure to risk?

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

WHAT IS FEMINIST MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)?²⁰

Feminist MEAL is not a unique set of “methods” – instead it brings feminist philosophy and values to assessing the context and power dynamics of structural change, and promotes the recognition that decisions related to measurement, learning and knowledge are political. Feminist MEAL recognizes that ‘success’ is context-dependent and subject to power dynamics, and therefore assessments of progress, change and impact must be done in ways and through spaces that allow for meaningful participation where diverse and representative voices are heard.

There are a number of commonly accepted tenets of feminist MEAL, which mirror the feminist influencing principles featured in this guide:²¹

- 1 Gender inequalities lead to social injustice
- 2 Discrimination and inequality are structural and systematic
- 3 Evaluation is political – the contexts in which evaluations operate are politicized, and evaluators bring a particular combination of experiences, attitudes and characteristics that influence evaluation design, implementation and findings/recommendations
- 4 Knowledge is a powerful resource, that should be of and for the people who create, own and share it
- 5 Knowledge and values are culturally, socially and temporally contingent, and are filtered through the ‘knower’
- 6 There are many ways of knowing – some are privileged over others

To ensure that we address and uphold these tenets, Oxfam adopted feminist MEAL principles in 2013²² which say that MEAL should examine gender and power relations, how they change, and why. If you do not take a feminist approach to your MEAL, you risk not knowing the real results of your influencing on people’s lives. And you may be making things worse, especially for women. It is really important to keep in mind that changes resulting from influencing, particularly related to gender and power, are often not as easy to measure as, say, numbers of food drops made. Challenging power is complex. Holding power holders accountable for people’s rights, influencing their policy making to include the most marginalized, or shifting their attitudes and beliefs about whether violence against women is acceptable, are hard to predict. When powerful individuals, groups and systems are challenged there are often setbacks and backlash.

20.) This is drawn from the Oxfam Discussion Paper: “Applying Feminist Principles to Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning”

21.) Capturing change in women’s lives: the experiences of Oxfam Canada in applying feminist evaluation principles to monitoring and evaluation practice. Carol Miller & Laura Haylock. Gender and Development 2014.

22.) From Oxfam International – Gender and Feminist Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Learning Event Communique and Presentation (June 2013)

COMPONENTS OF FEMINIST MEAL:²³

There are many ways of ensuring that your MEAL strategy is feminist, and that a feminist approach to MEAL is integrated through the entire influencing process. You should design your MEAL strategy at the outset of your influencing, after you conduct your analyses and theory of change. The objectives and strategies you design should keep MEAL in mind, so that any data and insights you generate are helpful in improving your initiatives and impacts. Here are the basic components of a feminist MEAL approach:

Component 1

Integrate a feminist approach to MEAL

Ensure that your MEAL strategy addresses key questions about gender and power.

As you design your influencing strategy, you will want to know if you're actually contributing to necessary changes. Questions for influencing are commonly related to reach, access and influence, and indicators should be developed in a participatory manner. When designing your indicators, consider the following questions:

Reach

- How many women, men and gender non-conforming people are we reaching through media, social media, events, allies and influential people?
- How many community members have we engaged as agents of change? What proportion of these are women?

Access

- Are women from marginalized groups at the table in shaping policy debates? Do we understand any barriers to their participation, and to what extent have we supported their elimination?

Influence

- Are we sharing policies that take into account the needs, interests and demands of women, particularly those from marginalized groups?
- Are we changing attitudes and beliefs that discriminate against women?
- Are we challenging harmful social norms preventing women's rights?

Outcomes and Impact

- What difference has changing attitudes, beliefs and norms made in the lives of women (positive and negative)?
- Do women from marginalized groups feel more empowered? What does that look like?
- Do women feel that they are able to better exercise their rights? What does that look like?

23.] Oxfam's Common Approach to Social Accountability ([CAMSAs](#)) outlines the organizational minimum standards for MEAL delivery, such as frequency of evaluations.



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

The following table may help you think through how your MEAL strategy (principles, indicators, approaches and participants) will incorporate feminist perspectives and approaches as defined above as well as assess your theory of change, using a question-driven approach.²⁴

Feminist MEAL principle	Key assumptions and defining characteristics	Key questions	MEAL implications and considerations
Focus on power and inequalities	e.g. Discrimination cuts across class, ethnicity, caste, etc.	e.g. How do these intersectionalities affect reach? Access?	e.g. Need to capture barriers and differentiated impacts to understand who benefits and who does not
Inequalities are structural	e.g. Understand changes in discrimination and institutionalized preferences	e.g. Which areas of gender discrimination were particularly resistant to change? Why? What changes in behavior were unexpected? What drove those changes?	e.g. Use participatory tools to assess changes in power relationships and assess role(s) of community leadership to challenge inequities, understand what inequities are resistant to change and why
Evaluation is political	e.g. Trust is critical to probe changes in traditional patriarchal engendered attitudes, behavior and institutionalized power structures	e.g. What are accepted traditional practices and how do communities challenge them (or not)?	e.g. Involve a range of stakeholders to understand political realities. Think about who is carrying out the evaluation and how they engage with these stakeholders.
There are many ways of knowing	e.g. A variety of data collection methods are important for deep and authentic engagement with stakeholders	e.g. How are we capturing personal changes? Defining and measuring empowerment? What new ways of knowing and expressing have been demonstrated?	e.g. Interactive tools used that enable expression of feelings, attitudes and behaviors and facilitate group learning while co-generating data
Knowledge is a powerful resource that adds value	e.g. Participatory reflection is important for those implementing as it affects the quality of the intervention	e.g. What efforts have been made to involve marginalized groups?	e.g. Understand how marginalized women are involved (or not), challenges and barriers

The answers to your questions become the data you want to collect, and should be a mix of qualitative and quantitative. You should never collect more data than you will use, because excessive data collection is a waste of time, energy and resources – for Oxfam, your allies and key stakeholders – and using data for participatory engagement, knowledge and learning should be prioritized over upward accountabilities. Think very carefully about your choices based on the most critical gender dimensions of your theory of change.

24.] Taken and adapted from ECF Evaluation report of Action for Equality Programme (Sonal Zaveri)

Component 2

Collect and analyze data

There are many approaches to gathering, analyzing and reviewing data for monitoring and evaluation. The way you do this will depend on your particular influencing initiatives, and what is possible with your partners as well as your capacity and budget. It's most important to **gather information that will help to illustrate changes, foster learning, and create a picture of the experiences of women and men in the change process. Make sure you're thinking about the different needs and experiences of people of different genders (and their intersecting identities).**

This means you also want to consider frequency and expectations – monitoring data will most likely give you information on whether you are implementing according to plan, and therefore is gathered more regularly. Evaluations and reviews should be used to analyze changes – in behaviors and attitudes as well as outcomes and impact. Given the longer-term nature of influencing work, data for evaluations should be reviewed more periodically, and spaces for participatory review, reflection and adaptation must be incorporated into any evaluation process.

Using your theory of change, you should lay out your plan for assessing desired outcomes and progress against planned objectives as well as testing assumptions, and you can use key learning questions as well as indicators. Critical is clarifying at the start how and when you will use the data – including review and sharing – and identifying evaluation methodologies that support a feminist approach (see Special Note below).

When analyzing data and reviewing progress, it is important to involve and consult with women and women's organizations, to reflect on data that has been collected together. The spirit of such reflection should be one of learning, and your primary accountability is to those your campaign aims to benefit. Consider whether:

- You have sufficient, disaggregated, qualitative and quantitative information to complete a picture of the changes your campaign has contributed to
- You have verified the sources of data you have collected and that it includes men's, women's and gender non-conforming people's perspectives
- You need to make any adjustments to your influencing plans, based on what you find

There are many ways to use the analysis that comes from your MEAL efforts. These include reports on outcomes and how change happened for external stakeholders (e.g. peers, donors), lessons from campaigning for partners and allies, and accountability scorecards for governments.

Sharing good communications (see next section) with various stakeholders about what your MEAL has produced is important for the credibility and accountability of your influencing and is part of a feminist approach.

Component 3

Share, review and adapt with stakeholders and partners

It is important to plan moments to review progress on your influencing strategy as you move through implementation. Review moments should happen at regular intervals throughout your influencing cycle. As with your gender analyses, you will want to make sure you have put aside the resources and time to revisit your MEAL plan with stakeholders and partners, to enable learning and action loops that will ensure your campaign remains relevant to the context and situation. It's also important to take opportunities to learn together, and adapt based on evidence and reflection.

Special Note on Evaluations

Evaluations are an important part of understanding what is working, what isn't, and why, and may also solicit information about how your influencing work is having intentional and unintentional consequences on people of different genders.

You should always make sure that you are clear on the purpose and usage for any evaluation. You should also ensure a feminist approach to evaluations by asking questions like:

- Does the evaluation process include women activists and women's rights or feminist organizations? If so, have those groups or individuals been compensated for the time and participation in the evaluation?
- Does the terms of reference for the evaluation include considering the impact of your influencing on people of different genders, in terms of both process and outcomes?
- Does the evaluation team have gender knowledge or advisory support?

Evaluation Approaches and Methodologies

There are specific evaluation approaches that lend themselves to a



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

feminist approach to evaluating influencing work. Some suggestions include:

- Outcome harvesting – this is a participatory approach to identifying key changes and then working backwards to establish contribution. Ideal because it requires participation, does not work from a set of pre-set outcomes, stresses the identification of positive and negative changes, and focuses on contribution not attribution.
- Utilization-focused evaluations – participants are encouraged to identify during the evaluation design process how the evaluation will be used and include key questions that need to be answered to ensure use. This helps to ensure the evaluation is relevant and useful, and ideally the discussion of use and inclusion of key questions is done through a participatory process.
- Developmental evaluations – using evaluations as a process to support innovation within evolving and dynamic pieces of work. Uncertainty and unpredictability are expected, as is that the work being evaluated will evolve and therefore needs to be responsive.
- Participatory, empowerment and collaborative evaluations – evaluations are a key opportunity to learn together about change and promote empowerment through knowledge.

As with all evaluations, it's critical to identify what kind of data will address key questions and areas, and provide the evidence and insight desired – typically this should be a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. How the data is collected and presented can vary, and there are quite a few methodologies and tools to support this – the most common

are surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Additional Reading:

- [Capturing Change in Women's Realities: A Critical Overview of Current Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and Approaches](#), AWID, Battilwala, Srilatha and Pittman, Alexandra (2010). This document provides a critique of M&E frameworks in relation to women's rights, and important considerations for how to do feminist MEL.
- [Applying Feminist Principles to Program Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning](#), Oxfam by Shawna Wakefield and Daniela Korppen (July 2017). This paper includes examples of how principles of feminist MEAL agreed by Oxfam affiliates is applied in programming, including ones that include influencing.
- [Changing Gender Norms: Monitoring and Evaluating Programs and Projects](#)
- [Capturing Changes in Women's Lives: the Experiences of Oxfam Canada in Applying Feminist Evaluation Principles to Monitoring and Evaluation Practice](#) by Carol Miller and Laura Haylock (2014)
- Better Evaluation – [Feminist Evaluation \(background information and further reading\)](#)

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COMMUNICATE IN A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE WAY?



Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

As a campaigner or when engaging in influencing, part of your job is to present messages in a way that is compelling, relevant, and impactful. You may be asked to write articles, create short videos, lead digital campaigning or post on social media: all of these are ways of communicating that must consider gender. Often, your communications will be challenging ideology in addition to challenging specific policies or laws. If you are not aware of the gender dimensions of your communications, you may reinforce the status quo instead of challenging it.

Example:

“Some organizations use an ‘instrumentalist’ frame – arguing that gender equality is desirable because it will promote economic growth, or that investing in women and girls is important as it will benefit the whole community. This strategy has certainly worked in terms of increasing the political constituency for gender equality, but it can be dangerous because it excludes the aspects of gender equality that don’t contribute to economic growth or community development. Justice and rights arguments may seem harder to make, but without them campaigns can fail to win real converts to the cause. It is important that decision makers support women’s equality as a matter of fundamental human rights, above and beyond what a woman might do for her community” ([Source](#)).

HOW DO I DO IT?

A feminist approach to communications for influencing is not just about meeting the audience where they are. It’s also about taking them on a journey that pushes them to think about things in a new, transformed way.

Steps:

1 Consider the language you use

Language can challenge gender norms, and is an important tool in the campaigner or influencer’s toolbox. Pay attention to the different ways and terms used to describe men and women, and the ways in which words to describe women can be infantilizing or patronizing. Calling adult women “girls” is one common example, referring to doctors as “lady doctors” is another. Using the term “survivor” for someone who has experienced sexual violence, rather than the term “victim,” may be more respectful of their agency. Make sure to distinguish between male/female (which refers to sex) and women/man (which refers to gender). Make sure to include non-binary or non-gender conforming voices where possible, and to respect the pronouns that those individuals wish to use.

2 Consider whose voices you amplify

In your communications, make sure that you amplify the voices of both women and men, and pay attention to the ways that those voices are presented or treated. For example, make sure to cite women experts as often as you cite men experts.

3 Pay attention to images, photos and videos

Make sure that all your materials, across all platforms, refrain from promoting harmful gender stereotypes. Further explanation of gender stereotypes is available from OHCHR [here](#).

Exercise

As a group, you may want to try this exercise as a way to start thinking about how to communicate in a more gender transformative way²⁵. Working individually or in groups, identify one or more news articles about a topic that relates to the aim of your campaign (for example, land rights). Look at the article(s) and think about how gender has been addressed. Has the article been written in a gender sensitive way?

You may like to use the following questions to help guide your analysis and discussions:

- What is the story about?
- Who is telling the story?
- Whose story is told? Whose story is not told?
- What does the image show? Are women and men shown? Who is shown in the foreground, who is in the background?
- What adjectives are used to describe the girls/women? And the boys/men?
- What does the image or article tell you about

girls and women – age, occupation, skills, physical appearance? What do they tell you about the men?

- Is all that information relevant to the story? If not, why is it included?
- Is there information missing from the story that would help you understand how men and women are affected by the issue being addressed?
- How are other issues such as poverty, HIV/

AIDS addressed?

- What does the story make us think about women? About men? About the relationship between them?

As a group, reconvene to discuss how the findings of this exercise will impact your communications.

25.) Adapted from [Working with the Media on Gender & Education](#)





Image courtesy of Tineke D'haese/Oxfam

Communications Checklist:

	Are your communications materials balanced and well-researched, and inclusive of the work and thinking of women’s organizations and women in communities?
	Do your communications contain voices and perspectives of both women/girls and men/boys? Do they treat the voices of women and men as experts in equal measure?
	Do your communications contain gender-disaggregated data where appropriate?
	Do your communications utilize photographs or images that reinforce gender stereotypes of roles?
	Do your communications refrain from using gender stereotyping language?
	Do your communications refrain from making assumptions regarding the roles, activities, profession or capabilities of women/girls and men/boys?
	Do your communications promote gender equality?

How do you respond to pushback?

A feminist approach to communications may receive pushback from those who want to keep women marginalized, disguised by language like “protecting local customs and traditions.” Here are some ways to respond:²⁶

- Include as many voices of local women activists and women’s organizations as possible. Engage local women’s organizations in your communications work where relevant.
- Point to national or international policy development, advocacy or campaigns led by women activists from the Global South (to counter the idea that Oxfam is applying “Northern feminist ideas”)
- Where appropriate, make sure to include in your campaign messages some reference to regional and international agreements, like CEDAW, which most countries have signed on to.

26.) Adapted in part from the Gender and Development Network’s [10 Steps](#)

Additional Reading:

- [Gender and Media PPT](#) offers a useful overview of key points related to gender and media, including a summary list of what happens when gender is ignored.
- [Working with Media on Gender & Education](#)

THE TRAFFIC LIGHT CHECKLIST

This Traffic Light checklist offers a quick and easy tool to ensure your campaign or influencing strategy is on track. Use it at regular intervals during the campaign or strategy cycle to check your progress, assess your integration of gender, and get back on track if necessary. Your entire team and any key partners should fill out this checklist together, so that different viewpoints on how well gender is being mainstreamed into the influencing work are accounted for. Additionally, this will allow for dialogue among team members about this important topic.

Action				Plan to improve
Reflecting on Internal Culture				
Campaign/influencing leadership reflects on the internal culture of the organization and team, identities inequalities, and remedies them.				
Staff have the space and support to raise or report issues related to internal culture as they come up.				
Gender Analysis of Context & Situation				
Our research strategy identifies how gender and social relations analysis will be integrated, and how sex-disaggregated data will be collected.				
Our context and situational analysis integrates gender, is regularly updated, and informs the design & ongoing rollout of the campaign.				
Our context & situation analysis is informed by our partner organizations.				
Gender Analysis of Context & Situation				
Our research strategy identifies how gender and social relations analysis will be integrated, and how sex-disaggregated data will be collected.				
Our context and situational analysis integrates gender, is regularly updated, and informs the design & ongoing rollout of the campaign.				
Our context & situation analysis is informed by our partner organizations.				
Gender Power Analysis				
We regularly update our gender power analysis in collaboration with women's rights organizations and integrate new findings into our strategy & tactics.				



Red

This action is not happening at all.



Orange

This action is sometimes happening, but not systematically or across all parts of the campaign or strategy.



Green

This action is definitely happening!

Action				Plan to improve
Formulate objectives with a Gender Lens				
The campaign/influencing strategy has clear objectives relating to gender equality.				
Realization of objectives benefit people of different genders appropriately, and promote women's rights and empowerment in the long term.				
Strategy Design & Tactics				
The influencing strategy is transformative in its approach, in that it seeks to change the relationship between men, women and gender non-conforming people and the issue area, including the role of marginalized people in decision making.				
Our influencing work lends itself to the promotion and achievement of gender equality, either explicitly (with a focused campaign) or implicitly (by engaging women and girls as empowered actors in campaigning).				
The strategy builds on the gender context and power analysis, and explicitly recognizes and takes into consideration the lived realities of women and girls.				
The voices of women and girls impacted the design of the influencing work. We are working with feminist allies, both women's organizations and feminist thought-leaders.				
Implementation				
Staff, stakeholders and campaigners have access to information, a budget for gender-focused activities, resources and opportunities to carry out their responsibilities around integrating gender.				
Our strategy is implemented in a way that meaningfully and respectfully engages women's rights organizations.				
Senior managers hold ultimate accountability for ensuring women's rights are at the heart of this influencing strategy.				
The voices of women and girls impacted the delivery of the influencing work. We are working with feminist allies, both women's organizations and feminist thought-leader.				



Red

This action is not happening at all.



Orange

This action is sometimes happening, but not systematically or across all parts of the campaign or strategy.



Green

This action is definitely happening!

Action				Plan to improve
Monitoring & Evaluation				
The underlying theory of change for this influencing work meaningfully examines the relationship between gender and our issue area, with specific attention paid to power and gender dynamics.				
There are specific outcomes and indicators for this project that seek to further the rights of women and girls. Gender is mainstreamed in other outcomes and indicators.				
We are integrating examples of good practice on gender equality in our campaign work.				
We are learning quickly from our mistakes and integrating that learning as we go.				
In our monitoring & evaluations, we are using or gathering data that is disaggregated by sex and/or gender.				
We review and reflect with key stakeholders, most notably women and women's organizations, to ensure their perspectives are integrated and that knowledge is shared.				
We have identified challenges in further integrating gender into this influencing work and have determined ways to overcome those challenges.				
Communications				
Our media explicitly profiles gender in our messages, images, celebrities and activities.				
Our popular campaigning explicitly profiles gender in our messages, images, celebrities and activities.				
All communications demonstrate the campaign's understanding of the gender dimensions of the issue.				
Influencing messaging and/or publications tell a strong story that includes women and girls or discusses how gender affects the issue area.				
Capturing Change				
Please share a story about a 'significant change' related to gender you've experienced as part of the project or campaign in the past six months. What happened? Who was involved? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Why did it happen? What enabled the change to occur? What did your team do with, or as a result of, this change? Why do you consider this change to be significant?				



Red

This action is not happening at all.



Orange

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Green

This action is definitely happening!