



National Women's Council of Ireland  
Comhairle Náisiúnta na mBan in Éirinn

# Women for Change

A resource for women's groups and  
women working for social change  
and equality at local level

**2019**

  
**Plain  
English**  
Approved by NALA



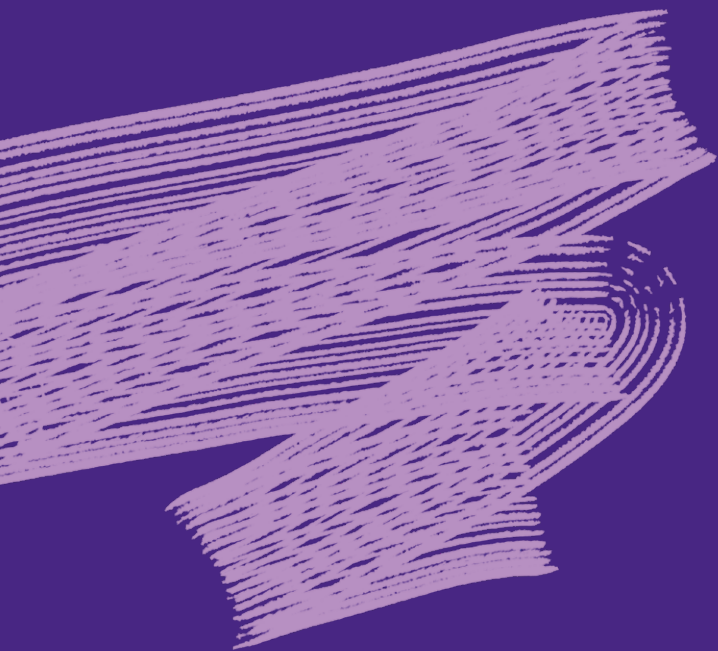
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“It’s great to have a space for women to come together to share their own experiences, their stories and their strategies for bringing about change.”

—

**Quote from participant in  
Women for Change project**





# Introduction

About this guide

Women's inequality in Ireland today

Women for Change project

## About this guide

This guide aims to be a useful resource to women's groups working to bring about positive change in women's lives and in the communities they live in. It outlines the practical steps involved in moving from ideas to action, as well as tools and resources to bring your campaign and action forward. It also explains how to lobby to influence policy, and includes useful tips, resources and exercises you can use in your own work. Policy is a course of action resulting from decisions made by government. It is essential that women's organisations and other organisations working to address women's equality develop opportunities to discuss the effects of national policy at a local level and whether the policy is making a direct difference to women's lives.

There are three core parts in this guide:

**Part 1: Working for change** (lobbying, policy, using the media to help and Government commitments and framework)

**Part 2: Group exercises** (a variety of exercises to help you assess skills and explore important themes, and others)

**Part 3: Resources** (this section includes helpful explanations of key terms we use in this guide and useful contacts)

Ideally, we hope that you use this guide with the help of a trained facilitator. There may be trained facilitators available to you free of charge. Sometimes, you can access these through local partnership companies, Family Resource Centres or a local project of the National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks.

Before you read the main parts of this guide, we advise you to read the next few pages which tell you about the National Women's Council of Ireland, information about women and inequality in Ireland and the Women for Change project (the results of which we used to develop this guide).

## About the National Women's Council of Ireland

Established in 1973, the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi) is the leading national women's membership organisation in Ireland. NWCi seeks full equality between men and women, and we draw our mandate (authority) from a membership of over 190 groups and organisations across a range backgrounds, sectors and locations. We also have a growing, committed individual membership.

This work is kindly supported by the Department of Rural and Community Development through the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) administered through Pobal.

## **Women's inequality in Ireland today**

Inequalities between men and women persist and are far-reaching in our society. At local level, we continue to see women and women's groups undervalued and marginalised. Women are often disadvantaged in several ways by policies that do not recognise that different women have different circumstances and different lives. These disadvantages could include unequal pay, responsibilities at work and home, and gender-based violence. Here are six important issues about women and equality.

### **1. Women parenting alone**

86 out of 100 lone parents in Ireland are women. Women who parent alone experience high levels of poverty and deprivation compared to other groups in Irish society.

### **2. Women and pensions**

The gender pension gap is 26%. This means that retired women who receive private or occupational pensions receive over a quarter less than men. Women often have less access to the contributory and non-contributory state pension.

### **3. Employment and childcare costs**

7 out of 10 people in part-time employment are women.

Childcare costs for couples in Ireland are the second highest of the countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) area. The OECD is made up of 36 member countries, and it aims to stimulate economic progress and world trade. Childcare costs for lone parents in Ireland are the highest in the OECD area.

### **4. Domestic violence**

On nearly 4,000 occasions in 2016, women's domestic violence services were unable to accommodate women and their children because the refuge was full or there was no refuge in their area.

## 5. Homelessness and women

44 out of 100 homeless people nationwide are women. That rises to 47 out of 100 in Dublin. Ireland has the highest rate of women's homelessness in Europe.

## 6. Low representation of women in politics

Less than a quarter of local councillors are women, and only eight women have served as chief executive officers (CEOs) of local authorities.

### Women are more likely:

- to be poor,
- to parent alone,
- to be the main provider of unpaid care work,
- to have low job security,
- to earn low wages, and
- to be at risk of domestic or sexual violence.



Mayo Women for Change project



Navan Women for Change project

## About the Women for Change project

This project aims to bring together women who are involved or are interested in getting more involved in representation and participation in their local communities. The project helps these women, for example, to:

- access training,
- get support from other women, and
- advocate for equality and social change (advocate means to stand up publically to recommend or support change).

NWCI, together with nine of our member organisations,<sup>1</sup> was successful in receiving funding under Training Links<sup>2</sup> in June 2018. We formed a steering group to oversee and help us develop the Women for Change project.

The project aims were to:

- provide women across the country with the necessary skills and knowledge to have their voices heard, build their confidence and expertise in their project work and community work for the benefit of local communities;
- support NWCI policy development; and
- develop and support leadership among women to be advocates for women's equality issues.

## Women's participation in local communities

Women continue to play a central role in developing communities in both rural and urban areas. The enormously significant contribution that women make to local communities has traditionally been unrecognised and undervalued, and it has rarely been reflected in decision-making structures. Despite some advances for some women in Irish society, there has been very slow progress in women's representation in decision-making roles at local and regional level in Ireland. Under-representation and the absence of the influence of women has been, and continues to be, a negative and persistent feature of local decision-making and structures.

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1 Community Work Ireland, National Collective of Community Based Womens Network, IRD Duhallow/Duhallow Women's Forum, National Traveller Womens Forum, Longford Womens Link, Women4Women/Southside Partnership, Cultur Migrant Project, West Clare Family Resource Centre, Carlow County Development Partnership

2 [www.wheel.ie/training/training-links-programme-2018-2019](http://www.wheel.ie/training/training-links-programme-2018-2019)



Real and effective participation means that women are closely involved in the processes that affect their lives – be they economic, social, cultural or political. If women are not supported to take part in local decision-making structures, the diverse interests of women will not be represented.

## Diversity of women needs to be recognised

**“So far the course has been great. There’s some good diversity in the group which is exactly what I was looking for.”**

(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)

Given women's differing experiences and interests, it is both impossible and undemocratic for a small minority of women to represent the needs of all women. There is a clear need for diversity of representation amongst women and men.

Government policy needs to recognise that women come from different backgrounds and have differing needs and concerns. Women vary by class, ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, sexual orientation and abilities.

There are serious consequences for a system that excludes women. Here are three:

1. The assumption is that all women's interests are the same, with the result that the needs of differing groups of women may be ignored.
2. A small number of women cannot possibly represent a broad range of women.
3. There is no possibility that marginalised women will have the opportunity to represent their own needs and interests.

Real participation also implies a commitment to provide the supports necessary for participation to be a real possibility.

### **Barriers ...**

... women constantly refer to the same **barriers** that prevent them from taking part equally to men:

- childcare and care supports,
- lack of accessible public transport,
- traditional male systems of organisation,

- a lack of statutory paid family-friendly policies, and
- a lack of formal education amongst poorer women.

If women in general experience barriers preventing them from becoming involved in all levels of decision making, then the only women who will be able to overcome those barriers will be those who are financially secure and socially and culturally advantaged. Inevitably, this leads to unequal outcomes for women.

**“Women’s voices have to be at the table”**

(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)

## How the Women for Change project worked

Members were invited to express interest through our communication channels, online and through our newsletter. We worked closely with the members of the steering group of NWCI member organisations. This group came together to support the implementation and direction of the project to support local engagement and facilitate the participation of women to help them use their local knowledge of each community and the women in their area.

Generally, in each area we invited women who:

- are involved in local communities;
- want to shape a more equal community for women;
- take on leadership roles on issues or campaigns in their local area; and
- represent their community or project on a decision-making structure.

**“I’m looking forward to applying any skills I learn to helping the local community in Clare.”**

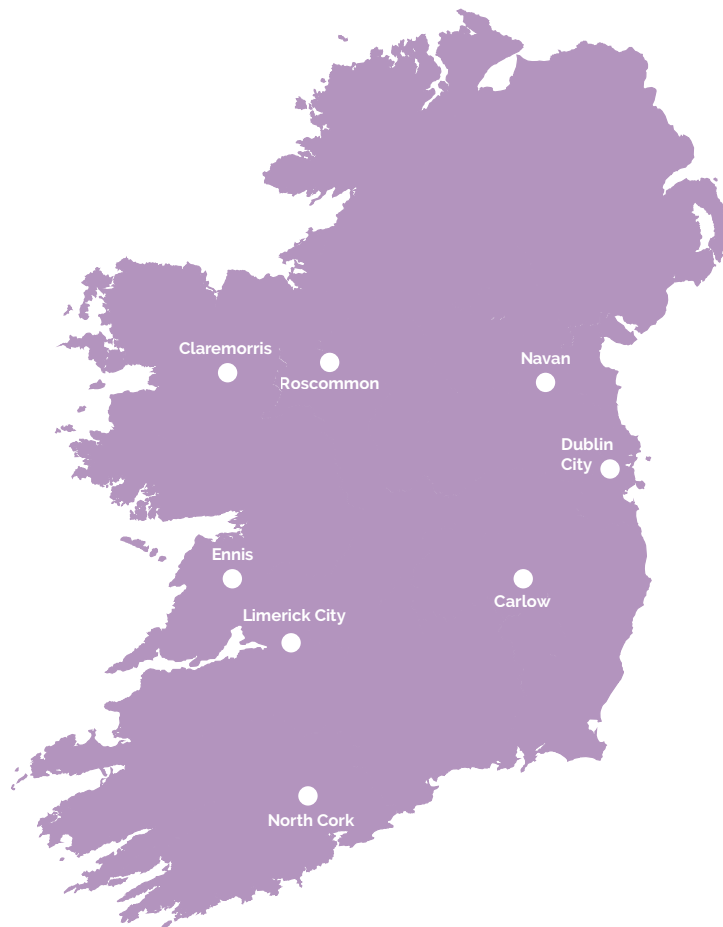
(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)

Women interested in the project were invited to come together to discuss what they would like to do together. The intention was to make it easy for women to take part.

To facilitate this, we:

- offered financial support towards participation costs, and
- chose timing to suit women's schedules.

We developed a schedule of training, capacity-building sessions like Understanding local government and dealing with the media. This is done through workshops in regions for women in representative roles at local level.



Location of Women for Change Projects

**Over 200 women** from different regions came together in North Cork, Limerick City, Ennis, Claremorris, Navan, Dublin City, Carlow and Roscommon. The project ran from June 2018 – September 2019 and aimed to help women to exchange information, ideas, and strategy towards highlighting women's concerns which are often hidden. Topics covered included:

- Women's Equality
- Intercultural Leadership
- Sustainable Development Goals [goals that address global challenges like climate]
- Media Training
- Effective Meetings
- Understanding Local Government
- Influencing Policy and Campaigning.

## Evaluating the Women for Change project

We contracted Ann Irwin, Social Researcher, to carry out an external evaluation of the project. Ann asked all the participants to:

- complete a profile of themselves (their age, their employment situation and education experience),
- evaluate workshops, and
- complete end of project evaluation forms.

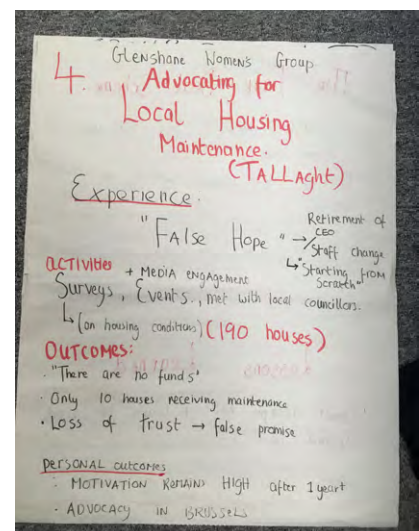
Participants also got the opportunity to give their views at our closing event for the main project on the 12 September 2019. Members of the network were also invited to give their feedback. A final evaluation report has been submitted to the funder. We hope to continue to connect with the women who took part in the project – and new women.

**"It is great, and has allowed women to meet and share experiences and stories. The training was beneficial and it is good we received handouts plus a PowerPoint to refresh our memories. It is hard for women to put their heads above the parapet. It is great to have the opportunity to learn how to effectively lead and participate in structures which impact upon our lives."**

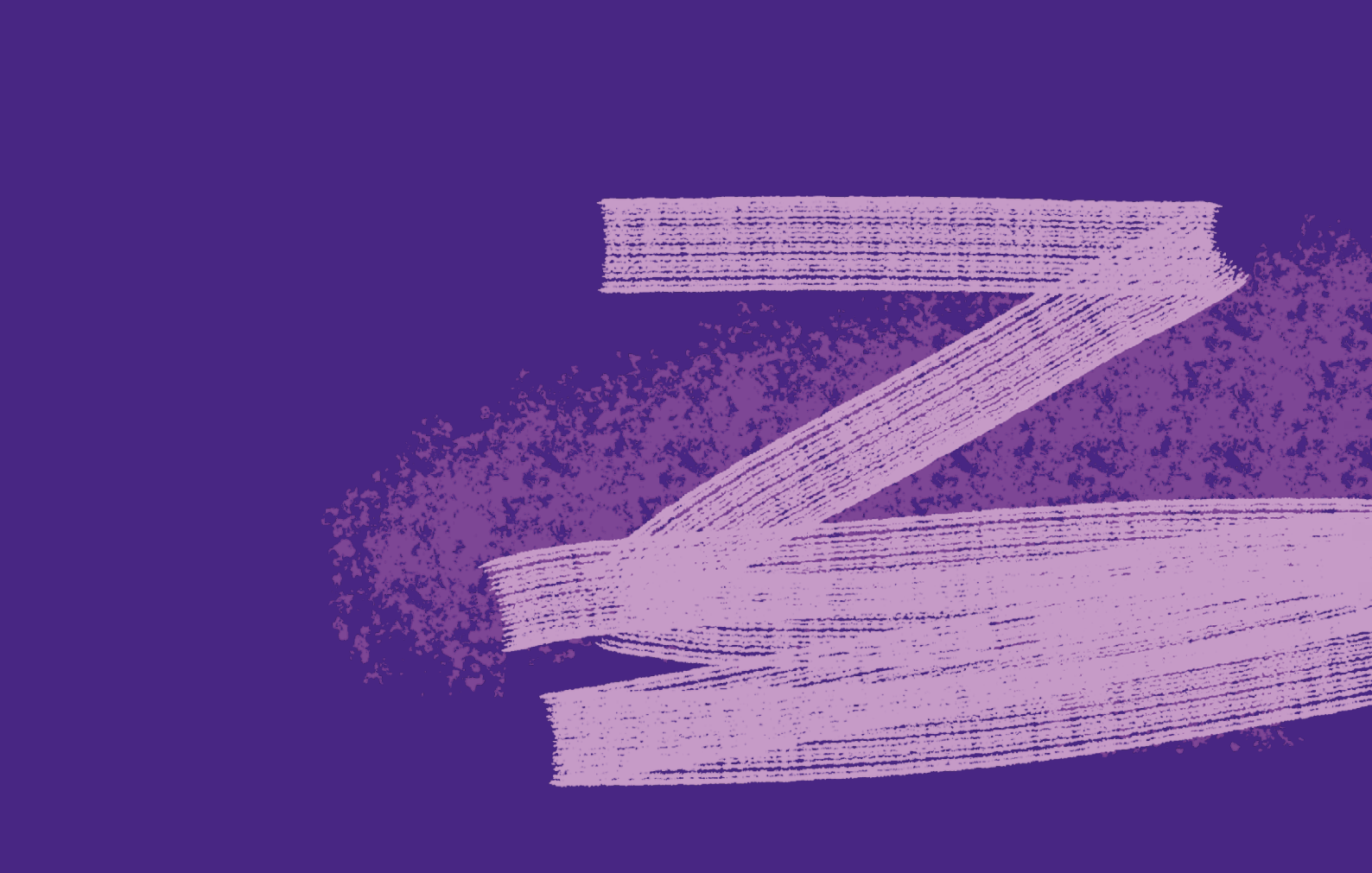
(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)



Limerick Women for Change met with candidates running in the local elections



Notes on women as they discussed a local housing campaign



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world.

Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

---

**Margaret Mead**



# Part 1: Working for change

**Lobbying**

**Policy**

**Using local media and social media**

**Government commitments and frameworks**

## About Part 1: Working for Change

This part of your guide is very important to you. It explains the four points below in terms of what they are and how best to use them to your advantage

1. Lobbying (what, types and tools)
2. Policy
3. Using local media and social media
4. Government commitments and frameworks

# 1. What is lobbying?

Lobbying is any direct pressure on decision-makers with the aim of influencing change through organised action. There is no single, fool proof way to lobby policy makers. Success depends on many factors – the political environment, the people involved, the resources available and the issues concerned. Change will not happen for women without concrete demands to government. You need to decide how you are going to lobby, and how you can keep your issue on the agenda.

## Different types of lobbying

There are two types of lobbying – direct and indirect

Direct lobbying: is gaining access to key decision makers, pressuring and informing them about an issue to achieve change.

Indirect Lobbying: is helping to raise public awareness of issues and supporting lobbying campaigns in an attempt to influence the decision makers.

| Examples of lobbying  |   |
|---|---|
| Direct  | Indirect  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Meeting with politicians and civil servants</li><li>- Writing submissions</li><li>- Speaking to committees</li><li>- Asking Dáil questions</li><li>- Issuing press releases</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Supporting petitions</li><li>- Public protests</li><li>- Media activity</li><li>- Organising events – such as seminars and vigils</li></ul> |

### Remember

You may need to declare your lobbying. This means that organisations and individuals that lobby senior public officials have to register and report regularly to the Standards in Public Office on their lobbying activities. This need to declare is in place since 2015. For more details, see [www.lobbying.ie](http://www.lobbying.ie)

## Tools for lobbying – and sample actions

| Tools to bring about change   | Sample actions  |
|---|---|
| Build your own strength   | <p>Organise awareness-raising sessions on policy</p> <p>Organise training/workshops on how to lobby policy makers</p> <p>Skills audit (see appendix)</p>                                |
| Get to know the system  | <p>Skills development workshops for representatives on decision-making structures – for example, committees and so on</p> <p>Organise meetings with local political representatives</p> |
| Document your own experiences and the experiences of the groups you work with | <p>Developing case studies from your work</p> <p>Carry out research</p>   |
| Gather information on your work to influence policy                           | <p>Prepare submissions on your case. (These are written documents that outline your case.)</p>  |



| Tools to bring about change  | Sample actions   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Organise media campaign      | <p>Prepare a media strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare 3 or 4 key messages – 3 or 4 simple points that you want to make.</li> <li>- Use all opportunities to make these points</li> <li>- Appoint a spokesperson/s who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give all interviews</li> <li>• issue press releases</li> <li>• attend press conferences</li> <li>• attend photo opportunities</li> <li>• propose articles to local newspapers</li> <li>• write letters to local newspapers</li> <li>• give local radio interviews</li> <li>• build relationships with journalists</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Spread and share information | <p>Organise seminars</p> <p>Launch publications</p> <p>Publish research findings and annual reports</p>  |

## 2. What is policy?

Policy is a course of action resulting from decisions made by government. Policy states the direction and actions that government will take on particular aspects of life – for example economic, social, and environmental. Making of policy decisions involves:

- government ministers,
- civil servants,
- politicians,
- media,
- trade unions,
- employers and
- community and voluntary sector groups.

Each of the above have different levels of power to influence decision-making.

### Why do we need to engage with and influence policy?

We need to engage with and influence policy:

- to achieve positive change for women, and
- to recognise the potential of women's work.

Let's look at each of these reasons in turn.



Carlow Women for Change



## Achieving change for women

Influencing policy on equality for women is primarily about working to bring about change for women's lives. Influencing policy can help to bring change to the inequalities women face and the poverty and discrimination which many experience. In all our work at local and national level, there is an awareness and recognition of the links between the decisions made by government and the authorities working on the government's behalf and the position of women in society.

Women's inequality in Irish society is directly related to how resources are allocated. It is about who has the power and resources, who influences the decisions, who has the skills to lobby successfully and who does not. Eliminating inequality for women will require fundamental change in policy which can only happen if strong pressure is put on the political system at all levels.

## Recognising the potential of women's work

Informing policy makers about the reality of women's lives is a key part of effecting change. The experience and expertise of women's groups and organisations working with women is critical for policy makers trying to address the causes and effects of inequality and discrimination. Women's voices must be heard – particularly the most marginalized, including:

- Traveller women,
- Roma women,
- migrant women,
- women seeking asylum, and
- women with disabilities.

When women's views are heard, changes in policy will be effective, and we can call the Government to account. We must ensure that policy is informed by women and not just developed by officials with little understanding of the issues involved.

**“Be part of change”**

(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)

## How do we do it?

The first step in trying to effect change is getting your voice heard or making your agenda visible. Too often the policy debate in the media or at various levels of government does not reflect what **your project** is trying to achieve. Trying to set the agenda is, in many cases, the first challenge in influencing change. The following five steps will help.

1. Identify the issue
2. Research the issue
3. Identify who holds the power
4. Get organised – building your community
5. Build support systems

Let's look at each of these in turn.

### Step 1: Identify the issue

Begin by identifying the issue or situation and be clear about what you want to change and what you want to do about it.

Your strategy is your plan to win. Think about the following:

- What change do you want to achieve and what will it look like?
- Define the problem and the effects on women – research and gather evidence.
- Identify the solution(s).
- Is it a local or national issue?
- Are you concerned with an existing policy or has a policy not been implemented?
- How can you achieve that change?
- How would you know that you have achieved that change?
- What one specific area do you want to make a distinct impact on?
- Where do you see your cause in 1, 3 or 5 years?

## Step 2: Research the issue

Ensure that you have evidence or facts to build your case.

- What commitments have already been made in this area? For example, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- What is the law in this area?
- Make yourself aware of any reports and documents published on the issue.
- Use reliable sources and up-to-date statistics – for example, information from the Central Statistics Office.

Find out how much support there is for and against your cause. Talk to national organisations that are a good source of information on policy.

## Step 3: Identify who holds the power

Ensure you are focusing on the people that can make the most difference. Ask yourself the following:

- Who has the power to make the decisions on your issue?
- Who can influence the people with the power?
- Where is the issue being dealt with – is it at local, regional, national, European level?
- What is the government position?

**“Don't let the small things go”**

(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)

## **Step 4: Getting organised – building your community**

Although you can go it alone, most successful lobbying is the result of a group or team working together. Start by putting together a group of people who feel as strongly about the issue as you do. Think about how your issue could be related to other issues. There are likeminded people out there who want to put their energy into something. When you're getting organised and building your contacts, think about the following:

### **Include the right people**

Be sure to include those who are directly affected by the issue and the change you want to make.

Connect with people on the basis of common values and emotion and engage through stories. Sometimes using statistics does not connect with people.

Remember the women who are often excluded – for example, Traveller Women, poorer women, minority ethnic women, disabled women. Think about how to actually include diverse groups of women rather than just talk about doing it. Organise awareness-raising sessions and invite women who are affected (refer to appendix).

### **Identify leaders and the best approach**

Identify leaders. If you focus on what groups have in common, and use different, non-traditional ways of organising, different leaders will emerge.

Decide on the best approach for your group to take in order to change and influence policy – for example, joint actions with other local organisations, linking with national organisations working on the same agenda, and so on.

### **Plan your strategy and tactics**

Plan your strategy and tactics. Identify the opportunities where your influence will be most effective (relevant meetings, local media campaigns, meetings with local politicians, asking Dáil questions, planning days of action, online campaigns, petitions, visiting a TD's office).

- Timing is important – an opportunity might present itself with a new government or change of people in charge.
- Pass on your skills to share the learning and broaden participation.

- Think about your resources – what do you have, and what do you need.
- Celebrate your achievements. Change can be slow and it is an uneven playing field, so celebrate the victories.

### Step 5: Build support systems

Identify your friends and supporters. There may be other members of your community who could benefit from your proposals. Identify the key institutions and decision-making structures you need to influence in order to change policy. Ask yourself:

- Have you contacted other local groups working on similar issues?
- Are there national/European organisations working on the same issue who could support your work?

“I have always been involved in community projects, but I want to concentrate more on activism going forward.”

(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)



Dublin Women for Change participants



## Preparing for meetings with policy makers and politicians

The following section tells you about how to prepare for meetings with policy makers and politicians.

### Before the meeting:

1. Find out which politicians or officials will be there.
2. Decide and agree on who attends from your group.
3. Identify the person with the most knowledge/expertise on the issue, and decide what needs to be said and who will say each point. Don't underestimate the importance of your personal experience.
4. Research the issue – aim to be better informed than the person you are meeting.
5. Network – think about who you know that knows the person or people you're meeting. Ask them to mention your name and give their approval of you.
6. Appoint a spokesperson for the group to guide the meeting.
7. Prepare a list of ways the person you're meeting may help your campaign.
8. Prepare a one-page briefing document for the person you are meeting which includes your contact details.

### At the meeting:

1. Explain the current situation and why you asked for a meeting.
2. Explain how you would like this person to help your campaign.
3. Discuss how the issue will impact on their constituency if they are an elected representative
4. Mention if your group has support from other interest groups.
5. Try to establish the party position on the issue.
6. If there is an upcoming election, mention how many voters are affected.
7. Discuss the level of media interest in your campaign – for example, if there have been any articles or letters in local or national newspapers or online.
8. If you don't already know, try to find out if the issue impacts on the decision-maker personally in any way.
9. Look for clear decisions.
10. Leave an 'umbrella' behind! – give yourself a reason to come back for further meetings.

## Getting the most out of meetings

To get the most out of the meeting, consider the following six tips:

### **1. Be prepared**

Know the procedure, functions, rules of meetings – for example, things like the standing orders (the rules for conducting the meeting).

Be an expert about your own issues.

Read all documentation critically – that is, draw your own conclusions and relate what you read to your own issue.

### **2. Be professional**

Get there early and introduce yourself to others. Move around the room and get to know people.

### **3. Be brave**

Be prepared to challenge bad behaviour, such as talking over others, especially at the start.

Be prepared to vote against issues, and make sure any objections you have are noted in the minutes (the written record of the meeting).

### **4. Allocate time for meetings – preparing, attending and after**

Be sure to set aside time to prepare, attend and do whatever you need to do after meetings as follow up. Do this well in advance of your meeting.

### **5. Follow up**

After a meeting, follow-up and check that things are being done. Do this by sending a follow-up letter to the person or people you have met thanking them for their time. Summarise in your letter what was discussed at the meeting and what they committed to do.

### **6. Be consistent and assertive**

Get to all meetings. Complain if times and dates are changed and you can't go.

## Checklist to prepare for a great meeting

The following checklist of statements might help you to prepare for meetings and get the best value out of them.

- I am well informed. I know what issues I want to get across. I can define them, write about them and talk about them.
- I know what the political system can and can't do about my issue.
- I know who is being asked to do what.
- I know what the solution looks like.
- I know the workings of the system and I know who does what.



Dublin Women for Change participants looking at women's equality issues

## How to write a letter to decision-makers

Writing a letter is an effective way of communicating your issue to a decision maker. A well-written letter can help you gain recognition for your issue and your group. A letter can be a great way of arguing your case.

### Tips:

- Be brief, clear and to the point. Letters should be no longer than one page.
- In the first paragraph, state who you are and who you represent.
- In the next paragraph, state the issue you are lobbying about, and support your statement with one or two statistics.
- State what you want the person to do.
- Offer the person further information on the issue.
- Ask for a reply. If you do not receive a reply, draft a follow-up letter enclosing your original letter.

If you get a standard letter in response to your letter or you are dissatisfied with the response, draft a follow-up letter re-stating your objectives, and your willingness to continue lobbying.

If you have networked with other groups, ask them to send a similar letter to the representative, or ask them to co-sign your letter for added impact.



North Cork Women for Change project

“The Women for Change workshop was a brilliant experience. I got a massive insight into how a successful campaign works, the steps to implement in order to achieve the desired outcome and, of course, the advice from the other attendees who have been game changers within their own industries was invaluable to me.”  
(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)

## How to draft a submission

The following three steps will help you draft (draw up) a submission.

### **Step 1: Identify the relevant authority – who will be reading this document?**

Check to see if the authority has provided their own guidelines for writing submissions.

### **Step 2: Start writing**

State who you are and who you represent.

Identify the problem and be as clear, but as brief, as possible.

Base the letter on the information from your lobbying document.

- Provide credible evidence for your concerns, cite/reference current and accepted research.
- Include only essential information.
- Use graphs and charts where possible – put as attachments.
- Give possible solutions, and explain what could happen if no action is taken.
- Attach a case study to highlight the effects of your issue.

### **Step 3: Publicise**

Remember to publicise the submission – email, mail out, local newspapers, tweet, and so on.

## Submitting a Parliamentary Question (PQ)

The Government can be asked four types of questions by Oireachtas members:

1. Leaders' questions;
2. Priority questions;
3. Oral questions; and
4. Written questions (generally called Parliamentary Questions).

See more information about the different types of questions at:

[www.oireachtasbrief.ie/about-the-oireachtas/parliamentary-questions/](http://www.oireachtasbrief.ie/about-the-oireachtas/parliamentary-questions/)

TDs can send any number of PQs. (Senators cannot submit PQs, they can help in other ways, see below. The answers to PQs are not read out in the Dáil, but they are included on the Oireachtas daily record. PQ answers are drafted by civil servants and must be signed off by the relevant Minister.

PQs are a useful way to find out if policies are being implemented, the cost of Government activities, the funding provided to different State services and other areas of government business. As such, PQs can provide information for campaigns and submissions.

### **1. Search for similar PQs**

If you want to ask a PQ to find out information about a particular topic, check if your question, or a similar question, has already been asked, and if the information you need has already been provided.

You can use search terms to look for any PQs or debates at:

- [www.kildarestreet.com](http://www.kildarestreet.com)
- [www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/)

### **2. Draft your PQ**

If the information you need isn't available, you will need to draft your own PQ.

There is a standard format for PQs. Each PQ is directed at the Minister responsible for the area. The PQ can combine a number of questions linked to the same topic, and is always ended by the words: 'and if s/he will make a statement on the matter'.

For example:

To ask the Minister for Health how much funding was provided to maternity services in the years 2010 – 2018; how much funding is forecasted for 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Try to be as specific as you can in your question to ensure you receive a detailed response. The search step above can really help in formulating your question. The more questions asked about a particular issue, the more it reflects the level of public concern.

### **3. Ask a TD to submit your PQ**

Who is the best deputy to ask the question? Do they have an interest in this issue? Email your selected TD, sending them your draft PQ text and ask if they will submit it for you.

Generally, TDs are very happy to ask PQs for constituents and NGOs. It can be helpful to ask a TD you already have a relationship with, or who is already engaged in the issue your PQ refers to.

### **4. Receiving responses**

Generally, the TD who has submitted your PQ will send you an email with the response they received. Alternatively, you can keep an eye on [KildareStreet.com](http://KildareStreet.com) or [Oireachtas.ie](http://Oireachtas.ie).

### **5. Follow-up**

If the PQ response received does not provide the information you need, you can ask your selected TD to submit additional PQs.



## Members of the Oireachtas – how they can help your campaign

### **TDs can:**

- ask questions in the Dáil, including spoken or written parliamentary questions;
- reject or halt amendments/changes to a Government Bill;
- speak on a motion (a proposal), and vote on a motion;
- refer your letter to the relevant Minister – the Minister will then reply to the TD stating the Government's position on the issue and personally sign the letter; and
- write to a state agency on behalf of your group.

### **Senators can:**

- introduce amendments to Bills in the Seanad, which will then pass back to the Dáil;
- write to a state agency on behalf of your group;
- lend credibility and political weight through their support of your campaign; and
- raise your issue with fellow party members.

### **Councillors can:**

- get a motion passed at city/council level or at a party conference;
- raise the issue within their party; and
- write to a state agency on behalf of your group.

Special Advisors and the Joint Oireachtas Committees are very important. Special Advisors are very close to Minister, but they can be hard to access.

### **Role of Special Advisors**

Each Minister has at least one special adviser. They are important people to contact, but they can be hard to access. These are often, but not always, employed from outside the public service. They can play a number of distinct roles – including working with civil servants, representing the Minister and influencing policy. They can also advise Ministers on the political aspects of government policy decisions or actions. Specialist advisor names should be published on all government departments' websites.

## Joint Oireachtas Committees

The Oireachtas – the Dáil and Seanad – has a number of joint committees that include members from both houses. You can read more about these committees at the following link. It is important to know that you can make recommendations to these committees, and this is a good strategy. The media often report on these recommendations, and many meetings are live streamed on Oireachtas TV.

[www.oireachtas.ie/en/committees/](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/committees/) (they are listed at the bottom of the page)

Joint Oireachtas Committees are set up to deal with specific matters – like health and children, social protection, and so on. Joint committees are tasked with the following:

- To consider all policy, budgetary or administrative aspects of the relevant matter.
- To invite a Minister or an office holder from a government department to appear before the committee on a relevant matter.
- To write reports on relevant matters and table a motion to the Dáil based on report outcomes.
- To invite relevant stakeholders to address the committee.



Clare Women for Change participants

## 3. Using local and social media for change

### Local media

Writing a press release is an effective way to help you and your organisation gain publicity for the work you are involved in. Call your local paper and ask them for a contact name to send your press release to. Check the deadlines, and get your press release to them in time.

The following are some tips, but the most important thing is getting your message out there.

### Prepare an attention grabbing press release – and title

Try to get your press release typed and email it to the newspaper. Make the subject line of your email interesting.

Your title should be short, interesting and to the point. Use action words, and clear, understandable language. Keep your headline simple and short to clearly focus people's attention on your message. Use strong language in the heading: 'NWCI demands/accuses/calls on, and so on. Try to place your organisation's name within the heading.

### What should be in your press release?

The first paragraph of your release: this should cover the who, what, when, why, where, and how of your new launch, update, or development. Reporters don't have time to sift through details and background information - they just need facts that will help them tell your story to someone else from a position of authority. There shouldn't be any new, crucial information covered after this section that the reader could potentially miss.

If you're publicising an event, make sure to include details of time, place and who to contact for further information.

The next paragraphs help you bring your details to life with a quote that reporters can use for context around your announcement and help paint a picture of your news. Use quotes from the people involved in your group to emphasise the points you are making and make it more interesting. Remember to get their permission. The same goes for photographs. If you supply a photo with the press release, be sure you have permission from those in the photo.

The final paragraph: this should provide valuable background information, including the contact details for the spokesperson. If possible, give an out-of-hours contact – journalists typically work late evenings and might need to follow-up after office hours.

### **Other general tips about writing your press release**

- Keep it short and to the point – try to keep it to one page, if possible.
- Use direct and simple language throughout the press release. Do not use jargon, abbreviations or acronyms.
- Include notes to Editors, if necessary, to provide extra information.
- Follow up on your press release with a phone call to the journalist.
- See the press releases section on NWCI website – [www.nwci.ie/learn/news/category/press\\_releases](http://www.nwci.ie/learn/news/category/press_releases)

### **Radio and television interviews**

Radio and television interviews are a great opportunity for your group to deliver its message to a wide audience. It is important to note that pre-recorded interviews are usually edited down to between 10 and 30 seconds, so be brief and practise getting your point across in this space of time.

### **When the call comes for an interview...**

Ask:

- What is the core topic of the interview?
- What is the date and time of the interview?
- Where will it be held?
- Will there be a panel? If so, who will be on it?
- Will it be live or pre-recorded?
- Do they have your correct name and title?
- Who is the interviewer?

Before an interview:

- Practise your responses with a member of your group.
- Draft a list of the three key positive points or messages that you would like the public to know.
- Perhaps have an event planned so you can advertise it.

## How to use social media for change

Social media is for everyone, and you can use it to reach out to more people. It is a democratic tool, and can be used to hold politicians to account. It can also be used by voters to create a campaign for change, and build momentum around important issues.

Social media has huge power to engage new audiences, to get your name out there, and to grow an online network of supporters. It can raise awareness and bring people to a website, a petition, an event, and so on. In many cases, it helps you to reach more people than you would by traditional media. You need to move from simply telling people about something to being part of an ongoing dialogue keeping people informed about the substance of what you're doing.

For example, on social media, you could:

- share a fact about women's inequality;
- post a photo of your meeting with a local representative;
- get signatures for a petition;
- share a local news story; or
- share a link to a radio or television interview.

## Popular social media platforms

Here we tell you about three social media platforms. Remember to use the image descriptions on Twitter/Instagram and Facebook to keep it accessible.

### Facebook

Facebook is great for engaging people locally and nationally.

#### **Remember:**

- Don't use your personal page, but set up a company page for your campaign.
- Get a Pages Manager app on your phone which allows you to keep an eye on your page on the go.
- Facebook allows for more detailed engagement than Twitter and replies are longer.
- Facebook tends to be more local than Twitter.

- Although each page is different, the best times to post are early morning, and in the evening.
- Photos work very well as content.
- People like actions – sign up to an event, sign a petition, or share a fact.

## Twitter

Twitter is very immediate and interactive – posts and replies appear instantly.

### Remember:

- A good way to start a conversation is to ask a question. You can then 'favourite' or retweet replies.
- Hashtags are important on Twitter. That is what people search for. Use a relevant hashtag for your campaign – for example #womensissues.
- Use images as often as possible.
- Make sure to follow your supporters and retweet their articles or tweets.
- State in your personal bio that retweets are not an endorsement and do not necessarily represent your personal views.
- Link to your website (if you have one) or your Facebook page as often as possible.
- Try not to engage with trolls (a person who posts unduly upsetting, off-topic or unnecessary controversial comments to invoke offence or upset). Engaging with them feeds their ego and leads to further engagement.
- Direct a person with a genuine complaint, often posted on Twitter, to your email.
- Tweeting in the morning and evening are good times to set the agenda.
- If you are being harassed on Twitter, report it. If the person is being abusive, block them immediately.

## Instagram

- Post between once and three times a day.
- Try and use good quality pictures.
- Follow local groups and people that support you.
- Let people know you are on Instagram, email your members and supporters, share your handle (name on social media) on your other social media accounts.

- It's great for reaching young people.
- Instagram stories are a great way to show your day-to-day work and to showcase an event.

**Event promotion is a very good strategy to use on social network platforms.**

## How to organise an event to get support for your campaign and or media attention

There are many benefits to holding a well-organised event. An event can gain media attention for your campaign, and it can inform the public about your issue. Also, if there is a large turnout, it can apply pressure to decision makers by showing them that your campaign deserves their attention.

Here are a few things to consider when you're planning your event:

### Get a big name (if you can) and advertise

Consider asking a local representative or prominent politician to attend or speak at your event.

Remember to advertise your event in advance.

Write to local and national journalists and let them know about the event (see the section on 'How to write a press release').

### Sort out venue and equipment

Think about the kind of equipment you will need on the day – for example, banners, loudspeakers, microphones, chairs, tables, and so on.

Ensure the venue is accessible and that everyone attending can participate.

### Evaluate how it went – and learn

When your event is over, evaluate and analyse it. Write down how you felt it went and what you could do differently next time.

**“When I go to the shopping centre now, I am saying hello to everyone”**

**(Quote from participant in Women for Change project)**



## 4. Government commitments and frameworks at national and international level

There are four main Government commitments and frameworks at national and international level that you can refer to when making a demand.

### National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 – 2020

The National Strategy for Women and Girls (NSWG) is the primary State policy document addressing key areas of concern for women and girls in Ireland. This policy supports women and girls as contributors to society and the economy, and recognises their roles as carers, service-users and decision-makers. The NSWG should act as a key reference for all policy makers and departments.

The vision of the strategy is:

**“An Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life.”**

**“This is an all of Government Strategy which will ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into decision-making on a wide range of policies. Its implementation will improve the lives of women, be they old or young, rural or urban.”**

**(former Tánaiste Francis Fitzgerald)**

### The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979. This Convention is often described as an international bill of rights for women. It defines what discrimination against women is, and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

In the concluding observations that arise as a result of Ireland's examination under the Convention in early 2017, it recommended the following measure related to women in local life:

**Take concrete measures, including temporary special measures, to promote the participation of Traveller, Roma and migrant women in political and public life.**

## Public Sector Duty

Public bodies need to take into account the legislative implications arising from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014. Furthermore, they need to make these very clear in all their communications and policies. All public bodies in Ireland have responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans.

Public bodies are now required in their annual reports to report on related 'achievements and developments' related to, for example, State obligations to prioritise the most marginalised and vulnerable in society, and to ensure that women enjoy equality with men in political and public life. This is also referenced in the National Strategy for Women and Girls in action 6.1:

**"All Public Bodies will assess and identify the human rights of women and girls and the gender equality issues that are relevant to their functions, and address these in their strategic planning, policies and practices and annual reports." [www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/](http://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/)**

## Charter for equality between men and women in local life

To promote gender equality at the local and regional level, the Council for European Municipalities and Regions launched the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life in 2006. A charter is a written commitment to people in this case women and men.

The Charter is both a political document and a practical guide. It encourages local and regional governments to make a public commitment to equality, and to implement the principles listed in the Charter. The Charter proposes concrete methods of how equality of women and men can be pursued in different fields – for example, political participation, employment, public services, urban planning, and so on. Today, over 1,600 local and regional governments in 32 European countries have signed the Charter.

As yet, no local authorities in Ireland have signed up to this charter.

[www.charter-equality.eu/](http://www.charter-equality.eu/)



# Part 2: Group exercises

## Skills Bank and Group Matrix

## Exploring Feminism, Diversity and Inclusion

## Using Social Analysis to explore women's equality issues

## Campaign Planning

## Evaluation

These exercises can help your group explore important issues.

### About Part 2: Group exercises

This part of the guide has activities for you to do as a group. For each exercise, we list its aim, and the time and the materials needed. The aim of the activities generally is to get a discussion going, make sure everyone can participate and help in making your group work.

## Skills bank exercise<sup>3</sup>

The following exercise is a simple but effective exercise to make the most of the group's strengths and skills and to help with team building. Taking time to identify strengths before tasks are assigned allows you to choose the areas best suited to your skills. When you complete the table below, keep it to use at future meetings when tasks are being assigned.

**Aim:** To identify skills and strengths in the group

**Time required:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart, table drawn on flipchart sheet (see below),  
coloured stickers

### The activity:

- Hand out coloured stickers to all group participants.
- Draw the table below out on flipchart with the names of the group participants along the top. List the skills shown down the left column.
- Ask the group to call out other skills that would be useful in carrying out your strategy. Add these skills in the left column.
- Ask group members to think about their skills for a few minutes and then place coloured stickers on the skills they are strongest in.

| Skills                | Name 1 | Name 2 | Name 3 | Name 4 | Name 5<br>and so on |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| Administration        |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Charing a meeting     |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Computer skills       |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Fundraising           |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Lobbying              |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Organisational Skills |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Media skills          |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Networking skills     |        |        |        |        |                     |
| People skills         |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Presentations         |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Research              |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Writing letters       |        |        |        |        |                     |
| Writing reports       |        |        |        |        |                     |

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<sup>3</sup> NWCI Roadmap for change: A handbook for women's groups working together for equality

## Sample Group Matrix

Getting group members to fill out this grid on a large sheet (or 4 sheets of flipchart paper stuck together) is a great way of breaking the ice, having fun, getting to know each other and building the group dynamic.

| <b>Name/<br/>Portrait</b> | <b>Describe<br/>yourself<br/>(using words<br/>or pictures)</b> | <b>Reason<br/>you are<br/>involved<br/>with this<br/>group</b>    | <b>Something<br/>you bring<br/>to this<br/>group</b> | <b>Hope/<br/>expectation<br/>for this<br/>group/<br/>project</b>  | <b>Concern for<br/>this group/<br/>project</b>                                    |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Mary                      | Friendly<br>Loyal<br>Enjoys life                               | To help<br>improve<br>services<br>for women<br>locally            | Ideas<br>Experience<br>Friendship<br>Fun             | For our<br>aims to be<br>brought to<br>satisfactory<br>conclusion | To remain<br>together<br>will be hard<br>and require<br>dedication                |
| Kathy                     | Conscientious<br>Helpful<br>Good-<br>humoured                  | To improve/<br>solve<br>women's<br>issues<br>in this<br>community | Previous<br>and current<br>community<br>experience   | That we<br>will identify<br>solutions<br>as well as<br>problems   | Our input<br>will be<br>filed away<br>in some<br>bureaucrat's<br>bottom<br>drawer |

## Exploring feminism<sup>4</sup>

Feminism can be described as the support of women's rights based on recognition that women and men are equal but not equally valued. The word 'feminism' conjures up many different feelings and images. This activity will enable you to begin to explore these.

**Aim:** To explore the group's experiences and images of feminism.

**Time required:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Materials:** Coloured sticky paper, pens, flipchart.

### The activity:

**Step 1:** Choose two colours of sticky paper. Write down quickly things that come to mind. On one piece of coloured paper, write what attracts you to feminism; on the other colour, write what puts you off it. Use one piece of paper for each thought. Don't discuss your thoughts with those near you. Just do it quickly on your own.

**Step 2:** In groups of three, discuss the things you wrote down that were similar or different from each other. Think about where these ideas have come from – for example, the media, talking to other women, and so on.

**Step 3:** Draw a table with two columns on a flipchart sheet and ask everyone to place their pieces of paper under the relevant columns (see image below). When you have done this, you will be able to see the collective picture of the group's experiences of feminism. At the top of the first column, write 'What attracts you to feminism'. At the top of the second column write, 'What puts you off feminism'.

| What attracts you to feminism? | What puts you off feminism? |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Put your sticky notes here!    | Put your sticky notes here! |

**Note:** Be aware of where the negative and positive images and messages come from. Are they from personal experience or wider society? What are the implications of this?

<sup>4</sup> Getting Started and keeping going: A resource pack for Local Women's Groups Downtown Women's Centre and Women's Resource and Development Agency (1995)



## Exploring diversity and inclusion<sup>5</sup>

**Aim:** To explore the group's understanding and experience of diversity and inclusion.

**Time required:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart paper and pens / markers

### The activity:

**Step 1:** Write the words 'Different Women' on a large sheet of paper and ask the group to name the different kinds of women they can think of who live in their area or community. For example, you might list older women, younger women, women from minority ethnic groups, Traveller women, women with a disability, lone parents, and so on. You may find some of the headings below useful to get the discussion going or to use as a checklist at the end.

**Step 2:** Write down the group's core problem or the summary statement of your group's core issue on flipchart paper and place it where everyone can see it. Divide the group into smaller groups of 3 - 4 people, and give each group a sheet of paper and pens and ask them to fill in the following table.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| How might these women be affected differently by the issue we're addressing? |  |
| Why might it be difficult for them to come forward and join the group?       |  |
| What might they bring to the group?  |  |
| How might they challenge the group?  |  |

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<sup>5</sup> Getting Started and keeping going: A resource pack for Local Womens Groups Downtown Womens Centre and Womens Resource and Development Agency (1995)

**Step 3:** Ask each of the small groups to feedback the information and ideas that arise. Lead a discussion on the value of embracing diversity and the importance of representing the wider community.

Here are a few examples of the questions you could ask and topics you could introduce:

- **How could we reach out to include more women in our community?**  
Write down all suggestions.
- **Where would we make contact?** Are there networks or agencies around that might guide us? Local partnership offices, and so on.
- **Is there practical support available in the area to help us involve other women in our work?** (For example, funding and advice, language support, childcare, transport, wheelchair accessibility, diversity training.)

## Using the Social Analysis Spiral to understand women's equality<sup>6</sup>

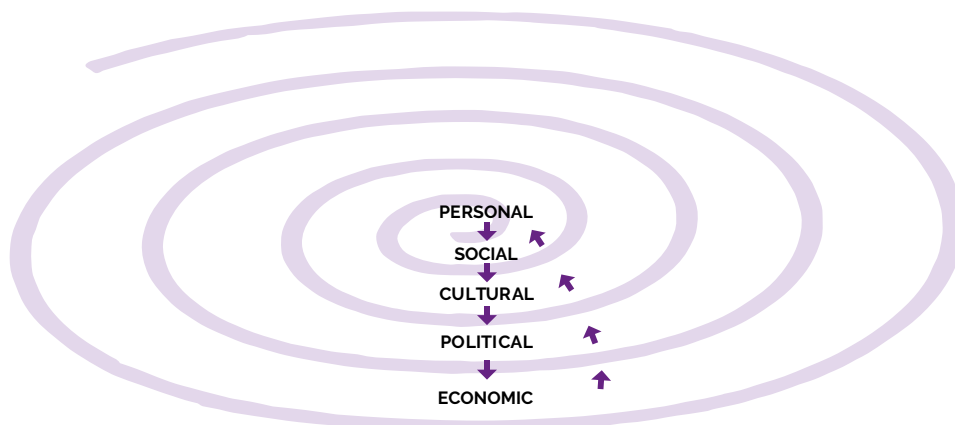
**Aim:** The exercise aims to deepen the understanding of women's inequality in different areas by helping discussion and analysis. It also aims to identify blocks to women's leadership at each level of the spiral and to identify some specific actions which would enable women's leadership.

**Time required:** 1 hours 30 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, markers handout with questions to prompt discussion

### The activity:

**Step 1:** Draw a large spiral on the sheet. Name the levels - personal, social, cultural, political and economic: Leave space on each size of the Spiral to note Blocks and Enablers



**Step 2:** Write the issue being analysed at the top of the sheet – for example, Leadership

**Step 3:** Discuss each level and identify Blocks and Enablers at each level. Note these on the sheet. (See below for some possible questions to guide the discussion. You do not have to address any or all of these – they are offered as prompts only.)

**Note time use:** Use the time to consider all levels and also to consider Blocks and Enablers. It's important to keep time for the latter as the purpose of the exercise is to support the Movement for Change.

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<sup>6</sup> From Banulucht Making Connections (used byMaureen Bassett October 2018)

At the **personal level**, consider:

- What may block women at a personal level from taking on leadership roles?
- Why might this be the case?

· At the **cultural level**, consider:

- What beliefs exist in Irish society that could block women's leadership?
- How are these generated and spread?
- Is the '**political culture**' woman friendly?

· At the **social level**, consider:

- What role might different social institutions play in blocking women's leadership? For example: the family, education system, political parties, social support systems.

· At the **political level**, consider:

- What role do government policies play in blocking or enabling women's participation in leadership? Which ones are most influential?
- Are there sufficient structures and resources in place to implement these policies?

· At the **economic level**, consider:

- What are the economic blocks to women's participation in leadership?

## Sample campaign exercise

**Aim:** To brainstorm and share ideas about designing and building a campaign.

**Time required:** 1 hour

**Materials:** Print outs of grid for completion, pins

**The activity:**

**Step 1:** Think about this scenario: You are a group of women who have identified a need in your area. You have decided to try to build support and develop an organised campaign on this issue.

**Step 2:** Fill in the following grid to bring your issue from an idea to a strong campaign.

Campaign Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

| Stages in the development of the campaign and questions you should ask yourselves.  | Answers |
|---|---------|
| <p><b>1. Information</b></p> <p>a) Who makes the decisions in this area?</p> <p>b) Where are these decisions taken?</p> <p>c) What government policies or commitments can we draw on?</p> <p>d) What other information is needed?</p>   |         |
| <p><b>2. Organisation</b></p> <p>a) How do we build community interest and with who?</p> <p>b) How do we involve those affected?</p> <p>c) How do we establish a campaign group - who should be on it?</p> <p>d) Who are our allies and who might oppose us?</p> <p>e) Where and how do we get our resources?</p> <p>f) Do we need more research – how should we proceed with this?</p> |         |
| <p><b>3. Developing our message</b></p> <p>(detailed campaign demands and policy changes based on information, research and consultation).</p> <p>a) What is our key message?</p> <p>b) What are our key demands?</p> <p>c) What are the arguments for and against our demands?</p>   |         |
| <p><b>4. Mobilisation</b></p> <p>a) What are the key actions we will undertake to get our message out and push for change? For example, protests, petitions, policy submissions, Dáil questions, media work, and so on.</p>   |         |

## Evaluating participation at meetings using the Evaluation Wheel<sup>7</sup>

The evaluation wheel is a simple and useful way of letting people give their views on how a meeting has gone. It can be filled in anonymously, but the end result is visually clear and easy to understand.

**Aim:** To discuss and analyse how well a meeting went, and to produce a visual aid that will show participation, strengths and weaknesses.

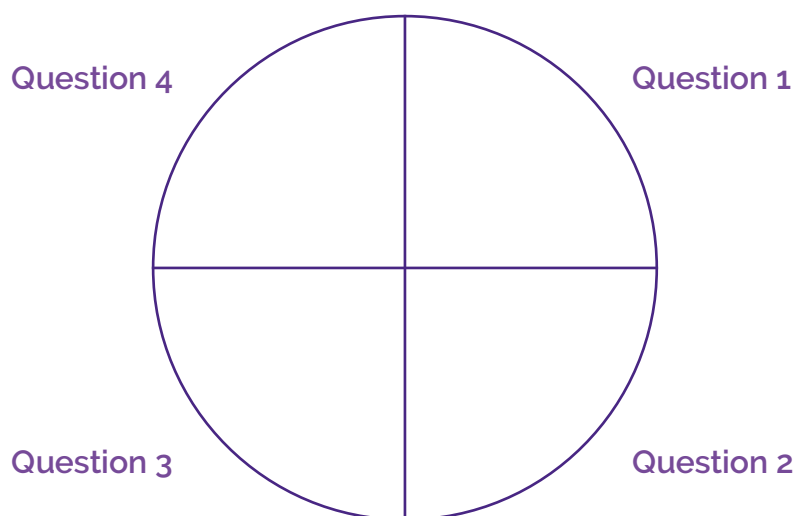
**Time required:** 1 hour

**Materials:** Flipchart, pens.

### The activity:

**Step 1:** Set up a flip-chart sheet on a stand or a wall. Draw a circle on it, and divide the circle into four sectors.

**Step 2:** Write questions you want people to answer beside each sector.



Examples of questions you could ask are:

**How much influence did you feel you had in deciding the agenda (that is what was discussed?)**

**Did you feel you were listened to?**

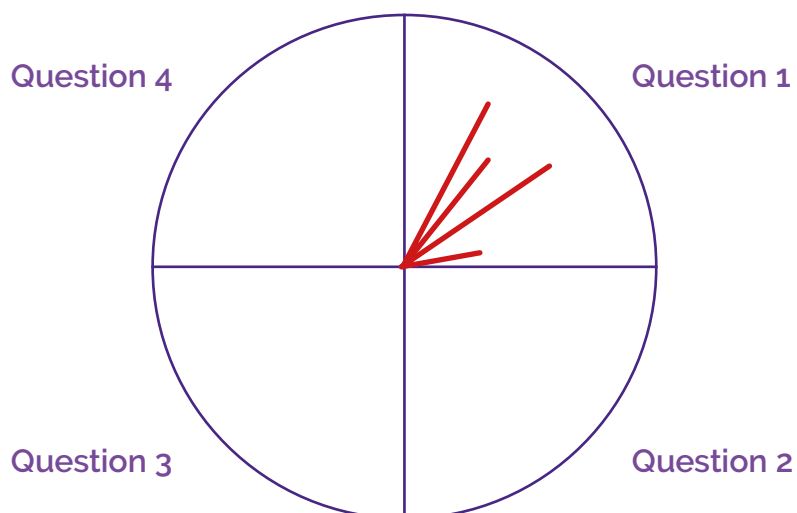
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<sup>7</sup> Courtesy of Inner City Organisations Network/North West Inner City Network Developing a Good Practice Guide to Community Participation (2008)

How much input did you feel you had in decisions made at the meeting?

Did everyone use clear language?

**Step 3:** Ask each person who has attended the meeting to answer each question, by drawing a line in the particular sector, starting from the centre of the circle and drawing outwards as far as they want towards the edge of the circle: the longer the line they draw, then the more positive their answer.



**Step 4:** When everyone is finished, the wheel can be seen by all.

The completed wheel can also be put on display at the start of the next meeting, so that everyone can see what improvements may be needed in how that meeting is run.

If you like, you can have more sectors, or fewer sectors, and you can use any questions you like, for any purpose. The wheel could also be used to quickly evaluate a whole process, rather than just a single meeting.





# Part 3: Resources

## Key terms explained

## Useful contacts

### About Part 3: Resources

This part of the guide lists key terms and what they mean. These are worth referring to. It also provides useful contacts that will help you in your work. They may be able to provide a room for meetings or other help. Finally, we thank all those involved in developing this guide. It is interesting to read, as you can see how you can link in with to continue to work for women's equality.

## Key terms explained

**Campaign:** organised actions by individuals and political parties to influence decision making – for example, public meetings, media coverage and so on.

**CEDAW:** The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) – an international treaty adopted in 1979.

**Feminism:** the view that women are completely equal to men and deserve equal rights and opportunities. The feminist movement works at creating more opportunities for women in public life, challenges stereotypes, fights for women's rights and creates conditions to respect and celebrate the unique contribution of women and girls.

**Joint Oireachtas Committee:** a committee made up of members of both the Dáil and the Seanad to discuss and vote on particular matters.

**Lobby:** an organised attempt by individuals or groups to influence decision makers – for example, by writing letters, making proposals or meeting with decision makers.

**Participatory Democracy:** a democracy in which people may take part directly in the decision-making process as well as or instead of indirectly through the election of representatives.

**Patriarchy:** the control by men of an unfairly large share of power in society. This is not to say that all men want to dominate all women, but it shows that all the systems of power have long been structured to protect the needs of men.

Parliamentary questions (PQs): questions that TDs ask the Government – spoken or written – about any issue for which the Government is responsible. PQs are recorded in the official Report of Parliamentary Debates in Dáil Éireann and on the website of the houses of the Oireachtas.

**Senator:** a member of the Senate or Seanad Éireann in Ireland. Unlike TDs, senators are not elected by the public. Some are appointed by Government, and others are elected by university graduates.

**Submission:** a written or spoken set of suggestions or arguments made to a decision-making authority such as a Government department, a committee or a court.

## Useful resources and websites

**Uplift: People Powered Change** – [www.uplift.ie](http://www.uplift.ie)

### **National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017 – 2020**

[www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls\\_2017\\_-\\_2020.pdf/Files/National\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls\\_2017\\_-\\_2020.pdf](http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/National_Strategy_for_Women_and_Girls_2017_-_2020.pdf/Files/National_Strategy_for_Women_and_Girls_2017_-_2020.pdf)

### **Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Consultation Guidelines**

(November 2016) – <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/consultation-guidelines/>

### **Central Statistics Office**

[www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2016](http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2016)

[www.genderequality.ie](http://www.genderequality.ie)

### **TASC Toolkit to Open Government**

[www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/tasc\\_2016\\_policy\\_making\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/tasc_2016_policy_making_guide_final.pdf)

[www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/tasc\\_2016\\_local\\_government\\_guide\\_final.pdf](http://www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/tasc_2016_local_government_guide_final.pdf)

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>

## Useful contacts

### **Find your local TD:**

[www.oireachtas.ie/en/members/tds/](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/members/tds/)

### **Find a senator:**

[www.oireachtas.ie/en/members/senators/](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/members/senators/)

### **Find your local councillor:**

[www.thejournal.ie/who-is-my-local-councillor-4650649-May2019/](http://www.thejournal.ie/who-is-my-local-councillor-4650649-May2019/)

### **Who does what in Government:**

<https://whodoeswhat.gov.ie/>

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We used the following resources to compile this guide:

- NWCI Roadmap for Change: A handbook for women's groups working together for equality
- Working for Change: Guide to Influencing Policy in Ireland Brian Harvey, Combat Poverty Agency (2008)
- NWCI Guide to effective lobbying for women's group in Ireland (2005)
- NWCI Through the Looking Glass: A guide to empowering young people to become advocates for Gender Equality (2014)
- NALA: A plain English Guide to Political Terms (2015)
- Community Participation Project. Doherty, Ger (2008) Good practice guide to community participation. Dublin: Inner City Organisations Network/ North West Inner City Network.





Participants receiving their certificates at the closing event for Women for Change







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