WOMEN'S DEMOCRACY NETWORK

Gender-Responsive Policymaking HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed as a quick reference guide for integrating gender into each phase of the policymaking process. The handbook summarizes key terms and concepts and provides a step-by-step approach on how to mainstream gender into the policymaking process. The content is based on the *"Gender in Policymaking Toolkit"* a training curriculum developed by the International Republican Institute's (IRI) Women's Democracy Network (WDN).

CONTEXT

Consideration of gender is imperative to effective policy. Women's political participation and leadership are essential for forging a health democracy,[1] economy and society. Despite growing evidence demonstrating the critical contributions women make to improve democratic governance, national security, economic development, health outcomes, and poverty eradication, many obstacles remain to women's full participation in public and private sectors.[2] Women's participation worldwide in national parliaments remains under 25 percent,[3] far below parity with men and below the 30 percent benchmark that research indicates is needed to form a critical mass to influence discourse and decision-making.[4] While the worldwide average of women's participation in national legislative bodies has increased in the last 10 years (from 18.6 percent in 2009 to 24.5 percent in 2019), there is still a long way to go for women to achieve parity with men in politics and political processes.

Gender-responsive policymaking helps more than just women — it is about addressing the different needs and priorities of all persons regardless of their sex. Doing so helps ensure that all members of a community are equally valued, policies are more effective, and the world is more just, productive and peaceful. In effect, gender-responsive policymaking is simply *smart policymaking.*

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[1] Mollman, Marianne. "Why Women in Politics Matter." *Human Rights Watch*, 24 June 2011, www.hrw.org/news/2011/06/24/why-women-politics-matter.

[2] "Women and Democracy: What Does It Take to Change Politics as Usual?" *UN Women,* 14 Sept. 2018, www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/9/compilation-international-day-of-democracy.

[3] "Why Women in Politics?" *Women Deliver*, 28 Feb. 2018, womendeliver.org/2018/why-women-in-politics/.

[4] Dahlerup, Drude. *The Story of the Theory of Critical Mass: Politics & Gender. Cambridge University Press,* 28 Nov. 2006, www.cambridge.org/core/journals/politics-and-gender/article/story-of-the-theory-of-critical-mass/592171C05B9B828DBBDCC121B05780D4.

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

- **What is meant by "gender"? Are "gender" and "sex" interchangeable?** Gender and sex are distinctly different terms. Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, and specifically to biological, physiological and anatomical features. Gender connotes the socially established set of identities, attributes, and roles for women and men in a given culture.

- **What's meant by "gender norms" and how does this relate to policymaking?** Gender norms are the standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform within a particular society, culture and community. **Policy interventions should analyze gender norms to determine how they shape and influence gender roles and whether they contribute to greater gender equality or intensify an imbalance of power.**

- **What is "gender analysis" and what is its purpose?** Gender analysis is the study of differences between women and men in their assigned gender roles in terms of their conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources, and development, control of assets, and decision-making roles. Gender analysis is critical not only at the onset of the process of designing a policy intervention, but it is also important throughout the policymaking and implementation process. It is important to allow for periodic opportunities to review, analyze and reflect on the gender dimensions to ensure gender remains a priority throughout the policy initiative. Without ongoing gender analysis, it will not be possible to develop and sustain a gender-responsive policy.

5 key domains of gender analysis:

- Access and control of resources
- Power and decision-making
- Legal rights and status
- Practices and participation
- Knowledge, perceptions and beliefs

Gender analysis examines two basic questions:

- How will gender norms, roles and power imbalance affect policy results?
- How will the results of the proposed policy affect both women and men?

- **What is a "gender-responsive policy"?** A gender-responsive policy takes into account both women's and men's interests and needs. It is an inclusive policy that also considers the unique needs of subgroups within the dominant framework of gender (for example, the youth; the elderly; people with disabilities; the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex community; ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous groups). Policies can be either gender specific (for example, a policy to promote gender equality in Parliament) or a gender-integrated policy (for example, a policy on natural resource management that includes elements specific to women's and men's needs).

- **Who is responsible for gender integration and when is it relevant?** Gender integration is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, in all areas and at all levels.[5] Integrating an understanding of gender should be the responsibility of all who are involved in the policymaking process as it is relevant for all policy areas. This may include issues that on their surface may not seem relevant but — after a gender analysis — may have consequences or elements that perpetuate gender inequality or have differential impact on certain subgroups of the population.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CEDAW is known as the "Bill of Rights for Women." The treaty provides a comprehensive human rights framework for gender equality. CEDAW has been ratified by 189 countries.

- **How can international norms and legal frameworks support gender integration?**
  There are many international frameworks that promote gender integration and gender equality, including international conventions, treaties and resolutions that can be used to integrate gender into policymaking and promote gender equality. The following are some of the most significant:

  - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

  - UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

  - Beijing Platform of Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women

  - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and subsequent resolutions

  - Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (concerns gender equality)

  - Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)

KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

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[5] "Gender Integration." *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner,* 2020, www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/Pages/GenderIntegration.aspx.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS: DESIGN TO IMPLEMENTATION

In the sections below, we will review the key components for each stage of the policymaking process with a checklist as a reminder of the steps to take to mainstream gender. **The policymaking process is made up of four distinct and sequential stages:** Problem identification, policy design, policy adoption, and policy implementation and oversight.

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              PROBLEM
           IDENTIFICATION



    POLICY
  IMPLEMENTATION                   POLICY DESIGN
  AND OVERSIGHT



                POLICY
               ADOPTION
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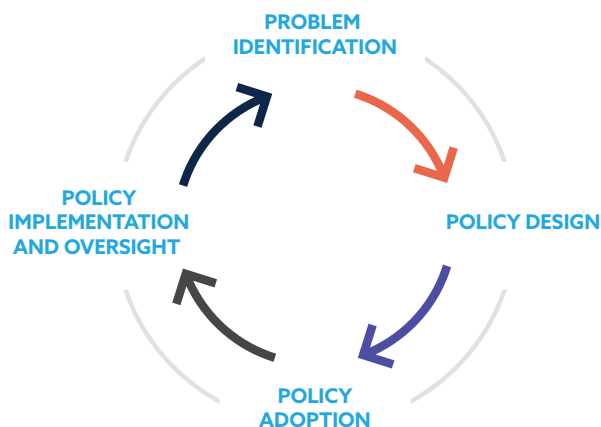
1 PHASE 1: Problem Identification

The first phase in policymaking is to define the problem and your goal as clearly as possible. It is important at the outset to apply a gender lens to ensure gender considerations are incorporated throughout the policymaking process. As you consider the problem and the goal you seek to achieve, it is also important to conduct a gender analysis. The gender analysis will help you identify, understand, and evaluate any gender differences and how gender roles and power dynamics may impact women and men differently. Without the gender analysis, it is unlikely you will have the necessary information to design a gender-responsive policy.

Once you have applied the gender analysis and defined your policy issue you can determine your goal, which is the long-term change you hope to achieve with your policy. Your goal must **address the differing impact of the issue on women and men and include a broader commitment to improving gender equality.**

CHECKLIST FOR PHASE 1

- ☐ Conduct a gender analysis to evaluate gender dimensions to determine policy issue.

- ☐ Define your goal. Does it address the differing impact of the problem on women and men and include a broader commitment to improving gender equality?

2 PHASE 2: Policy Design

Phase two of the policymaking process focuses on using gender analysis while gathering information to design your policy and create a gender-responsive policy intervention. Your policy intervention might involve designing a new policy, amending an existing policy or preparing policy recommendations.

In order to be effective, a policy must be grounded in evidence. This can include quantitative and/or qualitative research on the policy itself or the policy process, as well as perspectives of the stakeholders or those directly affected by the policy in question.

Gathering evidence is an iterative process that can change over time. **By using a gender lens, you can better understand what influences a particular issue. This will help you design more effective policy interventions that best address those factors.** By understanding more deeply what causes, contributes to and influences your issue, you can design more effective policy interventions that best address these factors.

KEY STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE POLICY DESIGN

⬛ **FIRST: Map your policy context** to understand what policies exist, who influences the process, etc. There are several tools that can be used to gather information, including:

Environmental scan: This lays the groundwork for the other methods. This is an initial inventory to determine what policies exist; who has influence over the policies; what, if any, programs address this issue; any existing available research; and whether or not the policies or programs include a gender perspective.

Stakeholder mapping: This exercise maps the stakeholders with influence on the policy issue. It is important to know which institutions have the power to act and the key decision-makers. **The actors involved in the process and their level of interest and understanding of gender issues will be crucial to determining whether your policy intervention is adopted and implemented.**

Gender policy analysis: A policy analysis is the process of analyzing a policy to determine

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How do policy recommendations differ from creating or amending a policy?

Policy recommendations are policy advice prepared for a group or individual with the authority to make decisions (i.e., member of Parliament). A policy recommendation should identify the policy issue and provide analysis and recommendation(s). **Be sure to highlight the gender components of the issue and analysis and clearly state how the recommendations address those components.**

what it means, how it affects stakeholders, and how it should be implemented. **Incorporating gender into the analysis should help determine how policies affect women and men differently.**

Key forces for and against your policy goal: Analyze the barriers and opportunities to reaching your policy goal to give yourself the best chance of success, and be sure to understand arguments for and against your proposal so that your advocacy will be most effective. During this analysis, be sure to identify the gender-related component.

🟨 **SECOND: Conduct research and collect data** based on some of the findings from your mapping exercises. The process of researching and collecting data includes:

Gender Policy Analysis Questions:

- How does the policy address the different interests and needs of women and men?
- Does the policy explicitly address the gender dimensions of the issue in its definition of the problem?
- Does the policy include gender-neutral language that could lead to the exclusion of women?

ACTION	DESCRIPTION
Design your research	Define your research question. What are you trying to answer? Be sure the question incorporates gender.
Create your data collection plan	The collection plan should include the gender-related research questions that have been developed, the data to be gathered, source of the data, who will collect it, methods for data collection and analysis, and how the information will be used.
Analyze data	Analysis can be done using standard qualitative and quantitative methods. Pay special attention to the data linked to the five domains used in conducting the gender analysis.

🟨 **THIRD: Develop your policy intervention.** At this stage, you should be able to decide whether you are drafting a new policy, amending an existing policy or developing policy recommendations. When considering which course of action to take, keep in mind:

- Efficiency: What is the cost-benefit analysis?
- Effectiveness: How likely is the policy to achieve the goal?
- Gender Impact: To what extent will the policy contribute to greater gender equality? Does the intervention redress historical disadvantages between men and women?

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

■ **Always ask how gender is taken into account within each component of the policy, including in the:**

- Background
- Goal
- Objectives
- Outcomes
- Activities

- Beneficiaries
- Indicators
- Implementation plan
- Monitoring and evaluation

- Budget
- Annexes
- Communication strategy

Think about what resources will be needed for your policy to achieve its related goals. An important component to ensure you have a viable policy intervention is building a gender-responsive budget (GRB).

Gender-responsive Budget (GRB)

A GRB breaks down the allocation of resources to address the gender gaps in sectors and government policies, plans, and budgets. A GRB strengthens monitoring, provides information to challenge gender stereotypes, recognizes the needs of the most marginalized, improves efficiency by ensuring expenditure benefits those who need it most, and improves transparency and accountability.

CHECKLIST FOR PHASE 2

☐ Map the policy context by conducting an environmental scan, identifying stakeholders (particularly those with an interest or expertise in gender), conducting a gender policy analysis, and determining forces for and against your policy goal.

☐ Research and collect data. Research question should be gender-sensitive, the data collection plan should consider how to engage women and men throughout, and data analysis should pay attention to the data linked to the gender analysis domains.

☐ Design your policy intervention. Include gender considerations in all components. Pay particular attention to creating a gender-responsive budget.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

3 PHASE 3: Policy Adoption

Phase three focuses on collective advocacy for your policy, and concerns tactics including mobilizing allies, framing your message and creating a gender-responsive communications plan.

🟨 **FIRST: Determine your advocacy tactics.** Your advocacy tactics are the approaches or actions you will take to achieve your goal.

There are two key approaches to advocacy, which may take place in public or private:

- The **constructive** approach uses collaborative actions to reach your goal and focuses on finding solutions.
- The **confrontational** approach uses adversarial actions to reach your goal.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a deliberate and sustained effort to influence decision-makers to adopt your proposal. Advocacy enables civil society actors to hold politicians accountable and amplifies the voices of ordinary citizens.

CONSTRUCTIVE

- Meet with policymakers
- Raise awareness
- Build coalitions with experts and civil society
- Conduct and share research
- Cultivate alliances with policymakers
- Using the media to call attention to policy issues and emphasize opportunity for policy action

CONFRONTATIONAL

- Organize actions such as strikes, protests, sit-ins
- "Naming and shaming" politicians who have failed their constituents on a given issue
- Organize petitions
- Use the media to criticize politicians and press for policy issues

Your advocacy strategy may consist of a combination of collaborative and confrontational tactics, depending on your goal and context.

🟨 **SECOND: Mobilize your allies.** Advocacy efforts are almost always stronger when they bring together a diverse array of stakeholders to demonstrate the broad range of support for your goal. Developing relationships and working collectively with a diversity of actors can help broaden your support base, bring new skills or experiences to your activities, add credibility to your agenda, and demonstrate the diversity of voices and perspectives that support your policy initiative.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

- **Before you can mobilize support for your policy initiative, you need to identify your allies and opponents.** Diversity is crucial to an effective collective advocacy approach in order to build broad support for your goal. As you identify allies, consider whether they are representative of the constituents that are affected by your policy issue and would benefit from the policy intervention.

- **There are many platforms for collective advocacy.** Methods of mobilizing and working with allies can range from formal coalitions to informal networks, which can be permanent or temporary structures, formal or informal, multi-issue or single-issue oriented. Two of the most common platforms are networks and coalitions.

  - A **network** consists of individuals and/or organizations willing to collaborate. Networks are informal and fluid.

  - A **coalition** is a group of organizations working together in a coordinated fashion for a common goal.

If you join an existing network or coalition, make sure to find out if it takes a gendered approach to its work. If you create your own network or coalition, include gender as a core component of its work.

Allies

Allies are individuals, organizations and institutions that can help you achieve your policy goal. **Make sure your allies have a commitment to gender equality.**

Opponents

Opponents are individuals, organizations and institutions that resist the change you are seeking to achieve.

How do you mobilize support? Consider what will motivate various potential allies to support your cause. People have competing demands and priorities and will naturally consider the costs and benefits of their participation in your initiative. You must communicate what they will gain if your policy intervention is adopted and what how they will benefit from joining your movement.

Building personal relationships with your allies is one way to mobilize them. As your relationship deepens, discuss your goal with your allies and ask them to join your advocacy campaign. Some ways to develop trusting relationships include:

- Collaborate on projects of mutual interest
- Help bring attention to their work
- Assist them with special projects

- Share information
- Attend their meetings and invite them to yours

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

Engaging male allies is important and sometimes overlooked. There has been some resistance to involving men in gender and policy work. However, it is increasingly accepted that having men as partners is beneficial, as men frequently hold more decision-making positions in local and national governments. Failing to engage men may limit the effectiveness of advocacy, as well as limit the policy interventions in ways that may perpetuate gender inequality.

Mobilizing male allies should involve helping them to understand the oppressive effects existing gender norms can have on both women and men. You can support men to reflect and understand the benefits the family and community gains from greater gender equality and the special role men can play in rallying others around this cause.

Building support among affected communities and stakeholders who will be impacted by the policy intervention is critically important. The change you seek with your policy intervention is likely to be a long-term endeavor and it may take time for stakeholders to experience the benefits.

To gain support, you should communicate the additional benefits you can provide your allies.

ACTIVITY	BENEFIT
Hold monthly community meetings to discuss the status of the policy (upcoming advocacy activities, implementation status, so on)	Allies feel heard and that they have a stake in the outcome of the policy
During consultations, provide space for participants to network and share their experiences and ideas for creating change	Allies meet people with similar concerns
Partner with an organization that can provide skills training and networking	Allies, and you, learn applicable skills

THIRD: Craft your message. Effective messaging is tailored to your audience and inspires them to join you. Your audience includes individuals, organizations or institutions that can push your policy intervention forward.

• You have two primary audiences:

  • The policymakers who need to introduce, support and adopt your policy initiative and later push for its implementation.
  • Your allies and, in particular, the group of actors who can help influence the key policymakers.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

- Once your audience is identified, the next step is to learn:

    - What issues do they care about?
    - Do they have an interest in gender equality?
    - Do they have a stand on your policy goal?

- After learning about your audience, craft your message. Your message should convey:

    - The problem you are trying to solve
    - The solution you propose to address the problem
    - An explanation of how the audience can help achieve your goal

FOURTH: Create a gender-responsive communications plan. Communicating with policymakers, civil society and affected stakeholders is necessary in all stages and at all levels and a good communications plan is an integral part of the whole process.

Conducting a gender analysis as you create your communications strategy will help ensure gender mainstreaming in all your interactions and communications. Using a gender analysis process will help you ensure that the message is formulated and delivered in a way that is respectful of women and men. Some questions to ask include:

- Do women and men read different publications?
- Do women and men watch or listen to different types of electronic media?
- Do women and men have different media consumption patterns?

CHECKLIST FOR PHASE 3

☐ Determine your advocacy tactics. Know your audience and policy context. What tactics will be most successful when it comes to advancing gender equality?

☐ Mobilize allies. Determine what platform you will join or create paying close attention to gender; identify your allies, particularly those who take a gendered approach; engage male allies and mobilize stakeholders who are impacted by the proposed policy intervention.

☐ Develop your message. Know your audience; frame your message using the problem, solution, action framework; incorporate gender equality arguments.

☐ Create your gender-responsive communications plan. Perform gender analysis to ensure your communication plan reaches and addresses both women and men.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

<table>
<tr><td>**4**</td><td colspan="2">**PHASE 4:**
Policy Implementation and Oversight</td></tr>
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This phase focuses on creating a gender-responsive implementation plan, a gender-sensitive monitoring framework, methods for data collection and analysis, evaluation and using those findings to make adjustments to the policy intervention. Key steps are outlined below:

▮ **FIRST: Develop a gender-responsive implementation plan in order to adequately track gender integration.** The process of explicitly identifying the gender components of activities will help you monitor and ensure gender integration throughout. Activities could include:

EXAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	PERSON (S) RESPONSIBLE
Assess organizational commitment to gender equality	To ensure gender mainstreaming the organization should commit to gender equality. Review existing working cultures, practices, and procedures to see if gender equality is reflected. Internal obstacles for effective gender mainstreaming should be removed, and daily routines adapted to accommodate a gender mainstream.	3 months	Consultant, $500 per day for 10 days	Consultant and hiring manager
Awareness raising	Conduct briefings with staff to ensure they are aware of the gender components of the policy intervention.	3 months	E-survey, $10 per survey	Gender focal point
Team assessment	Conduct an internal team assessment to determine knowledge of and technical expertise on incorporating a gender perspective.	1 month	Trainer, $500 allocated	Gender focal point

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

■ **SECOND: Create a gender-sensitive monitoring framework.** It is necessary to monitor both the implementation process and the progress toward achieving the policy goals and objectives. Continuous monitoring allows you not only to measure progress, but also to reassess your interventions, recognize unforeseen barriers, and adjust throughout.

A gender-sensitive monitoring framework tracks and monitors the gender components of the policy intervention. Some points to consider as you put together your gender-sensitive monitoring framework:

- Consider whether a stand-alone gender equality objective is necessary or feasible
- Match gender inequalities to specific intervention strategies
- Link how the proposed intervention strategies will lead to the desired impact

Gender can be incorporated into the framework in two ways:

- Ensuring the impact, outcome, outputs, indicators and activities reference the anticipated impact for women, girls, men, and boys.
- Including objectives and activities that specifically address gender equality. For example, there could be a specific objective around increasing women's access to resources.

In any gender-sensitive monitoring plan, it is critical to understand the gender equality results that the policy intervention aims to achieve, the concrete actions that are needed to deliver these results, and the indicators that are needed to measure progress.

■ **THIRD: Determine your methods for data collection.** It is important to use a variety of data collection methodologies in order to improve data reliability and help in interpreting the different effects on women and men. The following data collection methods will enable you to gather more nuanced information with consideration for the impact of gender:

- **Document review:** When reviewing documents, notice whether they are gender-sensitive.
- **Surveys/questionnaires:** Be aware of the various literacy rates (women and girls often have higher illiteracy rates) and take appropriate measures to adapt survey delivery to enable the participation of all.

Indicators

Indicators are variables that provide a simple and reliable means to measure achievement. Indicators tell us if we're making progress toward achieving the objective(s), should be gender sensitive and specific and should allow you to capture both quantitative and qualitative information.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

- **Interviews:** When conducting interviews, be aware that women and girls may not feel comfortable speaking to a male evaluator or men may feel out of place leading such interviews. Take steps to accommodate these concerns and create a safe setting for participants.

- **Focus groups:** There are times when mixed groups may not facilitate open and honest conversations. Women and girls may feel uncomfortable speaking in front of men and boys or vice versa. Take this into account when designing your consultation and data collection sessions.

> **When collecting data, always abide by the principal of do no harm, which includes ensuring participants' safety, confidentiality, respect, and nondiscrimination.**

- **Observation locations:** Vary your observation locations. You may be able to glean more information if you interview women in their homes, where some may feel more comfortable and be more forthcoming than they would be in public spaces.

FOURTH: Analyze your data. Ideally, data should be collected and analyzed on a quarterly basis to determine how well the project is achieving its goal. Pay attention to the data linked to the five gender analysis domains outlined in the Concepts and Terms section above.

If your data indicates gender gaps, conduct a gender analysis to determine the root causes and undertake corrective actions to ensure the interventions are carried out in a way that reduces or eliminates those gender gaps.

Consider hosting reflection sessions with individuals who have played a key role in developing and implementing the gender aspects of the project, and with leaders and participants from the affected community. These sessions can reveal which activities are driving toward the objectives and which are falling short.

FIFTH: Evaluate the intervention and learn from your findings. Evaluating and learning are the culmination of the monitoring process. This step is a critical time to reflect and ask: How did we do?

It is important at this stage to gather and document lessons learned and best practices from your policy intervention so that you can improve your intervention in the future. **Always conduct a gender-sensitive evaluation so that you can examine how your intervention helped to create greater gender equality.** This may require commissioning an evaluator with concrete gender expertise.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS

Three important areas to evaluate:

- Have your objectives been met?
- To what extent has your goal been achieved?
- How were the interventions and outputs delivered and the outcomes attained?

When documenting lessons learned and best practices, include some of the obstacles faced, gender gaps that weren't addressed, and how interventions successfully addressed some of the gender gaps.

Once your evaluation is completed, consider making it public and disseminating strategically to promote learning. This is a learning process. Your findings and recommendations from the evaluation may be useful in designing new policy interventions or redesigning your policy intervention. It may also influence your work on other policy issues.

Finally, consider how your policy intervention could feed into the broader gender agenda. Are there successes that should be highlighted, shared for inclusion in other initiatives or potentially scaled up further? Gendered policy interventions often occur in silos and gender analysis continues to be marginalized, thus preventing work from becoming institutionalized. Your aim should be to make this standard procedure.

CHECKLIST FOR PHASE 4

☐ Develop a gender-responsive implementation plan. Ensure gender was effectively mainstreamed throughout the implementation.

☐ Create your gender-sensitive monitoring framework. Reference the impact the intervention has on women and men in the outcome, outputs, indicators and activities or include objectives and activities that specifically address gender equality.

☐ Determine your methods for data collection, keeping in mind how to ensure women and men can participate in each method.

☐ Analyze your data paying close attention to the data linked to the gender analysis domains mentioned earlier.

☐ Conduct a gender-sensitive evaluation to evaluate how your intervention helped to create greater gender equality.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information, please refer to the *"Gender in Policymaking Toolkit,"* a training curriculum prepared and published by the Women's Democracy Network of the International Republican Institute. This handbook and the toolkit were prepared in collaboration with primary author Kelly Case and editor Alex Arriaga, both of Strategy for Humanity, and with the valuable input from members of the Women's Democracy Network around the world. To access the full curriculum, please contact wdninfo@iri.org.

POLICYMAKING PROCESS