Local Government
Gender Assessment & Action Planning
Implementation Guide

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About NDI

NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all.

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Introduction

In growing recognition that gender inequality is a persistent and pervasive global issue, national and local governments around the world have implemented approaches that attempt to reduce gender inequality and thwart its negative impacts. Since 1995, governments have utilized gender mainstreaming methods to confront gender inequality within institutions so that they better serve and engage diverse groups of women.[1] More recently, to hasten positive change and better deliver on policies, programs, and services, government and civil society actors have collaboratively designed and implemented practices that enhance government openness and transparency.

Local governments play a vital part in the day-to-day lives of citizens with responsibility for administering medical services, transportation, parks and other recreational spaces, water, waste and sanitation, community spaces, and so much more. As part of this role, local level institutions are acutely important in implementing measures that help to understand and address the concerns and priorities of diverse groups of women. One way to support this effort is through the use of a gender assessment, an instrument that assists its users in exploring barriers women community members and those that serve in government face when accessing services and engaging with the local government. However, few gender assessment resources specifically for local governments exist around the world. This guide from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), local government gender assessment and action planning, is designed specifically for local level actors including local government officials and staff, civil society organizations and community members, and with significant consideration of the unique position and administration of local governments. *The guide has been created to be applied locally and incorporates three important cross-cutting approaches: inclusiveness, intersectionality and openness.*

Background

Gender inequality continues to disproportionately impact women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals globally.[2] This gender disparity creates serious harm as it manifests itself in uniquely profound aspects: girls are less likely to have access to an education, are more likely to experience sexual violence, sexual exploitation and slavery,[3]

and as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, "carry internalized beliefs about their place, worth and role in society as dependent, vulnerable or incapable."[4] Women are more likely to be victims of human trafficking; earn 60 to 70 percent of what men earn globally;[5] and are more likely to experience food insecurity.[6] Women with disabilities may also face "double discrimination" and are more likely to face barriers and gaps in accessing needed healthcare, less likely to be employed and less likely to be elected to leadership roles.[7] Gender inequality is one of the leading drivers of poverty, with women much more likely to experience impoverishment and suffering compared to men,[8] while women living in areas with higher rates of gender inequality are at greater risk of maternal death.[9] Research from the World Economic Forum shows that because of the lack of parity and existent gender discrimination, it will take 132 years for the global gender gap to close.[10]

Gender inequality also hinders robust, participatory and representative democracy in politics and government at both the national and local levels. Women hold only 26 percent of the seats in national parliaments[11] and data from 133 countries shows that women constitute just 36 percent of elected officials in local deliberative bodies.[12] This discrepancy in representation directly infringes on women's political rights. Increasing women's representation, mainstreaming gender and targeting gender equality reforms within government can remove various intersectional barriers to women's empowerment, which can help ensure that women and girls play an equal role in economic, social, political and cultural life.[13]

This is particularly important at the local level. As the body closest to a community, local governments bear a unique and amplified responsibility to effectively serve the community members, and in particular, marginalized and historically excluded groups, including diverse groups of women. Women around the world rely on local public services such as healthcare, water distribution, housing, transportation and education, among others, but accessibility to these services may be unequal for women, who often face considerable barriers when attempting to access resources.[14]

Local governments, however, can activate measures that reduce barriers to public services. For example, when local governments engage in municipal/city design, utilizing a gender lens can lead to significant outcomes. In recognition of how women and girls may utilize public space differently than men and boys, urban planners in Vienna, Austria, used a gender analysis and

subsequently have implemented more than 60 projects that improve women's access to public spaces. Using a gender analysis to understand where improvements could be made, these projects include increased lighting along streets and other areas, widened sidewalks for ease of use with strollers, new play and activity spaces within public parks and the development of an apartment complex with women and girls needs in mind.[15] Additionally, in Santo Andre, Brazil, municipal officials, in connection with local civil society organizations, created a program focused on increasing social inclusion primarily through enhanced service delivery in sanitation services, infrastructure and public facilities; economic and financial support through micro-credits, employment and income generation, and vocation training; and services related to "education, health, protection of children and adolescents, and combating discrimination on the basis of gender, race."[16] This program led to a greater quality of life for thousands of community members, increased respect for women's roles in daily life, reduced violence, increased prenatal care, increased adult literacy, and higher levels of individual income and business profits, among other outcomes.[17] As Vienna and Santo Andre demonstrate, a gender analysis at the local government level can improve the lives of diverse groups of women and ensure that policies and services respond to the needs of community members.

At the same time, an open government can be a vital tool for reducing gender inequality. Open government is an inclusive and sustainable form of governance that instills transparency, accountability and public engagement and participation throughout all government actions, including policies, programs and services.[18] Open government also fights corruption which has "well-known differential impacts on social groups."[19] Open government can improve the relationship between the public and their government and create long-term, exponential benefits for everyone.[20] Through the implementation of transparent and open government strategies, governments can work with women and other marginalized groups to collaboratively set priorities and respond to public demands. Moreover, by opening the communication and feedback channels between women and the government, greater accountability can be achieved. If local governments incorporate gender perspectives, remove barriers to women's inclusion and operate with the principles of transparency, accountability and collaboration, then women can have a meaningful and active part in their communities and have greater agency over their lives.

This work to address gender inequality occurs within three domains. As set forth by NDI's theory of change for women's political empowerment,

"fostering an enabling environment for women's equal and active participation in politics requires change at the individual, institutional and sociocultural levels."[21] For change to be impactful, all three domains — institutional, sociocultural and individual — must be attended to. At the *institutional* level, the barriers or discriminatory frameworks that limit women's opportunities to participate in politics, including policies and procedures are addressed. At the *sociocultural* level, the discriminatory gender-based social norms that underpin women's inequality, such as the perception or belief that women are not as well-suited to be leaders as men and that politics and local government are a man's domain and other accepted norms are addressed. At the *individual* level, women's individual confidence, capacity and connections, the skills women often lack to participate effectively in politics and government, are addressed.

When interlinking this theory of change with the open government principles of transparency, accountability and public engagement, there exists a potential to accelerate the reduction of inequality gaps. At the institutional level, open government provides broader access to information, programs and services and reduces opportunities for corruption. At the sociocultural level, an open government addresses gender norms and allows for diverse groups of women to participate in and have access to information and services provided by local government. At the individual level, an open government provides resources needed by women so that they can engage with local decision-makers and institutions.

A government that is open and integrates gender-responsive practices is more effective because it "harnesses the experiences and ideas of women, and different groups of women, reduces inequality in access to public goods and services, and contributes to the democratic right of all citizens to participate in public life."[22] This focus on gender within open government addresses both the norms and practices that harm women, as well as designs and implements laws, policies and services that reach all intended beneficiaries.

<u>Guide description</u>

This guide, "Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning" (LGGAAP), can be used by local government staff and officials in collaboration with civil society organizations and members of the community to assess how

well a local government addresses gender inequality and engages with diverse groups of women. Following the assessment, it can help to mainstream gender throughout local government policies, programs and structures and to better understand the potential impact government actions may have on women. Through approachable and practical guidance, the LGGAAP guide helps oversee a process that is participatory and inclusive in order to identify concrete actions, strategies and steps that can be taken to increase women's participation and gender equality at the local government level.

Designed by NDI with an inclusive, intersectional and open government perspective, the LGGAAP guide seeks to enhance meaningful inclusion of the public in local government, which includes administrative districts at both the provincial and state levels. The theory of change for LGGAAP: *If local governments incorporate gender perspectives and gender transformative*[23] *approaches, and operate with the principles of transparency, accountability and collaboration, then women can be empowered to take a meaningful and active part in their communities and have greater agency over their lives.* The two main parts of the guide are: a Gender Assessment Guide and a Gender Action Plan. The guide can be used on its own, concurrently with other or ongoing action plans including those focused on transparency, or can be used in parallel with the co-creation, implementation and review phases of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) action-plan cycle.[24]

What is a gender assessment?

Gender analysis refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.[25] Generally, a gender analysis is conducted before the design stage of a project or policy whereas gender assessments are carried out following policy or program completion.[26] Gender assessments can be particularly valuable analytical tools as they includes four parts: a gender analysis to better understand the conditions that affect diverse groups of women's lives; a review of current policies, programs and activities; an identification of gaps, barriers and opportunities that affect gender inequality; and a set of recommendations to address the identified issues.[27]

In every country and context, it is important to recognize the diversity of women's lived experience of disempowerment. NDI recognizes this diversity,

and any use of the word "woman" or "women" includes women of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) women; women with disabilities; and women who are members of other marginalized communities. It is also imperative to understand how these multiple identities inform an intersectional relationship to power. Therefore, gender assessments must consider the unique challenges and opportunities for different groups of women through an inclusive, intersectional approach that considers the relationship to axes of power experienced by individuals and groups with multiple marginalized identities.

The LGGAAP guide is a gender assessment that evaluates local government policies, programs and structures to better understand their impact on diverse groups of women who serve as local government officials and staff or live in the community.

Other resources exist that can be very useful when assessing gender inequality within different frameworks or structures and should be referenced. The Government of Canada developed Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives within Canada.[31] The International Labour Office (ILO) created *A Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators,* a comprehensive guide that details the steps for a participatory gender audit that involves those within the audited organization in order to "promote learning and ownership of the process and outcome."[32] The Open Government Partnership developed the *Toolkit for More Gender Responsive Action Plans,* which supports OGP national and local members integrating gender responsiveness during the action plan co-creation process.[33] The *Gender Impact Assessment* guide by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) examines "the current gender-related position in relation to the policy under consideration, and the projected impacts on women and men once the policy has been implemented."[34]

Key terms
(*see **Appendix 1** for a more complete list)*[28]

Gender is the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations of women and men in societies, as well as a broad spectrum of identities that do not conform to this binary. The definition and expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl or

man/boy, and sanctions for not adhering to those expectations, vary across cultures and over time, and often intersect with other factors such as ethnicity, class, age and sexual orientation.

Gender identity refers to an individual's own perception, acceptance and expression of their gender and the social constructs therein. A person's gender identity may correspond to that of the sex that they were born with, or it may differ, or not conform to any gender construct. "Man" and "woman" are the two universally accepted gender identities due to a historical, patriarchal conflation with sex. However, there is a broad spectrum of identities recognized across cultures that do not conform to this binary. Social punishments related to non-conformity are rooted in the idea that everyone should conform to the gender binary, and those who do not should be punished.

Gender norms are social rules and expectations that govern the attributes and behaviors that are valued and considered acceptable for men and women within a given culture or social group. Norms are learned and reinforced from birth to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, education, the media, religion, the law and other social institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are "natural" and thus cannot be changed, even though they are "continuously negotiated, resisted and redefined in everyday interactions."[29]

Sex assigned at birth is "the sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy."[30]

Why conduct a gender assessment?

Local governments create policy, oversee and allocate funding, and provide services that play a unique role in the daily lives of community members. Local governments often consider the implementation of this work to be "gender-neutral," or "gender blind"[35] based on the assumption that the creation and implementation of public policy and services benefits women and men equally. However, because gender inequalities are embedded in all societies across the globe, even if laws and policies are written to treat all members of the community as equals, sometimes they are not equitably administered and may negatively impact different groups of women, girls, gender-diverse individuals and other marginalized communities.

The LGGAAP guide brings a gender assessment framework specifically to the work of local governments. Looking at the NDI theory of change, this guide helps local governments and civil society organizations collaboratively answer the following overarching questions, across the three domains for change:

Institutional: Are different groups of women represented in local government, across departments and in elected and unelected positions; do local government policies, services, structures, procedures, etc., include gender-transformative measures and/or indicators; does the local government effectively communicate with diverse groups of women community members; and does the government openly and transparently share accessible information and inclusively co-create policies, programs, events, etc., with diverse groups of women?

Sociocultural: Are there any harmful stereotypes and/or norms that do not allow diverse groups of women to engage with the government, formally and/or informally; what attitudes or beliefs about women's political participation and engagement exist in the local government (both staff and elected officials); does the local government see value in mainstreaming gender throughout the infrastructure, policies, programs, etc.?

Individual: Do diverse groups of women feel like they can meaningfully engage with local government as an institution and with local government officials and staff; are women connected to and have trust in their local government representatives; do diverse groups of women have the same access as men to government resources and services and if not, what are the barriers; are women afraid to express needs and opinions with local government representatives and staff; do diverse groups of women experience violence when accessing or attempting to access the local government, government actors and/or government services; how do diverse groups of women experience violence, marginalization and access to services and resources?

Cross-cutting principles of this guide

The LGGAAP guide seeks to reduce gender inequalities and improve governance at the local level. As such, there are key principles used in gender equality programming and open government initiatives that are important for both the gender assessment and any subsequent Gender Action Plan.[36]

Transparency: The principle of transparency is important with a "view toward achieving greater prosperity, well-being, and human dignity in our own countries and in an increasingly interconnected world."[37] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines open government as the "transparency of government actions, the accessibility of government services and information, and the responsiveness of government to new ideas, demands and needs."[38] As such, this encompasses both governance processes and outcomes, as it includes the public's interactions with the government as well as the policies that result from those interactions.[39] Openness and transparency with members of the public are key to improving services, managing public resources, promoting innovation and creating safer communities.

Accountability: The World Bank defines accountability as the "degree to which local governments must explain or justify to the public what they have done or failed to do."[40] Moreover, accountable governments require high ethical standards and codes of conduct for public officials. Countries who have signed on to the Open Government Declaration commit to "robust anti-corruption policies, mechanisms and practices, ensuring transparency in the management of public finances and government purchasing, and strengthening the rule of law."[41]

Public engagement: Ensuring that a government works for the public good requires informed, organized, active and peaceful civic participation. Meaningful public participation of all people in decision-making and policy formulation promotes trust-building and can improve connections and understanding between civil society organizations, community members and the local government. "Public engagement, including the full participation of women, increases the effectiveness of governments, which benefit from people's knowledge, ideas and ability to provide both accountability and oversight."[42]

 Intersectionality: Any discussion and understanding of how gender equality is being addressed in local government and/or how women interact with local government must take into account the diverse identities that influence gender norms and their societal impacts. In this guide, any use of the word "women" includes includes women of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) women; women with disabilities; and women who are members of other

marginalized communities. The consideration of how these multiple, intersecting identities inform access to power and experiences of marginalization is known as "intersectionality." Kimberlé Crenshaw, a U.S. law professor, formulated the term in 1989: "It's basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What's often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts."[43] Working to analyze institutional policies and procedures, social norms and attitudes and individual agency must take intersectionality into account, particularly with respect to the informal and formal practices of local political and civil society institutions.[44] An intersectional approach shows the way that people's social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination.

Making the decision to conduct a gender assessment

Step One: Consider conducting a gender assessment

As interested parties who care about gender equality in local government (local government officials, staff, community members and/or civil society organization leaders, for instance) begin to consider conducting a gender assessment, it is important to identify how a gender assessment will be used to deliver on strategic, longer-term local government goals. Most likely, there will not be unlimited resources available to analyze every aspect of the local government at once, so identifying the specific purpose of the gender assessment is a valuable beginning step.

Often, the focus of the gender assessment is:
1. A government function: employment, public policy, program, service delivery, information sharing, budget, or others; and/or
2. A specific program or department within the local government.

When making the decision about where to focus a gender assessment, consider where strong internal advocate networks exist to assist with socializing the process, collecting the data, and drafting and implementing the recommendations. There could also be a specific incident or experience that has occurred that makes a focus on one function or department more urgent. For example, there has been a decrease in the number of women applying for a specific position or in a certain department within the local government. In this case, a gender assessment would help the government determine why there is an increasing gap between the number of women, men and gender-diverse persons applying. Is it the recruitment efforts? Is it the application process? Has something changed (e.g., work hours, location, leadership, childcare, COVID-19 protocols) with regard to the position or department? To help determine the preliminary focus of the gender assessment, a community meeting would be valuable in understanding the priorities of the community members, to openly

share initial information about the assessment, and to respond to any questions the community may have.

It is also important to fully understand the assessment process. After choosing a preliminary focus, walk through the entire process and begin to think about needed resources and data, so challenges and issues that might emerge can be discussed. For example, if the assessment is being led by a civil society organization or coalition, an early meeting with local government officials and staff who are likely to be supportive would be helpful. If the assessment is being led by local government officials and staff, a meeting with civil society leaders that have a good understanding of the needs of the community or a public meeting is important. Starting with these allies and beginning engagement at the start of the assessment can help unearth possible issues or concerns.

After the group has a preliminary plan that addresses the potential concerns and questions of all of those involved, materials should be prepared for those who will make the decision about the gender assessment. The materials should make clear the benefits of the assessment to the local government and the community and can be used to promote the assessment to senior government leadership.

To ensure a participatory and inclusive process, it is important to identify the key stakeholders within the local government, civil society and the community at large. Stakeholder mapping is one exercise that can be conducted to assist with this process.[45] Discussions should be held inviting diverse stakeholders to participate in and lead the gender assessment with local government officials and staff. These stakeholders can help shape the focus, secure leadership buy-in, procure resources, implement the necessary data collection and research, develop recommendations, draft an action plan and help to oversee implementation. Absent an inclusive and diverse leadership team and process, the gender assessment is unlikely to deliver representative and high-quality outputs.

The assessment design should also take into account the **"do no harm"** principle, which puts the safety and security of participants first and ensures that any activity does not, *intentionally or unintentionally*, increase the exclusion of an individual or group, or further the status of a dominant group. Communities are not homogenous groups. Interventions such as a new policy or program can sometimes favor a particular demographic within the community over others

that may lose privileges or power. It is necessary to balance the risks to which this work exposes beneficiaries and maintain the social change objectives of the assessment.[46] An analysis of the risks of generating negative effects for communities in the short- or long-term should be conducted as part of the decision-making process about whether to conduct a gender assessment. To mitigate these risks, it is important that the assessment uses a whole-of-community approach that recognizes the diversity and dynamics within communities and seeks out the perspectives of diverse groups within the community.

Step Two: Secure leadership buy-in and dedicated resources

Once a preliminary decision has been made that a local government gender assessment will occur, there are several critical steps to take to prepare. The first is to obtain support from senior local government leadership. They may be elected and/or non-elected leaders, and they are key to alleviating obstacles as they arise, successfully carrying out the entire process, and overseeing ongoing monitoring, evaluation and follow-up. Engaging with senior government leaders and managers to communicate the goal, intent and process will help to respond to any concerns, and it will ensure that community members and local government officials and staff understand the importance of this assessment process. If a change in administration is possible during the gender assessment process, certain activities can prove useful in addressing these challenges, including the participation of officials and staff from all relevant political factions, the clear documentation of all meetings and activities, the adoption of a succession plan for the chair, co-chair and technical secretariat, and the creation of induction materials for new leadership.[47]

If there is a consensus on the gender assessment, senior government leaders and managers can communicate their support for the process and speak

with other local government officials and staff about participating in the gender assessment. To help with this, information should be provided about why participation is important, and how it may lead to addressing the ways in which gender inequality affects women in the community and within local government. Those involved in the assessment can help by making the connection between the work they do and the information sought during the assessment. Externally, communication should

begin with an announcement of the initial launch of the assessment, sharing the overall goal of the gender assessment and a commitment to provide regular, accessible updates to diverse groups of community members.

Dedicating public resources, including funding and staff time, is important for a government-led implementation process. In cases where funding and/or time may be limited, options are available for addressing this challenge, such as engaging with civil society organizations to lead the assessment, gathering as much data and information as possible from desk research, and obligating funding for the gender assessment in future budget cycles.

Step Three: Create a Gender Assessment Team

An inclusive and diverse Gender Assessment Team should be formed to oversee the design and implementation of the gender assessment. The team should represent a wide cross section of the community and government, including elected and unelected government members, senior-, mid- and junior-level staff, and include representatives across marginalized and historically excluded communities. To guarantee representation, the Gender Assessment Team should include individuals from different sectors of the community, representatives from civil society organizations, in particular women's rights organizations, and members of the private sector. When recruiting members for the team, it is important to remember that one woman does not represent all women, so a diverse group of women and gender advocates across age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, education, religion and experience must be included. This team must be empowered to oversee the process, providing continual feedback and input.

Additionally, at least one individual who works in the local government should be assigned the time and authority to oversee the details of coordinating each step of the assessment. This person can be a Gender Officer or Gender Focal Point, for example, but it is of utmost importance that the identified person has the authority to resolve outstanding issues quickly.

Men's participation in the team and buy-in of the gender assessment process is essential. Men, and particularly privileged men, often monopolize political leadership. Many aspects of institutional policy and procedure deter women from engaging with governments and social norms hamper

women's ability to participate fully in decision-making processes.[48] Therefore, men must understand the value and importance of the assessment and take part in the process.

The procedure to select the Gender Assessment Team members should be open and transparent. When recruiting team members, it is advisable to make sure there is a common understanding of the assessment goals and process. Local government and civil society representatives should collaborate on how the team will operate and collaboratively decide any rules of procedure. To maintain a collaborative atmosphere, government and civil society participants must operate in a horizontal manner. Where specific leadership roles are assigned, those positions should be seen only as a means to further the dialogue.

Deciding which stakeholders to get involved in the Gender Assessment Team may not always be clear. One way to handle this could be by starting with a small, core group to establish the basic features and procedures of the team.

This group could include actors that have collaborated in the past. However, in the long term, it is important to reach out to others that bring other perspectives, capabilities or skills. Actions that can be taken to make the team more inclusive may include taking into account hidden costs like childcare and transportation, as well as the time, day and location of the team meetings so that they are accessible for all.

There are three general ways to include civil society members and others in a Gender Assessment Team: open election, invitation and self-selection. In an open election, members of civil society and others directly elect their representatives. By invitation is the most common method for forming a team. In this case, the government invites representatives to participate. Different criteria for invitations can be used, but the most common are the technical capabilities and quality of performance of the organizations, as well as past collaboration. The self-selection process can involve an open call for applications, meetings open to all interested individuals, or using an open application procedure.[49]

Following the creation of the Gender Assessment Team, the team should agree on a scope of work. This scope of work should include a member structure with defined roles and responsibilities for each of the team members; a calendar of team meetings; rules regarding the meetings and decision-making process; a draft communications strategy; and a plan for addressing challenging situations for the team, for example, if team membership changes or government administration changes.[50]

Step Four: Communicate

Good communication is important to create productive interactions between the Gender Assessment Team, the public and other interested parties, and to maintain momentum and enthusiasm among all of the participants. This type of public engagement also demonstrates an ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability to the community.

Once there is a decision to conduct a local government gender assessment, it is important to have an internal and an external communications strategy about the decision and the benefits to the community and local government effectiveness. The strategy should include a timeline for conducting the assessment (*see **Appendix 3** for a sample timeline*), a list of team members who will be the principal communicators, approaches for ensuring accessible communications and a plan for providing regular communications to the public.
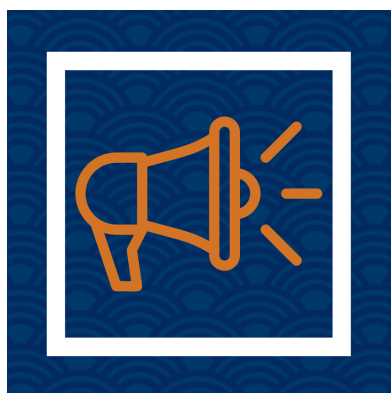
As with the materials created to secure leadership buy-in and dedicated resources, both internal and external communications should clearly relate the gender assessment to the local government's effectiveness and its commitment to gender equality and equity. The Gender Assessment Team, along with other leaders in government and civil society, should announce the gender assessment and what will be accomplished by conducting it. This can take the form of an event or press conference, supported by written and/or digitally accessible materials.

Additionally, the external communications strategy should cover all phases of the gender assessment, regular progress updates and a presentation of results. The communication plan should set out how to highlight final results, actions included in the Gender Action Plan and planned follow-up activities.

An internal communications strategy requires recognition of the reasoning behind the gender assessment and the commitment to following it. Information should be provided to local government staff and officials to share why their participation in the process is so important. Communication materials can help by showing the relationship between the work they do and the information sought during the assessment.

A variety of tools can be used for internal Gender Assessment Team communications including the following: electronic mailing lists (listserv); newsletters; memoranda; video conference services (e.g., Zoom or Skype); social network applications (e.g., Facebook); platforms for collaborative document drafting (e.g., Google Docs); direct messaging services (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger); courier services; intranets and in-person meetings. The most common tools for external communications are social media, press releases, town halls, conferences and seminars.[51]

When communicating throughout this process, it is critical that both the process for engagement and the communications materials are accessible to all persons. Persons with disabilities should have every opportunity to participate in public engagement, and it is critical that the Gender Assessment Team creates a plan that ensures both inclusive access to information and accessible materials. Barriers to participation may include "lack of societal support, education gaps, restrictive legal frameworks, and inaccessible physical environments and communication methods, low incomes and unemployment, and multiple layers of discrimination."[52] The removal of barriers benefits persons with disabilities, as well as society as a whole.

There are four different formats of information: written information (leaflets, brochures and reports), electronic information (information on computers such as websites), audio information (CD or radio) and visual information (videos on TV or a computer). For each, there are standards for making information easy to read and understand for all.[53] In creating communications materials for both the gender assessment, action plan creation and implementation, it is important to be aware of these standards about both the content (words and sentences) and the platform so that all community members can have access to the process and information shared by the Gender Assessment Team.

Conducting a gender assessment

Step One: Define the objectives and desired outcomes

The overall objective of the gender assessment is to provide the local government and the community with a better understanding of the barriers and opportunities for women's participation and engagement with the local government. A public meeting may be important to have a better sense of the community's needs. This will help the development of recommendations and strategies to mainstream gender at the local level to improve services, policies and programs for diverse groups of women.

One of the first tasks of the Gender Assessment Team is to define the specific objective(s) of the gender assessment relevant to the local context. If the focus of the assessment is too broad, there are strategies to keep the objectives manageable. First, the focus of the assessment can look at just one function of the government: employment, public policy, program, service delivery, information sharing, budget, etc. Within that function, the assessment should narrow in on one aspect. For example, an assessment of information sharing could look at either public meetings, public notices, or online materials. The assessment could also focus on a specific program or department within the local government, for example a program that aims to increase access to drinking water or a program centered on building the skills of women entrepreneurs. The assessment could further narrow the scope by focusing on one geographic area within the community.

The gender assessment objectives should be very clear, easily understood and realistic. The objective must clearly state what is to be achieved, by whom, where and when it is to be achieved. Sometimes it may even state why that goal is important. Next, the objective must be measurable. This applies to both the end result and the milestones along the way. It answers the question of quantity — how much, how often, how many? The milestones ensure that the process is on the right track to achieving the objective(s). The team must

believe that it can manage to do what it is setting out to do. Finally, the objective(s) for the gender assessment must be time-bound.[54]

For example, objectives for the gender assessment may include a better understanding of:

- How well the local government supports the work of different groups of women officials and staff who serve in the local government through internal policies and structures (i.e., if the local government human resources policies are gender-transformative);
- How well the local government addresses issues affecting different groups of women community members through policies, services, structures and procedures (i.e., if gender is mainstreamed in the development and delivery of local government services);
- How well the local government communicates and engages with different groups of women community members and/or organizations that represent women;
- How well the local government budget reflects its commitment to gender equality (i.e., if resources are allocated and spent on gender mainstreaming and programs that target support for women);
- How community attitudes and beliefs support (or do not support) the work and participation of different groups of elected and non-elected women in the local government (i.e., if there are harmful stereotypes or norms about women serving in local government); and/or
- How community attitudes and beliefs allow different groups of women community members to meaningfully engage with the local government.

The above are a few examples of assessment objectives; however, there are an unlimited number of possible assessment objectives, and they can be adjusted to what the assessment is seeking to find, as well as the local context.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

At this point in the process, there may be an inclination to decide on a recommendation or even a new program before the research is complete. However, it is important to carry out the suggested research to better understand the focus of the assessment's impact within the community. A gender assessment helps to explore how well a local government addresses gender inequality and engages with diverse groups of women, and carrying out the assessment will generate data-driven recommendations.

Step Two: Conduct desk research

Once the objectives have been defined, the next step is desk research. Desk research provides a framework and should be used to determine how other data collection tools, such as surveys, focus groups and interviews, will be designed. Desk research is important to better understand gender inequality within the community, and will help answer some of the large assessment questions about how diverse groups of women serve, work and engage with local government. The desk research should include a review of publicly accessible government documents, civil society reports, internal government materials and other legitimate and credible sources.

Sources may include:
- Government data on women's representation in local politics, elected office and civil service (specific source depends on the government)
- UN Women country reports
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) reports and shadow reports
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) reports and shadow reports
- United Nations Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (UN IE SOGI) reports
- World Bank reports
- National and local government reports
- National and local government budgets
- Local government plans for natural disasters, health crises, etc.
- Newspaper articles
- Publicly available media and academic public opinion polls
- Civil society reports about local gender norms
- Local government website(s)
- Internal local government memos
- Internal local government workplace policies regarding pay, benefits, retirement plans, etc.

The focus of desk research could include:
- ***Formal institutional context:*** Political system, electoral system, legal framework (including the constitution and party law), local council rules of procedure, judicial system, political calendar, media freedoms.
- ***Historical events, trends and patterns of state-citizen interactions:*** History of local government, the prevalence of peaceful protests, other forms of nonviolent contestation, data on community member inquiries

with local government, political movements, taxation as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP), conflicts.
- ***Social context:*** History of women's formal and informal political participation, ethnic tensions, security environment, prevailing gender norms, marginalization of certain social groups, regional differentiation in terms of citizen rights and duties.
- ***Current information:*** Local government policies for women officials and staff, structures to support women working in local government, gender-focused policies, services, structures and procedures for women community members, gender-specific programs or activities included in budgets.

Step Three: Collect data

Data collection should be conducted by Gender Assessment Team members with the help of a broad range of stakeholders, such as past and current elected officials and government employees, and community members including diverse groups of women and organizations that represent women. Data can be collected through the distribution of surveys, as well as through the organization of focus groups and key informant interviews. *To help collect comprehensive data, it is recommended that surveys are designed and distributed first, and then based on the survey results, focus groups are organized to further explore themes that emerged from the surveys. It is then recommended that key informant interviews are implemented.*

Surveys are important tools to better understand institutional and individual drivers of gender inequality. Surveys facilitate input from a broad population, and can be distributed by mail, online or in person and filled out independently by respondents. There are two main forms of survey questions, open-ended and closed-ended, and the survey guides provided in **Appendix 4** utilize both open and close-ended questions. It is important to survey a broad sample of diverse individuals within the community (randomly, if possible).

Focus groups are useful for gathering qualitative information about a particular issue. Focus groups are usually small in size (between seven and 12 people) and led by a moderator focusing on the participants' experiences, feelings and preferences about a topic. Focus groups have several advantages: they are generally low-cost and provide speedy results; a flexible format allows the

moderator to explore unanticipated issues and encourages interaction among participants; and with good moderation, the participants provide checks and balances in the discussion which can minimize false or extreme views.[55] Focus groups can include single-gender or mixed-gender groups, or utilize a mix of both. Single-gender groups may promote frank conversation because participants may feel safer communicating in this setting, especially if topics are sensitive, such as gender-based violence or harassment. Focus groups should also be organized with any accommodations that focus group participants might need to participate in the session.

Key informant interviews are qualitative, in-depth interviews with people who can provide insight into how the local government works and give recommendations for solutions. This technique has several advantages: detailed and rich data can be gathered in a relatively easy and inexpensive way; and an interview allows for clearer communication and a mutual understanding between the interviewer and participants.[56] Interviews with local government staff and officials would inform how policies, services, structures or public engagement activities are *intended, and the process by which they are undertaken.* Interviews with community members and civil society could focus on how local government policies, services, structures or public engagement activities are *received, accessed* or *perceived.*

To collect data effectively, the Gender Assessment Team must determine the following:
- Which data collection tools to utilize, given the objectives of the specific gender assessment;
- Who will finalize the surveys, focus group and interview questions;
- Who will distribute the surveys (if surveys have been selected as a data collection tool); and
- Who is a trusted individual who will lead the focus groups and interviews, as appropriate (this could be several individuals).

Any form of communication, including research tools, must be accessible in its format and delivered accessibly. Please see these resources for more information on accessible research:
- Designing and conducting accessible surveys from the Imperial College of London.[57]
- Making focus groups accessible and inclusive for people with communication disabilities.[58]

In this phase of the research process, **"do no harm"** practices would include an assessment of the safety considerations for participants, researchers and partners, and a mechanism to manage and protect data confidentiality. Researchers should ensure they obtain informed consent from research participants. Focus group and interview participants must understand that their participation is optional and can be terminated at any time. Researchers must create a safe space for participation and protect the confidentiality of participants. Data must be gathered, stored and reported in an anonymous and confidential way.[59] Data collection should not be disaggregated to include the most vulnerable groups in the community so that potential negative effects for those groups are minimized or eliminated.

The survey, focus group and interview templates and guides are included in **Appendix 4**. As these are templates, the Gender Assessment Team should edit and/or add questions most relevant to the objectives of the gender assessment and the local context as needed.

Step Four: Analyze the data

Once data is collected, the next step for the Gender Assessment Team is to analyze the results and prepare a report.

Key areas for analysis
In general, the major areas for analysis that underpin the LGGAAP guide include...   *Local government **institutional barriers and opportunities** for women*   • Women's representation in elected and non-elected positions   • Policies and structures that impact women serving in local government   • Local government policies, services, structures and procedures that impact women community members   • Local government public engagement   • Local government budget   • Transparency of local government procedures and policies   • Accountability of local government staff to elected officials and accountability of elected officials to the public   ***Sociocultural norms, attitudes and beliefs** about women's participation in local government*

- Harmful stereotypes and/or norms that do not allow diverse groups of women to engage with the government either formally and/or informally
- Attitudes or beliefs about women's political participation and engagement that exist among local government staff and elected officials

*Women's **individual confidence, capacity and connections** that allow engagement with local government regarding information, services and resources*
- Women's engagement with local government as an institution
- Women's engagement with local government officials and staff
- Women's access to government resources and services
- Women's ability to express needs, concerns, priorities and opinions with local government officials and staff
- The presence or threat of violence when accessing or attempting to access local government programs, services or other resources

Together, the information gathered concerning these key areas indicates the major risks, barriers and opportunities regarding women's participation. Data should be analyzed based on different identities, as barriers and opportunities may be different for diverse groups of women. This data can guide specific actions and strategies to support and increase women's participation in and engagement with local government. While each research tool individually may not provide information on every area, when taken collectively, they should provide a comprehensive basis for analysis.

Step Five: Create a draft report

Next, a draft report of the gender assessment that summarizes the steps taken and conclusions drawn from the first part of the LGGAAP process is created. This report should include a summary, the specific objectives of the assessment as defined by the Gender Assessment Team and costs associated with the process. It should also include information about the inclusivity of women's participation in the gender assessment process, while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of information. Additionally, the report should include details on the specific research methods that were used, why they were used, the steps for implementation and other details as needed. Finally, the report should include the data analysis process and an overview of the findings.

The preparation of a draft report should be done using an open, transparent and iterative process with the community, where a draft document can be made public through a consultation process that allows for both formal (structured) and informal input from the community. Based on that input, the Gender Assessment Team can then revise the report and develop recommendations.

Consulting with the public

Regular, inclusive, accessible and diverse communications provide a direct link between all individuals within a community. Updating the public, including civil society, on local government activity helps keep the community informed and serves as a tool for transparency. Good communications can increase engagement, interest and participation from the community. Public engagement also allows for feedback from the community, including voices that have been historically excluded from government.

Tips for an inclusive and transparent public consultation process for local governments to ensure openness and active engagement of civil society, community members and other stakeholders include:

Share information

- *Give details about LGGAAP in advance to facilitate informed and prepared participation in all stages of the process.*
- *Provide proactive, regular, accessible and inclusive updates including notes of events and Gender Assessment Team meetings, decisions, drafts of reports, results and other relevant information.*
- *Maintain an accessible website or another forum with information on all aspects of the LGGAAP implementation process.*
- *Publish an overview of all formal suggestions or proposals from community members and civil society organizations and the local government's response.*

Engage the public

- *Ensure that all interested members of the community can make contributions and observe, or have access to decision-making documentation.*
- *Provide at least one accessible and confidential portal for community members to provide written or verbal comments or questions (this*

could be an email address, page on local government website, Facebook group, etc.).

- *Hold an ongoing iterative dialogue where community members contribute to identifying priorities, setting the agenda and developing recommendations and/or commitments.*

Hold events[60]

- *Create an event team that represents diverse perspectives and experiences;*
- *Pick a location, space and agenda that allows for a diverse set of participants, taking into account the time (both the start time and the length of the event), access to public transportation, availability of childcare and room accessibility;*
- *Include all languages, arranging for simultaneous translation and sign language;*
- *Ensure that the speakers at the event represent the community;*
- *Set up should allow for community feedback, including microphones for participants;*
- *Consider holding your event virtually in order to boost participation and accessibility; and*
- *Hold a series of events, if possible, at different times and locations.*

Means for participation should take into consideration constraints that women and marginalized groups may disproportionately face when accessing technology and transportation, and develop a schedule for engagement that encourages different groups of women's participation.

Moving from assessment to action

Step One: Develop recommendations

After the data has been analyzed and the report has been drafted, a set of recommendations can be designed. To develop these recommendations, it may be helpful to determine thematic areas utilizing the results of the data, and identify if/how the local government can address the issue area. There should be a clear correlation between the gender assessment findings and the recommendations. Potential thematic areas include:

- Women's representation in elected and non-elected positions
- Policies and structures that impact women serving in local government
- Local government policies, services, structures and procedures that impact women community members
- Local government public engagement with diverse groups of women community members
- Local government budget that reflects commitments to gender-focused programs or activities
- Sociocultural norms, attitudes and beliefs about women's participation in local government
- Women's individual confidence, capacity and connections that support engagement with local government regarding information, services and resources

As the Gender Assessment Team is developing recommendations, it is important to think about the number of recommendations — having too many can be overwhelming and distracting, but having too few may undercut the effectiveness of the action plan and its impact. The recommendations can be divided into short-, medium- and long-term timeframes and should include recommendations for women of diverse identities. Finally, there should be a balance, being realistic about what can be achieved and having some "reach" recommendations.

This process should also be iterative with the community, where the recommendations are made public through a consultation process that allows for both formal (structured) and informal input from the community. Based on that input, the Gender

Assessment Team can then revise the recommendations.

Sample recommendations
- Revise procedures to actively recruit and promote women to serve in local government management positions   - Create a women's "affinity group" for women working in local government   - Collect gender-disaggregated data about women's access to health services   - Hold regular public meetings with women with disabilities about passing legislation that ensures access to public buildings   - Budget for evidence-based training to help prevent men's violence against women   - Develop a public service announcement campaign to encourage diverse groups of women to attend town hall meetings with local elected officials

[Step Two: Present the findings and respond to feedback]

After the recommendations have been developed, the Gender Assessment Team can update and finalize the draft report. Building on the previously created content, an example of a report outline would include:

Sample report outline
Executive Summary   - Background and gender assessment objectives   - Summary of the status of women's political participation and engagement in the community and country   - Summary of assessment and recommendations   **Gender Assessment Report**   - Background of the LGGAAP process   - Objectives and scope   - Women's political participation and engagement context   - Methodology and limitations   - Findings   **Recommendations**

1. ....
2. ....

Next Steps

1. Public engagement
2. Creation of a Gender Action Plan
3. Reporting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

After the report is finalized, the results should be presented to the public in an event (or series of on- and off-line activities) that allows for the broader community's participation and feedback. The objectives for the events are to 1) present the Gender Assessment Team report, 2) hear the community's feedback on the recommendations and 3) obtain the community members' suggestions for the Gender Action Plan.

Most importantly, there must be ample time in the agenda for the Gender Assessment Team to hear and collect the community members' feedback. At a minimum, there should be notetakers at the event and following the event, the notes should be publicly accessible. There could also be a written or digital survey distributed at the beginning of the event and collected as participants leave.

Step Three: Design a draft action plan

Following the completion of the report, the presentation of findings, and the collection of public comments, the Gender Assessment Team should create a Gender Action Plan. The Gender Action Plan is made up of a discreet list of ambitious commitments that will be co-created, implemented, monitored and assessed by government and non-governmental stakeholders. The plan should be designed collaboratively and through a public consultation process similar to the one described earlier.

For each commitment in the Gender Action Plan, the team should include the following information (note: the below draws from the OGP Local Open Government Template of Commitment)[6]:

Sample commitment template

Commitment title:
Describe the specific action that the commitment will achieve, so it can be easily distinguished from other commitments in the plan.

Commitment description:

- <u>Problem</u>   *Describe the problem identified that this commitment seeks to resolve.*

- <u>Status quo</u>   *Describe the current state of the policy issue at the beginning of an action plan.*

- <u>Action</u>   *What is the commitment? Describe what the commitment entails, its expected results and overall objective.*

- <u>How will the commitment contribute to solving the problem?</u>   *What are the expected outputs and outcomes once the commitment has been implemented?*

Time frame:
The commitment start date and end date, including milestones.

Primary policy area:
For example (there may be others):
- ☐ Women's representation in elected and non-elected positions
- ☐ Policies and structures that impact women serving in local government
- ☐ Local government policies, services, structures and procedures that impact women community members
- ☐ Local government public engagement
- ☐ Local government budget
- ☐ Sociocultural attitudes and beliefs about women's participation in local government
- ☐ Women's individual confidence, capacity and connections that allow her to engage with local government regarding information, services and resources

Resources needed to achieve this commitment
Include budget, staff, time and contributions of civil society and other organizations and any other resources required. Have the resources been procured, or will they need to be budgeted?

Lead implementing government agency
Include the name of the organization, branch of government, name of contact, their title, contact information (telephone and/or email) and their role in the implementation of the commitment.

Lead implementing non-governmental stakeholder, if applicable
Include the name of the organization, name of contact, their title, contact information (telephone and/or email) and their role in the implementation of the commitment.

Other stakeholders involved in the implementation of this commitment
E.g., government ministries, departments, agencies, civil society organizations, community groups, private sector companies or working groups. Include the name of the organization, name of contact, their title, contact information (telephone and/or email) and their role in the implementation of the commitment.

Sample targets, indicators and milestones

For each of the commitments, it is also important to have a target and/or a way to measure progress toward that target. Here are some illustrative sample targets and indicators:

Women's representation in elected and non-elected positions	
TARGET:	50 percent of local council members are women
INDICATOR:	Percentage of local council members that are women

Policies and structures that impact women serving in local government	
TARGET:	Equal pay for women and men working in similar positions in the local government
MILESTONES:	Salary audit, equal pay policy, salary adjustments
INDICATOR:	Percentage of difference between salaries of women and men including those at the intersection of identity factors working in similar positions in the local government

Local government policies, services, structures and procedures that impact women community members	
TARGET:	100 percent of data collected by the local government is gender-disaggregated

INDICATOR:	Percentage of data collected by the local government that is gender-disaggregated
TARGET:	Better local government response to gender-based violence (GBV) experienced by marginalized communities
MILESTONES:	Survey conducted about local government response to GBV and how it affects marginalized communities, community meetings about local government response to GBV
INDICATOR:	Delivering evidence-based training that aims to prevent men's violence against women, budgeting for mental health providers that specialize in trauma-informed care and responding to calls about GBV, increased reporting on GBV across marginalized communities, increased conviction rates for GBV perpetrators, lower rates of GBV

Local government budget	
TARGET:	Program(s) to increase the number of girls playing sports in the community is fully funded
INDICATOR:	Budget amount for the sports program(s), percentage of sports program cost covered by the local government

Sociocultural attitudes and beliefs about women's participation in local government	
TARGET:	Community members believe women should take part in community meetings, 50 percent of community speakers are diverse groups of women
INDICATOR:	Percentage of speakers at community meetings that are women across different identities

Women's individual confidence, capacity and connections that allow engagement with local government regarding information, services and resources

TARGET:	Women community members believe they can access local government services and resources, increase in women's usage of local government services (to be determined by the baseline data)
INDICATOR:	Percentage increase in women's usage of local government services

Step Four: Align with OGP local action plans, as relevant

Those using the LGGAAP guide may want to engage with an ongoing or completed local Open Government Partnership (OGP) action plan. Ensuring open government is inclusive is an underexplored method for accelerating gender equality and closing critical gaps in information, access and participation. To support inclusion approaches within open government, LGGAAP can be used in parallel with the co-creation, implementation and review phases within the OGP action-plan cycle.[62]

The LGGAAP partners and process can augment the creation of OGP local action plans by:

- Creating a more inclusive co-creation process: The Gender Assessment Team can help engage a diversity of experiences in the multi-stakeholder forums with specific outreach to key under-represented, impacted communities.
- Mainstreaming commitments: LGGAAP can inform the OGP commitment design, incorporate gender and diversity reviews of budgets and provide disaggregated person-level data by gender, age and location, where appropriate, to feed back into policy analysis.
- Adding gender inclusion-focused commitments by sector: LGGAAP can highlight and provide insight into issues such as health care, employment and the care economy, justice, gender-based violence and climate change.

Moreover, Gender Action Plan commitments resulting from the LGGAAP can be incorporated directly into OGP local action plans. LGGAAP results may help to illuminate progress toward open government action plans, adjust targets and timelines to increase the likelihood and commitment completion and inform future iterations of OGP action plans.

> ### *Notable action plan commitments made through the OGP process*
>
> In 2017, Argentina committed to co-creating a national plan with citizens addressing equal gender opportunity. The government published data on women's unemployment rates, the gender pay gap, hours dedicated to unpaid work by women and gender-based violence. This allowed citizens to better understand and address the extent of gender inequality within Argentina.
>
> In Mexico's 2019 action plan, the National Institute for Women, a government entity, committed to work with the Simone de Beauvoir Leadership Institute to design a national policy on public care services through a pilot program. This policy is monitored by citizens to "increase their ability to monitor and shape these services and reduce the gender inequality gap in Mexico and position the right to care in the public agenda."[63]

Step Five: Track progress

Following the creation of a Gender Action Plan, the Gender Assessment Team can either remain intact to track the progress of its implementation or create a small group that will monitor and report on its implementation over the following months to years. It is important that if a smaller group is created, the membership is inclusive and continues to include both government and non-governmental representatives.

To continue the practices of transparency and accountability, at a minimum, the local government should publish regular updates (i.e., at least every three months) on an official, public website or other public forums regularly

accessed by community members about the progress of commitments, including progress against milestones, reasons for any delays and next steps. The website should have a feature to allow the public to comment on progress updates. Moreover, the government should hold community meetings on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. If needed, working groups, including a range of relevant stakeholders, could be formed to implement and monitor specific

commitments. These stakeholders might include technical experts, potential beneficiaries, potential implementing partners and community advocates.

During this implementation phase, **"do no harm"** practices should be continued. Measures should be taken to mitigate any negative effects identified during the gender assessment and a mechanism should be put in place to monitor negative effects created by the implementation of any of the commitments. With regard to data, information collected according to the most vulnerable categories should continue to be managed and protected.[64]

Implementing the guide during a crisis

As many localities are facing unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters or conflict, the strain on local governments is extreme. In times of emergency, governments may move quickly without incorporating inclusion in the governing process. Bringing an intersectional lens using the LGGAAP guide, with transparency and accountability, to government functions, however, is vital to ensure effective government response and recovery efforts. This is especially important as different groups of women, marginalized and historically excluded communities are disproportionately impacted by many of the health and economic hardships. "Gender-neutral" or "gender-blind" government response efforts that do not acknowledge the diverse needs of their community members will fail to provide successful nondiscriminatory results for the public.[65]

A healthy civic space is even more important in times of crisis. Public engagement can create innovative responses and ensure that vulnerable communities receive vital support. Further, transparency is critical to ensure that budgets are allocated where there is the most need. Accountability helps safeguard funds to enact policies and/or programs so that mismanagement and corruption are minimized.[66]

Conclusion

The Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning guide can be used by local government staff and civil society organizations to collaboratively and transparently assess how well a local government addresses gender inequality and engages with diverse groups of women. The two main parts of the guide are a Gender Assessment Guide and a Gender Action Plan. The guide helps local governments and civil society organizations analyze women's political participation at the institutional, sociocultural and individual levels while focusing the assessment on a government function or a specific program or department within the local government. LGGAAP provides step-by-step guidance on how to make the decision and prepare for a gender assessment, how to conduct a gender assessment and then how to translate the assessment findings into a realistic and community-supported action plan.

As local government plays a uniquely critical role in people's lives, we hope LGGAAP will be used to reduce gender inequalities and improve local governance in communities around the world.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Key Definitions

Accessibility
"To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:
   A) Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
   B) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services."[67]

Accountability
Accountability is the "degree to which local governments must explain or justify to the public what they have done or failed to do … Accountability comes in two dimensions: that of government workers to elected officials; and that of elected officials to the citizens who elect them."[68]

Corruption
Corruption is the "abuse of entrusted power for private gain." Corruption can take many forms, happen anywhere and involve anyone.[69]

Gender
Gender is the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations of women and men in societies, as well as a broad spectrum of identities that do not conform to this binary. The definition and expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl or man/boy, and sanctions for not adhering to those expectations, vary across cultures and over time, and often intersect with other factors such as ethnicity, class, age and sexual orientation.[70]

Gender disaggregated data
This is data distinguishing gender-diverse persons, women and men. Disaggregation by gender alone is not enough. Identities interact on many

levels simultaneously. These interactions contribute to systematic and institutionalized discrimination. Class, caste, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, literacy, ability, age and other factors all shape expressions of what it means to be a person and their gender identity.

Gender equality
Gender equality refers to the goal of achieving equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all people.[71]

Gender equity
Gender equity is the process to overcome cumulative and persistent economic, social and political disadvantages that prevent people of all genders from operating on a level playing field. Equity recognizes that people have different opportunities and experiences with privilege. Equity calls for active measures to compensate for historical and social injustice.

Gender identity
Refers to an individual's own perception, acceptance and expression of their gender and the social constructs therein. A person's gender identity may correspond to that of the sex that they were born with, or it may differ, or not conform to any gender construct. "Man" and "woman" are the two universally accepted gender identities due to a historical, patriarchal conflation with sex. However, there is a broad spectrum of identities recognized across cultures that do not conform to this binary. Social punishments related to non-conformity are rooted in the idea that everyone should conform to the gender binary, and those who do not should be punished.[72]

Gender norms
Social rules and expectations that govern the attributes and behaviors that are valued and considered acceptable for men and women within a given culture or social group. Norms are learned and reinforced from birth to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, education, the media, religion, the law and other social institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are "natural" and thus cannot be changed, even though they are "continuously negotiated, resisted and redefined in everyday interactions."[73]

Intersectionality
The consideration of how multiple, intersecting identities (age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or other marginalized communities) inform women's access to power and experiences of marginalization is known as "intersectionality."[74]

Sex assigned at birth

"The sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy."[75]

Transparency

"Transparent governance means that government officials act openly, with citizens' knowledge of the decisions the officials are making. Availability of information on government policies and actions, a clear sense of organizational responsibility, and an assurance that governments are efficiently administered and free of systemic corruption are important components of transparent governance."[76]

APPENDIX 2: Sample Timeline for a Gender Assessment[77]

This timeline is provided to help the Gender Assessment Team plan ahead and think through each step of the gender assessment process. This can take from three months to a year to conduct the assessment. The Gender Assessment Team should create a timeline planning document to guide the process. Keep in mind that conducting an assessment process such as this nearly always encounters unexpected obstacles and/or delays along the way. This is inevitable. Don't get discouraged. The following timeline is intended to provide an estimate of how long each step of the process might take. These are estimates and will vary depending on institutional circumstances. The team should use its experience to realistically forecast how long each step will take.

Before the Assessment – one month
- Create a Gender Assessment Team to conduct the assessment: This can be an existing gender team, or it might be a new structure set up to carry out the assessment. It should have representation from all departments and levels of the organization as well as gender and other diversity.
- Team members should become familiar with the gender assessment process.

Beginning the Assessment – up to one month
- At the beginning of the process, develop a strong timeline and projected dates for each stage of the gender assessment process.

Conducting the Assessment – two to six months
- The process can take between two and six months to complete. Each step requires planning and logistical details that can and often do meet with unexpected roadblocks.
- Conducting the survey takes several weeks from start to finish, data analysis is time-consuming, and setting up and conducting focus group conversations also takes several weeks.

Ending the Assessment – one week
- To complete the assessment, the Gender Assessment Team will unveil the Gender Action Plan widely. To senior leadership, the team communicates the activities and recommendations contained in the Gender Action Plan, and to all staff and community members, the team

will communicate how gender integration will impact the delivery of services and the implementation of programs. In addition, the team will need to ensure that staff understand how their responsibilities and standard operating procedures may have changed.

After the Assessment – ongoing
- The ultimate aim of this process is for the local government to create a mechanism that supports ongoing gender integration, as well as provide the team or another, smaller working group with a way to assess, at regular intervals, how the local government is doing to integrate gender. The Gender Action Plan is that mechanism, but it must be reviewed regularly, and its timetable of activities updated and monitored for completion. The Gender Assessment Team may wish to add new activities as others are completed. Some organizations conduct a gender assessment every five years as one way of assessing the Gender Action Plan elements and progress.

APPENDIX 3: Additional Resources

- Government of Canada GBA+: Step by Step Video
  https://www.women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/microlearning-videos/gbaplus-step-by-step.html

- European Institute for Gender Equality Gender Impact Assessment
  https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment

- International Labour Office Manual for Gender Audit Facilitators
  https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_187411.pdf

- NDI Men, Power and Politics Program Guidance
  https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Men%2C%20Power%20and%20Politics%20Program%20Guidance%2011_20_2020%206.pdf

- NDI Win With Women Assessment Tool
  https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/English%20-%20WWW%20Assessement%20Tools.pdf

- OGP Actions for a More Inclusive Open Government Partnership
  https://www.opengovpartnership.org/actions-for-a-more-inclusive-open-government-partnership/

- OGP Gender & Inclusion Fact Sheet
  https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Gender-_-Inclusion-fact-sheet.pdf

- OGP Local Handbook
  https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ogp-local-handbook/#annex2

- San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, *Designing and Implementing a Meaningful Gender Analysis* (PowerPoint Presentation)
  https://sfgov.org/dosw/sites/default/files/DOSW%20Gender%20Analysis%20Toolkit.pdf

APPENDIX 4: Illustrative Research Instruments

The below research instruments - survey template, focus group template, and interview template - are samples and are illustrative. The templates should be modified to ensure the research tools are designed to evaluate the unique objective(s) of each gender assessment, as well as amended for the local context. This editing could include the addition or removal of some of the sample questions in each template.

ILLUSTRATIVE SURVEY TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION (for all surveys)

This survey is supported by _____. As the formal governing structure closest to citizens, local governments have a unique role in improving and ensuring gender equality. This survey is part of a research methodology being conducted through a local government gender assessment and action planning process to explore how women interact with their local government as community members and/or personnel or representatives, as well as how reforms may remove barriers to women's equal role in public life. The results of this survey will be summarized, reported to the public and will help to inform future local government policies, programs, structures, services, employment practices, budgets and/or other areas of concern.

INSTRUCTIONS (for all surveys)

Your answers to these questions are confidential and anonymous. Individual responses will not be disclosed to government officials or other individuals or groups.[78] Your response is completely voluntary, and there will be no penalty for not responding. There are no "wrong" answers on this survey; your answers will help us understand how you think about and interact with your local government and to guide follow-on discussions. We value your opinion on this topic and appreciate your time and input. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

SAMPLE CORE QUESTIONS (for all surveys)

General Information

What is your gender?

> Man / Woman / Transgender man / Transgender woman / Genderqueer / Gender non-conforming / Prefer to Self-Describe, below / Prefer Not to Answer
> Self-Describe:

What is your age?

> 0–19 / 20–29 / 30–39 / 40–49 / 50–59 / 60–69 / 70+

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

> Primary / Secondary / Tertiary / Other

What is your current, primary occupation?

- How long have you been in that position?
- If not in an elected position now, have you ever been elected to local government office?

● If yes, what is/was your elected position and when did you serve?

<u>Sociocultural Information</u>
1. Which phrase best describes your community?
   a. My community believes a woman should only do her domestic duties in the home and not be in public for any reason
   b. My community believes a woman may work outside the home with the permission of her husband or family
   c. My community believes a woman may engage in politics if she has permission from her husband or family
   d. My community believes a woman may engage in work and politics as long as her domestic duties remain a priority
   e. My community believes a woman may freely choose to engage in politics regardless of permission or domestic duties

2. Please select the statements from the list below that you personally agree with:
   a. A women's role is in the home and with domestic duties
   b. Gender equality is a women's issue
   c. Men make better leaders
   d. Women who participate in local government are not qualified
   e. Women are too emotional to serve in local government
   f. Women are capable leaders
   g. More women should be represented in local government
   h. Women elected officials are effective in their jobs

3. Negative attitudes and beliefs discourage women from participating in government, either by running as a candidate, accessing local government services or connecting with their representative.
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

4. Elected leaders and local government staff see value in taking into account how policies, services and structures will affect women.
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

5. Elected leaders and local government staff see value in communicating transparently and accessibly with different groups of women.
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

<u>Institutional Information</u>

6. Are there local government policies that address gender inequality for women serving in this local government? Please mark all that you know of:
   - ☐ Pay equity
   - ☐ Family leave
   - ☐ Maternity leave
   - ☐ Paternity leave
   - ☐ Parental leave
   - ☐ Sexual harassment
   - ☐ Non-retaliation
   - ☐ Anti-discrimination
   - ☐ Responding to domestic violence
   - ☐ Health and safety
   - ☐ Lactation room access
   - ☐ Childcare benefits
   - ☐ Equal opportunity for employment
   - ☐ Recruitment
   - ☐ Professional development
   - ☐ Other: _____

7. How well are policies implemented?
   - ☐ The policies exist, and all are evenly implemented, upheld and updated
   - ☐ The policies exist, but some or all are <u>unevenly</u> implemented, upheld and updated
   - ☐ The policies exist, but some or all <u>are not</u> implemented, upheld and updated
   - ☐ The local government does not have any such policies
   - ☐ I don't know

8. These policies have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within the local government.
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

9. Are there local government structures or practices that address gender inequality for women serving in this local government? Please mark all that you know of:
   - ☐ A "women in government" affinity group or similar

☐ An office of non-discrimination
☐ Effective training on sexual harassment
☐ Mechanisms for safe and confidential reporting
☐ Other: _____

10. These structures have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within the local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

11. Does the local government budget reflect a commitment to gender equality for women serving in this local government? Please mark all that you know of:
☐ Pay equity
☐ Pay equity audit
☐ Paid family leave
☐ Paid maternity leave
☐ Paid paternity leave
☐ Paid parental leave
☐ Childcare benefits
☐ Space for lactation room and supplies
☐ Training on sexual harassment, including budgeting for external consultant
☐ Retirement accounts
☐ Employment of a gender focal point
☐ Other: _____
☐ I don't know

12. These budget items have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within the local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

13. Does the local government utilize any of the following policies, practices or actions to advance transparency and openness within the local government? Please select all that apply.
☐ Created and implemented a local open government action plan, but with no specific commitments that target gender inequality
☐ Created and implemented a local open government action plan with commitments focused on advancing gender equality
☐ Collaborates openly and effectively with civil society
☐ Collaborates openly and effectively with community members
☐ Instituted open data policies
☐ Instituted access to information policies

☐ Instituted public accountability measures
☐ Instituted open procurement policies
☐ Regularly publishes information in an open, accessible manner (e.g., on a digital platform with access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing)
☐ Dedicated funding to openness and transparency practices (e.g., regular maintenance of local government website or hiring of open government focal point)
☐ Open budgeting
☐ Other: _____
☐ I don't know

14. These openness and transparency practices, policies or actions have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within local government.
     Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

15. Policies or legislation created by the local government are evaluated for impact on women and marginalized communities.
     Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

16. Services provided by the local government are evaluated for impact on women and marginalized communities.
     Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

17. Events held by local government officials or staff are organized in an accessible manner and are organized with women's needs in mind (e.g., time of day selected to enhance women's inclusion and participation in the event).
     Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

18. Services and programs that serve or affect women are appropriately staffed and resourced.
     Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

19. Does the local government regularly collect gender-disaggregated data?
     Yes / No / Somewhat / Unclear

Individual Information

20. I have the resources I need to communicate effectively and connect with those I represent, in particular diverse groups of women and other marginalized communities.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

21. I am listened to and respected by my colleagues.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

22. The workplace environment within the local government is a welcoming, respectful place for diverse groups of women to work.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

23. I face barriers in accessing resources or services I need to do my job effectively.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

24. Local government leaders take my suggestions, ideas, feedback or reports seriously.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

25. I have the resources I need to implement initiatives, policies or practices related to advancing government openness and transparency.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

26. I am utilizing open government initiatives, policies or practices to address gender inequality within the community and/or within the local government.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

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SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

6. The local government has utilized feedback from past assessments with gender-related data to adjust practices, policies or services.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable

7. The local government is making progress toward addressing gender inequality and inequity within the institution.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

8. The local government adequately maintreams gender throughout the institution.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

9. The local government's recruitment practices are effective in hiring and retaining diverse women employees.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

10. The local government has put into practice any policies, structures or practices that marginalize certain groups of women, including women with disabilities, women of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) women and women who are members of other marginalized communities.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

11. If applicable, the local government's training program on harassment is effective in combating men's violence against women within the local government.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable (no training program provided)

12. If applicable, the local government's training program on discrimination is effective in addressing discrimination within the local government.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable (no training program provided)

13. The local government's interactions or rules with media do not discriminate against women elected officials and staff (e.g., do not preference men officials).
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

14. Local government campaign and political party rules do not discriminate against women elected officials.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

15. Local open government policies or action plans are meaningfully co-created with diverse groups of women in local government and women within the community.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

16. Local government evaluates and ensures the inclusion of women and gender-sensitive measures in all stages of policy development.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

17. Strategic plans integrate gender-sensitive measures.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

18. Policies are proactively co-created with community groups, including women's rights civil society organizations.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

19. The local government website, portal or other official channels are designed and regularly evaluated to understand whether diverse groups of women are able to access the mechanism.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Individual Information

20. I have experienced sexual or gender-based harassment or violence from coworkers, including those in elected or staff positions.
    Yes / No / Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer

21. I have experienced sexual or gender-based harassment or violence from community members.
    Yes / No / Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer

22. I am respected by men colleagues.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

23. I receive support (informal or formal) from local government officials and staff to implement initiatives related to advancing gender equality.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

24. I believe the local government is not doing enough to prioritize gender mainstreaming in the institution and reducing gender inequality in the community.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

25. I believe diverse groups of women are well-represented in the local government, including within various departments, committees and offices, as well as within elected positions.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

26. I believe the government could do more to evaluate how government openness and transparency address gender inequality.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS/THE PUBLIC

<u>Institutional Information</u>

6. There are local government policies that address gender inequality in the community.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

7. There are local government structures or practices that address gender inequality in the community.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

8. There are local government programs or services that address gender inequality in the community.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

9. The local government effectively communicates to diverse groups of women community members about policies and programs that address gender inequality.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

10. The local government openly and transparently shares information with diverse groups of women community members about policies and programs.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

11. Events held by local government officials or staff are organized in an accessible manner and are organized with women's needs in mind (e.g., time of day selected to enhance women's inclusion and participation in the event).
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

12. The local government budget reflects a commitment to policies and programs that address gender inequality.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Unclear

13. The local government budget reflects a commitment to inclusive public engagement.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

14. The local government practices transparency and openness with regard to its policies, structures, practices and programs.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

15. Open government actions taken by the local government have increased gender equality.
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

<u>Individual Information</u>

16. Do you believe women should serve in local government as elected officials?
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

17. Have you ever contacted/spoken with/engaged with local government officials?
   Yes / No / I don't know

18. Do you believe women should serve in local government as staff?
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

19. Have you ever contacted/spoken with/engaged with local government staff?
   Yes / No / I don't know

20. Do you believe women in the community should have access to local government services?
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

21. Have you ever accessed local government services?
   Yes / No / I don't know

22. Did/do you face any barriers in accessing services?
   Yes / No / Somewhat / I don't know

23. Do you believe women in the community should access information from the local government?
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

24. Have you ever accessed information from the local government?
   Yes / No / I don't know

25. Did/do you face any barriers in accessing information?
   Yes / No / Somewhat / I don't know

26. Do you believe women in the community should contact/speak with/engage with elected officials and staff from the local government?
   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

27. Do you feel like you have the ability and opportunity to contact/speak with/engage with elected officials and staff from the local government?
>   Yes / No / Somewhat / I don't know

28. Have you ever contacted/spoken with/engaged with elected officials and staff from the local government?
>   Yes / No / I don't know

29. Do you feel like local government staff and officials take community members' suggestions, ideas, feedback or reports seriously?
>   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

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SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DIVERSE GROUPS OF WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Institutional Information

6. The local government publishes measures or actions it is taking to address how gender inequality and inequity are experienced within the community.
>   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

7. Local government leaders and elected members are representative of the community.
>   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

8. Policies and services provided by the local government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have had a positive impact on women's lives.
>   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

9. Policies that advance openness and transparency within government have had a positive impact on women's lives.
>   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Unclear / Not Applicable

10. Policies that advance openness and transparency within government have reduced corruptive behavior from local politicians.
>   Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Unclear / Not Applicable

11. Women community members have equal access to events the local government organizes.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

12. Women community members have equal access to services or programs provided or funded by the local government.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

13. Women community members have equal access to communications from the local government.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

14. Policies, services and programs that the local government organizes and/or funds have been effective in reducing gender inequality within the community.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

15. The local government actively collaborates with local women's rights organizations and/or diverse civil society organizations.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Individual Information

16. I believe my representative(s) are committed to addressing my priorities and concerns.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

17. I believe my representative(s) are committed to addressing the priorities and concerns of diverse groups of women.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

18. I do not face any issues in getting in touch with my representative(s).
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

19. I believe the local government, officials and/or staff utilize inclusive and respectful language in their communications.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

20. I trust my representative(s) and their staff.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

21. I believe more diverse groups of women should be elected to office.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

22. I have been discriminated against by the local government and/or elected officials and staff.
    Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

23. I have experienced sexual or gender-based harassment, including violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, hate speech, exploitation, unwanted sexual contact, insults and requests for financial compensation from elected officials or staff of the local government council, agencies or departments.
Yes / No / Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer

24. I believe the local government is doing enough to address men's violence against women in the community.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

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CONCLUSION (for all surveys)

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

ILLUSTRATIVE FOCUS GROUP TEMPLATE

FOR THE PLANNER (for all focus groups)

This tool is intended to be completed within a group setting. Included below is a template list of questions for the facilitator to consider, though the questions asked should be developed based on the questions and results of the distributed surveys. The Gender Assessment Team can modify the questions below and/or include additional questions. As a starting point, using the following questions, the facilitator should probe for detailed information and solicit specific examples to provide as complete an answer as possible. The facilitator has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted.

The questions below include both closed- and open-ended questions. Many questions also include specific guidance for the facilitator on the information that is necessary to gather for the assessment; in some cases, a list of options for the facilitator to mark or refer to is included. In general, the questions in **bold** are for the facilitator to ask the participants, and the text in *italics* is guidance for the facilitator on the types of information to collect.

Throughout the interview, the facilitator's role is to guide the discussion toward these subjects to get the relevant information. The facilitator has a responsibility to encourage the participants to answer the questions and explain their answers, as much as they feel comfortable. Participants should never be compelled to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. If participants are comfortable, some helpful ways to get more complete responses include:
- "Can you talk about that more?"
- "Help me understand what you mean."
- "Can you give an example?"

It is good focus group practice to paraphrase and summarize long, complex or ambiguous comments. This demonstrates active listening, and ensures that the participant's intended answer has been clearly understood. The facilitator must remain neutral throughout the focus group, refraining from nodding/raising eyebrows, agreeing/disagreeing or praising/disparaging any comment made by the participant.

PREPARATION (for all focus groups)

Before selecting a space for the focus group, it should be reviewed for accessibility to ensure all participants will have access and feel comfortable in the room. Other accommodations should be made, such as securing interpretation, to ensure participants are able to effectively engage in the

discussion. The room should have a door for privacy, which is closed during the discussion. It may be helpful to arrange the chairs in a circle or around a table, so that participants can see and talk to each other easily.

When participants arrive, ask them to fill out a participant information sheet, sign a consent form and take a table card. The table cards should only include numbers to identify participants, so that the notetaker can refer to participants' comments in the notes by their number rather than by name.

INFORMATION (for all focus groups)
Prior to beginning the focus group, please fill in the below information.
- Date and Time of Focus Group:
- Location:
- Name of Facilitator:
- Participant information:
- Other Notes/Comments:

FACILITATOR WELCOME AND INSTRUCTIONS (for all focus groups)

Please give the following welcome and introduction to the participants. This is important to ensure each is aware of the purpose and other important information about the focus group. If you have an assistant facilitator taking notes, please indicate their name and the role they will be playing as indicated in the first paragraph below.

"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. We recognize that you are busy, and we thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. My name is _____(your name)_____ and I will be guiding our discussion today. This focus group is supported by _____.

As the formal governing structure closest to community members, local governments have a unique role in improving and ensuring gender equality. This focus group is part of a research methodology being conducted through a local government gender assessment and action planning process to explore how women interact with their local government and how reforms may remove barriers to women's equal role in public life. The results of this focus group will be summarized, reported to the public and will help to inform future local government policies, programs, structures, employment practices, budgets and/or other areas of concern.

Before we begin, I'd like to discuss with you some of the ideas we are exploring in this focus group:

Gender is the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations of women and men in societies, as well as a broad spectrum of identities that do not conform to this binary. The definition and expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl or man/boy, and sanctions for not adhering to those expectations, vary across cultures and over time, and often intersect with other factors such as ethnicity, class, age and sexual orientation.

Gender norms are the social rules and expectations that govern the attributes and behaviors that are valued and considered acceptable for men and women within a given culture or social group. Norms are learned and reinforced from birth to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, education, the media, religion, the law and other social institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are "natural" and thus cannot be changed, even though they are 'continuously negotiated, resisted and redefined in everyday interactions.'

In our study, we are trying to better understand how gender and gender norms impact women serving in the local government, the policies and programs of the local government, public engagement with women community members and/or organizations that represent women and the local government budget.

We would like you to be as open, honest and accurate in your comments as you can. Some of the questions in this discussion may be personal and sensitive. However, you are in no way obligated to speak if you do not feel comfortable or prefer not to answer certain questions. Your participation is voluntary, and you can leave the focus group at any time without negative repercussions. Any information you share today will be kept confidential and anonymous. No statements will be attributed to an individual, or even a specific neighborhood or place where the focus group was conducted. Your data will be protected and only those serving on the Gender Assessment Team will have access to data, though no responses will be attributable to any one person. There are no right or wrong answers; all we encourage are open and honest responses. Are you willing to participate in this focus group?

There are a few ground rules for this discussion.
1. We want you to do the talking. We would like everyone to participate. When you do have something to say, please do so. There are many of you in the group, and it is important that we hear the views of each of you.

2. There are no right or wrong answers. Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. We want to hear a wide range of opinions.
3. Only one person speaks at a time. You may want to interrupt when someone is talking, but please wait until they have finished.
4. You do not have to speak in any particular order.
5. You do not have to agree with the views of other people in the group.
6. What is said in this room should not be discussed outside of the focus group. We want everyone to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up.

Do you have any questions?

OK, let's begin."

SAMPLE CORE QUESTIONS (for all focus groups)

Warm-up question:
What do you like most about living here?

Sociocultural Information
1. **What attitudes/beliefs about women's participation in local government exist for both elected and unelected officials?**
   Guide the participants to share their thoughts on this topic broadly.

2. **Are there any harmful stereotypes and/or norms that prohibit women community members from engaging with the local government formally and/or informally?**
   Guide the participants to share their thoughts on this topic broadly.

Institutional Information
3. **How does the local government communicate about its policies and services to the community?**

4. **Do you feel that the local government is equally good at communicating its policies, programs, services and other information to all members of the community? For example, women, young women, gender-diverse individuals, women with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, ethnic and religious minority women, and linguistic minorities?**

5. How does the local government solicit feedback on how to improve its policies, programs and services?

6. Does the local government have any specific mechanisms to consult with women community members and encourage women's participation?
   a. If so, are these mechanisms effective?

7. Is the local government effectively delivering services for women? If so, how? If not, why not/what are the barriers?

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

1. Do you think diverse groups of women are sufficiently represented in all areas of the local government (e.g., different committees, events, departments, caucuses, etc.)? Why/why not?

2. Do you think that women face barriers to their effective and active participation in local government?
   If yes, guide attendees to describe what barriers they believe women face.

3. Does the local government have any internal policies or structures that support women's effective and active participation?
   If yes, guide attendees to describe what policies or structures they have. Participants may indicate certain policies or whether they do not know. A list of potential policies is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
   - *Pay equity*
   - *Family leave*
   - *Sexual harassment.*
   - *A "women in government" affinity group*
   - *An office of non-discrimination*

4. Does the local government budget reflect a commitment to gender equality? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
   Participants may indicate certain budget items or whether they do not know.

5. Are there open government champions or leaders with the local government?

    a. **If so, how has their support for an open and transparent government affected implementing open policies, services, action plans, communications, etc.?**

6. **In what ways have open government policies, services, communications, action plans, etc., advanced gender equality?**

7. **How would you characterize the culture within the local government? Is it welcoming to diverse groups of women? If not, how do the negative stereotypes or norms affect your ability to do your job?**

8. **Are you able to have a work-life balance?**
    a. **Are there any policies/services/programs — or lack thereof — that affect your ability to maintain a work-life balance?**

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

<u>Institutional Information</u>
1. **How effective do you believe the local government is at designing and enacting gender-sensitive policies and services?**
    a. **What makes it effective or ineffective?**

2. **How can gender-sensitive budgeting be improved?**

3. **In what ways can the local government, including those in elected positions, improve community outreach and communications, in particular with diverse groups of women?**

4. **How well does the local government implement events that are inclusive and accessible to all members of the community (e.g., town hall meetings)?**

<u>Individual Information</u>
5. **As members of the local government, have you received any feedback from women community members on how programs, policies or services have addressed their needs or concerns?**

6. **What is the process you take to design and evaluate gender-transformative policies, events or services?**

7. **What is the process you take to address diverse groups of women community members' concerns and priorities? For example, if you are notified someone is having trouble accessing a local government service, what steps do you take to actively address the issue?**

8. **Does your political party provide support to women elected officials once in office? Staff of women elected officials?**

9. **How has COVID-19 impacted how you operate, develop policies, communicate with the community and address areas of need for women community members?**

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

<u>**Institutional Information**</u>
1. **Do you think diverse groups of women are sufficiently represented in local government? Why or why not?**

2. **Do you think that women face any barriers to their effective and active participation in local government?**
   If yes, guide FG attendees to describe what barriers they believe women face.

3. **Do you believe the local government is effectively communicating with community members about policies and programs that address gender inequality?**
   Participants may indicate certain communications or whether they do not know. A list of potential communication tools is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
   - *Newspaper*
   - *Radio*
   - *Television*
   - *Social media, including Twitter, Facebook*
   - *In-person events such as town hall meetings*
   - *Online events*

4. **What is the local government communicating about?**
   Participants may indicate certain topics or whether they do not know. A list of potential topics is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.

- *Local government policies*
- *Local government programs*
- *Information/data collected*
- *Elected official activities*
- *Upcoming in-person or online events*

5. **How does the local government budget reflect a commitment to gender equality?**
   Participants may indicate certain topics or whether they do not know. A list of potential topics is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
   - *Funds programs that impact women community members*
   - *Funds services for women community members*
   - *Funds staff specifically to address the needs of women community members*

6. **How does the local government budget reflect a commitment to public engagement?**
   Participants may indicate certain topics or whether they do not know. A list of potential topics is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
   - *Funds newspaper/television/radio advertisements about local government activities*
   - *Funds online communications about local government activities*
   - *Funds events to engage community members*

7. **Does the local government utilize any of the following policies, practices or actions to advance transparency and openness within the local government?**
   - *Created and implemented a local open government action plan, but with no specific commitments that target gender inequality*
   - *Created and implemented a local open government action plan with commitments focused on advancing gender equality*
   - *Collaborates openly and effectively with civil society*
   - *Collaborates openly and effectively with community members*
   - *Instituted open data policies*
   - *Instituted access to information policies*
   - *Instituted public accountability measures*
   - *Instituted open procurement policies*
   - *Regularly publishes information in an open, accessible manner (e.g., on a digital platform with access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing)*

- *Dedicated funding to openness and transparency practices (e.g., regular maintenance of local government website or hiring of open government focal point)*
- *Open budgeting*

8. **Do you feel like actions taken by the local government have increased gender equality? If so, what has changed?**

<u>**Individual Information**</u>

9. **How often do you access local government services? What services have been most beneficial to you, and which have been the least beneficial?**

10. **What are the barriers to accessing services?**
    A list of potential answers is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
    - *Don't know what is available*
    - *Office location*
    - *Office hours*
    - *Unhelpful staff*
    - *Too complicated*
    - *Only available online*
    - *Not in my language*
    - *Office is inaccessible*

11. **How often do you engage with your local government elected officials or staff? What are the barriers to your engagement?**

12. **What do you wish your elected official did differently to communicate with you?**

13. **Do you engage with the local government or officials as an individual or as a representative of an organization?**

14. **Have you faced any issues or negative experiences when accessing events held by the local governments and/or elected officials?**

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

<u>**Institutional Information**</u>

1. How have actions, if any, taken by the local government increased gender equality for all women community members? Have some groups of women benefited more than others?

2. Do local government staff and officials take women community members' suggestions, ideas, feedback or reports seriously? Does this differ for different groups of women?

3. What could the local government do differently to increase openness and transparency to better support women community members?

4. Is the local government and its representatives using effective communication channels that reach women? Is inclusive language used?

5. To the best of your knowledge, are you aware of how the local government collaborates (or does not) with diverse groups of stakeholders to make decisions related to policy, program or service development?

Individual Information

6. Have you been impacted personally by any of the local government policies that address gender inequality? If so, what was your experience?

7. Have you been impacted personally by any of the local government services and programs? Have any of these specifically targeted resources to women? If so, what was your experience?

8. As a sensitive and personal subject, you are not required to answer this question (just as you are not required to answer any question), and please only do so if you are comfortable responding. Have you ever experienced sexual or gender-based harassment or violence from local government staff or officials?

9. Have any officials committed corruptive behavior or tactics when you attempted to access local government services, programs, events, etc.?

10. What services, programs, events or policies not provided now would be helpful in addressing your concerns, needs or priorities?

11. **Do you believe that men and women government officials and staff are equally likely to engage with women community members to address their concerns, needs or priorities?**

CLOSING QUESTION (for all focus groups)

This question brings the conversation to a close without abruptly ending the discussion. Depending on the response, there may or may not be relevant information here for the analysis.

Do you have any other thoughts on this topic that weren't covered here today? Is there anything else you would like to add?

FACILITATOR'S CONCLUSION (for all focus groups)

Wrap up the conversation with the following.

"Thank you for participating. This has been a very successful discussion. The information you provided will be valuable for assessment. We hope you have found the conversation interesting.

If there is anything you are unhappy with or wish to provide feedback about, you may reach out to me through _____. I would like to remind you that any comments included in this report will be anonymous, and you have also agreed to keep this conversation confidential."

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ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

FOR THE PLANNER (for all interviews)

This tool is intended to be completed within an interview setting. Included below is a template list of questions for the facilitator to consider, though the final set of questions asked should be developed based on the questions and results of the distributed surveys and focus groups. The Gender Assessment Team can tailor the questions below and/or include additional questions. As a starting point, using the following questions, the interviewer should probe for detailed information and solicit specific examples to provide as complete an answer as possible. The facilitator has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted.

Throughout the interview, the interviewer's role is to guide the discussion toward these subjects to get the relevant information. The interviewer has a responsibility to encourage the participants to answer the questions and explain their answers, as much as they feel comfortable. Participants should never be compelled to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. If participants are comfortable, some helpful ways to get more complete responses include:
- "Can you talk about that more?"
- "Help me understand what you mean."
- "Can you give an example?"

It is good interview practice to paraphrase and summarize long, complex or ambiguous comments. This demonstrates active listening and ensures that the participant's intended answer has been clearly understood. The interviewer must remain neutral throughout the interview, refraining from nodding/raising eyebrows, agreeing/disagreeing or praising/disparaging any comment made by the participant.

INFORMATION (for all interviews)
Prior to beginning the interview, please fill in the below information.
- Date and Time of Interview:
- Location:
- Name of Interviewer:
- Name of Interviewee: (Also, title and other relevant information)
- Other Notes/Comments:

INTERVIEWER'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (for all interviews)

Please give the following welcome and introduction to the interviewee. This is important to ensure each interviewee is aware of the purpose and other important information about the interview.

"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I recognize that you are busy and thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. This interview is supported by _____.

As the formal governing structure closest to community members, local governments have a unique role in improving and ensuring gender equality. This interview is part of a research methodology being conducted through a local government gender assessment and action planning process to explore how women interact with their local government and how reforms may remove barriers to women's equal role in public life. The results of this interview will be summarized, reported to the public and will help to inform future local government policies, programs, structures, employment practices, budgets and/or other areas of concern.

Before we begin, I'd like to discuss with you some of the ideas we are exploring in this interview:

Gender is the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations of women and men in societies, as well as a broad spectrum of identities that do not conform to this binary. The definition and expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl or man/boy, and sanctions for not adhering to those expectations, vary across cultures and over time, and often intersect with other factors such as ethnicity, class, age and sexual orientation.

Gender norms are the social rules and expectations that govern the attributes and behaviors that are valued and considered acceptable for men and women within a given culture or social group. Norms are learned and reinforced from birth to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, education, the media, religion, the law and other social institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are "natural" and thus cannot be changed, even though they are 'continuously negotiated, resisted and redefined in everyday interactions.'

In our study, we are trying to better understand how gender and gender norms impact women serving in the local government, the policies, services and programs of the local government, public engagement with women community members and/or organizations that represent women and the local government budget.

We would like you to be as open, honest and accurate in your comments as you can. Some of the questions in this discussion may be personal and sensitive. However, you are in no way obligated to speak if you do not feel comfortable or prefer not to answer certain questions. Your participation is voluntary, and you can leave the interview at any time without negative repercussions. Any information you share today will be kept confidential and anonymous. No statements will be attributed to an individual, or even a specific neighborhood or place where the interview was conducted. Your data will be protected and only those serving on the Gender Assessment Team will have access to data, though no responses will be attributable to any one person. There are no right or wrong answers; all we encourage are open and honest responses. Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Do you have any questions?

OK, let's begin."

SAMPLE CORE QUESTIONS (for all interviews)

Warm-up question:
What do you like most about living here?

Institutional Information
1. To the best of your understanding, does the local government regularly evaluate its policies, services, events or structures for how it is affecting diverse groups of women?

2. Is local government information accessible to diverse groups of women? If so, how? If not, what are the barriers to accessibility?

3. In what ways do you see the local government instituting policies, communications, practices, services and events in an open and transparent manner?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information
1. Are there avenues put in place to ensure women's access to leadership positions (either elected or unelected)?

2. How are men, women and gender-diverse individuals selected to participate in committees, councils or other internal structures or groups?

3. Are the rules of the local government gender-sensitive? Please elaborate.

4. How are diverse groups of women staff members recruited, hired and represented within the staffing structure of the local government or other internal structures?

4. Is the local government upholding commitments, laws or treaties signed or enacted by the national government? If so, how? If not, why not?

Individual Information

5. As a sensitive and personal subject, you are not required to answer this question (just as you are not required to answer any question), and please only do so if you are comfortable responding. Have you experienced any form of sexual or gender-based harassment or assault while working for the local government?

6. Do you feel the local government, or its leaders, takes seriously and does enough to appropriately address reports of men's violence against women — both within the governing institution and within the community?

7. Have you ever received information from constituents or community members that they have experienced sextortion, requests for bribes or harassment from local government employees, representatives or service providers?

8. Do you feel you have the resources, funding, staff support and/or training needed to effectively serve different groups of women community members and help to meet their needs? If not, what do you see as the barrier to obtaining those resources?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

1. Where do you see the local government is failing to meet the needs of diverse groups of women?

2. How well did the local government adjust and respond to COVID-19's disproportionate impact on women?

3. Does the local government utilize any funding from the national government to address gender inequality? If so, in what ways?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

<u>Institutional Information</u>

1. How do you think local government elected officials and staff would evaluate the policies, services, events or structures for different groups of women community members?

2. How would you evaluate the local government policies, services, events or structures for different groups of women community members? If there is a gap, why?

3. How do you think local government elected officials and staff would evaluate the availability/accessibility of government information for different groups of women?

4. How would you evaluate the availability/accessibility of government information for different groups of women? If there is a gap, why?

5. How do you think local government elected officials and staff would evaluate their communications and other outreach efforts to different groups of women community members?

6. How would you evaluate the local government's communications and other outreach efforts to different groups of women community members? If there is a gap, why?

7. Do you feel the local government reflects a commitment to gender equality and provides sufficient funding for services, programs and communications? If not, what do you see as the barrier to obtaining those resources?

<u>Individual Information</u>

8. What do you think are the barriers for women serving as elected officials or staff in this local government?

9. Does this response differ for different groups of women?

10. What do you think are the barriers for women community members engaging with this local government formally and/or informally?

11. Does this response differ for different groups of women?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Individual Information

1. As a sensitive and personal subject, you are not required to answer this question (just as you are not required to answer any question), and please only do so if you are comfortable responding. Have you experienced any form of sexual or gender-based harassment or assault while engaging with local government elected officials and/or staff?

2. Is sexual or gender-based harassment or violence prevalent in the local community? How has the local government attempted to address it? Have any measures been effective in preventing sexual or gender-based harassment of violence?

3. What do you wish the local government was doing (more of) to increase gender equality and equity? What are some short, medium, or long term changes you wish to see in your community?

4. Is there a particular local government service, program, or event you engage with more than others offered? What has this experience been like?

5. What could the elected officials do to increase your trust in the institution or in their work to represent you?

INTERVIEWER'S CONCLUSION (for all interviews)
Wrap up the conversation with the following.

"Do you have any other thoughts on this topic that weren't covered here today? Anything you would like to add?

Thank you for participating. This has been a very successful discussion. Your opinions will be valuable for assessment. We hope you have found the conversation interesting.

If there is anything you are unhappy with or wish to provide feedback about, you may reach out to me through _____. I would like to remind you that any comments included in this report will be anonymous, and you have also agreed to keep this conversation confidential."

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78. PLEASE NOTE: this should be updated to reflect who is collecting the data
and who specifically will have access to it. For example, it should be noted if
only the Gender Assessment Team members will have access to it, and how
this data will be protected.