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An illustration of two women in conversation. The woman on the left has dark hair and is wearing a blue top. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a blue top. They are both smiling and appear to be engaged in a discussion. The background is a dark purple color with some faint star and leaf motifs.

**ADVOCACY  
FOR  
IMPACT:  
GENDER  
AND  
EDUCATION**

**LSE**

Department of  
**International  
Development**

**UNGEI**

UNITED NATIONS  
**GIRLS' EDUCATION  
INITIATIVE**

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## Disclaimer

All rights are reserved for United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI). Any findings, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this report are solely those of the authors. They do not reflect the views of the UNGEI or the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Some quotes from key informant interviews have been lightly edited for clarity.

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## Acronyms

IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluating
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative

## Definitions

**Advocacy:** is defined as a concept involving many different actors working together to coordinate an environment for political action and conduct research for policy development and implementation (United Nations Development Group, 2017).

**Anti-Racism:** An approach to actively identify and counter racial prejudice, systemic racism, and oppression of specific groups. It includes actively changing the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that can perpetuate racist ideas and actions (Racial Equity Tools, 2021).

**Gender-Inclusivity:** An approach where gender inequalities are identified and addressed. It considers the power relationships between gender identities and tries to break down gender binaries (WHO, 2002).

**Decolonizing Development:** *"Questioning and unpacking how colonial and hegemonic structures of power continue to produce contemporary inequalities and reflecting on how these highly unequal structures can be addressed."* (Global Development Institute, 2018).

**Intersectionality:** *"is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects."* (Crenshaw, 2017).

## Executive Summary

There has been an urgent need to include a gender-inclusive, anti-racist and decolonial lens in advocacy strategies in recent years. In the rare circumstances these lenses were applied, they were not effectively utilised when designing and implementing an advocacy campaign regarding education. Often, an intersectional approach was not used to consider context-specific power dynamics impacting girls' ability to access education.

The first objective of this report is to understand the “best practices to design and implement advocacy strategies that are gender-inclusive and anti-racist in the development sector, with a focus on gender and education”. The second objective was to examine the evidence regarding the effectiveness and impact of different advocacy strategies. Thirdly, the study aimed to understand the “best tools and approaches to measure advocacy impact”.

Existing gaps in advocacy practices were identified by analysing the literature surrounding advocacy, M&E, gender-inclusivity, decolonisation, and anti-racism. By combining the literature with the semi-structured interviews, this research evaluated the existing practices of advocacy organisations under the frameworks of gender-inclusivity, decolonisation and anti-racism.

The findings suggest that advocacy should be approached holistically; there is no single ‘best practice’ but a combination of multiple practices identified in this report for advocacy strategies and M&E efforts. Therefore, the ‘best practices’ identified and recommended in this report must be applied simultaneously to produce significant and positive results.

Based on the findings, this report presents seven recommendations:

- The addition of a **decolonial lens to anti-racist frameworks**
- The **inclusion of beneficiaries**<sup>1</sup> at all stages of advocacy campaigns
- **Incorporating an intersectional lens** into advocacy campaigns to avoid the erasure of other identities.
- The **consideration of the different agendas and priorities of the stakeholders** to implement effective advocacy campaigns

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<sup>1</sup> The report refers to targeted populations as 'beneficiaries' as the interviewees and their organisations frequently utilise this term. However, we are aware and conscious of the negative connotations, and wish to highlight alternatives such as 'partners', and 'targeted populations'.

- **Establishing a framework** allows organisations to evaluate the changes at three levels
- The need for improved **holistic or localised approaches to the M&E process**
- The **improvement of the data collection process**

# Introduction

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Education provides girls with a platform and the tools to raise their voices and shape their futures (Irvin and Otoo, 2017).

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Simultaneously, advocacy is one of the most critical strategies to influence public policy and systems to achieve targets. In combination, advocacy for girls' education is one of the most powerful mobilisation tools for girls often left behind. This report was conducted in partnership with the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) and a team of graduate researchers at the London School of Economics and Political Science (International Development Department) that aims to understand the best practices for gender education advocacy which are gender-inclusive, anti-racist and decolonial in development.

To achieve meaningful transformation within education systems *beyond* parity in the number of girls and boys enrolled in schools, practitioners must understand gender inequality through a gender-inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonial lens (Unterhalter et al, 2020). In order to increase the chances of an

advocacy strategy being successful, it is essential to create and strengthen approaches that are both gender-sensitive *and* anti-racist. Using these lenses in frameworks is crucial to understanding the intersecting inequalities girls face in school and developing meaningful educational policies and practices.

This report aims to present the best practices to design and implement advocacy strategies in the development sector that are gender-inclusive and anti-racist, with a focus on gender and education. Moreover, the report will review the various practices utilised by organisations to measure the impact of advocacy campaigns. Finally, it will present key recommendations of the best tools and approaches towards advocacy strategies used by interviewees and recommend ways to incorporate a gender-inclusive, decolonising, and anti-racist approach in gender education work.

# Literature Review

This section will analyse the nuanced aspects of 'advocacy' to establish a core definition of the concept. Then, we will examine the need for advocacy to be gender-inclusive and introduce a decolonial perspective to advocacy. Lastly, establishing an anti-racist framework within advocacy will be explained.

## 1. Advocacy

In recent years, advocacy has become considered one of the most effective strategies to sway public policy. The United Nations (UN) defines advocacy as a concept involving many **different actors working together to coordinate an environment for political action and conduct research for policy development and implementation** (United Nations Development Group, 2017). It is also defined as *"the deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions about developing, changing and implementing policies"* (CARE, 2014: 1).

The main aim of advocacy varies between international and non-governmental organisations, but it often focuses on social justice, development, gender inclusivity and decolonisation issues. Advocacy can be exercised at different levels (international, national, and local) to **accomplish policy change, influence policy implementation, and enhance accountability** (Sightsavers, 2019).

Firstly, with regard to policy change, advocacy can assist in **contributing to the policy development process by promoting specific frameworks and influencing the perspectives of**

**policymakers** (Ibid, 2019). Secondly, advocacy can influence policy implementation by *"improving the equity of an existing policy" and "increasing the funding allocated to policy implementation"* (Ibid, 2019: 3). Thirdly, advocacy can **increase accountability** by establishing robust systems that ensure decision-makers are held liable for the execution of policies (Ibid, 2019).

To implement an effective advocacy strategy, it is essential to first make it **context-specific** by analysing the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors (CARE, 2014). Secondly, a vital component of an advocacy policy is to **define the goal and the different metrics required to measure its success** (realistic targets, timeframe, funding, and an action plan, how will the policy change the problem being tackled, and who will take the lead in making this change) (Ibid, 2014).

Thirdly, it is crucial to **define the audience by analysing the interests of different groups**; consider the stakeholder's interests as they will be the ones who support or oppose the advocacy proposals; and finally, the extent of the involvement of stakeholders within the

advocacy strategy (UNICEF, 2021). Dividing the wide variety of stakeholders into two groups; primary targets (decision-makers) and secondary targets (celebrities, advisors, or public opinion). **Primary targets** have the power, ability, and capacity to attain the advocacy objectives, while **secondary targets** influence primary targets when they are unwilling to cooperate or cannot be persuaded (CARE 2014). Fourthly, it is essential to **highlight the critical message** the organisation desires to convey and **how it wants to communicate it** (UNICEF, 2021). A common practice for successfully highlighting the message in an advocacy campaign is the “*killer facts*” (Oxfam, 2019). Dr Duncan Green introduced the “*killer facts*” concept, and it argues that “*those punchy, memorable, headline-grabbing statistics*” are what make advocacy campaigns successful and unique (Oxfam, 2019: 1). They are part of a constantly reinforced narrative by media and politicians to delegitimise the opinions of the opposition (Ibid, 2019). These punchy “*killer facts*” have a significant impact in emphasising the message communicated through advocacy policies. This emphasis is done by stressing the large-scale nature of the problem, highlighting injustices, humanising contemporary issues, and adapting extensive statistics into a human scale size, formulating them so that the public and policymakers can relate (Ibid, 2019). This procedure must be done by **collecting data from credible sources** and not overwhelming the audience with many

facts (Ibid, 2019). Fifthly, following the creation of an action plan, the organisation needs to **identify the outcomes of the advocacy strategy and decide which advocacy tactics** (lobbying decision-makers, research and analysis, campaigning, or the use of the media, amongst others) **are best suited for each project** (CARE, 2014). The final step of an advocacy project is **Monitoring and Evaluating (M&E)**, through which the already agreed outcomes of the advocacy strategy are monitored and evaluated. A crucial factor that needs to be considered to measure the impact of a campaign is the influence exerted throughout the policy change process (Sightsavers, 2019). By **distinguishing the different levels of influence**, the organisations can determine the campaign’s impact at a local, national, and international level.



e 1. Sightsavers (2019) Advocacy in Programmes 2019 Toolkit.

This framework encompasses the **different stages of an advocacy campaign**: planning,

understanding the target audience, engagement and acceptance, the government or institutions commitment to the project, the delivery - how the government or institution implements change, and the final step, the reflection given that “*advocacy is a cyclical process*” and requires to measure the success in achieving policy implementation. This last step also explores accountability issues, and these accountability matters will help develop new policies in areas where change is required (Sightsavers, 2019: 13). When evaluating advocacy initiatives, it is crucial to account for changes that may occur in the long run of the project. Multiple factors and actors contribute to the process over time, including a **post-evaluation to measure the long-term impact** (CARE, 2014). Organisations can measure the reach of an advocacy campaign through digital-based media, or it can be done through the number of people attending advocacy meetings, events, or capacity-building workshops (UNICEF, 2021).

Despite innovative frameworks, there have been several main challenges that advocacy initiatives face, including the recurring issue in the literature of a **lack of diversity and inclusion** (UNICEF, 2019). This issue is specifically relevant when advocating for education. There is a **strong need to include communities and civil society in advocacy**; however, many efforts either outright exclude or only performatively include marginalised groups (UNESCO, 2020).

Aside from the need to create a more inclusive approach to advocacy, there is a pressing need to actively prevent vulnerable groups of people from having their agency deprived or perpetuating patterns of marginalisation (UNESCO, 2020). The **lack of knowledge of local practices in policies** can often lead to policy failure. It can sustain such patterns of exclusion, emphasising the need to be context-specific and context-sensitive. To reach vulnerable social groups, it is essential to create a more collaborative approach where all actors are involved.

## 2. M&E for Advocacy

Despite the necessity of full and strategic advocacy campaigns becoming recognised in the development community, there has often been a lack of clarity about what advocacy means in practice (Chapman, 2001). It has been challenging to assess an effective advocacy campaign and evaluate the project’s true impact. In many cases, organisations will use the same structural plans based on a narrow set of externally developed quantitative indicators, and the impact may also be limited (Chapman, 2001). There are numerous complexities regarding monitoring and evaluating advocacy work. One such complexity is the **ambiguous nature of cause and effect between advocacy initiatives and their outcomes**. It is often difficult to accurately analyse and measure a campaign or project’s direct, total causal outcomes. In addition, the **influence of external**

**factors** such as the political situation or an unexpected disaster is unpredictable and out of the advocate's control (Chapman, 2001). It is better to acknowledge the role played by many factors that can improve people's lives rather than focus on the narrow project targets (CARE, 2020).

Additionally, advocacy targets can differ from more common quantifiable project targets, such as ensuring 50,000 children were immunised or that every girl in a village is enrolled in school. Instead, advocacy targets are often moving targets sensitive to external factors. *"They will change as the environment changes through unrelated factors, as progress is made or when resistance and setbacks are encountered. Not only do objectives shift, but the main action may also shift between international, national, or local levels during a campaign, making it unclear where success should be sought."* (Chapman, 2002: 48).

**Indicators must be flexible and can even change entirely by the end of the project.** Targets vary due to external factors, and there is an increasing debate about when the project has achieved its sought-after objectives.

In many cases, compromise on the targets of a project and its success is a necessity. It can often be a subjective process influenced by the varying opinions of different partners and

stakeholders (Chapman, 2002). In addition to the targets, there are challenges simply due to the nature of advocacy work. It is frequently **long-term policy work**, and change can take a significant time to yield measurable results. In many cases, the work completed cannot immediately be measured by an NGO (CARE, 2020).

There is also a **limited accumulation of knowledge** due to the unique and rarely repeated nature of advocacy work. The more significant accumulation of knowledge as work, reports and studies built upon each other is often not present for advocacy work, which renders lessons learned less effective from one project to another (Chapman, 2002). Advocacy has also become increasingly collective as different organisations work in different ways to achieve similar targets. Other tactics such as lobbying, campaigning, influencing, or boycotts occur through various coalitions and networks. In a complex web of multiple advocacy strategies and initiatives, it can be challenging to assess the most effective or impactful (Chapman, 2002).

### 3. Gender-Inclusivity 2

**In recent years, incorporating gender-inclusive policies into the core objectives of advocacy campaigns has become imperative.** Beyond the

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the Annex 1 for themes of disability and innovation. Disability and innovations were prominent themes

in our research, but as they are beyond the scope of our project, we have included notes in the annex.

general definition of gender as being determined by a person's biological sex, this report will situate gender as the *"learned pattern of behaviours that are embedded in everything one does at the individual, community, and institutional levels"* (Kuehnast et al., 2018). Based on this definition of gender conceptualised as a societal dynamic, numerous gender-inclusive policies centre around reducing the inequalities perpetuated within gender dynamics.

Often, gender inequality initiatives are shaped with the foundational principle of putting girls into schools (Unterhalter et al., 2020). As a result, many initiatives have addressed gender inequality and gender inclusion measures as ensuring that the number of girls to boys in classrooms is equal. If a girl is present in a classroom and can be measured for gender parity, the project can be considered a success. However, **gender inequalities are complex and multi-faceted, shaped by social, political, economic, and cultural regimes**. Consequently, any gender-inclusive measures must reflect this complexity (Unterhalter et al., 2020). This complexity requires organisations to initiate **intersectional policies, frameworks, and projects, considering how inequalities are linked with institutional forms of power**. According to seminal gender scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, *"Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects."*

(Crenshaw, 2017). The imposition of powerlessness on women and girls reveals many reasons and how gender inequality can continue to persist through education (Unterhalter et al., 2020).

### 3.1 Gender Bias

The most foundational work done by development organisations includes combating gender bias against women and girls. Numerous biological factors such as menstruation or pregnancy exacerbate gender inequalities, particularly education. As a result, boys are more likely to pursue more extended studies than girls, enabling their emancipation and integration into society, whereas girls are relegated to the side-lines (Safe Schools, 2016). By implementing policies that raise awareness on the benefits of education and permit the reestablishment of girls (who have dropped out) back into the schooling system, gender-inclusive policies support the empowerment and equality of girls in the education system. **Education opens the door for emancipation and allows society to lay the foundation for a sustainable and equal future** (Irvin and Otoo, 2017). Indeed, by promoting girls' education, programs ensure *"long-term processes of sustaining peace by becoming leaders in their communities"* (Safe Schools, 2016).

Further, *"a mother's schooling cuts the infant mortality by 5-1%"* (Ibid, 2016), promoting

human capital and stimulating the economy. Therefore, women's education is a prerequisite for their emancipation, but it is also **necessary to consolidate the national economy**. Lastly, relegating girls' education to the sidelines means giving up on SDG Goal 4 and other developmental goals (Ibid, 2016), which slows down the process of a sustainable future for all.

### 3.2 Cultural Norms

Overlapping inequalities affect the experiences of women and girls in substantive, complex and multi-layered ways. Often, these experiences are not only shaped by their gender but by **politico-economic formations and group/socio-cultural relationships**, which impose a systematic structure of exclusion and discrimination. These structures have the unintended consequence of shaping the education system, which renders many gender-inclusive strategies that do not account for intersectional inequalities to become inconsequential (Unterhalter et al., 2020).

One such inequality is cultural norms and their effects on women and girls' integration and social mobilisation. Cultural norms represent the *"rules or expectations of behaviour and thoughts based on shared beliefs within a specific cultural or social group"* (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018: 1). These norms categorise girls and women as the caretakers, whereas

boys and men are considered the breadwinners (Thein, 2015). Therefore, cultural norms can lead to the undervaluation of women's work, thereby supporting lower wages or unpaid work (Thein, 2015). Further, due to cultural norms, boys are expected to take on leadership positions which bolsters their education retention, whereas girls are discouraged from the same (Thein, 2015). Cultural norms include *"child marriage, not sending girls to co-ed schools, not allowing the girls being taught by male instructors, preventing girls from going to schools who have been abused sexually"* (Bamik, 2018: 1). Hence, cultural norms can exacerbate gender inequalities, especially regarding education.

These cultural norms can also disproportionately expose women and girls to danger in disasters and crises. It has been noted that women are often left behind in disaster situations due to their caregiver roles, where women and girls are expected to care for their homes, children, and the elderly (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007). Paradoxically, **the humanitarian system furthers the marginalisation of women by relying on existing structures that reflect the patriarchal structure of society** (Neumayer and Plümper, 2007). Traditional roles can decrease women's survival rate, but they can further exclude girls from education due to these additional responsibilities. For example, the 2010 floods in Pakistan showed that 25% of girls had dropped

out of school against 6% of boys for the same period (Safe Schools, 2016).

In order to tackle the issues of gender inclusion, **women need to be represented in decision-making** (Rao and Smyth, 2005). However, the design of gender-inclusive programs is all the more complex as those issues are enshrined in societal norms where women are often not integrated into decision-making nor given room to express their opinions and voice their concerns. Surveys show that young females are likelier to feel less listened to than their male counterparts – 37% of women vs 25% of men– (Restless Development, 2021). This builds into the patriarchal narrative that males are more capable of taking decisions than females and that the latter should be relegated to the sidelines.

By excluding women from decision-making in programs, the whole notion of inclusive advocacy programs is at risk. Moreover, beyond the integration of women within decision-making, policies should also aim at building awareness across communities. Communities may often constitute the most significant restraint to girls' education, and therefore, working to dismantle communities' negative biases promotes education for girls (Restless Development, 2021).

### 3.3 Decolonisation

Much of the literature surrounding decolonisation concentrates on the literal process of decolonising countries once under imperial rule. However, this report will utilise decolonisation as a force intended to question and unpack *“how colonial and hegemonic structures of power continue to produce contemporary inequalities and reflecting on how these highly unequal structures can be addressed.”* (Global Development Institute, 2018). In 1952, Franz Fanon (1952) established the foundation of decolonisation theory as a theory for beliefs that favoured indigenous life, community, and epistemology. Scholars have built on Fanon's ideas of decolonisation over the decades, arguing that indigenous peoples must confront colonial policies and structures to ensure the continued existence of their native cultures and communities (Corntassel, 2012). According to the seminal paper by Tuck and Yang (2012) titled *“Decolonisation is Not a Metaphor”*, **colonialism and settler colonialism have continuously shaped and marked institutions** in colonial and settler-colonial nation-states. These *“invisibilised dynamics”* of colonialism shape the organisation, governance, education, schooling and curriculum as colonial perspectives and worldviews are counted as canon, core knowledge (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Advocacy within international organisations has become increasingly professionalised but

has recently included anti-racism and anti-oppression lenses. These **lenses can be seen as performative** if these organisations do not fully adopt decolonisation theory into their work. Humanitarian advocacy is *“still anchored in the representation of the Other that was devised at the turn of the 20th century, and that advocacy contributes to redefining sovereignty and local biopolitics in the Foucauldian sense.”* (Sennesael, 2020).

Advocacy that does not include decolonisation favours vertical and transnational notions of responsibility and accountability, which counters much of the *“localisation”* rhetoric spouted by IGOs (Sennesael, 2020). Despite the distinct aims and dynamics of decolonisation, there has been a trend in recent years of adopting the language of decolonisation for other social justice aims. *“Settler scholars swap out prior civil and human rights-based terms, seemingly to signal both an awareness of the significance of Indigenous and decolonising theorisations of schooling and educational research...”* (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 3). Through these attempts to signal awareness, decolonisation becomes a metaphor. It recentres whiteness and extends innocence to the settler to entertain a settler future that has been created and shaped by their perceived sense of rightness and possibility. *“Decolonise (a verb) and decolonisation (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical,*

*even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonisation is yet another form of settler appropriation.”* (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 3). For advocacy initiatives to be truly effective, they must be intersectional and to be intersectional, they must be decolonial.

#### 4. Anti-Racist

Hierarchies and power disparities between groups of people have often been legitimised by the concept of *“race”* (CFFP, 2022). *“The instrumentalisation of race as a discriminatory practice”* occurs at an individual, structural and institutional level (Ibid, 2022). To further promote an inclusive approach in the humanitarian and development sector, it is vital to **deconstruct the current hierarchies of colonialism and racism**. These hierarchies are embedded in a wide range of structures and discourses that systemically perpetuate patterns of discrimination. This embedment has a profound effect on the way organisations plan, implement, monitor and evaluate advocacy campaigns. By establishing an anti-racist approach to advocacy initiatives, organisations can acknowledge the consequences of **different systems of discrimination that overlap each other** and the diverse effects it has on communities (Caldwell, 2021). To create an anti-racist framework, it is critical to dismantle the systems that uphold power and privilege. Otherwise, white saviour

narratives are likely to persist, leading to a failure in successful policy change (Ibid, 2021). As mentioned in part 1.1, the lack of inclusion and diversity often makes advocacy campaigns unsuccessful while exacerbating existing patterns of discrimination. Therefore, it is essential to include different stakeholders to raise awareness and make their voices heard. It is essential to listen to communities and consider their experiences to create powerful advocacy initiatives.

While a localised approach is necessary for all advocacy campaigns, a campaign cannot be adequately anti-racist if it is not also intersectional. **An intersectional approach to advocacy will incorporate elements of racial justice and anti-racist education that will help identify systemic racism and the different ways organisations can advocate for change.** Often, advocacy strategies shape and are shaped by the political landscape, which influences the extent of its impact on society (Hirsch, 2017). During moments of political fervour, organisations are prompted into acting, seen with the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 (Ibid, 2017). While intersectional or anti-racist frameworks to advocacy campaigns can be reactive, an anti-racist framework must be proactive and incorporated into all advocacy initiatives, rather than only in times of political

intensity. The literature surrounding anti-racism also references the **necessity to tackle “colour-blindness”**, which refers to a façade for white privilege and to evade discrimination and racism discourses, thereby neglecting race (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). By ignoring race as a component of the policy change and advocacy, patterns of systemic racism are exacerbated (Ibid, 2015). Advocating through an anti-racist framework means not to neutralise or dismiss race but rather to **discuss, educate, listen, and acknowledge the challenges communities face.** Education is a crucial element when disputing *“the normalisation of many forms of racism”* by advocating for an anti-racist approach to education. It is possible to achieve equity, inclusion, and justice (National Education Union, n.d.: 4).

# Methodology

## 1.Data Collection

Primary data was collected through **qualitative key informant interviews** with members of various organisations to assess the best advocacy practices for girls' education. International, national, and regional organisations were selected based on their work in gender-inclusive, anti-racist and decolonising advocacy.

The interviews were conducted virtually between January 2022 and the end of February 2022 through video calls. In total, 13 **semi-structured interviews** were carried out with multiple organisations. The interviews were built around ten questions, divided into four main sections.

- **Section 1:** Understanding of advocacy in the development context
- **Section 2:** Gender-Inclusive and Anti-Racist campaigns
- **Section 3:** Collaborating with a network of stakeholders for advocacy campaigns
- **Section 4:** Best practices and key challenges for measuring the impact of advocacy projects

Secondary data sources such as international organisation reports, academic literature and

advocacy campaigns were used to identify best advocacy practices. Combining this existing literature with the information from the interviews made it possible to gain deeper insights and understanding of advocacy strategies and effectiveness.

## 2.Methods

Through the combination of interviews and secondary data, a **thematic analysis** was conducted. This method identifies essential topics through '*careful reading and re-reading of the data*' (Fereday & Cochrane, 2006). It allows synthesising concepts and ideas elicited during the interviews. The general themes were categorised from the data collected into five main themes (Resources, Intersectionality, Power Dynamics, Inclusion and Miscellaneous) through deductive coding. The final themes include popular sub-topics, which came up the most during interviews.

### 3.Limitations

Firstly, it is essential to note that some general caveats may arise when conducting qualitative analyses. One common issue is the bias interviewees may be subject to, even from the questions themselves. As a result, the answers provided by the key informants may reflect the subjectivity of the authors and the client through whom the questions were approved.

Additionally, the research findings may not apply to all contexts and situations. The number of interviews conducted was relatively small (13), and most interviewees' organisations work within the same policy and advocacy circles. As a result, the findings may not reflect general opinions or trends at the grassroots or practitioner level.

Third, many of the organisations interviewed conduct work solely focused on gender inclusiveness while leaving a noticeable gap in anti-racism work in advocacy and gender education. Despite various organisations working in diverse geographical locations, most organisations could not speak on anti-racism advocacy initiatives. The study and information collected would have greatly benefited from more in-depth practitioner insight on anti-racism.

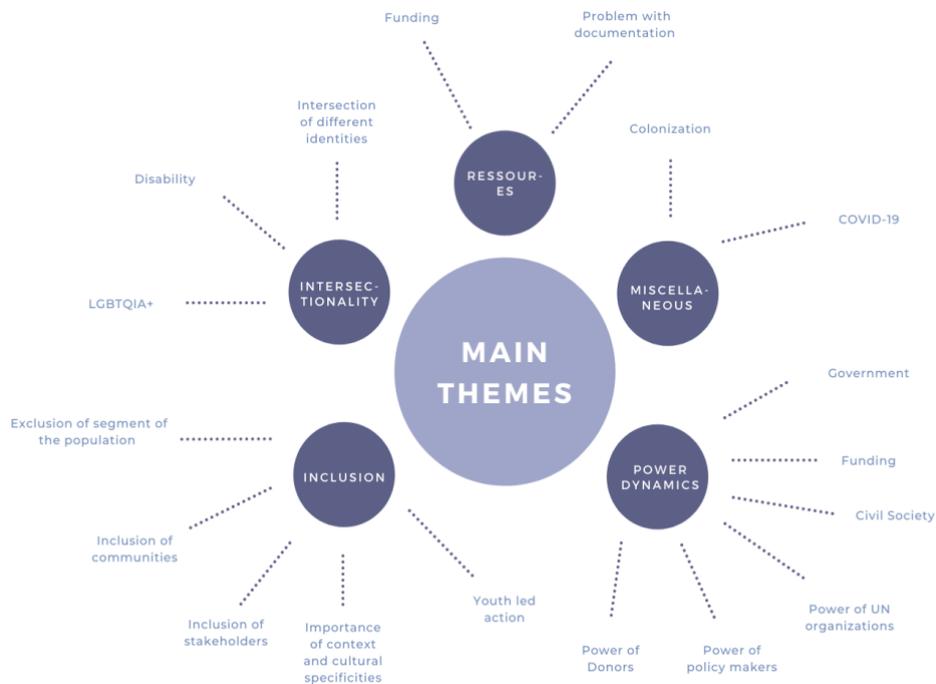
In addition to the gaps in anti-racism practitioner knowledge, there was a severe gap in the literature on anti-racist and decolonial advocacy in gender education or gender work in general. While there is significant academic and grey literature around the impact of advocacy strategies, many were not analysed through an anti-racist or decolonial lens leading to a limited literature review compared to other lenses such as gender inclusivity.

Lastly, this report centred around measuring and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of advocacy strategies in girls' education under various lenses. However, this depended on analysing extensive detailed information found in individual M&E reports from the interviewee organisations. Despite the authors' best efforts, no organisation was willing or followed through in providing anonymised M&E reports for this study leading to a severe limitation. Without specific examples of how organisations measure and evaluate the impact of their advocacy campaigns, there is a substantial limitation to the conclusions drawn.

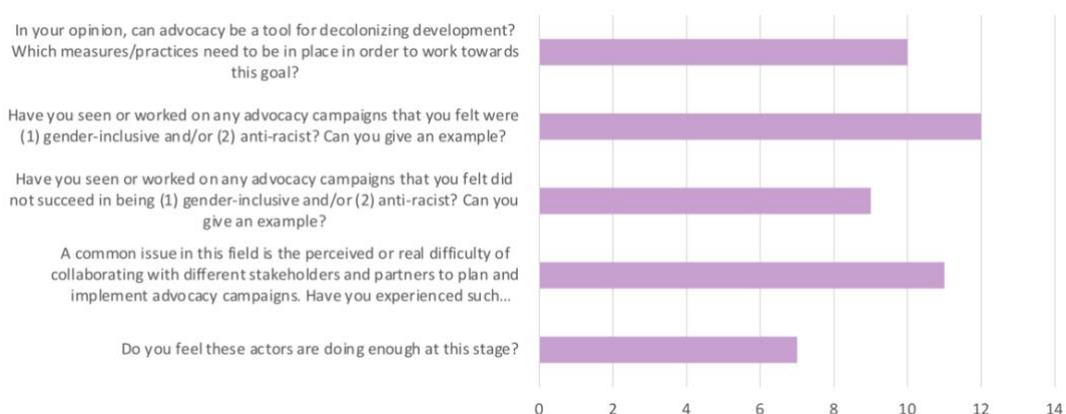
## Analysis of key findings

*This section of the report strives to answer the questions: What is the best practice for advocacy that is gender-inclusive, anti-racist and decolonising in development with regards to issues of gender, education, social justice, and human rights? Which advocacy approaches are most impactful, and how do organisations deduce and measure this impact?*

**Figure 2.** The following thematic map brings together the main themes and topics identified after the analysis of the interviews:



**Figure 3.** This bar chart represents the number of organisations that were able to answer and provide examples for selected interview questions:



## 1. Understanding of Advocacy in the Development Context

When organisations were asked about their understanding of advocacy in the development context, many organisations **related their understanding to the UN definition of advocacy** as actors working together to coordinate policy and political change. Organisation K stated that *“our understanding of the concept of advocacy is quite similar to that of the UN definition.”* (Organisation K, 2022). Organisation J went more into depth, elaborating that *“Advocacy, in general, are actions, movements, steps that aim to influence different causes of action ... and our values of advocacy are captured in the SDGs where it says no one is left behind, for improving the lives of people. In a way, it gives us the direction for what we are advocating for.”* (Organisation J, 2022).

At the same time, Organisation K, H, A, E all stated their responsibility to **use advocacy to safeguard or uphold the rights of a population, group or cause**. In contrast, Organisations I, F and C specifically stated the importance of placing young people at the centre of advocacy work. Organisation I stated that *“Our definition is similar to the UN but more specific in practices such as in building partnerships. Our experience centres on young people and their participation in mobilising and listening. Not only listening but keeping young people at the*

*centre of all of this effort and allowing them to lead these projects.”* (Organisation I, 2022).

Organisations I and L were the only organisations to **mention marginalised communities or anti-racism** in their definition of advocacy in the development context. Organisation I further elaborated, saying, *“we have to understand advocacy in the context of the lived realities of marginalised people such as marginalised youth and communities.”* (Organisation I, 2022).

One of the purposes of this study is to analyse advocacy in gender and education through a decolonial lens. When asked about advocacy as a tool for decolonising development, most interviewed organisations agreed on the role of advocacy for decolonising development. However, advocacy for decolonisation in practice varied from organisation to organisation, with some organisations being more involved in decolonial action and advocacy than others.

A key element mentioned by multiple organisations was the **participation and inclusion of beneficiaries in advocacy campaigns to be a tool to decolonise development** (Organisation C, D, B, E, 2022). For example, organisation D stresses the importance of *“capacitating them and giving them the space and opportunity to engage in advocacy, so that they can also influence the*

*kind of development they want to see in their communities.”* (2022). Adopting a **bottom-up, grassroots approach** to an advocacy campaign is crucial for empowering beneficiaries and challenging existing power imbalances (Organisation B, 2022).

Advocacy campaigns can be a powerful instrument in decolonising development as it allows for more significant debate and reflection on these issues (Organisation K, A, B, F, 2022). For organisation K, advocacy is a way to question the inequalities and norms in place that are harmful to a particular group of individuals (2022). This *“opens a window to reflect and perhaps transform ways of thinking and perspectives to include other thoughts.”* (Organisation K, 2022). Therefore, advocacy can expand and diversify mindsets and visions by addressing and questioning existing power relations.

One organisation had a more nuanced perspective on advocacy in decolonising development. Organisation H considered that **given the inequalities between the Global South and Global North, it was “difficult to transition to a decolonial mindset.”** (2022). They argue for a more significant change within institutions themselves before using advocacy as a tool for decolonising development.

## 2. Gender-Inclusive and Anti-Racist campaigns

### 2.1 The importance for advocacy campaigns in the development sector to be (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist. Have efforts towards these goals changed over time?

When considering the importance of advocacy campaigns to be gender-inclusive, organisations C and D highlighted **the need to include boys in promoting gender-inclusiveness** regarding girls’ education. They identified the gap in boys’ role in the problem identification process and in identifying solutions during a campaign. *“It is important to consider the realities and lived experiences of women and girls and ensure that women, men and boys are also part of that process.”* (Organisation C, 2022). Practitioners should utilise **a holistic approach** by understanding the different actors involved in the process. *“Inclusion has to be at the heart of advocacy”*, given that beneficiaries are the ones that can inform organisations about the failures of development (Organisation G.1, H, 2022). However, specific voices can be invisible, and it is crucial to analyse the complexity of gender norms.

Regarding implementing an anti-racist framework in advocacy campaigns, organisations stated that it allows them to **address power relations, leading to strategies of raising awareness and capacity-building to ensure the community’s voices are heard**

(Organisation B, 2022). *“Discrimination based on race is a very important issue to tackle the structural and historical roots ... recognising the indigenous knowledge as well.”* (Organisation B, 2022). An anti-racist framework involves a **process of self-reflection and understanding that the ownership of advocacy requires a bottom-up approach**. Thus, through education and exposure, an anti-racist framework can be achieved. Organisation D (2022) discussed the necessity to open spaces for countries other than Western ones, so practitioners from the Global South can input their viewpoints on advocacy. Organisation J (2022) highlighted that the prominent issue in development in Africa is postcolonialism, and neo-colonialism is a political and geopolitical agenda rather than a racial agenda. Similarly, organisation F (2022) stated that tribalism, rather than racism, is a significant problem due to having *“over 2000 tribes”*.

Organisation K commented, *“It is a duty for any communication efforts or advocacy to be gender-inclusive and promote inclusion in general... Advocacy must work through key societal challenges.”* (Organisation K, 2022). Organisation A agreed that *“advocacy projects and campaigns need to be gender inclusive, anti-racist and follow an intersectional approach so that we leave no one behind.”* (Organisation A, 2022). Organisation C (2022) highlighted, *“globally there is a vision of poverty, and the face is a child from Africa.*

*There are many girls across the world who face these challenges and these faces are not represented in campaigns. Flip it from an African perspective; when people speak about Africa, they shy away from showing the Caucasian and lighter-skinned people in Africa. In South Africa, there is a community predominantly Caucasian, and the children struggle to access a classroom. You do not see their face in campaigns; you need a holistic approach.”* However, Organisation I and H (2022) stated **a lack of a truly intersectional approach** throughout advocacy campaigns since certain parts of the population, such as the LGBTQA+ community and those who experience any disability, are not actively included. Due to this, gender, race, and other factors are often disregarded, reproducing inequalities- causing a **“short-sighted”** vision when creating advocacy campaigns (Organisation A, 2022).

Similarly, Organisation H stated that efforts toward establishing a gender-inclusive and anti-racist framework are still not enough. Even though much work has been done to improve advocacy projects and make them more inclusive, there is still a long road ahead. There is **a persistent lack of participation from different groups**: women, minority groups, religious or ethnic minorities. These groups represent a large segment of the population, and if organisations do not involve them in the campaign process, *“advocacy work will remain*

*unfinished by missing out target populations who are the beneficiary of these advocacy programmes.” (Organisation E, 2022). “We need to practise what we preach in terms of that approach, investing it and making sure that all of our processes and approaches encompass the ideals of gender inclusivity and anti-racist approaches.” (Organisation D, 2022). Inconsistencies have been perceived between the advocacy aims and how organisations have executed the programmes. “There has been a genuine attempt in advocacy to bring more voices to the table but are we listening to them?” (Organisation G.1, 2022). Hence, there has been a shift in organisational mindsets to include a gender-inclusive and anti-racist framework in their work.*

## 2.2 Successes and failures in working on advocacy campaigns that are (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist and challenges in establishing a gender-inclusive and/or anti-racist approach.

During the interviews, organisations were asked to address campaigns that succeeded and failed in being gender-inclusive and/or anti-racist. Notably, most organisations focused on providing examples of successful and unsuccessful campaigns regarding gender-inclusiveness rather than anti-racism. A rare reference to the use of an anti-racist framework was made by Organisation H (2022)

by highlighting that often, **the method to communicate and the imagery used to reach a particular group of people has reinforced colonial discourses.**

A significant campaign success perceived by the organisations on gender-inclusive campaigns was **the involvement of beneficiaries** throughout the project. *“Girls were involved in the process, getting representation from the continent at all levels and all ages. They spoke about their issues to continue learning. Regarding gender inclusivity in this campaign, both genders are very active, and even the boys are very vocal when speaking up for girls’ education. The campaign was a success as both genders.” (Organisation C, 2022). Similarly, organisation E (2022) stated that “when movements/campaigns are led by the communities that you are trying to serve, it helps shape the movement differently... Because **there is a distinction between learned knowledge and experience.**” (Organisation E, 2022). By focusing on the involvement of beneficiaries and their needs, organisations can act and provide support in areas of need, specifically in girls’ education. It was mentioned by Organisation A (2022) that a successful campaign was *“fuelled by the actions, and although quite localised, serves, as a reference to this day for the realisation of other campaigns, actions and discourse within the institutions”*. However, organisation E noted how some organisations claimed to involve*

beneficiaries only *“to have good pictures on social media or to have their name on your report”*. For instance, organisation E gave the example of an advocacy campaign for Indigenous rights that did not include any material in the language of this group of people. When doing an advocacy campaign, it is essential to **promote “meaningful participation”**, starting with sharing content that is accessible to everyone (2022). Therefore, it is crucial to **listen and include recommendations** and inputs from impacted groups and not solely qualify a campaign as gender-inclusive or anti-racist. This problem was also underlined by organisation J, which **denounced the superficiality of a campaign** that *“didn’t go to the depth it could have gone.”* (2022). Even if the organisations’ members noticed that no change occurred after the campaign and addressed this problem to the leaders, no action was taken, and their complaints were ignored. Therefore, some campaigns remain largely superficial, even if part of the staff is aware of it. Thus, an organisation needs to listen and act based on the recommendations and remarks from the groups of people directly impacted.

Moreover, organisation B (2022) reiterated the **importance of youth-led action** in advocacy to *“develop the capacities of marginalised youth with regards to education, gender...”*. This practice was used in one of their campaigns and proved to be successful by exploring *“What are*

*the gender dimensions and the inequality dimensions of education- why cannot they complete their education? What types of discrimination do they face?”* analysing the layers of discrimination and reinforcing the need of tackling intragenerational knowledge (Organisation B, 2022). However, multiple international organisations noticed the **failure to include marginalised populations in practice** (Organisation C, L, E, 2022). For example, ensuring the inclusion of the LGBTQA+ population is crucial. Organisation E explained how some campaigns failed because *“only the mainstream young boys and girls were included”*, while *“young LGBTQ youth group (...) were excluded.”* (2022). In addition, some organisations noted the importance of integrating boys into advocacy campaigns (Organisation F, C, 2022). Organisation C explains: *“You need both men and women to make the impact and the changes meaningful.”* (2022). Boys have been left aside from gender-inclusive campaigns and must be included for a more significant impact. Organisation C also noticed that **leaving boys behind harmed their mental health and could have detrimental long-term effects if left unaddressed** (2022). By applying an intersectional lens to see how race and gender were intersecting and impacting education, their project was considered successful in addressing girls in education. The use or existence of an intersectional framework was enough to consider a project a success. **The framework is now considered a measure of**

success instead of how well it is utilised and its effectiveness.

On the contrary, numerous organisations identified the **absence of an intersectional approach** in advocacy campaigns (Organisation A, L, F, 2022). Organisation A emphasised how in countries *“where class, gender and race issues are structural to explain domination over the vast majority of the population, advocacy initiatives that fail to articulate this intersectionality have limited impact and effect.”* (2022). Consequently, an advocacy

campaign might not have been successful by failing to adopt an intersectional lens, reinforcing that these criteria are now used to measure success.

2.3 Measures or practices to improve gender-inclusivity and anti-racism in advocacy relating to gender, education, and social justice

Organisations	Practices suggested to improve gender-inclusivity and anti-racism in advocacy
Organisations A, D, J, H, E	Including beneficiaries at every stage of the advocacy process.
Organisation E	Includes beneficiaries in a “meaningful” way, listening and applying their suggestions.
Organisation A	Connecting global and local networks in the territories to build the discourse from the actors and actresses whose rights are disrespected such as girls, women and black people.
Organisation G.2	Self-reflection and historical reflection on the role of development and colonialism.
Organisation C	Collect more data and do more research on advocacy.
Organisation F	Put in place mentorship of girls at early stages.
Organisation J	Integrate and be aware of cultural norms and practices.
Organisation B	Work closely with the SDGs.
Organisation A	Investing in strategic communication to dispute narrative, inform and encourage autonomy and agency of women and girls.
Organisations K and F	Pair advocacy with political will and legal frameworks.
Organisation G.1	Push for an internal cultural shift in organisations to reflect on decolonisation.
Organisation D	Safeguard and protect beneficiaries that speak up.

### 3. Collaborating with a Network of Stakeholders for Advocacy Campaigns

Most organisations highlighted the importance of collaborating with all stakeholders during advocacy campaigns. While stakeholders have **significant roles in deploying an effective advocacy campaign, they also have varying agendas and priorities.**

One of the most important stakeholders to include but **paradoxically one of the least consulted for advocacy campaigns are the beneficiaries.** They should be at the centre of every campaign (Organisation B, 2022) as there is a notable difference between learned knowledge and experience: *“no matter how much you learn about something, you cannot compare it to the experiences of people who have lived it”* (Organisation E, 2022). However, integrating beneficiaries in the decision-making process can be difficult in practice. **The interest of donors may overshadow the real needs of populations alongside their inclusion in every step of the campaigns** (Organisation I, 2022). It was interesting that very few organisations mentioned downward accountability as a best practice, although the literature emphasises its importance. Indeed, **upward accountability is often privileged at the expense of downward accountability,** leading to conflicts between stakeholders – communities do not feel included, but organisations need to satisfy their donors’ interests. The exclusion of beneficiaries may lead to more difficulties, especially in data

collection, as some communities may be reluctant to offer data if they are not included at grassroots levels (Organisation F, 2022).

Beyond the inclusion of beneficiaries mentioned above, **policymakers need to ensure the inclusion of civil society, donors, partners into their action.** Constantly rallying stakeholders is essential for promoting advocacy campaigns (Organisation C, 2022). However, it may be challenging to collaborate and find common ground because the priorities and interests of various stakeholders differ. Bringing all stakeholders together means being *“all-inclusive”*, but this requires utilising a gender lens with the sometimes-impractical consideration of all cultural peculiarities (Organisation J, 2022). For instance, implementing a gender-inclusive campaign in a patriarchal society may necessitate a different approach (Organisation C, 2022). Stakeholders may sometimes leverage NGOs in very conservative societies, which leads to difficulty sustaining campaigns (Organisation F, 2022).

When discussing gender-inclusive advocacy campaigns, an additional layer of difficulty arises **when combining gender with other identities** (race, political and religious group). The consideration of intersectionality is vital in designing an advocacy campaign (Organisation K, 2022). Therefore, the inclusion of all stakeholders requires a deep analysis of intersectionality, which may prove onerous.

Further to that, organisations need to ensure that they are **building “relationships of trust”** and that they are finding *“allies”* (Organisation F, 2022). However, this might be challenging considering all actors’ different timetables and schedules. Organisation I mentions the need to *“be conscious of different time zones”*, which are often western-centric.

Additionally, the vast number of actors at play implies **different and intricate agendas** and, consequently, **conflict of interests**. Donors, for instance, have an essential role to play in funding and are usually the most powerful in decision-making. Sometimes organisations may be stuck in *“donor dependency”*, which may bureaucratise their actions (Organisation I, 2022) - consequently disrupting their initial agenda. Therefore, the **implication of donors’ presence** will be *“different according to their agendas”* (Organisation D, 2022). The variety of actors at play may also induce an increased difficulty to *“sit down as a collective and agree upon the goal, agree upon some of the key considerations, agree upon the assumptions, agree upon the contextual issues that you need to take into account as you design this campaign”* (Organisation D, 2022).

Therefore, another difficulty lies in the hardships of different organisations' different understanding of advocacy actions. It is imperative that *“all actors, whether donors, governments, religious leaders, traditional*

*leaders, NGOs, practitioners, the beneficiaries themselves, work together to understand each other”* (Organisation D, 2022).

#### 4. Best practices and key challenges for measuring the impact of advocacy campaigns

Regarding the M&E of advocacy campaigns, several organisations have recognised **the complexity of this issue** and the need to improve practices and explore further. From the interviews conducted, many organisations agreed that measuring the impact of advocacy is **a long-term process** that requires **time and resources**. However, it is essential to focus on the short-term goals, such as the number of people joining a campaign, the extent to which awareness of a problem can be raised, and the ability to sustain the engagement on a campaign (Organisation F, 2022). Even though these practices may not be the ultimate goal, they can strongly impact an advocacy campaign.

The typical *“best practice”* to measure the impact of advocacy campaigns amongst the organisations interviewed was **the collection of data and documentation** (Organisations K, C, L, J, E, 2022). Conducting informal surveys, measuring the web traffic of the campaign, obtaining access to data and research, and having strong qualitative and quantitative indicators for the project will allow

organisations to measure the impact based primarily on numerical data. **Qualitative data** is essential to determine the extent of engagement and whether the campaign has achieved the correct **type of engagement** in reaching the target population group (Organisation E, 2022). Additionally, using log frames through source-based management allows the organisation to focus and ensure that the main goal is achieved by establishing smaller, more achievable targets (Organisation J, E, 2022). To analyse all the data collected, it is crucial to use software to put all the data together and determine the impact of a campaign. Although analysing data and collecting documentation is an essential measure of assessing the impact of an advocacy strategy, it must be complemented with additional practices outlined below. Currently, there are **data gaps and a lack of access to data** (such as analytics from social media) to monitor and evaluate the impact of advocacy campaigns (Organisations K, C, B, E, F, 2022). Communities might be reluctant to share information through interviews, which exacerbates the problem of obtaining data. If there is not enough adequate data to evaluate, it will be challenging to monitor and assess the impact of a campaign. This problem is linked to another challenge, the lack of capacity to sift through extensive data. **Allocating or obtaining the funds** to carry out M&E processes, given that the budget is *“sporadic across advocacy campaigns”* (Organisation K, 2022).

During the interview process, organisation D (2022) presented a framework to measure the impact of advocacy projects at **three different levels**. The first level is **the targeted population**, looking at their agency, their capacities, training, and views on social norms. Secondly, **observing the relationship level** allows us to examine the relationships girls have with boys, school peers, their teachers, their parents, and within their households or communities. The third refers to **the structural level**; it examines the engagement with the laws, policies, practices, and beliefs within the community the campaign sought to impact. Hence, organisations can use the suggested framework to analyse the different levels affected by the advocacy project.

When analysing the structural changes resulting from an advocacy campaign, it is necessary to **measure the campaign’s influence on legislators with access to parliament** (Organisation C, 2022). Legislators can raise the problems addressed in any campaign, potentially achieving change at a policymaker level. Analysing spaces where leadership can engage is essential when determining a campaign’s impact and how change can be achieved (Organisation G.1, 2022). Once the legislator has raised awareness of the problems identified from the advocacy campaign and has managed to change or implement a new law, it is necessary to measure how that specific policy has assisted young people or communities

(Organisation J, 2022). This will allow organisations to monitor a campaign's long-term impact by providing evidence from community-level education advocacy campaigns (Organisation B, 2022).

Additionally, **lobbying directly with national governments** allows individual advocacy narratives to be highlighted in parliament. (Organisation B, 2022). An example of this is when education coalitions lobby Members of Parliaments to raise relevant questions during the question period (Organisation B, 2022). Establishing a **communication channel or providing spaces to initiate dialogue** with government or institutions makes the likelihood of an advocacy strategy succeeding is more significant, as organisations can develop a relationship with policymakers.

Regarding the significant challenge that arose from the interviews on the influence of legislators, **the lack of accountability platforms** since advocacy efforts rely on **the goodwill of states** (Organisations G.1, G.2, I, 2022). There is an urgent need to establish follow-up accountability mechanisms with the stakeholders and partners involved in the project and how to support countries to ensure they are capacitated to implement changes (Organisation G.2, 2022). This problem is crucial to tackle since it is essential *“to track narratives to identify stakeholders and how their*

*narratives have changed in spaces where they participate, become more inclusive and raise awareness of issues they did not advocate before”* (Organisation G.1, 2022). However, it is difficult to monitor and measure this at an international level since it is not simply making the state raise awareness about an issue; they must act. M&E efforts are commonly based on what donors desire to achieve, so there may be indicators that are left out of the process.

**Feedback from stakeholders** is another practice among interviewees that were considered necessary when measuring the impact of an advocacy campaign (Organisation G.2, 2022)—considering their viewpoint on how the campaign has **evolved and any gaps to address to achieve meaningful transformation**. Also, organisations have suggested analysing the feedback provided by the audience and the extent to which the advocacy strategy has been able to change their perspective on the social issue advocated for (Organisation I, 2022). This can be done by carrying out opinion poll surveys to those target groups meant to perceive the campaign’s impact or by asking other organisations their opinion on the outcome of the strategy. Similarly, examining the media coverage of what the campaign achieved serves as an indicator to measure the success or failure or highlight any problems that arose from it.

Nevertheless, *“the impact of advocacy cannot be done in isolation. There is a need to collaborate with other partners and stakeholders”* (Organisation B, 2022). If some members of the advocacy project do not document the process, measuring the impact becomes more difficult. This problem is exacerbated when organisations work with staff based in a different country since working on multiple projects simultaneously may lead to lower levels of documentation (Organisation H, 2022). When advocating internationally, *“it becomes had to get the full picture of the work and therefore evaluate it. Indicators change or are obsolete depending on each context - this becomes tricky when done at a wider scale”* (Organisation K, 2022). Additionally, when there is a change in the political administration or a major institution, the dynamic and the priorities on their agenda change, which creates difficulties when **building credibility and establishing a relationship of trust with them** (Organisation B, 2022). Hence, a challenge to be addressed is *“to encourage members to document the policy gaps and the processes within the education sector”* (Organisation B, 2022).

A meaningful practice suggested throughout the interviews to determine the impact of a campaign was observing the **attitudes and actions of community members** and analysing any **corresponding changes** in the structures and frameworks at a local, provincial, national,

or international level (Organisations K, D, 2022). It was acknowledged by organisation K (2022) that this process might take an extensive amount of time that not all organisations have when measuring the impact of a campaign. At a local level, it is valuable to examine how social norms may have changed due to a campaign and how it has influenced the population (Organisation D, 2022). An example of girls’ education would be to observe how communities have positively changed their attitudes by analysing the relationships students or families have developed, consequently enabling communities to speak out about problems girls face when accessing education (Organisation D, 2022). Looking at the capacities the advocacy strategy has been able to deliver is crucial, for example, for mothers or gender-based violence victims to engage in education and support them throughout their educational path. Reviewing the evidence generated by the campaign, and observing how these communities have engaged with it, serves as an indicator to evaluate the campaign.

Organisations should include beneficiaries in measuring the impact of a project. However, there is currently **a lack of inclusion of beneficiaries** when evaluating and monitoring impact (Organisation D, 2022). Beneficiaries are at the centre of any advocacy campaign; it would be ideal for taking the time to listen to them, to what they want, the support they

require- it is a long-term process of influencing. *“It is important to create and leverage existing opportunities to share measurement issues with regards to advocacy”* and to be able to create a network of organisations by sharing *“best practices that can be used to inform the development of advocacy campaigns in the future”* (Organisation D, 2022). Organisations acknowledge that monitoring and evaluating a campaign is gradual and requires time.

Equally as important, Organisation B (2022) introduced the **idea of youth-led action research** as a measure to evaluate the impact of a campaign. By comparing the evidence, the advocacy strategy gathered, and the local actions of a community, organisations can assess the impact of their strategy. Through community learning centres, for example, organisation B (2022) stated that it enabled them to focus on boys who *“were reluctant to the learning centre to be built”, “the boys destroyed the banner of the centre because they said the girls did not have the right”* to access it. However, after working to rebuild the relationship between them, the boys from the community started to support the construction

of the learning centre and understood that the girls have the same rights as them. This reflects the successful impact the advocacy project had at a local level. However, when evaluating M&E impact efforts in a project where young people from a community took the initiative to promote the enrolment of girls in education, it is **hard to collect the data on the different pledges that were being completed simultaneously** (Organisation B, 2022). A follow-up report should have been done to evaluate the impact of what young people had done in this project. It is challenging to achieve reports on particular aspects of the project, given that they were youth-led. Some indicators to analyse the M&E impact, such as the number of people attending an advocacy event, may be misleading. Even though they are present in those meetings, their contributions can potentially be not meaningful (Organisation E). It may be hard to quantify the exact level of engagement in this case. Thus, the main challenge is setting up the indicators and fulfilling them (Organisation E, 2022).

# Recommendations

**DECOLONIAL AND ANTI-RACISM**

- All anti-racist work should be combined with a decolonial lens when possible

**THE INVOLVEMENT OF BENEFICIARIES**

- Include beneficiaries at all stages of advocacy campaigns
- Incorporate an intersectional lens to every advocacy campaign to avoid the erasure of other identities

**COORDINATION AMONGST STAKEHOLDERS**

- Consider the different agendas and priorities of the stakeholders to implement effective advocacy campaigns

**M&E REPORTS**

- Establish a framework that allows organisations to evaluate the changes at three levels
- Adopt an improved holistic or localised approach to the M&E process
- Improve the data collection process

## 1. Decolonising Anti-Racism

Decolonisation and anti-racism are not mutually exclusive, and organisations must utilise **a decolonial lens when conducting anti-racist work**. Decolonisation is often equated to or seen as a mere anti-racism component rather than foundational to a larger anti-racist struggle. Many practitioners cite a decolonial lens as ‘unnecessary’ if everyone around them looks homogenous. This gap allows organisations to discount significant areas and

issues for advocacy work as it is not registered as a struggle.

## 2. Recommendations on the Involvement of Beneficiaries

2.1 The importance of including beneficiaries at all stages of advocacy campaigns.

**Beneficiaries should be involved in campaign creation, the collection and analysis, and the implementation phase.** The experience of people directly impacted by the advocacy

initiative will always be different from those of the other stakeholders. To adopt a practical bottom-up approach, the suggestions and recommendations held by women and girls need to be applied and not just advertised or used in a tokenistic way. Not including girls in advocacy campaigns for girls' education is paradoxical. It may also feed into patriarchal and paternalist narratives by reinforcing the assumption that women and girls cannot be included in decision-making.

2.2 Incorporate an intersectional lens into every advocacy campaign to avoid the erasure of other identities.

Organisations should **systematically include marginalised groups** in advocacy campaigns for girls' education. Applying an intersectional lens will enable organisations to identify patterns of discrimination/exclusion that girls face. For example, ensuring the **participation of LGBTQA+ and transgender people** is essential to ensure a successful campaign. In addition, adopting an effective gender-inclusive lens also implies considering the **involvement of young boys**. Groups that have sometimes been left aside in advocacy campaigns need to be included in discussions and policy-making processes.

### 3. Coordination Amongst Stakeholders

Organisations need to collaborate with stakeholders. The various actors render the

process arduous, from planning to executing an advocacy campaign. Therefore, organisations must consider the **different agendas and priorities of the stakeholders** to implement effective advocacy campaigns. Organisations must coordinate effectively to achieve transformative results rather than minor changes. Another challenge perceived throughout the literature is that advocacy has a transformative change at a policy level; hence, it is crucial to achieving policy level reforms alongside other types of action to attain the best result.

## 4. M&E Report Recommendations

4.1 Establish a framework that allows organisations to evaluate the changes at three levels.

To monitor and evaluate the impact of an advocacy campaign on girls and education, organisations should **create a framework that allows them to assess the changes at different levels**. The first level of analysis should be with individuals in the **targeted population**, observing any changes in the agency, capacities, or any shift in their perspective of social norms. Secondly, at **a local level**, examining the relationships within the communities and their attitudes towards the inclusion of girls in education. By analysing the shift in social norms, organisations will be able to assess the impact. They will be able to create safe spaces to discuss the challenges girls face

when accessing education. The third level involves noticing any effect at a **structural level**, any new developments within education laws/policies/practices in the community the advocacy campaign sought to influence.

campaign has reached the desired type of engagement through qualitative data.

#### 4.2 An improved holistic or localised approach to the M&E process

M&E requires a holistic approach as there is no “*one best practice*”, and there must be a **combination of practices to monitor an advocacy campaign's impact**. Working with communities is crucial to obtaining information about their environment and understanding their social norms. Engaging communities and beneficiaries throughout the M&E processes should be necessary to understand their needs and their impact.

#### 4.3 Improve the data collection process

There is an urgent need to improve collecting data by **setting various targets and establishing which metrics to use when measuring the impact of campaigns**. By setting smaller goals, the organisation will be able to monitor and evaluate more effectively, eventually achieving its ultimate aim from the campaign. The organisation can then determine whether the

## Conclusion

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This study aimed to understand and highlight the best practices for gender-inclusive, anti-racist, and decolonial advocacy campaigns regarding gender and education. The interviews conducted with multiple IGOs, and the literature review offer insight into current advocacy practices and ways to improve the impact of advocacy campaigns.

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The main conclusion of this report is that advocacy must be approached from a holistic viewpoint. Indeed, there is no 'best practice' but a combination of practices identified in this research project to fit a context. Therefore, best practices that have been identified and recommended in this report must be applied simultaneously to produce significant and positive results.

Firstly, the inclusion of beneficiaries at every stage is crucial among the best practices identified to implement a gender-inclusive, anti-racist and decolonial advocacy campaign. This implies the participation of beneficiaries in M&E processes to encompass their perceptions and points of view on the campaign's impact. In addition, an intersectional lens must be applied when designing and implementing an advocacy project to consider marginalised populations, such as girls with disabilities or the LGBTQA+ community and young boys.

Secondly, regarding measuring the impact of advocacy campaigns, the main takeaway from this research project is the importance of feedback from diverse stakeholders. Asking them their viewpoint on how the campaign has evolved and if they can identify any gaps that need to be addressed is essential to achieve meaningful transformation. In addition, it is crucial to track the changes in their narratives and discourses, which can be more implicit than direct feedback, to understand the evolution in their perspective. Therefore, the point of view of every stakeholder involved in the advocacy project must be considered to deliver a detailed and accurate measurement of the impact.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1: Literature Review on Gender-Inclusivity

### Innovation

Increasingly, organisations have begun to recognise and include innovation as a critical driver of gender inclusion. However, innovation and technology rarely benefit women and men equally, and a concentrated approach is necessary to ensure that gender inclusivity is incorporated into innovative initiatives (Molinier et al., 2018). According to UN Women, innovation is about “identifying new and more effective solutions that explicitly meet the needs of women and girls and have the ability to accelerate impact” (Molinier et al., 2018). By encouraging innovation, organisations can tackle structural constraints in gender equality through alternative means while promoting women’s agency (Global Innovation Fund, n.d.).

There have been calls for more innovative proposals to drive educational initiatives like the Global Fund for Children, which creates grants for a wellness centres like the Mariposa Center for Girls. The centre hosts tutoring, sports, wellness classes and jobs skills training. “With the Maya Ajmera Sustainability Award, Mariposa has resources to train staff, engage in promotion and marketing, and renovate spaces for new income generation projects.” (Kee, 2017). These initiatives are specially designed to be gender inclusive and can account for many of the systematic issues girls and women face in other educational places.

### Disability

Though disability activists have done significant advocacy work in the past decade, there is still limited research and evidence that addresses the inclusion of girls with disabilities in educational programmes. Most of the available literature has focused on gender or disability separately while failing to address these two themes together (Humanity & Inclusion, 2021). However, girls with disabilities are among “the world’s most marginalised groups of society, resulting from social norms and cultural bias around both gender and disability.” (UNGEI & Leonard Cheshire, 2017). As a result, many women and girls face double discrimination due to being both disabled and female, increasing the risk of exclusion from the education system, jeopardising the foundational concept of IGOs of “no one left behind”.

Organisations and policymakers often neglect the specific barriers and challenges faced by this marginalised group of people leading to a disproportionate number of girls with disabilities not attending conventional schooling systems (UNGEI & Leonard Cheshire, 2021). For example, wheelchair users are sometimes confronted with access issues to school facilities and buildings due to a lack of accessibility infrastructure. For many girls living with disabilities, the barrier to their education is not themselves but the inaccessible world around them.

To achieve SDG 4 on quality education for all children seems impossible without prioritising girls with disabilities. For this reason, Leonard Cheshire's (2021) report emphasises the need for UN agencies and international development organisations to ensure that inclusive education programmes are tailored to girls with disabilities. To successfully implement gender-inclusive education strategies, policymakers have to commit to upholding the rights of girls and women experiencing disabilities to make sure that no one is left behind.

## Annex 2: Organisation Chart

Organisation	Region/Continent	Type of Organization
A	South America	INGO
B	Asia Pacific	NGO
C	Africa	IO
D	Global	NGO
E	Commonwealth Countries	NGO
F	Sub-Saharan Africa	NGO
G.1 and G.2	Global	Fund
H	Global	NGO
I	Global	NGO
J	Sub-Saharan Africa	UN Organization
K	Global	UN Organization
L	South America, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Central Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central and North Asia region	Fund and NGO

### Annex 3: Interview Questions

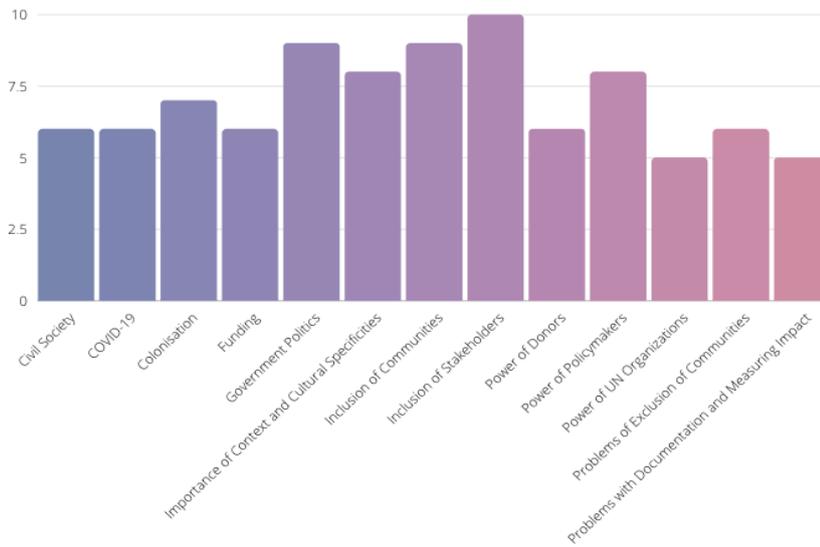
1. What is your organisation's understanding of "advocacy" in the development context?
2. In your opinion, can advocacy be a tool for decolonising development? Which measures/practices need to be in place in order to work towards this goal?
3. In your opinion, why is it important for advocacy campaigns in the development sector to be (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist? Do you feel that efforts towards these goals have changed over time?
4. Have you seen or worked on any advocacy campaigns that you felt were (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist? Can you give an example?
5. Have you seen or worked on any advocacy campaigns that you felt did not succeed in being (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist? Can you give an example?
6. In your opinion, what measures or practices would need to be in place to improve gender-inclusivity and anti-racism in advocacy relating to gender/education/social justice?
7. A common issue in this field is the perceived or real difficulty of collaborating with different stakeholders and partners to plan and implement advocacy campaigns. Have you experienced such difficulties? Tell us about this experience.
8. In your opinion, what are some best practices for measuring the impact of an advocacy project or campaign?
9. What are some key challenges in monitoring and evaluating the impact of an advocacy campaign?
10. Thinking about the network of different actors and stakeholders (including local, national, regional and international) working to advance gender equality in education around the world, which actors do you believe have (1) the power and (2) the responsibility to set the standards for advocacy that intentionally subverts gender, racist and colonial stereotypes in development? Do you feel these actors are doing enough at this stage?

## Annex 4: Key Findings

### 4.1 Major themes across the interviews

## Major Themes

Primary themes mentioned in key informant interviews



### 4.2 Rainbow Chart

	A	K	C	G.1	G.2	J	B	E	L	H	I	F	D
In your opinion, can advocacy be a tool for decolonizing development? Which measures/practices need to be in place in order to work towards this goal? (3)													
Have you seen or worked on any advocacy campaigns that you felt were (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist? Can you give an example? (5)													
Have you seen or worked on any advocacy campaigns that you felt did not succeed in being (1) gender-inclusive and/or (2) anti-racist? Can you give an example? (5)													
A common issue in this field is the perceived or real difficulty of collaborating with different stakeholders and partners to plan and implement advocacy campaigns. Have you experienced such difficulties? Tell us about this experience. (7)													
Do you feel these actors are doing enough at this stage? (10)													