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Fast-Track Advocacy Training Guide (One-Day Condensed Curriculum)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fast-Track Advocate is a high-impact, one-day intensive training designed to transform women, youth, and community champions into effective policy influencers and strategic negotiators. An accelerated crash course that blends core power mapping, SMART strategy design, and essential pitching skills into a single day. The curriculum shifts the focus from passively complaining about community or agricultural challenges to actively and strategically demanding structural change. Participants are equipped with the skills necessary to identify decision-makers, negotiate for equitable resource allocation, and drive inclusive governance at the local and institutional levels.

To ensure high engagement and accessibility across all educational backgrounds, the training strictly utilises participatory, literacy-neutral adult learning methodologies. It relies on visual mapping exercises, such as the “Issue Tree,” to deconstruct complex problems, paired with extensive, interactive role-playing. This fast-paced, experiential approach allows participants to immediately practice and refine their public speaking and negotiation tactics in a safe, peer-supported environment.

Key Training Pillars

- **Deconstructing Problems & Power Mapping:** Advocates learn to distinguish between the superficial symptoms of a problem and its structural root causes. Through stakeholder mapping, they identify exactly who holds the power to enact change, distinguishing between targets, opponents, and potential allies.
- **SMART Strategy Design:** The training transitions broad grievances into concrete, actionable demands. Participants master the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to ensure their advocacy requests cannot be easily dismissed by decision-makers.
- **Strategic Negotiation:** Participants are trained to navigate power dynamics by understanding the critical difference between a “position” (what you demand) and an “interest” (why you need it). Through targeted role-play, they practice securing “win-win” agricultural and community policies.
- **Mastering the Elevator Pitch:** The curriculum equips advocates to deliver compelling, evidence-based messages. Participants

learn to seamlessly combine hard data with personal storytelling, culminating in the delivery of a concise, powerful two-minute pitch to a hypothetical high-level leader.

The intensive is explicitly designed to spark immediate, real-world action. It concludes with an accountability circle where every participant voices a concrete, time-bound advocacy commitment—such as scheduling a meeting with a local chief or forming a cooperative coalition. Furthermore, the program establishes a framework for monitoring long-term impact, ensuring that the skills acquired translate into sustained policy shifts, new institutional alliances, and permanent increases in the representation of women and youth in decision-making spaces.

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM | ARRIVAL, REGISTRATION & WELCOME

- **Registration:** Welcome participants and establish a collaborative environment.
- **Ground Rules:** Co-create ground rules (e.g., active listening, respect for diverse opinions, phones on mute).
- **Objective Setting:** Explain that today’s goal is to move beyond simply complaining about problems and instead build the strategic skills needed to target decision-makers, negotiate for resources, and influence policy.

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM | SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC ADVOCACY

Objective: Define advocacy and the principles of inclusive governance.

- **Step 1: Defining Advocacy (15 mins):** Explain that advocacy is the deliberate process of influencing decisions, shaping policies, and amplifying the voices of those usually excluded from decision-making.
- **Step 2: The Four Principles (15 mins):** Introduce the core rules of advocacy:
 - **Participation:** Those affected must be involved in the solution.
 - **Representation:** Advocate *with* communities, not just *for* them.
 - **Equity:** Address structural barriers that create unequal power.
 - **Accountability:** Take responsibility for messages and their community impact.
- **Step 3: Local Landscape Mapping (15 mins):** Have groups quickly brainstorm current advocacy issues in their communities, identify

who currently makes the decisions regarding those issues and what they want to advocate for.

9:45 AM – 10:45 AM | SESSION 2: IDENTIFYING ISSUES & POWER MAPPING

Objective: Deconstruct problems to target root causes, not just symptoms.

- Step 1: The Issue Tree Exercise (30 mins):*
Provide groups with flip charts to draw an “Issue Tree”.
 - Trunk (Core Problem): The main issue (e.g., lack of agricultural funding for women).
 - Roots (Causes): Underlying structural, cultural, or institutional barriers.
 - Branches (Effects): The consequences on the community’s livelihood.
- Step 2: Stakeholder Power Mapping (30 mins):
 - Using the issue from their tree, groups map relevant stakeholders on a visual grid: *Influence (High/Low)* versus *Position (Supportive/Opposed)*.
 - Discuss how to convert “Neutral” parties into “Allies”.

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM | MID-MORNING TEA BREAK

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | SESSION 3: BUILDING A SMART ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Objective: Transform broad grievances into targeted, measurable demands.

- Step 1: Setting SMART Objectives (20 mins):
 - * Teach the framework: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.
 - *Example:* “By March 15, the Government will allocate 30% of the agricultural development budget to support women’s farming cooperatives”.
- Step 2: Mini-Strategy Workshop (40 mins):
 - * Groups develop a mini-strategy identifying their Primary Audience (the person with direct power) and Secondary Audience (those who influence the primary decision-maker). They select three specific tactics (e.g., policy briefs, coalition building, media engagement) to reach them.

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM | SESSION 4: STRATEGIC NEGOTIATION & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Objective: Learn how to navigate power dynamics and secure “win-win” agreements.

- Step 1: Positions vs. Interests (20 mins):

- Explain the crucial difference in negotiation: A *Position* is what you say you want (the demand), but an *Interest* is why you want it (the underlying need).
- Emphasize focusing on “win-win” outcomes and separating the problem from the person.
- Step 2: Negotiation Role-Play (40 mins): *
Scenario: Community advocates negotiating with a local council on budget allocation.
 - Divide groups into advocates, council members, and observers. Allow 20 minutes for live negotiation, followed by a debrief on what tactics worked best.

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM | LUNCH BREAK

2:00 PM – 3:15 PM | SESSION 5: COMMUNICATION & THE ELEVATOR PITCH

Objective: Master the delivery of compelling, evidence-based messages.

- Step 1: Balancing Evidence and Emotion (15 mins): Discuss how to combine hard statistical data (to convince the brain) with personal storytelling (to connect with the heart).
- Step 2: Elevator Pitch Development (30 mins):
 - * Participants draft a 2-minute pitch containing 6 elements: Hook (attention-grabber), Problem (issue statement), Evidence (data/example), Solution (change requested), Benefit (why it matters to the leader), and Ask (specific action).
- Step 3: Plenary Pitch Practice (30 mins):
Volunteers stand up and deliver their pitches to the room, receiving constructive peer feedback on body language, clarity, and confidence.

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM | SESSION 6: MONITORING & SUSTAINING THE MOVEMENT

Objective: Create accountability and plan for long-term momentum.

- Step 1: Tracking Success (15 mins): Discuss how to measure advocacy impact, such as tracking new alliances formed, policy changes achieved, or resources reallocated.
- Step 2: Reflection Circle (15 mins): Have participants form a circle. Each champion states one concrete advocacy commitment they will initiate within the next three months (e.g., securing a meeting with a local chief, forming a cooperative coalition).

3:45 PM – 4:00 PM | WRAP-UP, EVALUATION & CLOSING

- Step 1: Evaluations: Have participants complete the post-training evaluation forms to capture feedback and self-reported confidence increases. A follow-up will be done in three months
- Step 2: Transition from practice to reality. Ask participants, “What will we do tomorrow?” Their target is based on what they want to advocate. Maybe 100 people per person should be the target. Use existing group platforms such as meetings and WhatsApp groups.
- Step 3: Closing: Final words of encouragement, a closing prayer (if culturally appropriate), and a celebratory group photo. Dismiss the group with a word of prayer.



CGIAR Gender Equality and Inclusion is CGIAR's Accelerator designed to put gender equality at the forefront of global agricultural research for development. The Accelerator will transform the way gender research is done, both within and beyond CGIAR, to kick-start a process of genuine change toward greater gender equality and better lives for smallholder farmers everywhere.
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