Evidence-to-Advocacy Guide for Girl Leaders

Adolescent Girls Investment Plan

BACKGROUND

This document draws on a capacity-building session organised by the **Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP)** for the members of its **Adolescent Girls Advisory Committee (AGAC)** on 21 February 2026. The session included the launch of **'Investing in adolescent girls: A summary for young advocates'** by Silvia Guglielmi from **GAGE-ODI**, followed by an evidence-to-advocacy workshop led by Tanyaa Sharma, an independent feminist consultant. The aim of the workshop was to support AGIP Girl Advisors in strengthening their advocacy on girls rights, angled towards the upcoming **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70)**. This document was created by Tanyaa with the AGIP Secretariat as a guide for all girl leaders preparing advocacy messages around CSW70 and beyond!

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

> Speaking up for something you believe in, in a way that impacts people's decisions and actions, is **advocacy**. It's what happens when you take something you care about and turn it into something you can do something about.

Advocacy can look like many things — what makes it advocacy is that it's directed at someone with the power to create change, and it asks them to use that power.

A Conversation | **A Campaign** | **A Social Media Post** | **A Petition** | **A Presentation**

Why does it matter that *YOU* advocate?
Issues that affect girls are best understood by girls themselves. Decision-makers need your perspective to create programmes and policies that address your challenges and meet your needs.

Try this before you turn the page!

Write down one issue in your school, community or world that you genuinely care about. Don't overthink it!

I care about.....
.....

What is Evidence & Why Does it Matter?

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UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE

Evidence is information that helps you move from "***I care about this***" to "***I understand this***" and "***I can solve this***". Caring about something is the starting point. However, when you want to convince someone else — a teacher, a local official, a community leader, a policymaker — you need more than feeling. You need facts, stories, data and real-world examples that show **why the problem exists** and **how serious** it is, and recommendations on **how to fix it**.

Evidence gives your voice **more weight**.

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Data and Statistics

Numbers that show the scale of a problem and methods used to analyze and interpret those numbers to draw meaningful conclusions.

Research & Reports

Findings published by organisations, academics or governments that study the issue in depth.

Personal Testimony

Lived experiences shared by individuals directly affected by the issue as part of qualitative research. These are powerful because they put a human voice to the numbers and provide more context, nuance, perspective, and depth.

Case Studies

Real examples of situations or interventions that illustrate the problem or a possible solution.

Remember...
The strongest evidence is a collection of various kinds of data — both qualitative and quantitative data are important to strengthen to your advocacy efforts.

Try this:
Take a look at this AGIP CSW70 Advocacy Brief and see how the evidence informs the key advocacy messages.

How Do You Know if Evidence is Good

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Not all evidence is created equal. Before you use a piece of evidence in your advocacy, put it through these four tests. We'll use one example throughout — imagine you're advocating about child marriage and its impact on girls' education and well-being.

> **Example evidence**:
> *"According to UNICEF's 2023 report, 640 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood. At the current rate, it will take another 300 years until child marriage is eliminated."*

THE 4 TESTS OF GOOD EVIDENCE

1. **Credible Source — Do you know where it comes from?**
   Good evidence has a clear, named origin — an organisation, researcher or institution you can point to. It can be looked up, confirmed and traced back to an original, trustworthy source.
   This comes from UNICEF's 2023 report "Is an End to Child Marriage Within Reach?" It is publicly available at data.unicef.org and can be read and checked by anyone.

2. **Contextual — Is it relevant to the issue and audience you're speaking to?**
   Evidence that works in one context may not land in another. Think about whether it speaks to the particular situation and people that you are looking to influence.
   If you're speaking to a school board, a local government official or a women's rights body, the link between child marriage and girls dropping out of school is directly relevant to their mandate.

3. **Specific — Is it precise rather than vague?**
   Specific numbers and concrete details are far more persuasive than general claims.
   "640 million girls and women" and "300 years to eliminate child marriage" are striking, concrete figures that make the scale and urgency of the problem impossible to ignore.

4. **Consistent — Is it backed up by other sources?**
   A single data point can be misleading. Strong evidence appears across multiple credible sources.
   These findings are echoed by UNFPA, the World Bank and Girls Not Brides, all of which document the scale and consequences of child marriage across regions.

Try this!

Find three pieces of evidence about your issue – one statistic, one report or article, and one personal story. Run each through the four tests above.

Turning Evidence Into Advocacy Messages!

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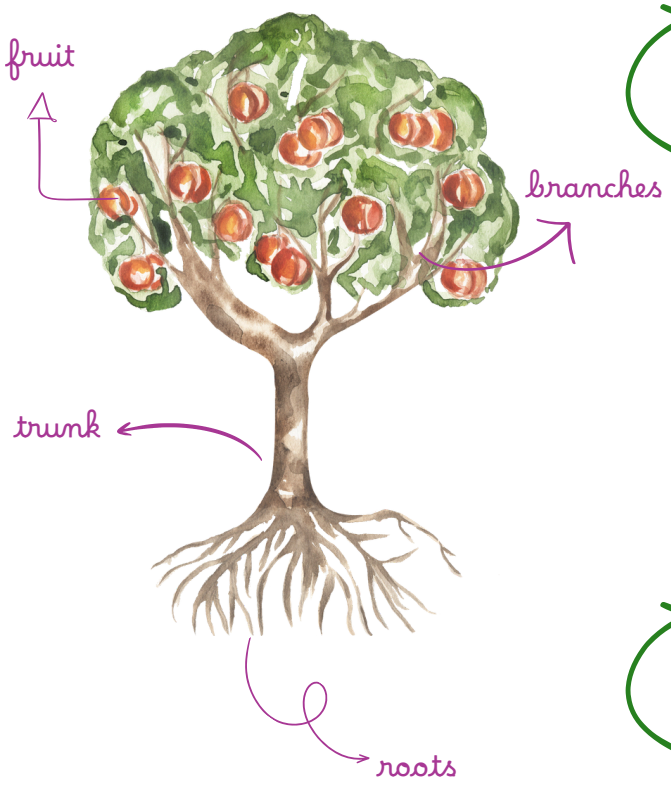
BUILDING YOUR MESSAGE

Evidence on its own is not advocacy. Advocacy is what happens when you use evidence to create a clear, targeted message — one that is aimed at a specific person or group of people and asks for something specific.

THE ADVOCACY TREE



FRUIT — THE ASK

This is your specific, actionable request. Vague asks produce vague results. Be precise. You must adapt your ask and the advocacy channel you use to the target audience.

BRANCHES — THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Who are you speaking to, and why do they have the power to help? Name them and acknowledge their role. In addition, think about your allies and who else can help you along the way.

TRUNK — THE EVIDENCE

This is what gives your message strength and keeps it standing. Choose one or two strong pieces of evidence that prove the problem is real, serious and relevant. All asks and recommendations must be supported by evidence.

ROOTS — THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

This is your foundation. What is the problem, stated clearly and simply? Name it directly.

Try this!

Using the issue and the evidence you've been building through this guide, draft your own advocacy message using the tree. Think about how you will reach the target audience with the ask - is it a poster, social media post or briefing? Get creative and share your message at CSW70 or the next opportunity!

Build Your Own Advocacy Message!

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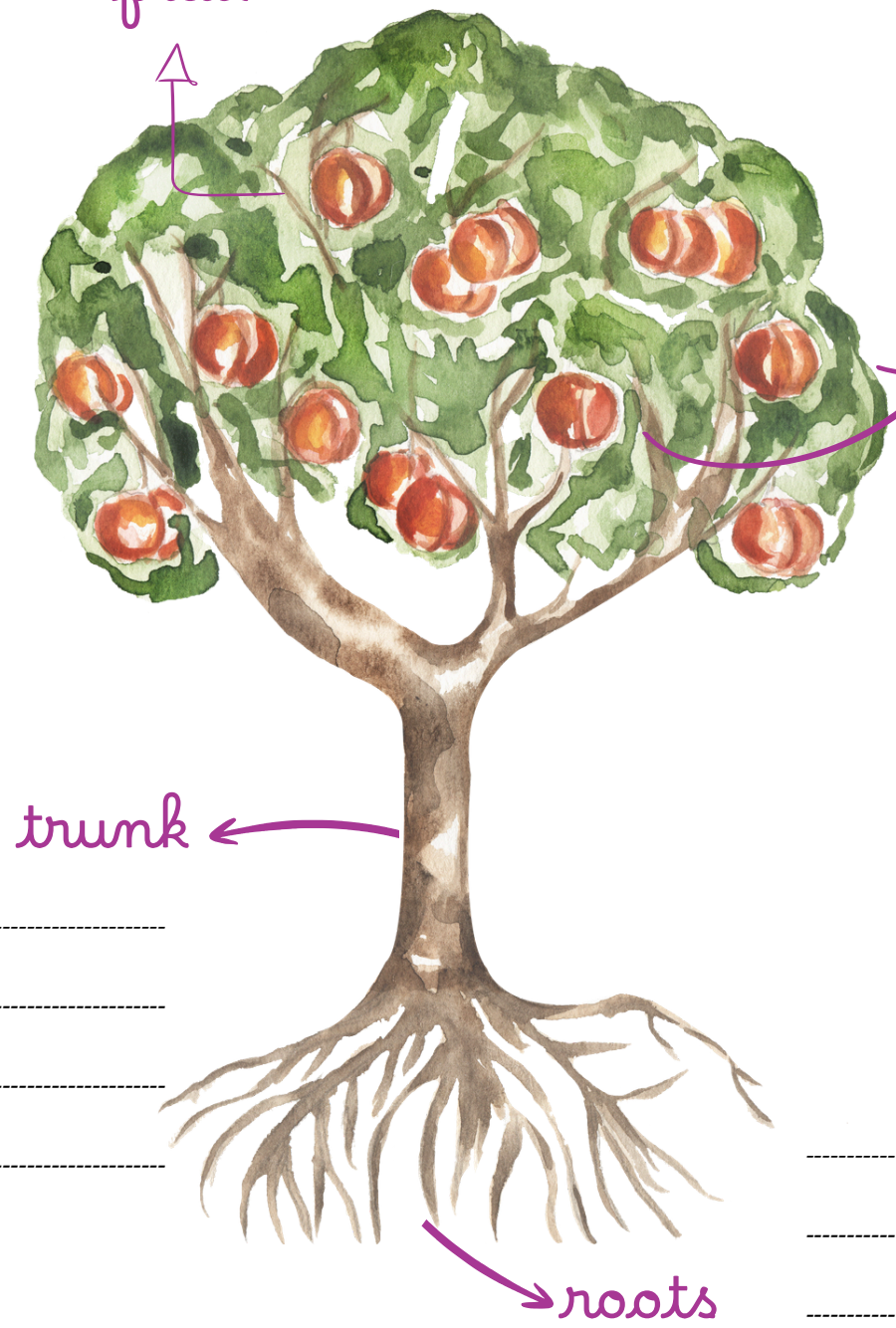

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A Snippet from the Evidence-to-Advocacy Workshop

During the Evidence-to-Advocacy workshop organized by AGIP for its Girl Advisors, participants worked through real examples of evidence — learning to spot facts, challenge assumptions, and identify when language is used to hide accountability. Below is a poem written by our participants, and three questions from that session, to try for yourself!

PARTICIPANTS' VOICES

I'M STILL GROWING

They say child marriage is culture,
But in reality, it is torture.
Children were pushed aside,
and they were made a bride
1 in 5 at this time.
I can't understand why,
because I am still growing.
Is being a girl supposed
to be a crime?
My place is caged and my hope has died,
Unless freedom will come to shine a light.

FROM THE WORKSHOP

1 One of these is a fact, the other is an opinion. Which one is the fact?

(a) It is embarrassing that girls have to miss school because of their periods.

(b) Only 1 in 8 schools in sub-Saharan Africa provide menstrual materials for girls.

Answer: (b); It is specific, measurable and verifiable!

2 "Child marriage protects girls and keeps communities stable." What kind of statement is this?

(a) A fact.

(b) An opinion presented as fact.

(c) Fake news.

(d) A reliable community viewpoint which should not be questioned.

Answer: (b); The statement uses confident phrasing to reflect a cultural viewpoint, not a verifiable finding.

3 "Mistakes were made in how girls' complaints of harassment at school were handled." What is the issue with this kind of framing?

(a) It removes any named person or institution from responsibility, making accountability impossible.

(b) It is too aggressive in assigning blame.

(c) Passive voice always signals misinformation.

(d) Nothing — passive voice is just a writing style.

Answer: (a); When no one is named, no one can be challenged, investigated, or held accountable.

CONTACT US

For more information on AGIP's AGAC, please write to Olivia at olivia.burns@plan-international.org

Content and Design by:
Tanyaa Sharma (tanyaa.sharma.r@gmail.com)

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