

# Implementation Tips for USAID Partners

Sharing Resources and Knowledge Among the Global CSO Community

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## Definitions

**Marginalized groups:** Refers to people who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; access to healthcare, education, employment, etc.), whether in practice or in principle (or both) for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

## Supporting Gender- and Socially-Inclusive Public Service Delivery

**Q** How can I work with service delivery oversight committees to achieve more inclusive delivery of public services?

**A** Civil society organizations (CSOs) and other community actors can facilitate the planning and delivery of public services that meet the needs of all community members by: stressing to service delivery oversight committees their formal mandates; facilitating critical reflection on gender and social norms and biases; supporting the use of sex-disaggregated data; and carefully recording the needs and perspectives of women and members of marginalized groups.

Service delivery oversight committees—such as school management committees, water user groups, and neighborhood health committees—play important roles in making community decisions about what kinds of services a government provides, how, and to whom. In many places, decision making in these committees is dominated by traditional and religious leaders who may have conservative or discriminatory views about the participation of women and marginalized social groups in public life. As a result, women and members of traditionally marginalized groups are often excluded from decision-making processes about critical public services and therefore miss important opportunities to voice their unique service needs. Women and members of marginalized groups who attempt to influence the delivery of public services may face backlash from traditional leaders and other committee members who have vested interests in maintaining the status quo. The steps below can assist CSOs to strengthen the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in community decisions about public services.

- **Reacquaint traditional and cultural leaders with the official mandate of the oversight committee.** Most countries have guidelines or mandates for service delivery oversight committees that outline their purposes and functions. Such guidelines usually outline what the committees are expected to do, as well as how they should conduct meetings and engage with members of the community. Despite these guidelines, traditional and religious community leaders may overstep the official mandate of a committee and lead it in a way that benefits them or their

## Resources

[Inclusive Public Sector Reform](#)

[The Transforming Agency, Access, and Power \(TAAP\) Toolkit](#)

## For More Information

For this or other issues of Implementation Tips, please visit [NGOConnect.net](https://ngoconnect.net). The website is a dynamic and interactive portal dedicated to connecting and strengthening CSOs, networks, and CSO support organizations worldwide.

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social group—or even take on issues that are beyond their official purview. Reinforcing committee members' knowledge of their official mandate may help them distinguish their responsibilities from other leadership roles they may have within the community and help ensure a committee does not overstep its intended purpose.

- **Work to transform the gender attitudes of traditional and religious leaders or ensure their views do not influence their actions on oversight committees.** The actions of traditional and cultural leaders on service delivery oversight committees are likely to reflect their own traditional views and closely held norms about gender and social relations. Engaging committee members in critical reflection on their own gender norms can encourage them to separate their personal views about gender from their public responsibilities.
- **Explain the value of inclusive decision making.** The concept of inclusive and participatory decision making may be new to traditional and religious leaders who may be used to making decisions on behalf of their constituencies. In such cases, it is important to explain that inclusive decision making is critical for the efficient delivery of public services that are needed, used, and appreciated by community members.
- **Support the use of information and data to inform decision making.** Leaders may often make service delivery decisions based on what they think women and members of minority groups want, rather than on actual data from these groups about their service needs. Supporting oversight committees to collect data from women and marginalized groups about their service needs and their satisfaction with existing services can enable oversight committees to plan and deliver services more efficiently and effectively.
- **In public meetings, utilize observers and note takers to record the voices of women and marginalized groups.** If the views and recommendations of different members of the community are recorded on paper, oversight committees may face greater pressure to integrate them into decision making. See the *Implementation Tip* on [Gender-Sensitive and Socially Inclusive Facilitation](#) for more information on how to ensure women and marginalized groups can attend and participate meaningfully in meetings.

