

# SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER FOR WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations using the *Men, Power and Politics Toolkit* need to partner with local women's rights organizations and female members of the targeted political organization(s) to understand the political context of the program, to hear women's experiences in political life and to hold male, political leaders accountable.

Female members of the targeted political organization **MAY OR MAY NOT** also be members of local women's rights organizations or movements. If the female members of the targeted political organization are NOT also members of local women's rights organizations or movements, then separate outreach efforts must be made to the two distinct groups:

- ▶ Members of local women's rights organizations can provide the political context of the program and help to hold male, political leaders accountable; and
- ▶ Female members of the targeted political organization(s) can share their experiences in political life and in the targeted, political organizations.

Staff of organizations considering the use of Men, Power and Politics Toolkit need to be aware of the current gender context in which the program will take place. It is important to have this information written down in one place so that it can be easily shared with the local masculinities organization to ensure the workshop content is accurate and beneficial.

Information that women's rights organizations and/or coalitions can share might include:

- ▶ How the government interacts with international gender frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Beijing reports, and Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- ▶ Current data on the number of elected and appointed women in politics at all levels as appropriate, the number and proportion of women registered to vote, the number of women who have run previously for elected office; and
- ▶ Relevant national laws regarding gender equality, elections, campaign finance, and violence against women in politics;

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

[IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION] is implementing a new program to engage male political leaders as transformative agents of change for gender equality. We are writing to invite [WOMEN'S GROUP] to participate and assist with this initiative that aims to change the patriarchal gender norms that are held by political leaders and underpin political institutions. The final desired result is a shift in the organizational structures, policies and actions of institutions such as political parties, civil society organizations, government ministries and elected bodies like local councils and parliaments.

The **Men, Power and Politics Program** seeks to promote gender equality in politics. It is therefore imperative that we seek open dialogue, collaboration, and partnership with women's rights organizations such as [WOMEN'S GROUP] and that these practices are institutionalized within the program's approaches, tools and activities. The initiative's efforts to promote gender equality in politics will work to ensure that the program facilitators, [IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION], and you do not unintentionally reinforce underlying power inequalities between men and women, and that instead we leverage any privileges the organizations or the male leaders working with them have in order to create space for women and girls to actively participate.

In order to do this, [IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION] is currently seeking collaboration, open dialogue and constructive criticism from [WOMEN'S GROUP] and other key stakeholders for gender equality in the context in which the program takes place. The full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies. Women's ability to participate equally in politics as activists, voters, members of civil society, party members or leaders, government officials and elected leaders results in tangible gains for democracy. To date, many of the programs to increase women's political participation have focused directly on women. The goal of this program is to change the patriarchal gender norms that are held by political leaders and underpin political institutions. The final desired result is a shift in the organizational structures, policies and actions of institutions such as political parties, civil society organizations, government ministries and elected bodies like local councils and parliaments.

**We would like to invite your organization to work alongside us in this initiative, which is designed to change the norms of male political leaders in order to change the attitudes of their peers and the political organizations they lead.** Changing the political organizations will allow for greater women's political participation, leadership and gender equality. This partnership will include your organization's participation in 1) a review of the current context regarding gender equality within women-only workshop activities; 2) mixed-sex workshop activities with a political organization's male leadership, including sessions where male leaders and women organizational members co-create commitments for further action; and 3) monitoring and learning activities based on the commitments made. [IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION] will support the coordination of your organization's partnership with the local program facilitation partner and the male, political leader participants.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request. We are available to answer questions that you have and look forward to this potential collaboration.

Respectfully yours,