



# Parliamentary exchange: Multi-party caucuses for gender equality

Dr. Sonia Palmieri  
October 2016

**Promoting gender sensitive parliaments:  
The case for multi-party caucuses  
for gender equality**

# + Have we achieved gender equality?

- No country has achieved gender equality
- **Discrimination in the law** persists in many countries, particularly in family law
- Educational attainment and rising participation in the labour market have **not been matched with better conditions and equal pay**
- Heavy and intense **unpaid care workloads** limit women's enjoyment of human rights
- **Violence against women and girls** persists in many forms
- Widespread **violations of sexual and reproductive health and rights**
- Women continue to be **excluded from decision-making** at all levels in public and private spheres

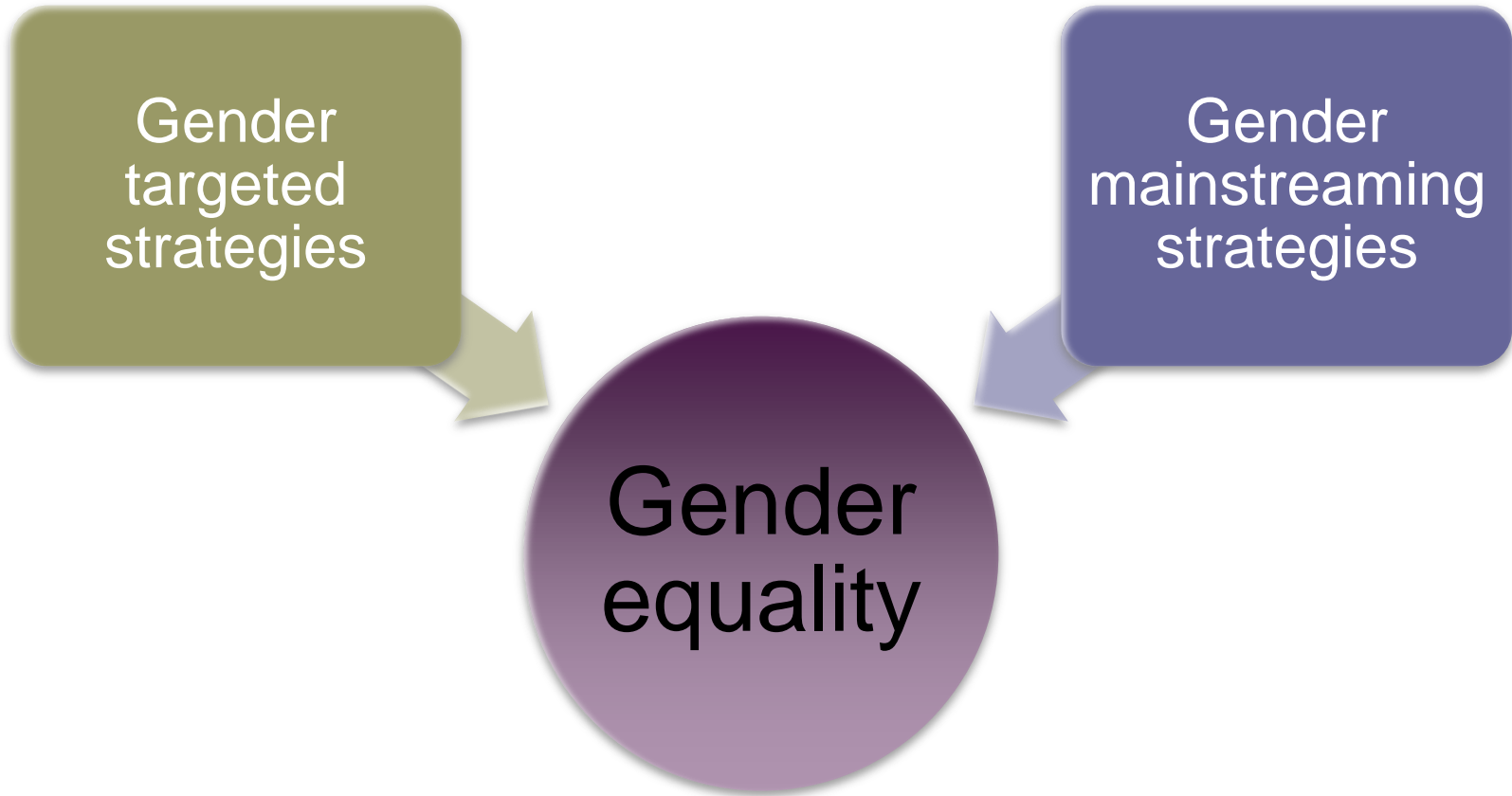


# + What will it take?



- Address discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes
- Attention to multiple discrimination, inequalities and the most marginalized
- Make the economy work for gender equality and sustainable development
- Significantly increase investments in gender equality
- Ensure full and equal participation of women at all levels
- Make our institutions more accountable to women

# + Key message

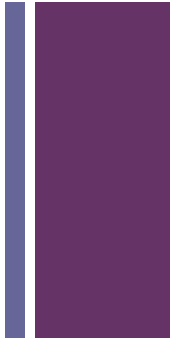


# + Gender equality



- refers to the **equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities** of women and men and girls and boys.
- does **not mean that women and men are the same**: but rather that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will **not depend** on whether they are born male or female.
- implies that the **interests, needs and priorities** of both women and men are **taken into consideration**, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.
- **is not a women's issue** but concerns and should fully engage men as well as women.

# + Gender targeted strategies



- seek to tackle **specific areas** where women are unrepresented or disadvantaged, including through the adoption of temporary special measures.
- **Temporary Special Measures** (TSMs) are specific measures taken to accelerate the equal participation of women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.
  - Electoral gender quotas (reserved seats, candidate quotas)
  - Capacity development programmes, special media and advocacy campaigning, campaign financing support
  - Preference given to a woman over a man in recruitment/promotion selection processes when candidatures are equal

# + Gender mainstreaming



- “The process of **assessing the implications for women and men** of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.
- It is a strategy for making **women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences** an integral dimension of the **design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation** of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated.”

Economic and Social Council, 1997



# + Gender sensitive parliaments



The Inter-Parliamentary Union defines a GSP as:

“An institution that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods and in its work.”

- Removes the barriers to women’s full participation
  - Offers a positive example or role model to society at large
  - Creates a workplace that is attractive for women
- 
- Achieved by implementing both gender targeted and gender mainstreaming strategies

**Building momentum for multi-  
party gender caucuses**

# + Parliamentary caucuses

## ■ Caucus

- Simply a group of parliamentarians, with a specific issue focus – e.g. population and development; gender equality, etc.
- Differentiated from a parliamentary committee by its rules and powers, functions

## ■ Women's caucus

- Usually composed only of women MPs

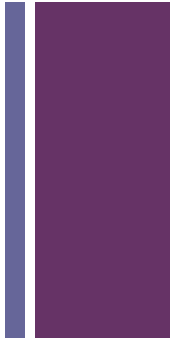
## ■ Parliamentary caucus on gender equality

- Could be comprised of men and women, but with the principal objective of advancing gender equality

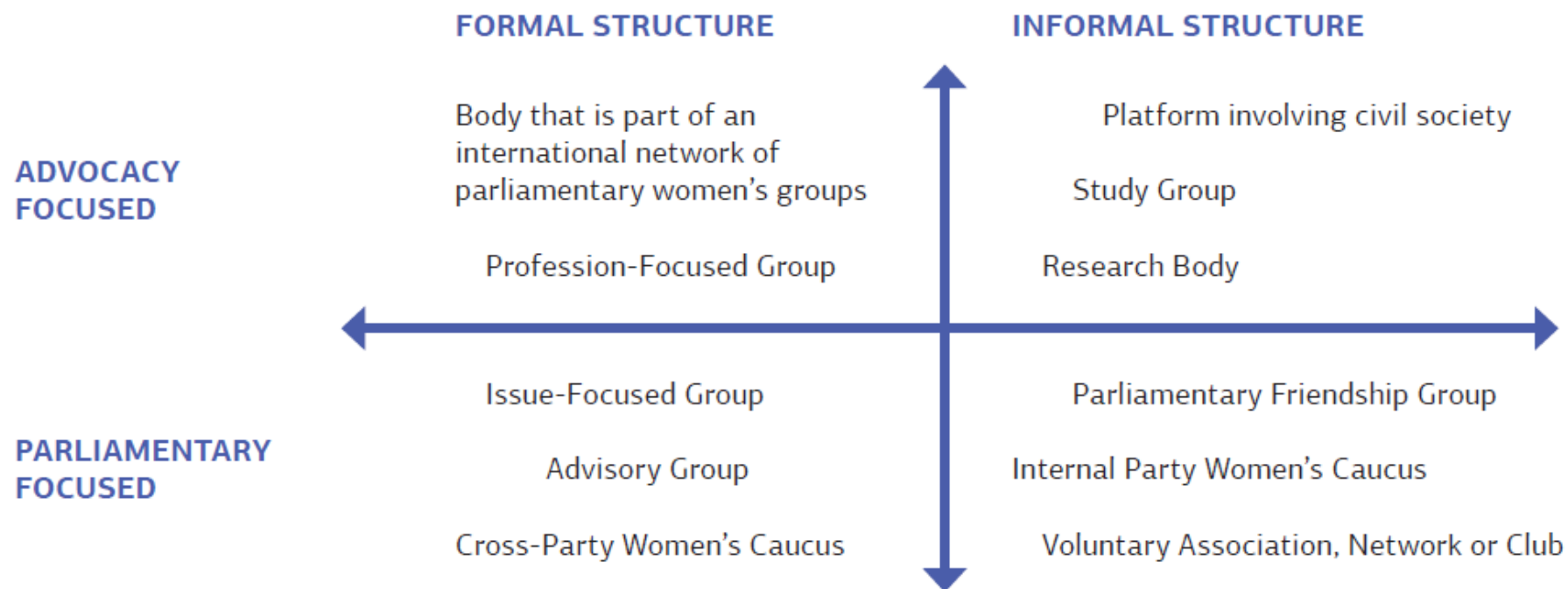
## + 'Added value'

Caucuses can:

- promote women's **descriptive** and **substantive** representation.
- serve to ensure that **gender equality** issues are **mainstreamed** into legislative and policy processes, and within parliamentary processes.
- **influence policy and legislative agendas** through cross-party co-operation.
- **facilitate dialogue** within and across parties.
- provide **training and support** to their members, as well as **information and analysis**.



# + One size does not fit all



Source: OSCE ODIHR, 2013, *A Comparative Study of Structures for Women MPs*, Warsaw, Poland, p. 22

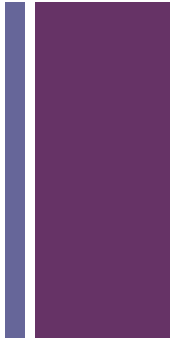
# + Key challenges

- The **low number** of women MPs and parliamentary leaders (Speaker, committee chair)
- Strict political **party discipline**
- **Limited funding** and resources
- Lack of **perceived legitimacy** within the parliament
- **Workload** and political priorities of MPs

# + Assessing the landscape

- Have women MPs expressed a genuine interest in forming a caucus?
- Is women's representation in parliament new or firmly established?
- Has there been a women's caucus or similar group in parliament before?
  - If so, why was it abolished?
  - Have the issues leading to its abolition since been resolved?
- Will other members and the parliamentary leadership be receptive to such a caucus?
- Are there any other caucuses in parliament?
- Is there scope for cross-party collaboration in parliament?
- Is there a strong women's movement, or are there women's civil society groups prepared to work in partnership with a women's parliamentary caucus?

# + Mapping of power



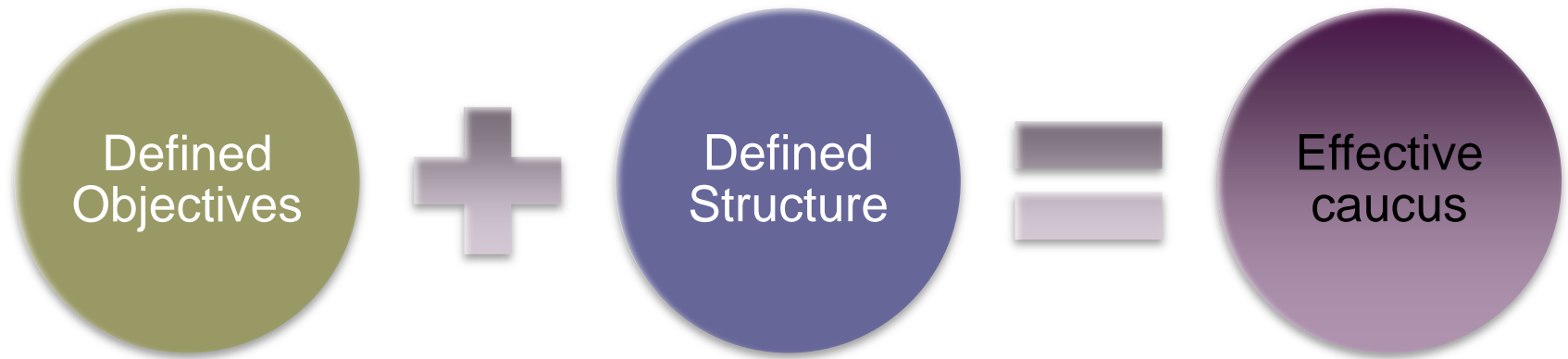
Take 10 minutes to identify:

- Who are the stakeholders who need to be lobbied to create a caucus in your parliament?
  - List them in order of power and influence.
  
- What arguments would convince those stakeholders to establish a caucus?
  - Do you need to devise different arguments for different stakeholders?



**Aligning objectives with modus  
operandi**

# + Key message



# + Objectives

- **To promote solidarity** among women in general and among women parliamentarians in particular;
- **To influence policy and legislation** from a gender perspective;
- **To raise awareness of gender equality** issues in parliament;
- **To enhance the capacity of women parliamentarians** as effective legislators and representatives;
- **To ensure** that gender equality **policy and legislation** is effectively implemented;
- **To lobby for support** from non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations.



## + Question of purpose



- What do you think would be the **objective** of a caucus in your country?
  - Limit the objectives to no more than 3.

# + Questions of membership and leadership



- How will the membership be decided?
  - Should there be a membership fee?
  - Would it be voluntary? Exclusive to women?
- Should the Speaker be involved?
- Who would chair the caucus?
  - Should the chair be shared by all parties?
  - Should there be a rotation of the leadership across the political parties?
  - Should men and women co-chair?

# + Questions of structure

- Would a formal or informal structure work best?
  - Should the caucus be a formal body of the parliament and included in the rules of parliament?
- How often would the caucus meet and how would decisions be made?
  - Consensus; by majority vote?
- What powers would the caucus have?
  - Similar to parliamentary committees – call witnesses, papers, question Ministers?
  - How will the caucus report to Parliament? Oral/written report
- Would the caucus have dedicated staff, a meeting room, financial resources?

# + Questions of partnership

- What relationship will the caucus have to the parliament, and other parliamentary bodies (e.g. committees)?
- How will the caucus work with women's organisations and other civil society groups?
- Will the caucus interact with the media? Will it have a social media presence?
- Other groups: universities/think tanks; ombudsperson; international organisations

# + Let's put it together

Take 30 minutes:

- Using the template provided on pages 35-36 of [Guidelines for Women's Caucuses](#) (IPU 2013), develop a model set of standing orders to establish your caucus.
- You may wish to consult the IPU database on gender equality caucuses at: <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/instanceadvanced.asp>
- Report back in country groups



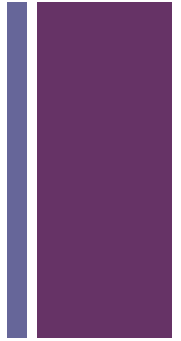
# **Setting priorities for action in gender caucuses**

# + Linking objectives to actions

- **Gender sensitising the parliament and its workplace practices** through self-assessments and training members in gender analysis
- **Examining specific policy issues** through data collection and conducting investigations so as to strengthen the advocacy impact of the caucus.
- **Facilitating discussion among citizens and politicians**, through luncheons and briefings on issues of importance to the caucus, establishing contacts among interested individuals.
- NB: These activities can in particular be undertaken in collaboration with universities and research institutions, or with civil society organizations.

# + IPU Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments

- **Action area 1:** Increase the number of women in parliament and achieve equality in participation
- **Action area 2:** Strengthen gender equality legislation and policy
- **Action area 3:** Mainstream gender equality throughout all parliamentary work
- **Action area 4:** Institute or improve gender-sensitive infrastructure and parliamentary culture
- **Action area 5:** Ensure that responsibility for gender equality is shared by all parliamentarians – men and women
- **Action area 6:** Encourage political parties to be champions of gender equality
- **Action area 7:** Enhance the gender sensitivity of, and gender equality among, parliamentary staff



# + Self-assessment questions

## ■ The number of women in parliament and their positions

Are there any measures to guarantee women's access to positions of leadership in the parliament?

## ■ The legal and policy framework for gender equality in the parliament

Does parliament analyse laws from a gender perspective, so as to measure their differing impacts on men and women?

## ■ Gender mainstreaming in the parliament's work

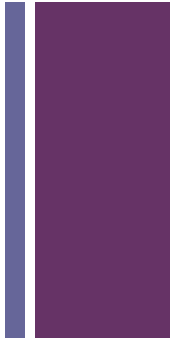
What mechanisms or structures are used to mainstream gender equality in the work of the parliament?

## ■ The culture of parliament

Are there discriminatory and derogatory stereotypes about women in parliament? If so, how can these be eliminated?

## ■ Are men and political parties gender sensitive?

Is gender understood to also concern men? How do political parties develop their policies on gender equality?



# + How gender sensitive is your parliament?

- Is a self-assessment something that your parliament should undertake?
- What changes do you think a self-assessment would recommend?



# + The 2030 Agenda



- **17 Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), adopted in September 2015, covering poverty, hunger, health, education, water and sanitation, employment, safe cities and peace and security.
- These goals **are universal** – all countries will need to monitor and report on progress according to targets and indicators.
- Gender equality and women's rights are reflected both as a **cross-cutting theme** and a **priority area**.



# + Goal 5: Achieve GE & empower all women & girls

- 5.1. End all forms of **discrimination** against women & girls
- 5.2. Eliminate all forms of **violence** against all women & girls
- 5.3 Eliminate all **harmful practices** (e.g. child marriage, FGM)
- 5.4. Recognize and value **unpaid care and domestic work**
- 5.5. Ensure women's full & effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at **all levels of decision-making**
- 5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive **health and rights**
- 5.a. Ensure women's equal rights to **economic resources**, as well as access to ownership and control over land & assets
- 5.b. Enhance role of **ICTs** to empower women
- 5.c. Adopt & strengthen **sound policies** and **enforceable legislation** for the promotion of gender equality & the empowerment of all women & girls at all levels

# + Mainstreaming gender equality across the SDGs

A new report identifies **16** indicators for girls and women across **8** goals that are **Ready to Measure now**



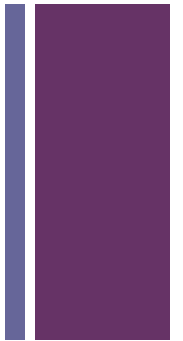


# + How will your parliament monitor the SDGs – especially SDG5?

- Would a gender caucus be useful in monitoring the SDGs in your parliament, or has another mechanism been established?
- How would your gender caucus monitor the SDGs?

# + Gender analysis of legislation

- Presents an **analysis of the impact** of an issue on women and men – which will most likely be **different**
- Investigates **the context** – gender relations, the resources, institutional changes – and **strategies** needed to **solve problems** and **minimise disadvantage**
- Uses a **participatory and inclusive approach**, and identifies barriers to inclusive participation
- Establishes **baseline data**, and ensures data collection is broken down by sex
- Identifies **risks for women and men** and monitors and evaluates **change** for men and women



# + Ensuring sex disaggregated data

- Data are **collected** and **presented** by sex as a primary and overall classification;
- Data reflect **gender issues**;
- Data are based **on concepts and definitions** that adequately reflect the **diversity** of women and men and capture all aspects of their lives;
- Data collection methods take into account **stereotypes and social and cultural factors** that may induce **gender bias** in the data (e.g. under-reporting)
- Good example:  
**World Bank: Gender Equality Data and Statistics**  
<http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>

# + Developing tools for gender mainstreaming: the checklist

- Who is the target of a proposed policy, programme or project?
- Who will benefit? Who will lose?
- Have women and men been consulted on the issue being addressed?
- Who makes the decisions? Have women and men been involved in the development of a solution to address the issue?
- Who uses the resources? How are the resources procured?
- Does the intervention maintain or challenge existing gender relations?



# + Does your parliament currently analyse legislation from a gender perspective?



- What resources does your parliament have to analyse legislation from a gender perspective?
  - Staff?
  - Access to gender resources and sex disaggregated data?
  - Tools to analyse legislation – checklists?
  - Involving citizens and civil society organisations (including women's organisations)?
- How would a gender caucus advocate for these resources?

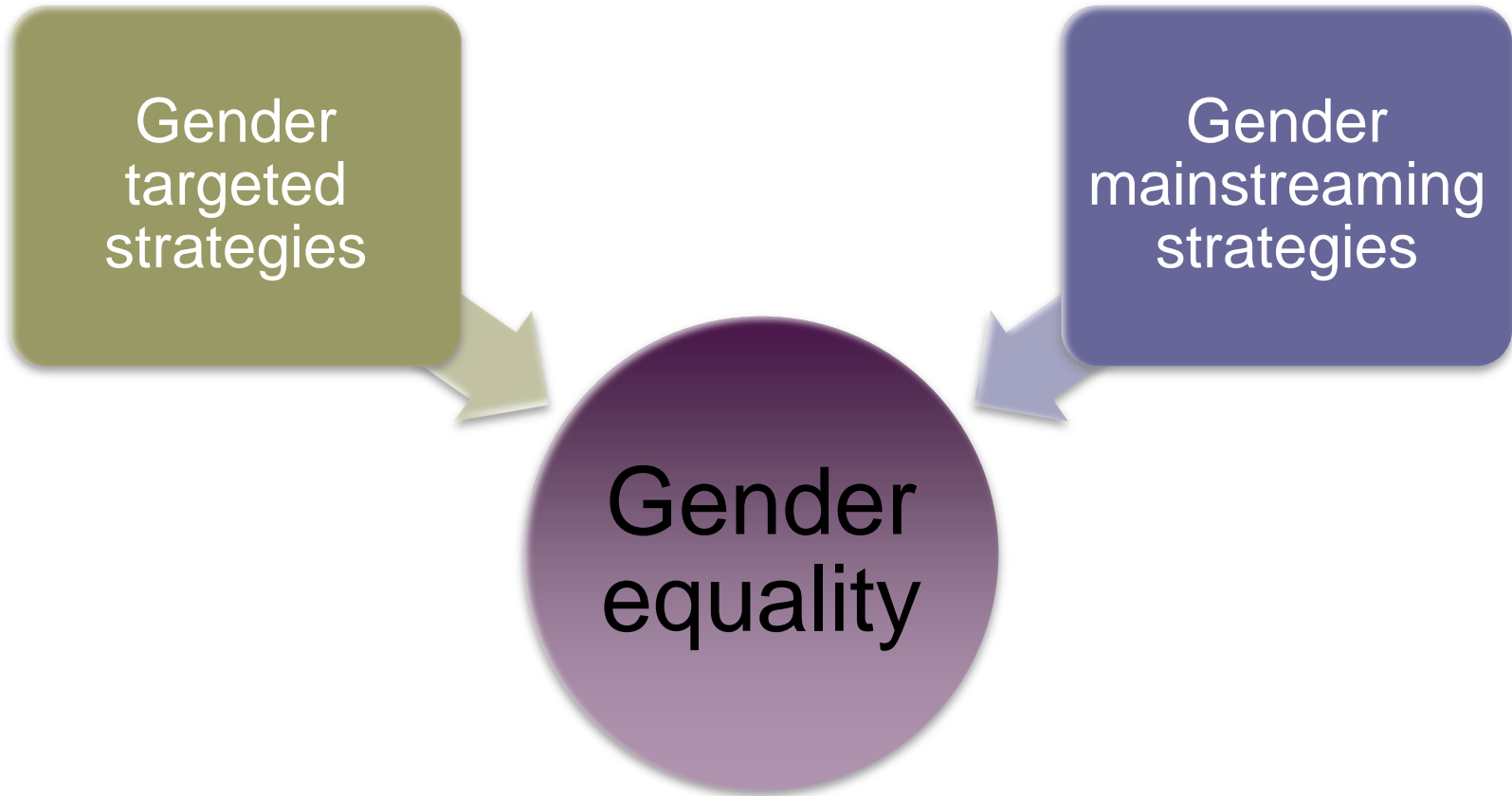
# + Strategic planning



- Long-term **vision, goals and objectives** of a caucus should ideally be included in its **internal rules**
- A **strategic plan** for operationalizing a caucus and achieving its objectives is essential. It should include:
  - a **list of the objectives** and issues to be addressed,
  - the **activities** planned to address them and
  - a **timeframe**.
  - Strategic plans should be **updated regularly** (e.g., every two to five years), further to an evaluation exercise.

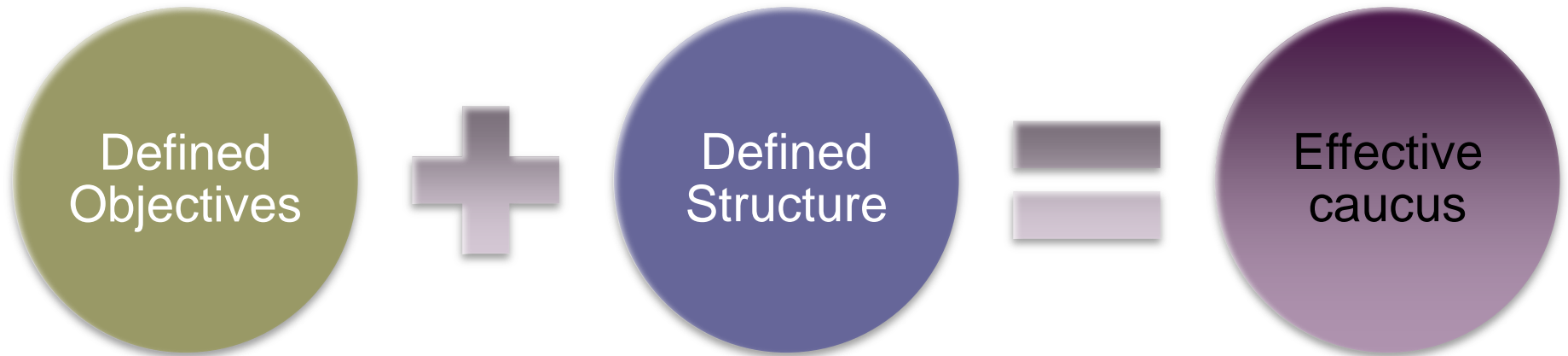
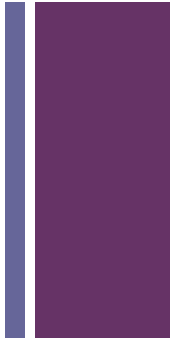
# Conclusions

# + Key message



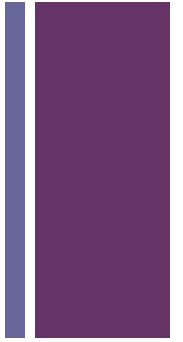


# + Key message

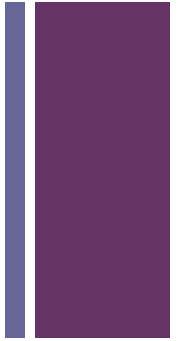


# + Communication

- **Clear and open lines of communication inside** the caucus so that ideas can flow freely and all members can be on the same page.
- Brainstorm about ways to publicize the work of the caucus and communicate **with other parliamentarians and parliamentary authorities**.
- Outside of parliament, caucuses need to **communicate with civil society and the general public** (e.g. through social media).
- Some caucuses have established **communication plans** to target their communication efforts and determine how information will be circulated.



# + Communication



- Host public events and participate in radio and TV programmes
- Advertise your work through websites, newsletters and social networks
- Celebrate the caucus's achievements

# + Strategic planning

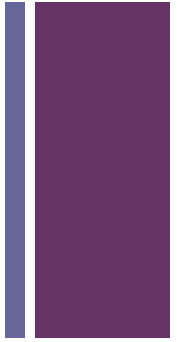


- A **strategic plan** for operationalising a caucus and achieving its objectives is essential. The plan should include:
  - a **list of the objectives** and issues to be addressed,
  - the **activities** planned to address them and
  - a **timeframe**.
- Strategic plans should be **updated regularly** (e.g., every two to five years), further to an evaluation exercise.

# + Evaluation

- Activities should be reviewed to ensure that they are advancing the caucus's objectives.
  - E.g. Success in passing legislation can be measured with reference to:
    - Drafting the bill,
    - Awareness raised on the importance of the bill (members, public, media)
    - Introducing and reviewing the bill in committee,
    - Recommendations approved by government;
    - Vote taken in parliament
    - Law passed
- Not meeting objectives?
  - Review the strategy! Revise the objective?
  - Consider what are the barriers and how can they be addressed?

# + Indicators of progress



- What indicators could you use to determine your caucus' progress in meeting its objectives?
- What are the 'baselines'?
- What data sources would you use to measure progress?
- Are there are means to 'verify' your achievements?

# + Strategies for Success

- Prioritise your **objectives**
- Clarify **relationship** to the **parliament**
- Sustain **strong relationships** with CSOs and gender advocates
- Find **consensus** on issues and priorities and **celebrate** achievements
- Adopt **action or strategic plans**, with targets and indicators to monitor and evaluate progress
- Seek **support** from international organisations

