



# Trinidad and Tobago

## POLICY SCORECARD

To what extent are Trinidad and Tobago's national policies that focus on engaging men and boys gender-transformative?



**MenEngage Alliance**

working with men and boys for gender equality

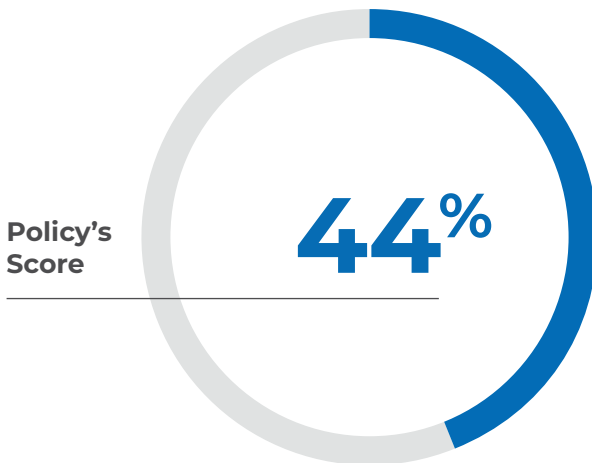
**fj FemJust**  
Feminist Solutions towards Global Justice

A review of Trinidad and Tobago's **National Policy:**

## **National Policy on Gender and Development: A Green Paper, 2018 ("Green Paper")**

### **At a glance**

The policy process itself has contributed to a society that is both gender-aware and gender-sensitive; it acknowledges physiological, biological, and social differences that exist between women and men but states that these differences should not exist or be exploited. However, the policy explicitly states that it prescribes no measures pertaining to abortion, same-sex unions, or sexual orientation. These issues are reflected in the policy's overall score of 44%.



This is part of a series of policy reviews developed in partnership between MenEngage Global Alliance and FemJust.

Find out more about the methodology used to review this policy – and how you can use it to hold law-makers and policy implementing institutions accountable from national to global levels – at [menengage.org/advocacy](http://menengage.org/advocacy).

The policy was reviewed independently against a methodological framework that assesses the policy against a range of criteria. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from interviews, document reviews, and survey responses.

Interviews and respondents included feminist, LGBTIQ and youth activists, and people from government and UN officials, and academia. Find out more about the methodology and detailed results for Trinidad and Tobago and other countries assessed at [menengage.org/advocacy](http://menengage.org/advocacy).

[www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org)

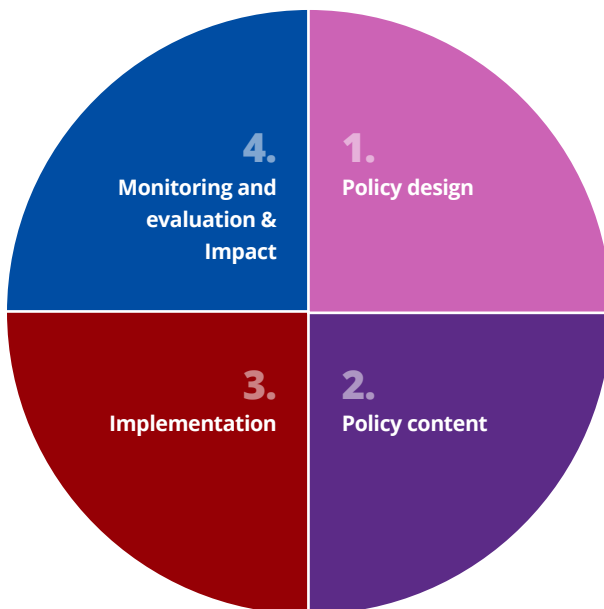
THIS IS A REVIEW OF THE POLICY:	<b>National Policy on Gender and Development: A Green Paper, 2018 ("Green Paper")</b>
DATES OF THE POLICY:	<b>2018</b>
SCOPE:	<b>National policy of Trinidad y Tobago</b>
POLICY DEVELOPED BY:	<b>The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) (in partnership with civil society, the private sector and labour)</b>

# How has this policy been analysed?

The policy was analysed based on its alignment to the following frameworks through all phases of the policy process:

- 1. Intersectional Feminist analysis**
- 2. Human rights-based approach**
- 3. The socio-ecological model**

The policy's approach towards engaging men and boys through a feminist policy process is assessed across four areas:



## What makes a policy gender-transformative?

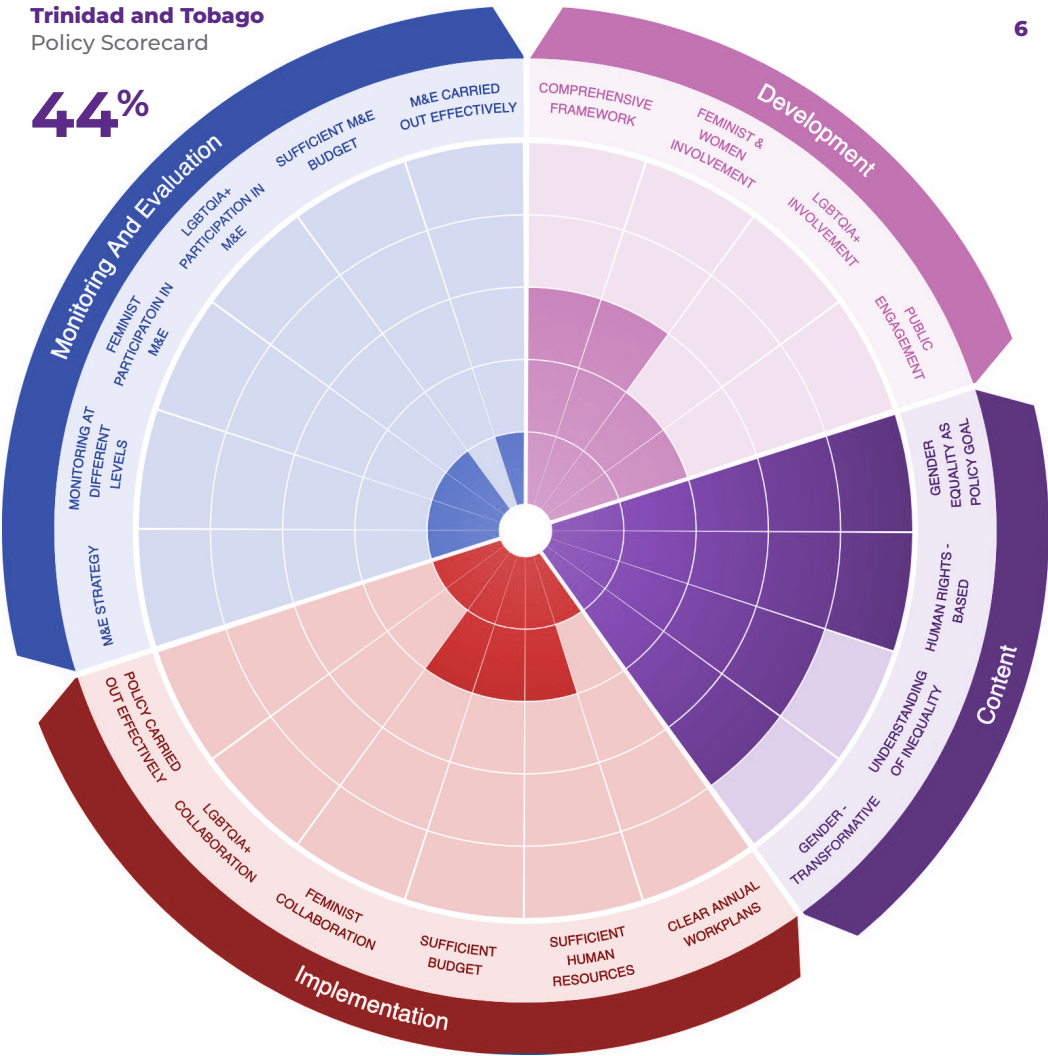
A gender-transformative policy aims to: dismantle harmful and oppressive social and gender norms, create new norms that affirm people of all gender identities and expressions, and redistribute gendered and other intersecting forms of power and privilege. It also puts into practice the human rights principles of participation, empowerment, accountability, transparency, and centering the most affected and the most marginalized, among others.

It appropriately conceptualizes and analyzes the problem in focus - for example, gender inequality or gender-based violence or adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes. **This includes identifying the power imbalances created by gender norms and stereotypes, and how these intersect with other forms of oppression.** It does not perpetuate existing gender norms and stereotypes in its framing, assumptions or strategies.

**It recognizes the leadership of feminist and queer movements and meaningfully engages them at all stages of the policy process, from design to implementation to evaluation.** At its heart, a gender-transformative policy is **accountable to all those who have been historically oppressed by patriarchal norms**, discrimination and violence, including girls, women, trans, non-binary and queer people.

When a gender-transformative policy engages men and boys, it does so in service of the mission of achieving a gender just society, social and political institutions, and policy framework. **Specific strategies call on and enable them to recognize and dismantle patriarchal power and privilege utilizing an intersectional feminist approach.** Strategies to engage men and boys do not operate in a silo, rather form part of a comprehensive strategic framework to achieve gender transformation and equality.

44%



This chart shows how strong the policy is in terms of intersectional feminist thinking and practice, across 20 scoring criteria. The criteria are grouped into four areas, offering a quick visual guide to how well the policy was developed, implemented and monitored, as well as the strength of its content. The scores reflect a thorough assessment of evidence and interviews, against a standardised scoring framework.

Find out more at [www.menengage.org/advocacy](http://www.menengage.org/advocacy)



## Highlights

- ▲ The policy is informed by concepts of equality and social justice and underpinned by respect for fundamental human rights.
- ▲ Strategies include promoting male participation in prenatal, birthing, post-natal, and parenting activities, as well as the education of men and boys on the rights of women and girls.



## Lowlights

- ▼ No gender equality policy has been adopted; instead, efforts to advance gender equality are primarily informed by the country's regional and international level commitments. Contention surrounding the right to abortion and rights of LGBTQI people - key aspects of a policy aimed at gender equality - have almost singularly prevented the policy's adoption.
- ▼ The absence of an adopted policy presents significant challenges in assessing implementation efforts.



**Most of the work on engaging men and boys in Trinidad and Tobago has been done by progressive women's organizations and feminist groups. Despite advocacy efforts, calls for data collection and data to be made readily available have not yet been heeded by the government.**

It is noteworthy that although feminist activists and women's organizations were consulted in the lead up to the draft NGP, it is unclear whether LGBTQI groups were consulted, although LGBTQI activists likely had been through their associations with other CSOs.





**“It’s complex. There was excellent consultation between 2004-5 as part of the writing of the first draft. Subsequent drafts were non consultative and regressive [...], these repudiated rather than included issues of sexual orientation and reproductive rights, and activists heavily criticized their top down revision. The current draft was not finalized (and is not approved) in a participatory way”**

## In what landscape did the policy emerge?

In Trinidad and Tobago, a political consciousness has long existed on engaging men and boys in the struggle for gender equality and against GBV. Post-colonial struggles in the country have informed discourse and action by feminist movements and women's organizations on engaging men and boys in the work of transforming gender relations. The particular achievements of feminist movements in post-colonial Trinidad and Tobago in advancing the status of women through, for example, education, prompted wide-ranging sentiments of marginalization by men. On the one hand, women and girls were successful within the education system thereby also successful at accessing resources that would facilitate upward social mobility. Men, on the other hand, were not succeeding at the same pace, and historically were also not seen as primary income earners. Young men and boys outside of the education system came to be seen as problematic and 'at risk' - their effort to secure income led to criminality, homelessness, and contributed to drug-use. This national sense of underachievement by such young men and boys came to inform how the discourse on engaging men and boys took on its current form.

The work of engaging men and boys in Trinidad and Tobago is largely understood as an act of ensuring citizen security. The human development approach of security, as described in the UNDP Caribbean Human Development Report 2012 postulates that human and citizen security is a marker of a democratized and developed society. Criminality, as such, is an affront to citizen security and impedes the development of society. Within a historical background that saw black men as less than white men, combined with the significant presence of women in education - approximately 75% of university entrants and graduates are women - the narrative which took hold saw masculinity, which presents as protector and provider within Trinidadian society, as a victim of post-colonialism. Men see themselves as marginalized

and emasculated within society. Thus a very compelling driver for male involvement in promoting gender equality within the country is ensuring that men do not get left behind and this eroding sense of masculinity has insinuated itself into gender policy in Trinidad and Tobago.

Most of the work on engaging men and boys in Trinidad and Tobago has been done by progressive women's organizations and feminist groups. There is however a growing body of men's rights and anti-feminist reactionary groups that are pushing alternate perspectives on what this work means. Such groups are defining the work of engaging men and boys to the role of men as fathers, within the masculinist mold, and failing to address the role of men as domestic partners, among other issues. Men's groups in Trinidad and Tobago are driven largely but not only by patriarchy, a desire to retain power and dominance, and as a defense against the emasculation of men in society.



## How was the policy design process carried out?

No gender equality policy has been adopted in Trinidad and Tobago. While the policy design process of the island country's gender equality policy, the draft National Policy on Gender and Development (hereinafter "draft NGP"), has been well documented, information about the parliamentary green papers (i.e., subsequent updates to the draft NGP) that were to follow is not entirely clear due to a protracted process and information gaps throughout. This case study discusses the draft NGP, as well as its most recent iteration - the National Policy on Gender and Development: A Green Paper, 2018 (hereinafter "Green Paper").

The focus on policy by feminist organizers in light of the UN's Decade for Women (1976-1985), coupled with the momentum this created spurred the national government to undertake various actions that sought to move beyond a largely singular focus on the social welfare of women and towards initiatives that address the status of women in society. In the years that followed, the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Status of Women was re-established (1987), and an Inter-ministerial Committee on Women (1987) was created. A policy statement on women was also developed (1989), though criticized by feminist activists on the grounds that key issues of concern, such as GBV, had not been included, and that the national machinery was understaffed. Citing concern that the policy statement did not include a robust consultation, feminist organizers undertook their own consultative process to create a position paper on the status of women (1990) but it had limited national impact. Around the same time, it became clear that political buy-in, will, and leadership would be instrumental in the adoption of a national gender policy.

The appointment of Joan Yuille Williams as Minister of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs in 2002 served as the impetus

for the country finally drafting a national gender policy. Following a period of consultation from 2002-2003, in 2004 the Government released its draft NGP. Although this draft policy has not been approved by cabinet, it has nevertheless informed all subsequent policy documents. The thematic areas and policy measures included in the draft NGP and the Green Paper are the result of research and evidence gathered through consultations, sector studies, interviews, and existing documents.

The Green Paper reflects on the stakeholder participation dating back to the draft NGP: a national stakeholder consultation; seven community consultations held in Trinidad; ten interest group consultations held in Trinidad; an island-wide consultation held in Tobago; and six interest group consultations in Tobago were held. Roundtables for government Gender Focal Points to provide feedback on seven sector studies led by subject-matter expert researchers (Health, Education, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Social and Community Development, Law and the Judiciary, Trade, and the Economy and Labour) were also held.

The extensive consultations leading up to the draft NGP resulted in a document in which government, policy drafting consultants (including the government appointed Institute for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies), and CSOs working in the field of gender and development were aligned on the contents of a draft national policy. However, the draft NGP ran into problems as soon as it was tabled. Specifically, disparate views on key issues and terminology - namely, that the inclusion of the term 'gender', which was seen as a means to legalizing homosexuality, as well as a call for a review of abortion laws stalled progress within cabinet. Visible opponents included major opinion leaders and religious groups who opposed the inclusion of gender and abortion, and feminist and LGBTQI activists who felt that the draft NGP was insufficient and needed to explicitly advance acceptance of sexual diversity. Future drafts and green papers were also unsuccessful in spite of efforts to develop a policy that was palatable to the widest segment of society.



## How are masculinities addressed in the content of the policy?

The Green Paper outlines that the policy is philosophically underpinned by respect for fundamental human rights and the dignity of 'women and girls, men and boys'. Informed by social justice and equality, the Green Paper acknowledges physiological, biological, and social differences that exist between women and men but states that these differences should not exist or be exploited.

The Green Paper is divided by its rationale and context, the policy framework, and the policy measures. An in-depth situational analysis, based on the sector specific research previously mentioned, across a number of areas (e.g., unwaged economic life, GBV, education, and health and well-being, among others) was undertaken and included in the Green Paper while still noting that the systems for data collection, collation, and analysis need significant improvement.

The Green Paper's preamble succinctly addresses the role of men and boys for gender equality: "Historically, due to the severe gender disparities between men and women, dialogue and actions under the heading of 'gender' have focused necessarily on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. With the removal of the most egregious aspects of discrimination against women being realized, there is a growing appreciation that men must be partners in gender equality and that traditional male gender roles may constrain and restrict men's quality of life and opportunities, particularly in the private sphere."

The situational analysis also briefly addresses masculinity within the context of gun violence, highlighting the need for crime prevention policies to

address masculinities that lead to both the use and experience of violence. However, for the most part, the engagement of men and boys in the policy is referred to within the context of ensuring equitable relationships between the two sexes (gender binaries are strictly reinforced throughout), and less a critical reflection on how male privilege and power contribute to gender inequities and inequalities.

The Green Paper also clearly outlines key strategic steps that the government and partners will take to advance gender equality and equity within the country. These include gender and development measures in all programs, policies, and projects, strengthening institutional capacity to address inequities, fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, public awareness and sensitization, legislative review and reform, and the prevention, punishment, and eradication of GBV.

There are specific policy measures included that address the role of men and boys:

“

#### **UNWAGED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, DOMESTIC AND FAMILY LIFE**

- 31. Raise public awareness of the value of reproductive work to social cohesion and national development, and encourage male participation in housework, the care of children and the family, and other forms of unremunerated work.”

“

#### **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:**

- 89. Institutionalise family-friendly hospital practices including women-friendly birthing procedures, fathers’ involvement in prenatal, birthing, and post-natal activities, and the ability of both parents to stay overnight with sick children.”
- 94. Promote awareness raising initiatives to enable adult and young women to successfully negotiate sexual relations including their right to abstain from sexual activity or engage in safe sex, and to educate men and boys to respect the rights of women and girls and prevent the incidence of date rape, forced sex and gender-based violence.”

The inclusion of these measures is promising; however, what has been excluded underscores that much room for progress remains. The Green Paper explicitly states that it prescribes no measures pertaining to abortion, same-sex unions, or sexual orientation. As previously described, the passage of the draft NGP has been arrested by contestations around these issues. Key informants have indicated that measures relating to sexuality education were also suppressed in the development of the draft NGP. The omission of these issues which are an important part of rectifying discriminatory and unequal power relations and challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes calls into question how gender-transformative the draft NGP or the more recent Green Paper may be considered.





## How well has the policy been implemented?

The lack of an adopted gender equality policy presents significant challenges in assessing implementation efforts. Nevertheless, the government's efforts to align itself with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in addition to its other international, regional, and national obligations and commitments (e.g. CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and CARICOM Platform for Action on Gender and Development) continue to guide the government's work and push for key components of the draft NGP to be acted upon. This has resulted in some less contested measures being implemented, e.g. the adoption of the national strategic plan to end GBV and the recent sexual harassment policy.

The lack of easily accessible information makes it difficult to know whether action points related to engaging men and boys have been implemented. Moreover, despite advocacy efforts, including by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (which significantly input into the draft NGP and subsequent green papers), calls for data collection and data to be made readily available have not yet been heeded by the government.

### **How are the policy targets and activities being funded?**

A lack of transparency is also evident with regards to budget allocations for activities pertaining to engaging men and boys, and civil society actors have no way of knowing how monies are allocated. For example, in session, the Minister of Finance will publicly read out activities related to the National Action Plan which accompanies the draft NGP as well as the lump sum allocations to the different ministries, but the contested issues are removed before the public reading and the distribution of money within each ministry is not disclosed. Funds, however, do reach organizations that may support implementation efforts (e.g. Cariman, Coalition to End Domestic Violence, and other CSOs), and typically support daily operations. It is unclear whether

funding has reached feminist organizations to support their efforts to engage men and boys, and funds most certainly have not reached LGBTQI groups. Key informants indicated that most funding for work on engaging men and boys comes from government initiatives, actors such as the Inter-American Development Bank, regional cooperative mechanisms such as CARICOM - Caribbean Community, and local corporate firms but the amount of funding is not known. In response to the general lack of transparency, activists are currently thinking about ways in which to hold the government accountable with respect to its budgetary allocations and to do so in ways that would be more transformative. Gender-responsive budgeting is one example of such practice.



## Has the policy been monitored & evaluated?

It is near impossible to understand the impact of the draft NGP and the Green Paper. While all ministries have monitoring and evaluation units, these are held squarely within the government and all monitoring and evaluation is conducted internally. Annual reports, quarterly reports, and impact assessments are not made publicly available.

Key informants have surmised that the draft NGP could potentially have had an institutional impact. The government has appointed gender focal points across the ministries. The Institute for Gender and Development Studies was recruited to provide wide-ranging training on gender norms and stereotypes, discrimination against women, and gender transformation to the focal points. However, there is still much work to be done as the knowledge sits with the gender focal points, who may be junior staff who are unable to make decisions or their proposals may be dismissed by their superiors who have not received the training.

The policy process itself has contributed to a society that is both gender-aware and gender-sensitive. The various iterations and discussions have increased awareness about both gender-related rights and discrimination while also, interestingly, contributed to men's sense of victimhood - the belief that while women have advanced in society and gained equality, men on the other hand are seen as causes of gender inequalities and violence.

# A closer look at the other case studies

As part of this initiative, we carried out a review of other national policies, including:

Costa Rica	Política nacional para la atención y la prevención de la violencia contra las mujeres de todas las edades Costa Rica 2017-2032 (National Policy for the Attention and Prevention of Violence against Women)
Czech Republic	Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for 2014 – 2020
Indonesia	Government Regulation Number 61 of 2014 on Reproductive Health
Mexico	Estrategia Nacional para la Prevención del Embarazo en Adolescentes (National Strategy for the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy)
Rwanda	National Policy against Gender-Based Violence, 2011
Sri Lanka	Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka 2016-2020
Trinidad and Tobago	National Policy on Gender and Development: A Green Paper, 2018
Turkey	National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2016-2020)

# Cross-Cutting Themes Across All Score Cards

Some key themes surface from the country scorecards:

Almost universally, **gender inequality** is not fully understood, particularly how patriarchal norms lead to social control of sexuality, sexual behavior, bodies and gender identities, and how this results in oppression and violence against not only women but also queer and trans men, intersex and nonbinary people.

Oftentimes there is a disconnect between a policy's stated intentions and the **implementation** on the ground, which may be poor, or even nonexistent. There is even an instance where a robust policy has been adopted but the government through its actions is actively undermining gender equality and the rights of women and LGBTQI people.

**LGBTQI groups and organizations** are largely absent from the processes of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies focused on gender equality, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health.

Across the board, **human and financial resources** are insufficient for the effective implementation of the policies assessed. Often national budgets lack the systems and/or the transparency required in order to track the funds allocated towards the implementation of specific policies.

Nearly all the policies include **gender-transformative strategies** to engage men and boys, with a focus on changing the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of men and boys; challenging oppressive social norms and stereotypes; adoption of gender-transformative programs and policies by social institutions; and strengthening the legal and policy framework in favor of gender equality.

A large majority of the policies have adequate accountability mechanisms in the form of **monitoring and evaluation** strategies; however, these are not followed through with sufficient funds or action. Moreover, indicators intended to monitor progress are often quantitative and focused on outputs or outcomes, rather than processes or impact.

# Would you like to carry out this methodological analysis for a national - regional - global policy?

The Policy Analysis Toolkit serves as tools which aim to support the efforts of MenEngage Alliance's members and other advocates to advance gender-transformative policies and programs.

The Policy Analysis Toolkit, as an accompaniment resource to the policy case studies and score cards, can further be utilized and adapted to analyze other national, regional and global policies.

The process and resources to replicate these efforts can be accessed at [menengage.org/advocacy](http://menengage.org/advocacy).

