



Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific (SISEAP)

www.siseap.org

Start Making an Impact Today: Your Free 7-Day Guide to Local Advocacy Involvement Join the Movement to Empower Women and Girls in Our Community!

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in empowering women and girls! This guide is designed to provide you with actionable steps you can take over the next 7 days to start making a real impact in your local community. We believe that every voice matters, and by working together, we can create lasting positive change.

This guide will introduce you to the fundamentals of local advocacy and show you how your efforts, big or small, can contribute to a stronger, more equitable future for women and girls. We also hope it inspires you to join our growing network of passionate advocates at the club level, where you can connect with like-minded individuals and amplify your impact.

Let's get started! More Information about joining us <https://www.siseap.org/get-involved.html>

1. Day 1: Understanding Local Advocacy & Identifying Key Issues

- **Morning:** What is Local Advocacy?
 - Local advocacy is the act of speaking up, organizing, and working with your Legislative representatives, neighbours and NGO groups to influence the decisions made right here in your own community.
 - It's about being a voice for the changes you want to see—whether it's fixing a park, funding a school program, improving public safety, or influencing city, council, and municipal policies. It is where your voice has the greatest and most immediate impact..
 - Examples of local issues impacting women and girls (e.g., access to childcare, safety in public spaces, equal pay initiatives, reproductive healthcare access, domestic violence support).
 - **Afternoon:** What Matters Most to You?
 - Simple reflection exercise: "What local issues affecting women and girls are you most passionate about?" (Create yourself a short list of prompts).
 - This list could stem from your personal experiences or observations.
 - **Action Step for Today:** Identify one local issue you care deeply about.
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2. Day 2: Researching Your Local Landscape

- **Morning:** Who are the Decision-Makers?
 - Create a guide on identifying Decision Makers in your community, e.g. local council members, relevant government ministers and councillors, government departments (e.g., community services, health), or local organizations working on your chosen issue.
 - Provide links or suggestions for finding this information online (e.g., local council website).



- **Afternoon:** What's Already Being Done?
 - Research Local Non-Profits/Charities: Look up organisations related to your cause (e.g., environment, youth, disability support, child care). Their websites, annual newsletters, or "Our Impact" pages often detail their success stories and completed campaigns.
 - Historical/Community Groups: Contact the local library or historical society. They frequently archive community newsletters, local newspaper clippings, and even the papers of influential local residents or activist groups.
 - Local Media Archives: Use online newspaper archives for your town/city. Search using keywords combined with your location and the word "win," "success," or "campaign."
 - Suggest searching local news archives or community group websites.
- **Action Step for Today:** Find out who your local council representative is and identify one local initiative related to your chosen issue.

3. Day 3: Learning to Speak Up – Crafting Your Message

- **Morning:** The Power of Your Story.
 - Tip: Create your story, personal stories can be effective in advocacy. Articulate why the issue matters to you.
 - The goal is to make people feel the issue, not just hear about it.
- **Afternoon:** Key Message & Call to Action.
 - How to distill your concerns into a clear, concise message.
 - Examples "You want Council to upgrade a local park • Describe the desired future of the park, How it would improve the children's experience outdoors.
 - Example: "The new \$50,000 park upgrade would give Sarah and 200 other families a safe, vibrant place for children to play, fostering community connections and increasing local property values."
 - • Connect the Ask: Clearly state the action needed to bridge the gap between the conflict and the transformation. This should be simple and direct.
 - Example: "We need the City Council to reallocate 1% of the infrastructure budget to create a dedicated 'Community Green Space Repair Fund."
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- **Action Step for Today:** Draft a short, concise statement (2-3 sentences) about your chosen issue and what you'd like to see happen.

4. Day 4: Taking Digital Action

- **Morning:** Engaging Online.
 - Create a new social media page, encourage people to follow you as you begin your advocacy journey
 - Effectively use social media for advocacy (e.g., sharing relevant news, tagging local leaders, using hashtags).
 - Tips for respectful engagement. **Focus on the Issue, Not the Individual:** Critique policies, systems, or actions, not the character of people who hold different views. Avoid personal attacks at all costs.
 - *The "Golden Rule" of Online Engagement:* Treat people online the same way you would treat someone face-to-face.



- **Lead with Empathy and Story:** Facts and data are essential (logos), but personal stories and real-world impacts (pathos) move people to action. Share your story or amplify the voices of those directly affected.
- **Maintain a Civil Tone:** Even when expressing anger or frustration, use language that invites dialogue rather than shuts it down. A post that is "pure, then peace-loving, considerate, and sincere" (as one source puts it) is more likely to be shared and taken seriously.
- **Afternoon:** Emailing Local Leaders.
 - Create a Template for writing a polite and impactful emails to your local councillor or relevant officials, NGO groups etc..
 - Emphasis on being clear, concise, and respectful.
- **Action Step for Today:** Send an email to your local councillor (or a relevant local official) using your drafted message from Day 3.

5. Day 5: Connecting with Others – The Power of Community

- **Morning:** Why Collaboration Matters.
 - collaboration is not just helpful—it is often the most critical factor for success.
 - At the local or grassroots level, power and resources are more dispersed, a unified front presents a broad community input to the solution...
 - By joining a group, you increase your visibility and credibility
- **Afternoon:** Finding Local Groups & Our Club!
 - Suggest looking for other local community groups or organizations working on similar issues.
 - **By Joining Soroptimist International SISEAP**, a powerful women's movement you join an organisation which is a prime example of a organisation that is both globally recognized and locally active. Consultative status with the UN, Credibility with policy makers.
 - Access to resources and training.
 - Networking with passionate individuals.
 - Participation in organized campaigns.
 - Mentorship opportunities.
 - A stronger, collective voice.
- **Action Step for Today:** Explore your charity's website for information on joining your local club or attend an upcoming online information session (if applicable).

6. Day 6: Beyond the Digital – Other Ways to Engage

- **Morning:** Attending Public Meetings (or Watching Online).
 - How to find out about local council meetings or public forums.
 - Download the agenda, look for issues which you are passionate about, identify the key players, become familiar with the code of meeting rules .
- **Afternoon:** Spreading the Word.
 - Simple ideas like talking to friends and family, sharing information, or putting up a community notice (if appropriate).
 - Emphasize that every conversation can be a step in advocacy.



- **Action Step for Today:** Identify when and where your local council holds public meetings (or if they are live-streamed).

7. Day 7: Sustaining Your Impact & Joining Our Movement

- **Morning: Reflecting on Your Journey.**
 - Consider the progress and steps you have taken over the past 6 days, Identified your issue, looked at ways to raise awareness and provided solutions, identified like minded groups in your community, build the networks..
 - Advocacy is an ongoing process. Small steps big gains.
- **Afternoon: Take the Next Step: Join Your Local Club!**
 - **Visit www.siseap.org** Find a Club and search for a Soroptimist club in your vicinity. If there isn't one, consider joining our online club <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089029767344>
 - Reiterate the benefits of membership:
 - Dedicated support and resources for ongoing advocacy.
 - Opportunities to work on larger, more impactful campaigns.
 - Leadership development, mentoring and training.
 - A vibrant community of women dedicated to making a difference.
 - Direct access to expert guidance and shared strategies.
 - Still not too sure about a club near you, complete this enquiry form <https://www.siseap.org/get-involved/membership-enquiry.html> and a member will contact you.
- **Action Step for Today:** Visit our "Join Us" <https://www.siseap.org/get-involved.html> page and explore the benefits of club membership. We can't wait to welcome you!

8. Bonus Resources & Next Steps:

- **Glossary of Advocacy Terms:** (e.g., policy, bill, stakeholder, grassroots). See Appendix 1.
- **Recommended Reading/Listening:** (e.g., articles, podcasts on women's empowerment, local politics). See Appendix 2
- **Success Stories:** Visit Soroptimist International Brisbane facebook page to see how their submission into the senate enquiry on quality and safety of early childhood care was adopted.
[https://www.facebook.com/SIBrisbane?__cft__\[0\]=AZWF_5vUo9mMXm9TLKfFbpo2oUMCWMt7LCJSIw76T-aWrD-ZHqqK5Zh9eD9mHyZVAiR_3HQmrdZLiHXObOK3NavODSh5FT_O5Ertlt1ZZAm9Q1M7NmBYhexfaasZR8uB1p9bvC0oeCiQY3sIRUg_enFI4roFiJPydXFvrjM4WFmTnA&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/SIBrisbane?__cft__[0]=AZWF_5vUo9mMXm9TLKfFbpo2oUMCWMt7LCJSIw76T-aWrD-ZHqqK5Zh9eD9mHyZVAiR_3HQmrdZLiHXObOK3NavODSh5FT_O5Ertlt1ZZAm9Q1M7NmBYhexfaasZR8uB1p9bvC0oeCiQY3sIRUg_enFI4roFiJPydXFvrjM4WFmTnA&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)
- **FAQs about Membership:** Membership of SISEAP is rewarding, you can contribute in numerous ways, Join today, step in to help at an event or work on a campaign, step up, explain your concerns and turn that into a campaign, .enjoy engaging conversation, guest speakers, and participate as little or as much as you can.
- **Contact Information:** www.siseap.org. <https://www.siseap.org/get-involved.html>

Remember: Every action, no matter how small, contributes to a brighter future for women and girls. We're here to support you every step of the way!



Appendix 1

General Advocacy & Action Terms

Term	Definition
Advocacy	A broad process of actively supporting, recommending, arguing for a cause or policy, or pleading on behalf of others. Its goal is to bring about systemic social change.
Call to Action (CTA)	A specific request made to the public or supporters to take a tangible step to help a cause (e.g., "Sign the petition," "Call your representative," or "Join us").
Activist	A person who campaigns vigorously to bring about political or social change, often engaging in public actions like protests or rallies.
Coalition	A partnership or alliance formed when several organizations or groups come together to work toward a common goal, amplifying their collective voice and resources.
Grassroots	Change efforts that originate from the ground up, driven by ordinary citizens, local communities, or a broad group of constituents, rather than being directed by a centralized, wealthy, or influential organization.
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that has an interest, concern, or is affected by the issue or policy you are advocating for (e.g., consumers, patients, industry leaders, etc.).
Policy Change	The ultimate goal of many advocacy efforts: the alteration of an existing law, regulation, official guideline, or established principle.

9. Legislative & Policy Terms

Term	Definition
Public Policy	The decisions, laws, and regulations that are made by government officials at the local, state, or federal level.
Lobbying	A subset of advocacy that involves direct attempts to influence specific legislation (a pending or proposed bill) by communicating with legislators or their staff.
Grassroots Lobbying	Asking the general public to support you to oppose a specific piece of legislation . Or to have input into legislation change with your suggestions. This is a Call to Action directed at influencing a bill.
Bill / Act	A Bill is a proposed law introduced to a legislative body. If a bill is passed by both chambers and signed into law, it becomes an Act .
Amendment	A formal proposal to change (add, delete, or modify) a clause in a bill or motion before it is passed.



Term	Definition
Appropriation / budget	Legislation that provides specific funding for a government program that has already been authorized. Also referred to as the budget.
Constituent	A person who lives or votes within a politician's electoral district or area of representation.
Mark-up	The process by which a legislative committee reviews, debates, and revises the text of a bill before deciding whether to recommend it to the full legislative body.
Veto	The power of an executive (like a President, Governor, or Mayor) to reject a bill passed by the legislature, thereby preventing it from becoming law.

10. Types of Advocacy

Type of Advocacy	Focus & Goal
Self-Advocacy	An individual's ability to speak up for themselves, communicate their needs, and assert their own rights.
Individual Advocacy	Focusing efforts on supporting a single person or a small group of people to access their rights, services, or voice their concerns (e.g., a case worker helping one client).
Systems Advocacy	Focusing on changing the rules, policies, or laws (<i>the system</i>) that affect a larger group of people. This is often the focus of large non-profits and movements.
Peer Advocacy	When the advocate and the person they are supporting share similar experiences, environments, or characteristics, providing support based on shared understanding.

Key Distinction: Advocacy vs. Lobbying

The difference between **Advocacy** and **Lobbying** is crucial, especially for non-profit organizations:

- **Advocacy** is about **education** and **awareness** on an issue (e.g., "The digital safety of women is a critical issue that needs stronger laws.")
- **Lobbying** is about influencing **specific legislation** (e.g., "Tell your Senator to vote **Yes** on Bill S-123 to increase online safety training for police.").



Appendix 21

Focus: Practical Australian Toolkits & Skills

These resources are designed specifically for Australian community groups and policy engagement.

Resource Title	Source	Why It's Recommended
The Commons Social Change Library	<i>Online Resource</i>	An <i>essential</i> starting point. It's a curated, Australia-specific digital library providing manuals, articles, and training materials on campaign strategy, community organising, digital advocacy, and policy influence.
Advocacy - Preparation and Performance	Hugh Selby	A practical book that explains the "what," "why," and "how" of basic advocacy skills and techniques using realistic scenarios. It focuses on developing clear, persuasive communication—a core skill for any advocate.
A Toolkit for Effective Everyday Activism	Alison Rogers & Leanne Kelly	A recent, practical Australian resource that empowers ordinary people to make a difference. It covers theories, strategies, and tools for measuring effectiveness, avoiding burnout, and dealing with disagreement in the local context.
Advocacy - Take Control	https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/	This Australian non-profit portal provides practical "how-to" articles and tools for community groups, including tips on lobbying, governance, and fundraising for advocacy.