

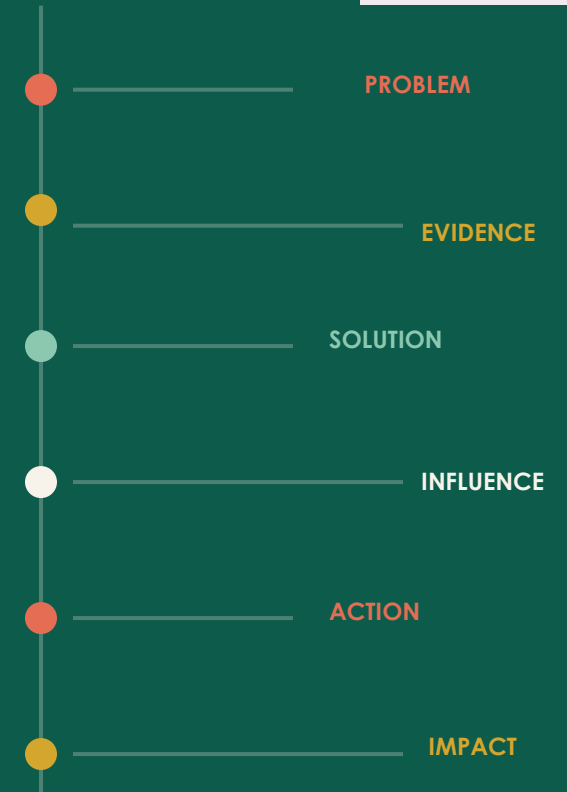
# FROM PROBLEM TO POLICY

How young women can influence public policy  
and drive community change

Facilitator

**Ahmad Ibraheem Ilu**

Economist | Policy Researcher | Public Policy Practitioner



28 AUGUST 2026

*Meaningful change begins when people move beyond identifying problems and start influencing solutions.*

# One community problem is enough to begin

If you could change

# ONE

thing in your community...  
what would you change?

ED

Education

GI

Gender inequality

UN

Unemployment

HC

Healthcare

MH

Menstrual health

DI

Disability inclusion

YO

Youth opportunities

CS

Community safety

How do we move from “this is a problem” to changing the system that produces it?

PUBLIC POLICY

+

ADVOCACY

=

SYSTEM CHANGE

# Policy quietly shapes everyday opportunity



## EDUCATION

Access to schools  
Quality of teaching  
Learning environment



## MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Products available  
Facilities and support



## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Employment  
Skills development  
Access to finance



## HEALTHCARE

Affordability  
Accessibility  
Quality services



## DISABILITY INCLUSION

Accessible services  
Equal participation



## GENDER EQUALITY

Equal rights  
Equal opportunities

**POLICY DECISIONS SHAPE PEOPLE'S OPPORTUNITIES, RIGHTS AND LIFE OUTCOMES — EVERY DAY.**

# Women contribute broadly — but remain underrepresented in key decisions

## 4.2%

of House of Representatives seats are held by women<sup>1</sup>

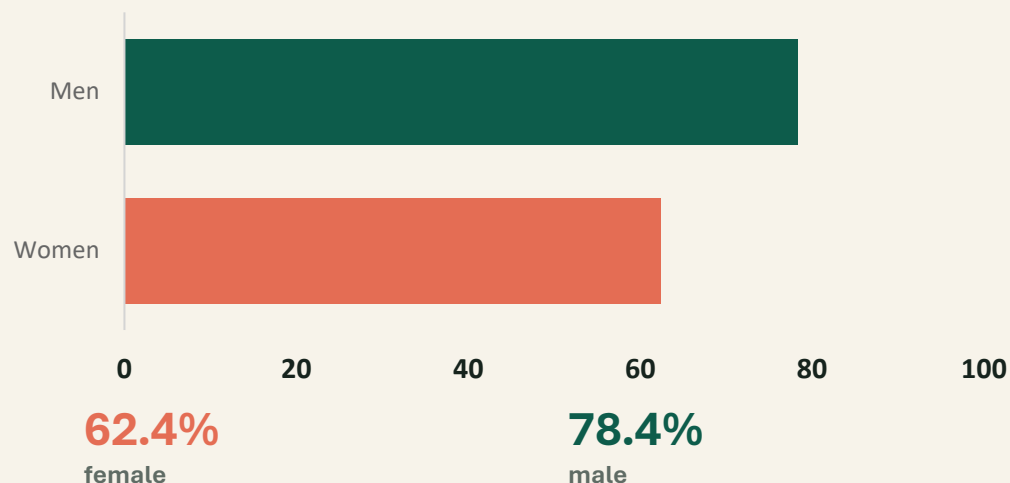
## 3.7%

of Senate seats are held by women<sup>1</sup>

## ≈993

maternal deaths per 100,000 live births<sup>2</sup>

ADULT LITERACY RATE



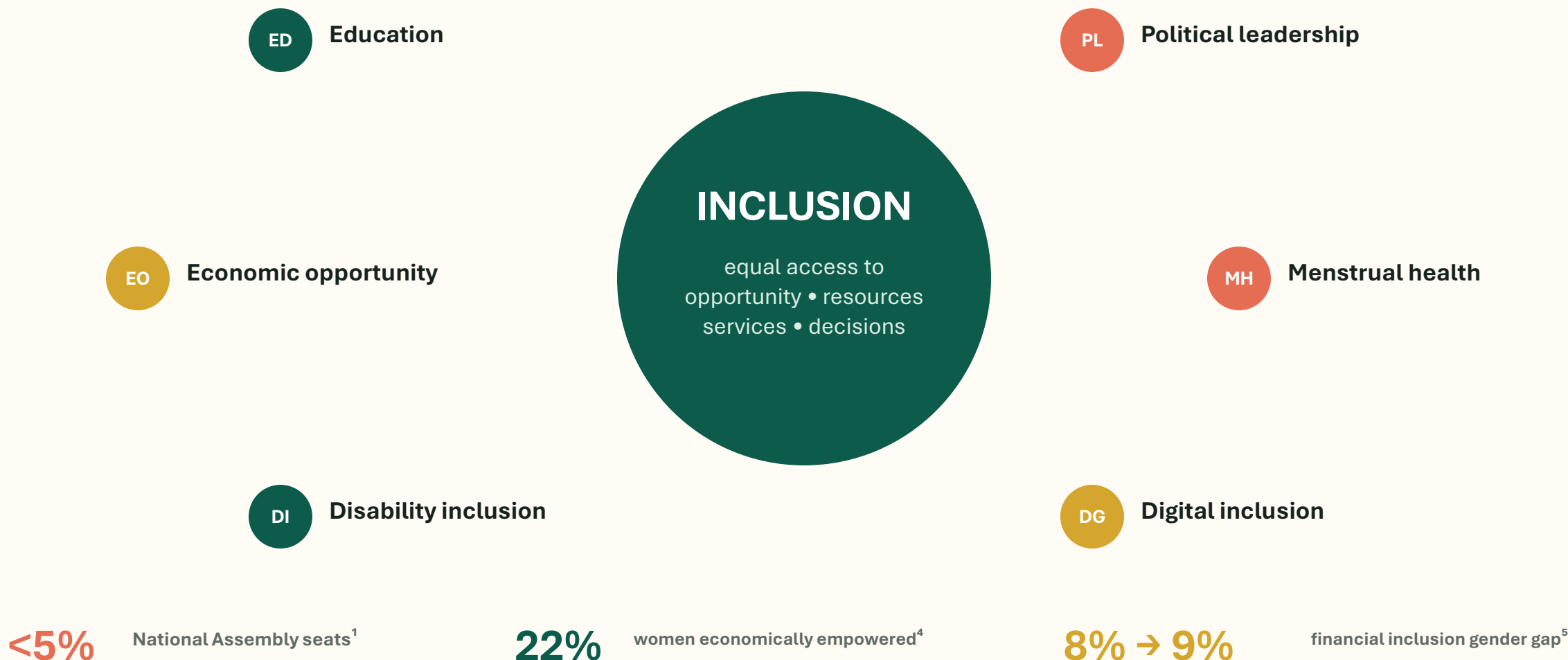
## 48.4%

of Nigeria's labour force is female<sup>3</sup>

### THE QUESTION

If women are nearly half of the labour force, why are they less than 5% of national legislators?

# Inclusion is more than presence — it is access, resources, services and voice



# Financial access is a policy lever for women's agency

## 64%

FORMAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION

in Nigeria<sup>5</sup>

## 26%

NIGERIAN ADULTS

remain excluded<sup>5</sup>

## 9%

CURRENT GENDER GAP

in financial inclusion<sup>5</sup>

## 22%

Only around one in five adult women are considered economically empowered<sup>4</sup>

## 6×

Women who save are more likely to be economically empowered<sup>4</sup>

## 2×

Women using formal credit are more likely to be economically empowered<sup>4</sup>

BANKING ISSUE



PUBLIC POLICY



DEVELOPMENT



GENDER EQUALITY

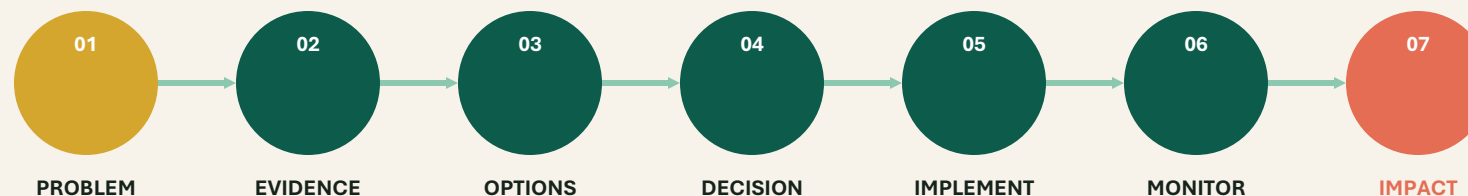
If access to finance, credit and digital tools is unequal, participation in development will be unequal too.

# Policy turns a public problem into measurable impact

## PUBLIC POLICY

### Government's response to a public problem.

A good response is deliberate, evidence-based, implemented and measured.



## EVERY GOOD POLICY MUST ANSWER

- 1 What problem are we solving?
- 2 For whom?
- 3 What evidence supports the intervention?
- 4 Who is responsible?
- 5 How will success be measured?

**APPROVAL IS NOT THE FINISH LINE. IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT ARE.**

# Lived experience starts the case; evidence makes it actionable

“

Girls in my community miss school during menstruation.

This is an observation — not yet a policy case.

BUILD THE CASE WITH SIX QUESTIONS

WHAT?

How many girls are affected?

WHO?

Who is most affected?

EVIDENCE?

What data or stories support the claim?

WHY?

What is causing the problem?

WHERE?

Which schools or communities?

CHANGE?

What policy or programme can address it?

OBSERVATION



Lived experience identifies the problem. Evidence builds the case for change.

# Influence works only when aimed at the real decision-maker

01

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Ministries • Agencies • National Assembly



02

## STATE GOVERNMENT

Ministries • State Assembly • Agencies



03

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Councils • Departments



04

## COMMUNITIES

Traditional & religious leaders • Schools • CSOs • Media • Youth groups

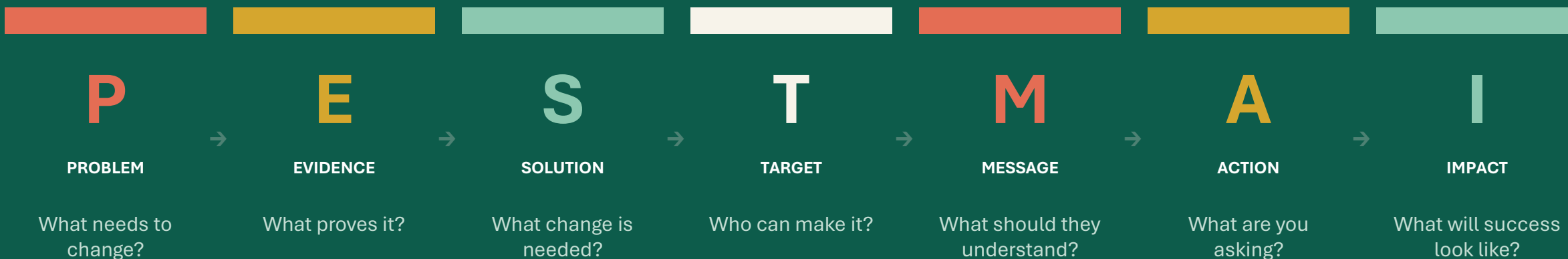
POWER ≠ EXPERIENCE

The person experiencing  
a problem is not always  
the person with the  
power to solve it.

THE ADVOCACY QUESTION

WHO CAN MAKE  
THE CHANGE I WANT?

# Advocacy succeeds when every link from problem to impact is explicit



**AWARENESS** → **COMMITMENT** → **ACTION**

Good advocacy is a chain. A weak link makes the ask easier to ignore.

# Specific asks are easier to understand — and easier to act on

WEAK ADVOCACY

✗ “Government should do more for women.”

STRONG ADVOCACY

✓ The State Government should provide menstrual health facilities and affordable products in public secondary schools to reduce menstrual-related absenteeism among adolescent girls.

WHY IT WORKS

| WHAT                     | WHO              | WHERE                    | ACTOR            | WHY                |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Menstrual health support | Adolescent girls | Public secondary schools | State Government | Reduce absenteeism |

WE WANT

[Decision-Maker]

TO

[Specific Action]

BECAUSE

[Evidence / Reason]

# Build one actionable campaign in five minutes



## ANSWER THESE FIVE QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the problem?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 What evidence do we need?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What change do we want?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Who can make that change?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What is our one-sentence advocacy message?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**05**

MINUTES

**2–3**

GROUPS SHARE

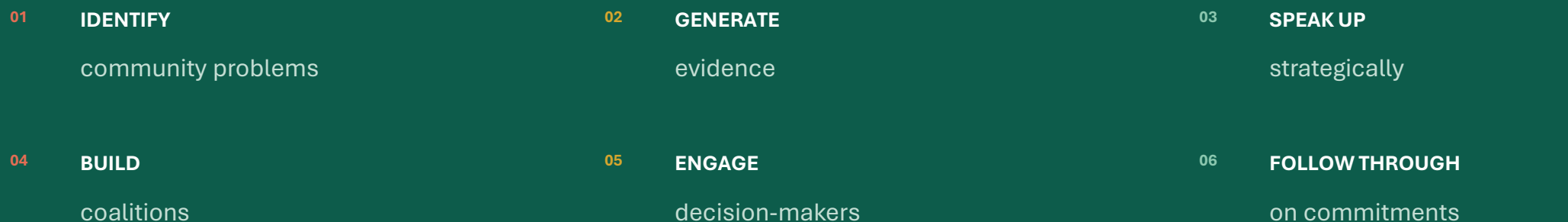
### OBJECTIVE

**Turn an issue into an actionable advocacy campaign.**

Choose one issue. Agree on one ask. Name one decision-maker.

# Organised, evidence-based voices can shape policy now

You do not have to wait until you become a politician.



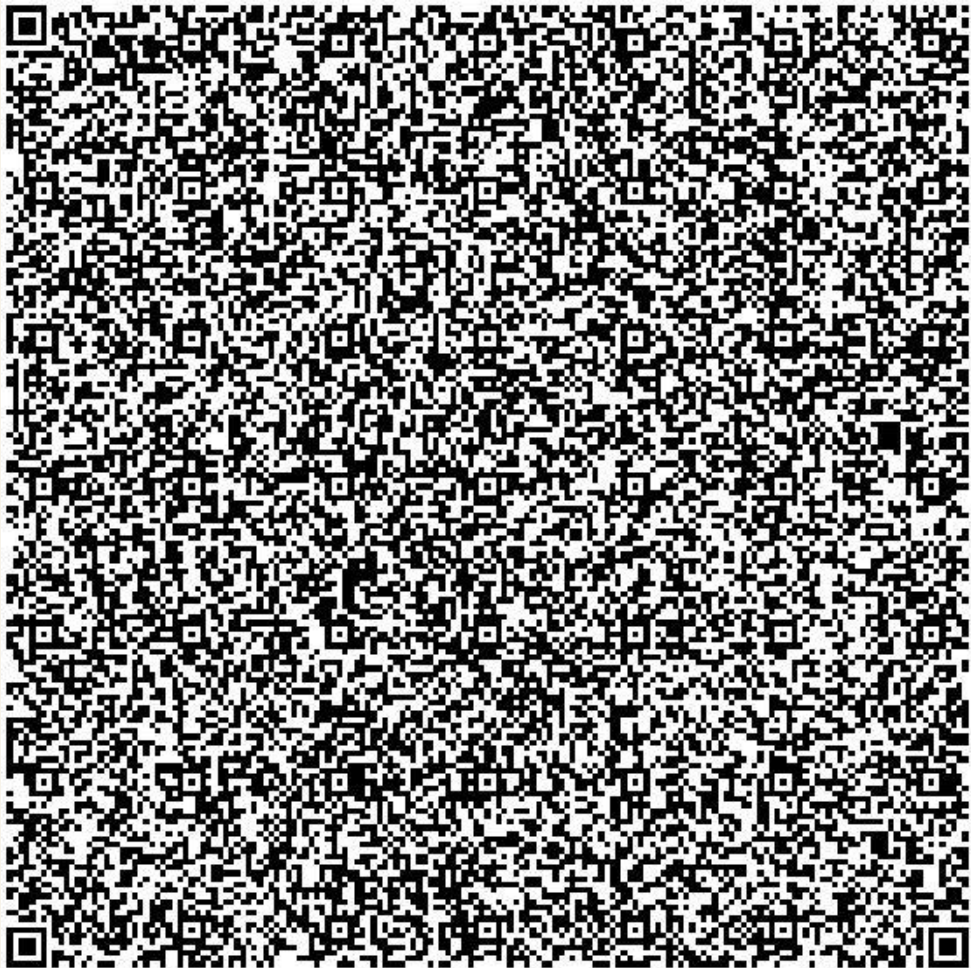
## FINAL REFLECTION

What is one policy change you will advocate for after today?

YOUR VOICE BECOMES POWERFUL WHEN IT IS ORGANISED, EVIDENCE-BASED AND DIRECTED TOWARDS CHANGE.

THANK YOU

Scan to save my Contact



Thank you for Listening!