

**CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF ABANTU  
FOR DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA –  
PROMOTING WOMEN’S  
PARTICIPATION IN POLICY**


**THE NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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# BACKGROUND OF NIGERIAN PROGRAMME

- ▶ Commenced activities in 1998, with funding from the European Union
- ▶ Conducted research on the extent of women's participation in policy making/analysis and monitoring policy implementation
- ▶ Trained over 500 women on 'engaging with policy from a gender perspective'
- ▶ Most of the first core of 25 original trainers have moved on and are hardly available for training


# ENGAGING WITH OTHER DONORS

- ▶ The EU grant opened the doors for more funding, between 2001 to date ABANTU Nigeria has been able to work with women's groups and other non governmental organizations to ensure the women's participation in policy formulation and in decision making.
  - ▶ Our strategies have over the years evolved from training women's organizations to forming and mentoring grassroots organizations
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# Objectives of the Nigeria Programme

- ▶ To increase the number of women in governance structures at national and local levels
- ▶ To train NGOs and women's organisations to influence policies from a gender perspective
- ▶ To improve the management capabilities of NGOs in Nigeria
- ▶ To raise public awareness, network and systematically engage in gender – sensitive and responsive advocacy on poverty, conflict, governance and ICTs.
- ▶ To provide skills training for NGO's on Information Technology and Communication, and to equip them to use ICTs as advocacy tools.


# OUR EXPERIENCE ENGAGING WITH POLICIES

- ▶ Lack of capacity on the part of women's groups to influence policies;
  - ▶ Government lack the political will to ensure women's participation in policy analysis;
  - ▶ Most policies are gender blind/neutral;
  - ▶ Women's concerns are not sought or reflected in policy formulation;
  - ▶ There is need to build a critical mass of women to engage with policies from a gender perspective.
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# Challenges

- ▶ Policy influencing requires long term engagement to make desired impact. Most grants can only last for 5 years.
  - ▶ Raising funds to promote the rights of women has remained a challenge for the organization.
  - ▶ Depletion of the core trainer group and the need to train more to support organisation's capacity building activities
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# CURRENT FOCUS

- ▶ Increasing Women's Participation in Politics through Political Participation;
  - ▶ Women's Grassroots Development initiatives;
  - ▶ Increasing women's participation in governance;
  - ▶ Advocacy for Gender Sensitive Policies;
  - ▶ Researching education sector budget allocation to assess the Universal Primary Education system.
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# Increasing Women's Participation in Decision Making through Political Participation (AWDF)

Select women across party lines, and equip them with leadership skills

Women formed a network, for mentoring and information sharing. This built sisterhood amongst the women.

As a group, alongside women's organizations lobbied political parties for women's involvement in the political process

Women were provided with skills to carry out community development to enable their acceptance for political representation.

Women are supported through out the electoral process. The network of female politicians have been able to set up a fund to support each other.

# Women Grassroots Development Initiatives



# Increasing Women's Participation in Governance (Water Governance)

## Community Mobilization

- Select community facilitators
- Build facilitation skills
- Mobilize women and men. This should represent all categories of people including, marginalized groups, women and the poor.

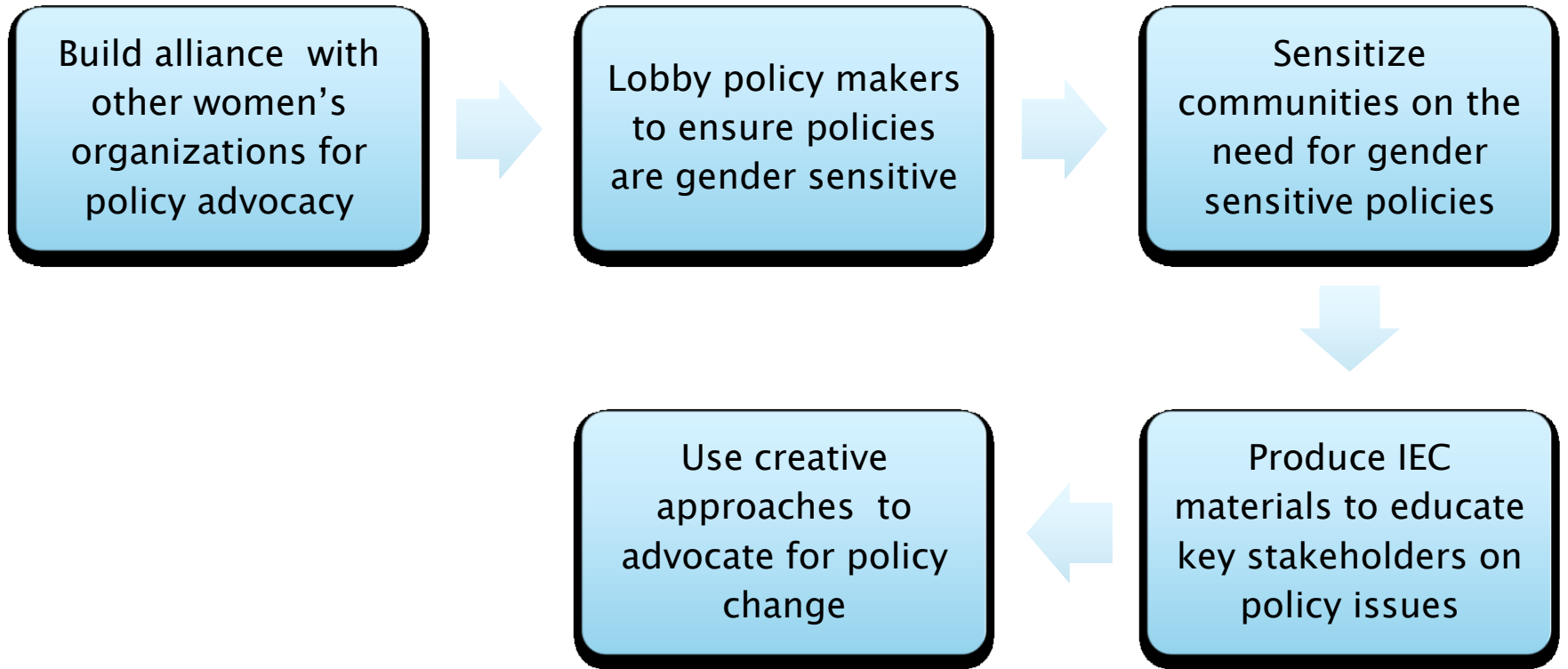
## Develop a vision and strategy for engagement

- Facilitators support communities to develop a vision for their community
- Develop strategies for achieving vision


## Policy influencing

- Engage and develop relationship with policy makers and implementer
- Identify community members to engage with policy makers
- Present vision and strategy and ensure their support in achieving community vision.

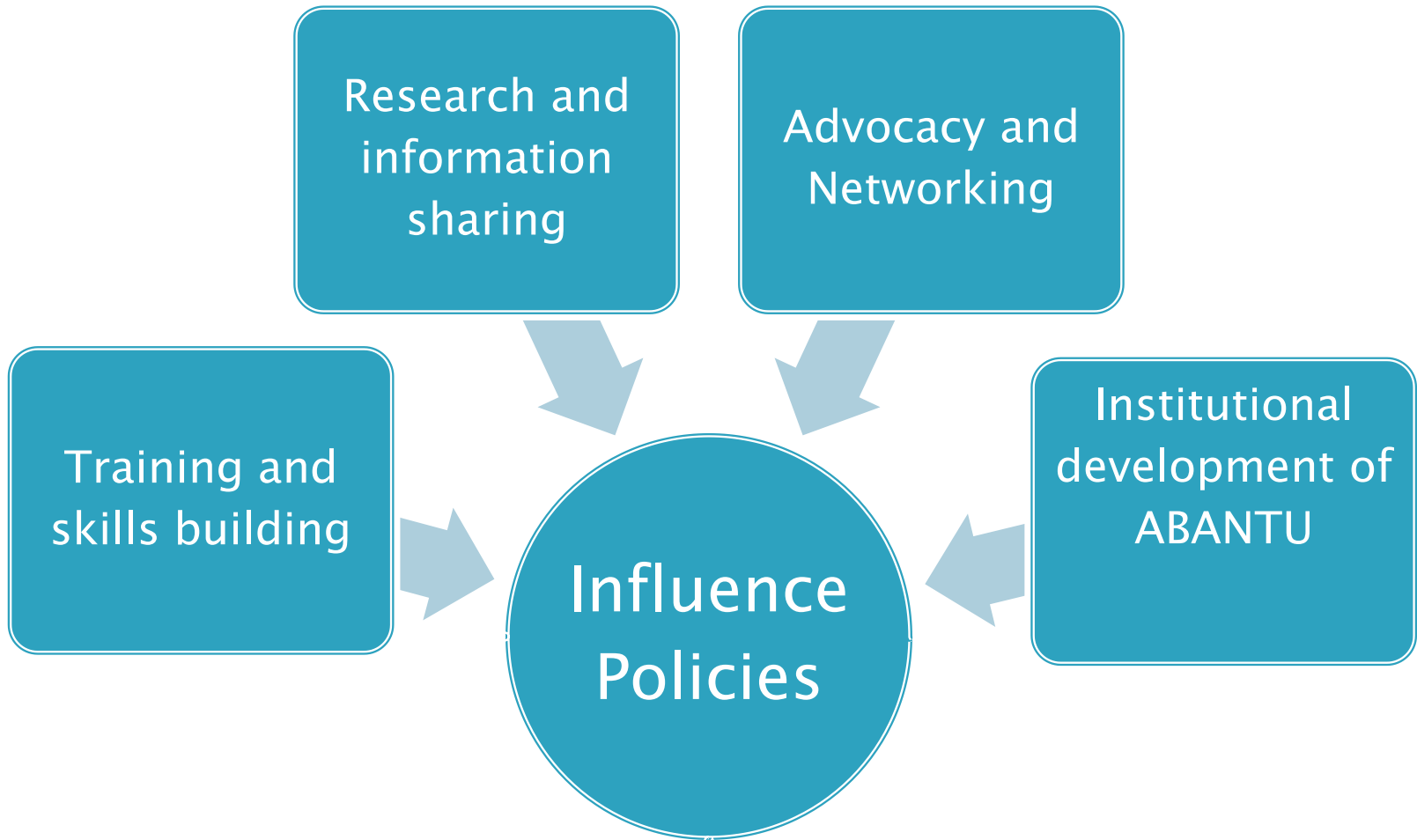
# Advocacy for Gender Sensitive Policies




# Action Oriented Research

- ▶ Identify key problem within a specific sector;
  - ▶ Develop research proposal;
  - ▶ Build relationship with sector partners;
  - ▶ Train research assistants;
  - ▶ Conduct research;
  - ▶ Identify advocacy issue; and develop policy brief;
  - ▶ Conduct advocacy
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# Strategies




# Current Policy Influencing Activities

- ▶ Advocacy on increasing health funding to address reproductive health of women
  - ▶ Advocating for increased participation of women in politics
  - ▶ Advocating for adequate funding to promote girl child education
  - ▶ Advocacy to reduce violence against women (16 days of activism)
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# Policy issues.....

- ▶ Advocacy to ensure women's participation in local/community governance.
- ▶ Serving as the network secretariat for a host of NGOs engaged in influencing policy such as: AdvocacyNigeria for reduction of maternal mortality, Gender Advancement Network, Global Campaign Against Poverty– GCAP Coalition of Civil Society Organisations on HIV/AIDS

# Acknowledgement

- ▶ We appreciate the contributions of the founders of ABANTU for Development
  - ▶ Dr Amina Mama
  - ▶ Late Wanjiru Kihoro
  - ▶ The numerous supporters of the organisation in those formative years: Donors, Board members, Dedicated staff, Titi Fakoya, Helen Nwoha, Late Basseyy Okedi etc
  - ▶ Those who supported us when we lost our office: Alice the oldest staff
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# THANKS

- ▶ We thank you all and wish ROWA many more years of service to humanity
  
- ▶ I thank you for listening