



Women’s Protection and Empowerment Advocacy



Advocacy is about putting pressure on people in power in order to effect change. It is a powerful tool that allows women and girls to lead, for their voices to be heard, and to influence the decisions made by leaders in their communities and their countries.

Why Advocacy?

The IRC recognizes that solutions to violence against women and girls must confront the power

“The most common way that people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

-Alice Walker

inequalities at the root of the problem. Too often, women and girls are not heard by people in a position to bring about change. Through advocacy, the IRC seeks to share learning from our programs and research and create opportunities for women and girls to be heard and to have their concerns recognized and responded to.

At a time when world leaders are committing to tackle violence against women and girls and speaking out to condemn it, the IRC is asking for more than words. Our advocacy focuses on ensuring that ending violence and gender inequality is not merely a slogan for leaders, but actually translates into tangible, concrete benefits: better services, increased resources, and more space for women and girls to have their say in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

IRC’s advocacy to protect and empower women focuses on three pillars:

Rights Under Fire

Promoting the protection of women and girls in emergencies and neglected crises

Rhetoric v. Reality

Ensuring that the increased attention to violence against women and girls translates into concrete action

Women’s and Girls’ Voices

Supporting women- and girl-led social movements

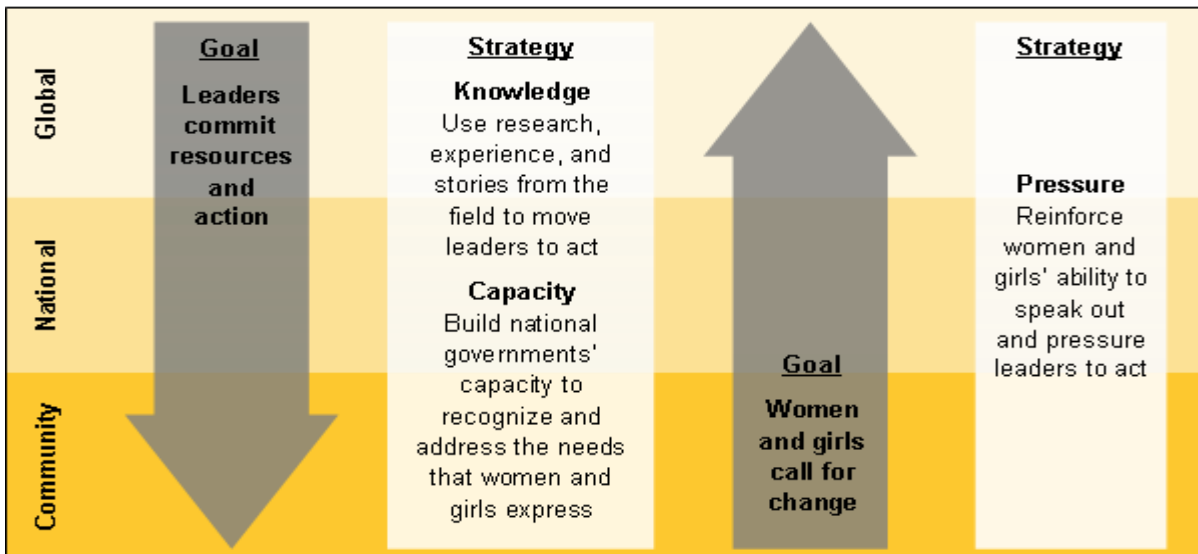
The women’s protection and empowerment unit includes two full-time policy and advocacy advisors based in Washington and London, who work closely with IRC’s global advocacy teams and our field offices on local, national, regional and international advocacy efforts.

Advocacy is not only something that we invest in globally, it is an everyday part of the work we do. Our key accomplishments include:

- Engagement with policymakers in the U.S. and Europe on violence against women and girls following the Haiti earthquake, the famine in the Horn of Africa, and on responding to this violence in emergencies such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and in the Syria Regional Response.

- Publication of a groundbreaking discussion paper, *Lifesaving, not Optional* which served as a major catalyst for the creation of the global *Call to Action on Preventing and Responding to GBV in Emergencies*, and led to efforts to improve the prioritization of GBV emergency response from key donors and humanitarian agencies.
- Commission of a UNFPA-UNHCR Real Time Evaluation of the implementation of the IASC GBV Guidelines in the Syria Regional Response—a direct result of successful advocacy stemming from WPE’s report, *Are We Listening?: Acting on our Commitments to Women and Girls Affected by the Syrian Conflict*.
- Increased investment in research on violence against, and accountability to, women and girls in emergencies through projects such as: “What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Conflict and Humanitarian Crises” and adolescent girl protection in humanitarian settings, both of which are supported by the U.K. government; a partnership with IrishAid on GBV in Emergencies including first phase response, preparedness, programs and advocacy efforts; and membership in a U.S.-funded Real-Time Accountability Partnership (RTAP) to promote accountability in GBV prevention and response across all humanitarian assistance and protection actions.
- Products, reports, meetings and actions that consistently raise the voice and visibility of the women we work with to influence policy and practice at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Advocacy Approach



What’s on the Horizon?

- Launch of the updated discussion paper *Life Saving, not Optional* in 2015, which will highlight successes in GBV emergency response globally since 2012 and analyze existing gaps in implementation and coordination in recent emergency responses in the Central African Republic, Iraq, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and the Ukraine.
- Publications on engaging women and girls in program design and monitoring and evaluation, adolescent girl programming, prevention and response to violence against women and girls at the onset of emergencies, and effective approaches to responding to violence against women and girls in refugee and immigrant communities in the U.S.

For more information on WPE advocacy, visit www.gbvresponders.org or contact:

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