

# West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive areas (WAGES)



*National Youth Interns, Bogoso, Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality, June 2018 (Photo Credit: WAGES)*

## Local Governance Toolkit *Communication*

**WAGES**

WEST AFRICA GOVERNANCE AND  
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY IN  
EXTRACTIVE AREAS



Global Affairs  
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Canada

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## Abbreviations

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

MMDA – Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

MTDP – Medium -Term Development Plan

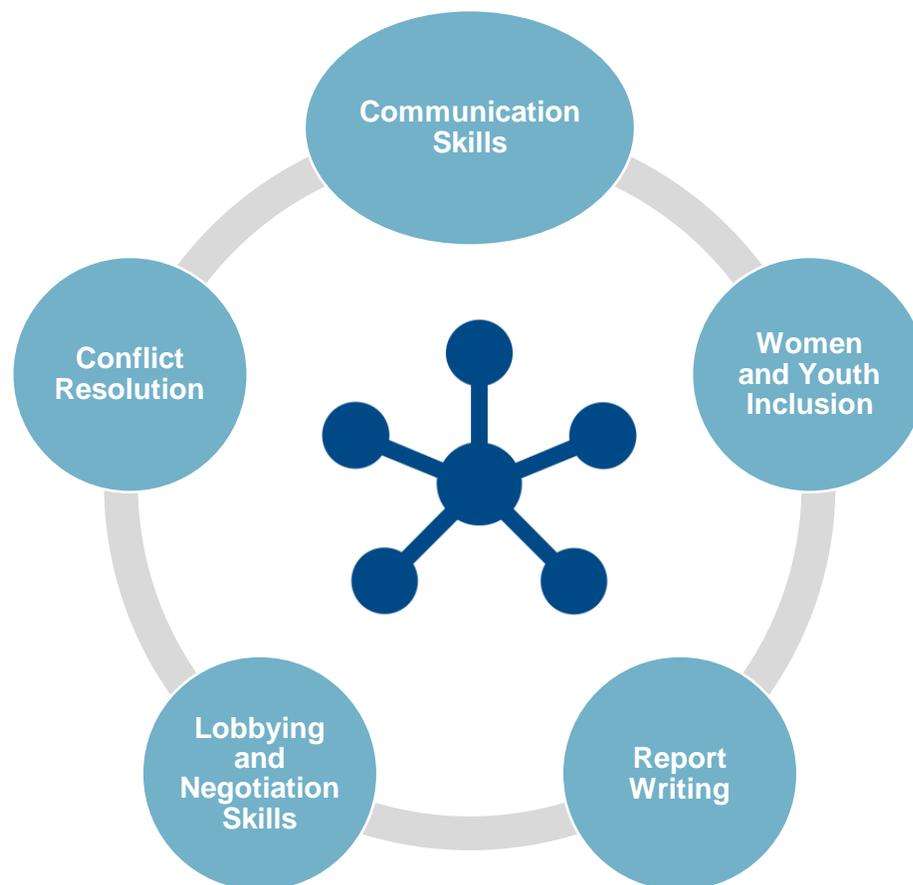
WAGES – West Africa Governance and Economic Sustainability in Extractive Areas

## Introduction

This toolkit encourages the use of different communication approaches for local governance stakeholders to improve social accountability within their localities. It also incorporates gender equality and youth inclusion as a cross-cutting component of effective communication. This toolkit will provide the reader with education, training, and activities for:

1. Communication Skills
2. Report Writing
3. Lobbying and Negotiation Skills
4. Conflict Resolution
5. Gender and Youth Mainstreaming in Local Plans and Activities

By the end, participants will be able to answer the review questions to test their ability to identify and apply the appropriate tools and techniques in their localities.



# 1. Communication Skills

Coherent communication is very crucial since people must exchange information, make decisions, implement decisions, and assess the outcomes of those decisions. In fact, communication is successful only when both the sender and the receiver reach a common understanding regarding the same information, as a result of the communication process. Good governance and inclusivity are ultimately achieved when there is a dialogue between the duty bearers and other people who are affected by decisions and services. The process of communicating with the various groups in the community is one significant part of ensuring development.

Communication is a part of daily activities and has some advantages which cannot be ignored. The importance of communication is to ensure open and transparent engagement among community members. Without effective communication, the community loses focus and cohesion in order to achieve the desired development.

There are different types of communication, used for different purposes.

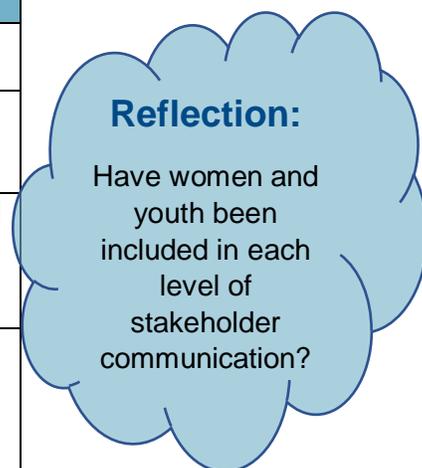
**Table 1: Different types of communication**

Formal	Informal
Important or serious matters	Casual
Written records	Oral accounts and conversations
Reports, memos, letters, etc.	Not dated

There are several ways to communicate with different kinds of people in the communities. Therefore, there is the need to make decisions about which method or tool is most suitable for the different stakeholder needs. To effectively use the tools for communication, it is imperative to understand the levels that a particular tool can be used. The table below explains the levels of Stakeholder Communication.

**Table 2: Levels of Stakeholder Communication**

Level	Description	Benefits
Level 1: Informing	This level provides preliminary information	Informing on a decision or direction
Level 2: Consulting	Undertaking research to identify each stakeholder and their needs or issues	Seeking feedback on a service or facility. Evidence-based decision-making
Level 3: Involving	Involving all stakeholders in discussion, implementation, and activities	Ensuring informed inputs and broader participation. The creation of the sense of belongingness
Level 4: Partnerships	Establish a structure for involvement in decision-making, negotiations, and evaluations	Enabling ongoing involvement and keeping informed. Thus, clarity in roles and reduction of conflicts



The method and tools for communication will depend on the level of communication.

**Table 3: Tools for Communication**

Inform	Consult	Involve	Partner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact Sheets</li> <li>• Notice Boards</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Reports</li> <li>• Radio &amp; TV</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Exhibitions</li> <li>• Information Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Hearing</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• FGDs</li> <li>• Phone</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Open Days</li> <li>• Durbars</li> <li>• Town Hall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• General Assembly Meetings</li> <li>• ZUTA and Ucs</li> <li>• Social Audit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participatory Decision Making</li> <li>• Festivals</li> <li>• PRCC</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p><b>Reflection:</b></p> <p>Are posters visible and accessible to all community members? What about the elderly or those who cannot read?</p> </div>

Developing and distributing a Communications Plan is an excellent way to establish expectations and solicit feedback early on in the governance process, ensuring the shared understanding and ownership for all kinds of projects and program.

**Figure 2: Developing a communications plan**



## 2. Report Writing

Report writing is a logical presentation of facts and information of an event or a process. It is usually a written document produced after observation, research, investigations, and analysis of something that has occurred. Reports are often conveyed in writing, speech and video. A report is always written in a sequential manner in order of occurrence and timing. It is a way to permanently record information and also communicate to others what has happened. Broadly, the importance of report writing is captured below:

### Example

A report is able to reveal what has happened. For instance, a report will be able to document the effects of 'galamsey activities' in a mining community.

- **Report as a means of community communication:** A report acts as an effective means to communicate within the community. It is prepared as information and a guide to the various stakeholders in a community who are connected with an issue under consideration.
- **Report as a product of an investigative process:** Reports help to disclose information that was previously unknown to others.
- **Report facilitates decision-making and planning:** Report provides reliable data and information to key stakeholders which can aid in planning and decision-making. It acts as a reference point to make a decision.

### Box 1: Hypothetical Case Study on Report Writing

In the community of Kubeman, a mining company has started operations to mine the bauxite deposits in the forest of the community. The mining activities have been going on for about 5 years. Recently, some community members and farmers complained to the Chief of Kubeman that their water bodies are being destroyed and their farm produce are not yielding the quantity they use to harvest. Some of the farmers mentioned that, since the mining activities started in the forest of the community, they have realized that their yields are dropping. The Chief promised to investigate the issue and solve the problem.

The chief therefore tasked the Youth Leaders to produce a report about the situation so that he can take a decision.

- How should the youth leaders go about the report?
- How do you think an effective report will help address the problem at hand?
- What would you do to encourage the Youth Leaders to be inclusive of women and youth in their reporting?

Report writing could be in a formal or informal manner. These types of reports are further categorized to take certain forms based on the purpose and the audience.

**Informational Reports** presents facts and information related to an issue or situation. This kind of reports can take a periodic form. The time period could be annually, semi-annually, monthly, nightly, weekly, or even daily.

**Analytical Reports** present an analysis of the facts, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations to solve the problem. This report usually tries to address why things are happening or have happened and how they can be addressed. For example, an analytical report will attempt to analyse why there is unemployment in mining communities.

**Recommendation Reports** deal with fact findings and make recommendations. This type of report advocates a particular course of action.

Features of Good Report Writing
It has clear thoughts and a style suitable for readers
It is complete and self-explanatory
It is comprehensive but compact
It is impersonal
It is accurate and well-structured in all aspects
It has no jargon

**Reflection:**

Are women and youth integrated in all reporting processes?  
 Are there challenges in doing this? Can these challenges be addressed?



**Figure 1: Stages of Report Writing**



Planning and organizing a report require systematic processes. Every organization has its own prescribed format or template that can be adapted in writing a report. However, there is an internationally accepted pattern that includes various components that are mentioned below.

The **Cover** of a report is something that captures a reader's attention at first sight. The report's cover leaves a huge impression on the reader's mind and he/she can get an idea regarding the report's topic or quality through the cover design.

The **title of the Report** presents what the report is about. It must include the name of the writer. Apart from these things, the title can also have a date and the name of the organization for which the report has been prepared.

The **Table of Contents** includes headings and subheadings of the primary text written and the pages to find the headings. It helps your readers to reach desired sections in the report with speed.

The **Summary** is one of the important parts of the report. It can be referred to as the 'executive summary' or 'abstract' and is not more than 200 words.

The **Introduction** is the most important section of the main text. The main text always includes three components – introduction, discussion (or body), and conclusion. Here, you introduce the main text of your report in the most intriguing and detailed manner so that all types of readers can get your point without much effort. It highlights the rationale, objectives, methods used, participants and the period of the report.

In the **discussion** section or body, a report writer discusses the main story of the report. There are multiple sections or headings that can be presented. Do not write to impress. Be simple and clear.

**Conclusion/Recommendation** includes the summary of the discussion section. Findings are summarized and recommendations made for future actions.

**Appendix** includes graphs, lists, maps, etc., that are related to the report and helps readers to understand the report comprehensively.

**Reference/Bibliography** includes details of any works cited.

#### Questions to Consider in Report Writing

1. Who is the report for?
2. Why do they want it?
3. What do they need to know?
4. What period is the report covering?
5. What action do I want the reader to take?

### 3. Lobbying and Negotiation Skills

Lobbying and negotiation usually takes place between two or more people with the view of attempting to reach an agreement on an issue. Lobbying and negotiations are an integral part of local governance.



**Lobbying** is viewed as an attempt to try to influence the thinking of others, for or against a specific issue or course of action. It is the means to convince someone to take a particular course.

**Negotiation** on the other hand, is a method of settling differences by avoiding any argument and reaching a common conclusion.

In order to be successful in lobbying and negotiations, some critical issues must be observed by the lobbyist or negotiator.

- Always be clear about what you are offering and what you need
- Be consistent while presenting your goals and expectations
- Use effective communication skills and positive body language
- Do not be selfish; try to arrive at a mutually beneficial solution in case of conflicts
- Develop a habit of remaining calm, professional and patient during an argument
- Always avoid passing on the blame to other people
- Try to see what went wrong from your side
- Be ethical and reliable. Do not try to take advantage of people by unethical practices; it takes a lot of time to earn respect as a lobbyist or negotiator and it just takes a minute to lose it
- Do not be partisan in anyway or form
- Stay neutral to the issues

Good lobbying and negotiation skills build, maintain, and improve relationships. Lobbying and negotiation skills establish common ground and eradicate the friction among stakeholders. Lobbying and negotiation skills help attain important goals and maneuver deals in favor of your project. Lobbying and negotiations can represent large and small interests and can engage public involvement.

The most typical factors that affect how a lobbying and negotiation will play out are:



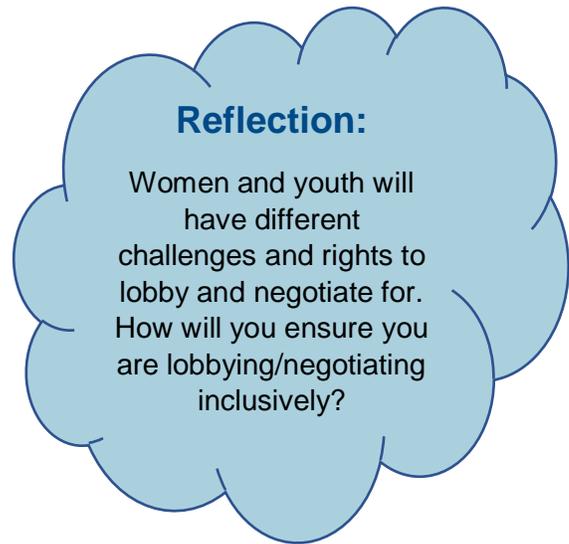
*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” – Margaret Mead*

There is no one-size-fits all approach to successful lobbying and negotiations. The context, target person, time and goal affect the kind of style, technique and tool to be used by the lobbyists and negotiators. The dynamics are not the same. There are various tools that can be used to lobby and negotiate with decision-making entities. These tools vary based on the recipient and issue under consideration.

Tools for lobbying and negotiation can be **oral** or **written** communication. Some of these tools include, face-to-face meeting, email, television, radio, letters, telephones, memos, proposal, posters, protest or street demonstration and drama, among others. Picking the key model of engagement will help find the influential group needed to support the issue being lobbied.

### 3.1 Model of Engagement

- **Direct Action:** Participants individually engage with the government or community leadership. Lone actors seek to exert influence based on their capacity to do so. For example, an Assembly member solely lobbying the District Assembly to provide portable water.
- **Grassroots Engagement:** This is one of the most recognized forms of lobbying and negotiation. Here, individual persons work together to identify a problem, develop a strategy, mobilise necessary resources and implement action in an informal alliance.
- **Organizational Engagement:** In this model of engagement, organisations such as NGOs are used to serve as a vehicle for lobbying and negotiations. They develop governance structures to direct efforts and manage resources. For instance, in this engagement, the Youth and Women Groups in Prestea can lobby the District Assembly through the WAGES project.
- **Network-centric Engagement:** This approach brings all the various stakeholders together for a particular course of action. In this approach, lobbying and negotiation is very much effective. Traditional Authorities, Assembly members, youth groups, women groups, business people and civil society come together to force a change in projects and programs.



#### Box 3: Lobbying and Negotiation Skills Takeaway

- Lobbying and negotiation is not only an option for community members, it is essential
- The lobbyist and negotiator must be confident
- Frame your message to answer the question, “So what?” This is very critical as there should be a reason why the listener should support your course
- Plan and practice your message
- Present a clear and compelling message
- Effective communication is the weapon for successful lobbying and negotiations

## 4. Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a process that begins when an individual or group perceives differences and opposition between oneself and another individual or group about interests, resources, beliefs, values or practices that matter to them.



There are no tailored techniques, both formal or informal, to manage conflicts, although the techniques are based on intuition, logics & commutation arts.

The following are the most commonly known methods of conflict resolution:

Method	Description
<b>Negotiation</b>	Process where the parties to the dispute meet to reach a mutually acceptable solution. There is no facilitation or mediation by a third party; each party represents its own interest
<b>Facilitation</b>	Process in which an impartial individual participates in the design and conduct of problem-solving meetings to help the parties jointly diagnose, create and implement jointly-owned solutions
<b>Mediation</b>	Process of settling conflict in which an outside party oversees the negotiation between the two disputing parties
<b>Arbitration</b>	It is a process in which a neutral outside party or a panel meets with the parties in a dispute, hears presentations from each side and makes an award
<b>Litigation</b>	Short of coercion and physical violence, the ultimate formal mechanism for conflict resolution is taking recourse to the legal system of the country. In many instances, this is the only way to resolve a conflict but in other cases, it may not be so
<b>Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms in Ghana</b>	Under the <b>Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2010, (Act 798)</b> methods that the law accommodates are Arbitration, Mediation and Customary Arbitration. In general, these mechanisms can be used to resolve disputes between private individuals, business entities, government agencies and sovereign States
<b>Gender and Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM)</b>	Due to the structural discrimination and cultural roles of women, especially in rural settings, their social, financial and logistical challenges need to be factored into the resolution process. Instability, violence and insecurity affect women, youth and children. Women are often more vulnerable to violence but less able to get protection. Social injustice and lack of opportunity perpetuate cycles of violence. Particularly, building the capacity of queen mothers and leaders of women groups in this area is critical.

## 4.1 Conflict Prevention

Preventing conflict before conflict begins is a major priority. While there are no uniform methodologies for undertaking the process, the important thing is to create an enabling environment whereby the stakeholders are able to actively participate in the policy dialogues and subsequent planning and design process. If you cannot prevent the conflict, strategies for resolving conflict may include the following steps:

- Defining the problem rather than proposing solutions
- Focusing on interests
- Identifying various alternatives
- Separating the generation of alternatives from their evaluation
- Agreeing on principles or criteria to evaluate alternatives
- Documenting agreements to reduce the risk of later misunderstanding
- Agreeing on the process by which agreements can be revised and the process by which other types of disagreements might be solved
- Using the process to create agreement
- Creating a commitment to implementation by allowing the stakeholders specific roles in the execution of the agreed action/program

### Reflection:

Women may have different conflict resolution styles, departing from conventional litigation approaches. Women representation on respective dispute resolutions teams, especially at community and district levels, is essential to harness their participation.

To practice your conflict resolution skills, create a hypothetical scenario and follow these steps in the analysis. These are not the only way to conduct such exercises; they are simply provided as potentially useful techniques.

**Step one:** The purpose of engaging in case study analysis is to sharpen problem-solving skills. One gains an appreciation of the need to assess probable causes and determine what additional knowledge is needed to design a conflict management strategy. One also recognizes the importance of evaluating different options in deciding what strategy to pursue.

**Step two:** When opening the discussion of a particular case, reviewing the content helps determine whether all the stakeholders understood the materials. Rather than simply opening with the broad question of “what happened?”, provide a series of the following guiding questions:

- What was the conflict about?
- How did the conflict manifest itself?
- Who were the other stakeholders or interested parties?
- Why did the parties seek to resolve the conflict?
- Did the community members seek help from outsiders? (Or did outsiders intervene?)
- What resources were expended in the conflict management and resolution process?
- What was the outcome of the conflict management and resolution process?
- Did any information seem to be missing that might have helped you understand the case study better?



**Step three:** Having reviewed what happened, the bulk of the discussion time should next be opened to the more important consideration of why it happened, and what alternative actions and processes were possible. In addition, one should explore the broad lessons learned from the case study and how these relate to (or contrast with) the circumstances and situations they themselves have faced.

#### Further questions needed to be asked in analyzing conflict situations

- Why did the conflict arise? Did it have a single cause or multiple causes?
- What was the role of power or power relationships in the conflict?
- Is a level playing field necessary to resolve conflicts?
- What was the role of gender in the conflict?
- What other socio-economic considerations influenced the conflict management process?
- Why did the conflict parties seek to resolve their conflict?
- Why did the conflict parties pursue their particular conflict resolution strategy?
- What other conflict resolution options were (or might have been) available?
- Were sufficient resources available for addressing the conflict?
- If you had been consulted by the parties in the conflict, what conflict resolution strategy would you have recommended? How would you have conducted negotiations in the case?
- If the parties used negotiation, what factors contributed to their success or failure?
- Was the conflict adequately addressed by the selected conflict management/resolution processes or was the conflict simply managed?

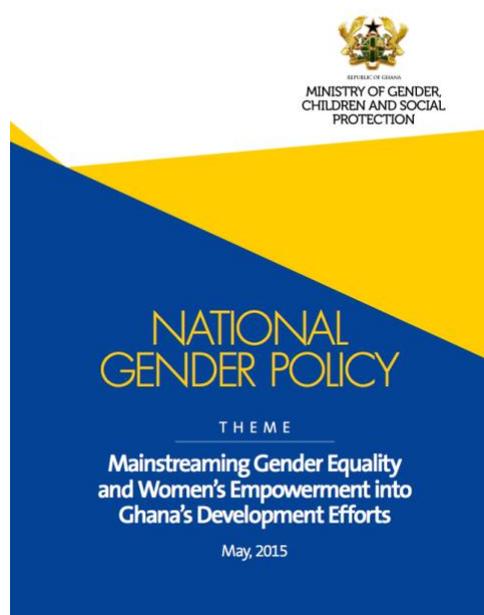


## 5. Gender and Youth Mainstreaming in Local Plans and Activities

The dynamics in socio-economic and political indicators show that the issue of gender can no longer be ignored. It is therefore important for local authorities to understand and

address the issue of gender parity and youth inclusion in the democratic governance and participatory development process.

**Figure 6: National Gender Policy**



National Gender Policy, May 2015  
 Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

Theme: Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Empowerment in Ghana's Development Efforts

The overall goal of the policy is to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment concerns into the national development process in order to improve the social, legal, civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the people of Ghana; particularly women and men, boys and girls in an appreciable manner and as required by National and International Frameworks.



### Do You Know the Difference Between Sex and Gender?



Sex	Gender
Biological make-up	Socially constructed
Universal for all human beings	Differs between cultures, location, climate
Unchanging	Dynamic and changes over time
Identifies the biological differences between men and women	Identifies the social relations between men and women

**'Gender'** refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male, how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man.

Gender issues do not only concern women. It is essential to involve women and men in all stages of development at the household, project, the community and the government levels, so that women's and men's, as well as girls' and boys' specific needs are considered. This way it can be ensured that they are equally benefitting.

**'Sex'** refers to the biological characteristics that categorize someone as having either a female or male body.

**'Youth Engagement and Inclusion'** refers to the active, empowered and intentional partnership with youth as stakeholders, problem solvers and change agents in their community.

**Did you know?**

Each District has a Gender and Youth Inclusion Strategy. Contact your District Gender Officer to learn more!

There is growing consensus to eliminate all forms of discriminations in development actions via gender mainstreaming. In that regard, efforts are made to recognize that both women and men play equally significant roles in community development and delivery of services.

Gender Mainstreaming enables us to:

- Recognize that every policy, program and project affect women and men differently
- Transform women's participation in reconstruction process from passive beneficiaries to active agents at all levels and in all fields
- Achieve an enabling environment where women and men work as partners and carry values of mutual respect

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of ensuring that both women and men have equal access to and control over resources, decision-making, and benefits at all stages of the development process and in development projects. In achieving this, governments over the years have created institutions, policy, project and programmes to ensure that both men and women have equal opportunity to be integrated in development issues. In the District Assemblies, Gender Desk Officers are appointed to help mainstream issues of gender in decision making. In the preparation of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), issues of women empowerment and gender mainstreaming are strongly included. For instance, when schools are built, there are available washrooms for the pupils to use. Also, it has been observed that there are more washroom spaces for the girls than the boys.

## Module Review

1. What is the issue you are concerned with?
2. What are the specific points for and against your issue?
3. What is the logic behind the other side of the issue?
4. What state-wide or grassroots groups are advocating the same message as you?
5. Who is the report for?
6. Why do they want it?
7. What do they need to know?
8. What period is the report covering?
9. What action do I want the reader to take?
10. How important is Communication in your dealings with other community stakeholders?
11. How do you understand the tools for communication?
12. Do you have any suggestions to improve the dissemination of information on community governance?
13. Kindly describe the various methods of resolving conflict/dispute in your community.
14. What do you consider as the best method for resolving dispute in your community as an opinion leader?
15. What do you understand by the term 'Alternative Dispute Resolution' mechanisms?
16. What has been some of the causes of conflict in your community?
17. What has been attributed to the difficulty in resolving conflicts in your community?
18. What effects has the emergence of conflicts/disputes has on the community's development, women and children and the youth?

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