Out of the Shadows

OUT OF THE SHADOWS INDEX ADVOCACY TOOLS | Meeting guide

Meeting guide

Researched and developed by

ECONOMIST IMPACT

Together for girls
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

brave movement

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Meeting guide

How to use this guide

This meeting guide is designed for one purpose: to help survivor advocates and allies walk into a room with a decision-maker and walk out with a commitment.

What meeting is this for?

This guide is built for face-to-face advocacy meetings where you have a window—however brief—with someone who has the authority or influence to act. That could be:

- A minister or deputy minister (health, justice, education, social protection, finance, information, communication, and technology (ICT)).
- A senior government official or permanent secretary responsible for policy or budgets.
- A parliamentary committee chair or member considering legislation.
- A donor, multilateral representative, or development partner with funding authority.
- A national or regional body overseeing child protection coordination.

The guide works for both formal scheduled meetings and opportunistic moments, for example, a corridor conversation at a conference, a side event at the World Health Assembly, or two minutes with a minister after a panel. The 10-minute script and 2-minute intervention are designed for exactly these moments.

What you need to do before using this guide

This guide is not the starting point. It is the moment you convert preparation into action. Before using it, you need to:

a) **Review your country's Out of the Shadows Index results.** Know where your country scores well and where it falls short across the four pillars: Governance and Accountability, Prevention, Healing, and Justice. Identify the specific gaps you want to address.

b) **Use the Fact Sheets to understand the evidence.** The pillar-specific Fact Sheets explain what each indicator measures and why it matters. They give you the language and framing to make your case without needing technical expertise in the Index methodology.

c) **Shape your 'ask' using the Finance Advocacy documents.** If your 'ask' involves funding—and most meaningful policy commitments do—the Finance Advocacy documents help you connect your policy 'ask' to a budget line, a costing estimate, or a financing mechanism. Decision-makers take 'asks' more seriously when you can show you have thought about how to pay for them.

d) **Identify who you need to be in the room with.** Map out who holds decision-making power over your issue—whether that is a minister, a permanent secretary, a parliamentary committee, or a donor—and secure or work to secure access to them. If you are not a survivor advocate yourself, work with the Brave Movement to identify someone who wants to accompany you to bring critical expertise from lived experience to the conversation.

e) **Assess the policy environment and realistic timelines.** Work to understand the political context: what is achievable in the near term (a directive, a budget allocation, a task force), what requires legislative action and therefore a longer timeline, and what commitments already exist that your government can be held to—including any pledges made at the Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children or under existing frameworks such as the INSPIRE technical package or relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions.

What this toolkit will help you do

Once you have your evidence and your 'ask', this toolkit helps you deliver them effectively. It provides:

1. **A structured meeting script** that keeps a 10-minute conversation focused on the 'ask' and the commitment.
2. **A 2-minute intervention format** for when you have a brief window.
3. **Accountability questions** designed to turn vague goodwill into trackable commitments with owners, timelines, and budget lines.
4. **A leave-behind template** so your 'ask' stays on their desk after you leave the room.
5. **A follow-up structure** to make sure commitments do not evaporate after the meeting ends.

Access to a decision-maker is often hard-won, especially in contexts where civil society space is constrained. This toolkit is designed to make every meeting count.

1. Before the meeting

Preparation is where meetings are won or lost. Use this checklist.

Know your audience

- ☐ Who will be in the room? (Name, title, decision-making authority, status as a public survivor)
- ☐ What are their priorities? (Ministry strategy, current initiatives, political pressures)
- ☐ What have they said publicly about child protection?
- ☐ Who influences them? (Advisors, other ministries, donors, media)

Know your ask

- ☐ What specific policy action are you requesting?
- ☐ Which ministry has authority and budget?
- ☐ What timeline are you proposing?
- ☐ What's the minimum you'd accept? (Do you have a backup plan?)

Prepare your evidence

- ☐ Learn your country's score on the relevant Out of the Shadows Index pillar and key gaps (see pillar **Fact sheet**).
- ☐ Review 1–2 peer country comparisons. Look at nearby or peer country scoring and where your country is leading the way. That's a great place to start the conversation.
- ☐ Gather cost or feasibility data if available (see pillar **Finance advocacy** document).

Prepare your materials

- ☐ Leave-behind summary (see Section 5)
- ☐ Talking points
- ☐ Note-taking materials (capture commitments in real time)

Safeguarding

- ☐ Review The Brave Movement's guidance on Safe advocacy, Safe advocacy events, and Trauma-informed meeting tips to ensure you are prepared.
- ☐ Conduct a full risk-assessment and implement mitigation strategies for your meeting using this simple template.
- ☐ Fully brief any survivor advocates before the meeting. Ensure they are involved in planning and understand the full agenda and meeting talking points.
- ☐ Do not ask personal questions about a survivor advocates experience of childhood sexual violence or of seeking justice.
- ☐ Emphasize the right of all participants to decide not to participate at any time.
- ☐ Ensure the survivor advocate is aware of someone (e.g., a counselor) they can speak to if the meeting is difficult.

Tip: Assign roles

If meeting as a group, decide in advance:

- Who leads the conversation?
- Who presents the data?
- Who takes notes and tracks commitments?
- Who handles questions outside your lead's expertise?

2. 10-minute meeting script

Meetings often are cut short. This script keeps you focused and ensures you make the ask.

Time	Section	What to say
0:00-1:00	Open	Thank them for their time. Briefly introduce yourself and your organization. State the purpose: "We're here to share findings from the Out of the Shadows Index and discuss one specific opportunity to strengthen [COUNTRY]'s response to sexual violence against children and adolescents."
1:00–3:00	Acknowledge progress	Name something positive: a recent initiative, a policy commitment, or an area where the country scores well. "We recognize the Ministry's work on [X]. This kind of leadership matters."
3:00–5:00	Present the gap	Introduce the Out of the Shadows Index finding briefly (1–2 sentences). Explain what it means in practice.
5:00–7:00	Make the ask	State your 'ask' clearly: "We're asking the Ministry to [POLICY ACTION] by [TIMELINE]." Briefly explain why this is achievable: peer examples, existing infrastructure, modest cost. Offer to support.
7:00–9:00	Invite response	Pause. Let them respond. Listen for: interest, concerns, questions, constraints. Don't argue — note concerns and address briefly or offer to follow up. You do not need to have all the answers - you can let the person know you will find out and get back to them (e.g., by email or preferred method).
9:00–10:00	Close with next steps	Summarize any commitments. Confirm follow-up: "We'll send a summary and follow up in [X weeks]." Thank them. Leave the leave-behind.

3. 2-minute intervention

For panels, side conversations, or when you only have a brief window. Memorize this structure.

Time	Element	Content
15 sec	Hook	This is why this issue matters now for our country.
30 sec	Evidence	Here is one Out of the Shadows Index finding and what it means.
30 sec	Ask	We'd like to see [specific policy] implemented by [ministry] within this time period [timeline].
15 sec	Offer	This is how I can help.
30 sec	Close	I'd like to request a follow-up meeting or to confirm a next step.

Example: Healing pillar

"Thank you, Minister. I'll be brief. The Out of the Shadows Index shows [COUNTRY] has made real progress on [AREA OF STRENGTH]. But when it comes to [pillar AREA], there's a gap: [SPECIFIC GAP FROM FACT SHEET]. We're asking the [MINISTRY] to [SPECIFIC ASK] by [DATE]. Peer countries like [EXAMPLE] have shown this is achievable. We're ready to support — with technical input or by connecting you with partners who've done this. Could we schedule a 30-minute meeting to discuss this further?"

4. Accountability questions

Vague commitments disappear. Use these questions to clarify specifics you can track.

Question	Why it matters
Who will be responsible for this?	Identifies the owner. Without a name, no one is accountable.
What is the timeline?	Creates urgency and a date to follow up.
Is there a budget line for this?	Tests whether commitment is real. No budget means no action.
What policy instrument will this use?	Clarifies the mechanism for implementation: law, regulation, directive, circular, budget allocation.
How will progress be reported?	Establishes a reporting pathway you can monitor.
Can we follow up in writing?	Creates a paper trail. Written commitments are harder to walk back.

Capture commitments in real time

Write down exactly what they say, in their words. At the end of the meeting, read it back: “Just to confirm what we’ve discussed, you’ve committed to [X] by [DATE]. Is that right?” Include this in your follow-up email within 48 hours.

5. Leave-behind template

A one-page summary to hand over at the end of the meeting.
Adapt this template.

Out Of the Shadows Index 2026: [PILLAR NAME] — [COUNTRY]

KEY FINDING

[1–2 sentences summarizing the main gap that you went to discuss]

WHAT THIS MEANS

[2–3 sentences on the impact of this gap]

OUR ASK

[Clear ask: policy, ministry, and timeline]

PEER EXAMPLE

[1–2 sentences showing this ‘ask’ has been done elsewhere]

CONTACT: [Name, Organization, Email, Phone]

6. After the meeting

The meeting is just the beginning. Follow-up is where commitments turn into action.

Within 24 hours

- ☐ Debrief with your team: What went well? What did we learn? What did they commit to?
- ☐ Write up meeting notes with exact commitments (who, what, when).
- ☐ Draft follow-up email (see **Email templates** document).

Within 48 hours

- ☐ Send follow-up email thanking them, summarizing commitments, attaching any promised materials, and responding to any remaining questions or concerns from the meeting.
- ☐ Share meeting notes with coalition partners (if appropriate).
- ☐ Update your advocacy tracker.

Within 2 weeks

- ☐ If your advocacy targets have committed to internal review or next steps, check in.
- ☐ Similarly, if they requested information, ensure it's delivered.

Ongoing

- ☐ Set a calendar reminder for follow-up based on the timeline they committed to.
- ☐ Monitor for public statements, budget announcements, or policy developments.

Commitment tracker

Commitment	Owner	Timeline	Status

Remember

One meeting rarely changes policy. Advocacy is a process. Stay respectful, stay persistent, and document everything.

7. Use with other resources

This Meeting guide is designed to work hand-in-hand with the other components of the Out of the Shadows Index advocacy tools. Here's how to connect them:

Component	How it connects to this guide
Fact sheet	Read before the meeting to understand indicators, scoring, and gaps. Use the score interpretation tables to explain findings in the room. Provides the evidence base for your leave-behind.
Email templates	Ready-to-adapt outreach and follow-up emails. Use the meeting request template before the meeting, and the follow-up template within 48 hours after.
Finance advocacy	Investment arguments, budget line mapping, and submission template. Essential if your meeting involves spending commitments or budget cycle discussions.