



# THE POWER OF VOICE

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[metgroup.com](http://metgroup.com)

Metropolitan Group crafts strategic and creative services to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world.

## Advancing Gender Equality

Gender inequalities and inequities are among the most pervasive and widespread forms of injustice in the world. Influenced by dominant narratives that create stereotypes and entrenched gendered social norms, gender inequality negatively impacts individuals, families, communities, and societies at large. Metropolitan Group (MG) gathers groups of experts and practitioners working to create more inclusive policies, laws, social, and cultural norms regardless of sex, sexual orientation or expression, and/or gender identity. At MG we envision a world where everyone including girls, women, LGBTQIA+, boys, and men can be their full selves and pursue equitable well-being. To advance this vision, our social and behavior change (SBC) methodology:

- Utilizes qualitative, and quantitative research methodologies that include digital tools such as social listening, to understand the context using an intersectional lens, identify gender norms that shape roles and stereotypes, and impact what is perceived as acceptable or not in a specific cultural, political, and socioeconomic context.
- Identifies and maps diverse individuals and groups impacted by the issues, and interested parties whose power and alignment can help advance change, or create resistance and backlash.
- Engages local communities, expertise and knowledge, and develops partnerships to dismantle the barriers they face, and harness their power to drive locally-led solutions.
- Co-designs interventions that center those who are most impacted by the issues, are culturally relevant and socially engaging, and advance sustainable change.
- Co-creates indicators that center what communities mostly care about focusing on systemic change.

In our gender equality work, we seek out and collaborate with local NGOs, grassroots organizations, feminist and women rights movements, LGBTQIA+ movements, civil society organizations (CSOs), foundations, and international development agencies. In partnership with local teams, we have effectively co-created strategies that advance gender equality and counter gender-based violence. This approach empowers our partners to take ownership of the work we co-create together and carry it forward. Our experiences include: advancing women's rights in Tunisia; countering impunity and corruption in Mexico; advancing gender equity and addressing gender violence in Mexico and El Salvador; bolstering support to confront gross human rights violations across a number of regions; and shifting poor health expectations in the U.S. to a more proactive community of health framework.

### About Metropolitan Group/Impacto Social Metropolitan Group

[Metropolitan Group \(MG\)](#) is a global small business and a [Certified B Corp](#) that specializes in narrative change and strategic communication to create lasting and sustainable impact for people and communities. At MG, we design and implement social and behavior change (SBC) initiatives, work to shift narratives, build capacity of local partners, and conduct and disseminate actionable research. Since 1989, we've worked to directly impact social change in two core ways: 1) by creating strategic campaigns and initiatives that change enabling environments—including attitudes, behaviors, practices, policies, and mindsets/expectations and 2) by building the capacity and resilience of institutions and organizations that drive social change. MG and its Mexico City-based sister company, [Impacto Social Metropolitan Group \(ISMG\)](#), work with national, state, and local governments, foundations, NGOs, and private sector partners.

We have worked in more than 30 countries on five continents, including Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Our in-house staff in Mexico and the U.S. includes multiple bilingual speakers (English and Spanish), as well as staff who are professionally proficient in French, Portuguese, and Swahili.

MG began working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2021 as a subcontractor to multiple prime contractors for activities related to SBC, strategic communication, and narrative and message creation, as well as direct technical assistance and capacity building for partners across multiple regions. Throughout our activities, we prioritize our commitment to localization as a critical force for creating resilient change.

**We offer a range of services within three integrated practices:**

- **Strategic Communication and SBC**—SBC strategy development and implementation; narrative and strategic messaging design and testing; stakeholder mapping and engagement; formative research; audience research; policy and public sector transformation initiatives, social marketing campaigns; branding, digital strategy, and human-centered design; SBC training and technical assistance
- **Intercultural Engagement and Social Inclusion**—creation of strategies and tools designed with cultural context, language nuance, and appropriate literacy levels; stakeholder assessments; equity, diversity, and inclusion-facilitated training; co-creation and nontraditional/locally centered evaluation and assessments
- **Organizational Strategy and Innovation**—change management; strategic planning; capacity building; training; leadership development; and technical assistance

*Local capacity building is integrated across all three of our practice areas to ensure increased resiliency of the changes achieved, increased opportunity for scaling and replication, and supported localization.*

### SBC Experience and Methodologies

MG/ISMG is an innovator in designing and piloting SBC activities and social and behavior change communication (SBCC) related to democracy, human rights, and gender equality, as well as in sustainable development/climate mitigation and global health. SBC methodologies and tools are critical in reshaping the enabling environments that can advance policy, institutional, cultural, and individual changes. MG specializes in SBC at the structural levels and integrates individual behavior change to advancing systemic change. Our approach includes developing, testing, and applying narratives and messaging that aligns with people’s closely held values to create long-term shifts in mindsets and social norms. Our expertise in [public will building](#) and [narrative change](#) methodologies and locally driven approach are highly effective in shifting deeply entrenched behaviors that are related to social norms, beliefs, and values. MG is deeply versed in all stages of SBC research, analysis, assessment, design, iterative implementation, and learning capture and dissemination.

### Client Examples

#### Advancing Women’s Rights in Tunisia

MG/ISMG launched the [Advancing the Rights of Women Agriculture Workers](#) project, which applied SBC strategies to shift narratives that impact the rights of women workers. We partnered with two respected women’s organizations in the interior regions of Tunisia, which co-led this project. Working together in Arabic, French, and English, we identified that the dominant narrative around Tunisian women agriculture workers frames them as victims only, ignoring their incredible strength and skills and their enormous contributions to society. With evidence and research, we then developed and tested a new narrative and messaging, which was applied through the “[Felha](#)” campaign. The campaign aims to shift core narratives and, ultimately, influence social norms and specific practices and policies that would improve fair treatment and offer better protection for women who work in agriculture. The narrative framework implemented through the pilot campaign gained enormous traction among women agriculture workers and key stakeholders, including governors; local authorities; local and national civil society organizations; and local, national, and international media. Prioritizing localization throughout this activity created full ownership of the narrative by women agriculture workers, their families, and even some male farmers, creating lasting impact for this community. This was a project under the Innovation Design Services Contract managed by Vistant



## Ford Foundation

ISMG partnered with CSOs, policymakers, and influencers in Mexico to create and apply a groundbreaking SBC initiative focused on addressing severe human rights abuses, including forced disappearances, femicide, murder of journalists, and state-sanctioned torture. ISMG designed a new metanarrative that activates core values and engages citizens as part of an effort to build a more trusted justice system. The initiative has engaged millions and mobilized thousands of people through activities that counter disinformation and corruption and promote justice, the rule of law and civil society activism. Through this project, ISMG has provided direct technical assistance to some of the most renowned feminist CSOs to help them advance women's access to rights in the criminal justice system as well as judiciary power, promote policy changes related to women's and girl's reproductive rights, and improve working conditions for women, seasonal workers, and their children.

## Equis Justicia

In Mexico, violence against cis and trans women is rising and hate speech continues to weaken collective action toward gender equality. With [Equis Justicia](#) and [la Red Nacional de Juventudes Trans](#), ISMG created an intersectional feminist campaign called "[Sin Miedo A Ser](#)" and elevated the voices of those experiencing social and institutional discrimination. In partnership with 22 organizations, we told diverse stories that convey hope, strength and complexity with a call for everyone to join together, overcome fear and realize a world of true gender equality.

## Reproductive Human Rights in El Salvador

MG/ISMG worked on a collaborative campaign, "[Nos faltan Las 17](#)", to free women who have been imprisoned in El Salvador as a result of suffering obstetric emergencies. El Salvador is one of the three countries in Latin America with a total ban on abortion, which includes health emergencies like those that lead to stillbirth, spontaneous abortion, and other obstetric emergencies. This law disproportionately impacts low wealth and Indigenous women living in rural areas with no access to health care. MG/ISMG developed the strategy for the campaign in partnership with an American human rights organization, a talent agency, design agency and other Salvadoran CSOs.

## Promoting Midwifery in Mexico

MG/ISMG partnered with a coalition of state and federal agencies, foundations and nonprofit organizations in Mexico to advance a new narrative on the importance of integrating professional midwives into public clinics and hospitals. Our objective was to eliminate the stigma and misinformation surrounding midwifery while increasing funding for and access to quality reproductive services and prenatal care for women in the public health system. The result was a national media campaign that created a shared narrative and communication tools ([from message guides to videos](#)) around the importance of midwives in Mexico's health care system.

## Key Team



### **Maria Elena Campisteguy—intercultural engagement lead: senior executive vice president, principal, MG/ISMG**

For more than 30 years, Maria Elena has been dedicated to creating campaigns, strategies, and programs that advance social justice and build intercultural understanding. She has worked with public agencies, foundations, universities, and nonprofit organizations in the United States, Mexico, and Latin America to attract and authentically embrace new stakeholders; advance policy, systems, and behavior change; expand programmatic and service reach; and build more inclusive and equitable workplace cultures. Clients include NASA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Ford Foundation.





**Kristin Gimbel—policy and public affairs lead: executive vice president, MG**

Kristin has spent more than 20 years advancing just systems and inclusive policies through strategic communication, advocacy and public will building that centers the voices, experiences and wisdom of communities regularly excluded from decision-making tables. Kristin is a former policymaker and senior public affairs official and spent the formative years of her career working for human service organizations at the intersection of education, health, housing and social justice. Throughout her career she has been guided by an equity lens that centers the humanity, dignity, strengths and capacity for contribution that each individual and community brings.



**Ximena Canseco Michel—gender narrative expert: Director, ISMG**

Ximena is a political scientist deeply committed to gender equality, social justice, and education. With over a decade of experience in academia and activism, she has worked at the intersection of gender and social justice in México, India, U.S., and Latin America. Her expertise includes human rights—particularly addressing gender-based violence and grave human rights violations—educational and public policy, prison systems, and strategic communication. Ximena is passionate about dismantling systemic inequalities and advancing the mechanisms that empower women and marginalized communities to shape their realities and improve their quality of life.



**Fernanda Salazar Mejía—gender equality and social inclusion expert: of counsel, MG/ISMG**

Fernanda has 15+ years of experience working at the intersections of policy, advocacy, strategic communications, and social and behavior change strategies including narrative change. At MG/ISMG she led human rights campaigns with a gender focus, provided technical assistance to feminist movements and CSOs, and designed strategies to improve conditions for female seasonal workers. She has worked for UN Women as a technical consultant on political participation and gender-based political violence. Under the #HeForShe campaign umbrella she authored [this report](#) on women’s political participation. Fernanda developed course content and has taught at the university level issues such as on gender mainstreaming in the justice system and in the legislation process. She regularly publishes articles addressing women’s rights and gender justice for online publications.

MG/ISMG has a [full team of 50-plus](#) experts and practitioners that includes communication and policy specialists; researchers; narrative change and SBC experts; gender equity and inclusion leaders; multilingual facilitators; innovators in visual communication; design and digital strategists, and others.

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**Contract Vehicles**

We hold the General Services Administration (GSA) Professional Services Schedule, and are a leading partner with The Cloudburst Group under USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Bureau’s Learning, Evaluation, and Research III Task Order. We are a resource partner on USAID’s Digital APEX mechanism managed by Vistant. We have joined teams on Analytical Services IV for LACLEARN and SEGA tasking, and we are a subcontractor to DAI for Mexico’s ConJusticia contract.

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**Schedules**

541-2: Public Relations Services  
541-4a: Market Research and Analysis  
874-1: Integrated Consulting Services

**Contact**

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GS-07F-0224X

**NAICS Codes**

541430, 541611, 541613, 541618,  
541720, 541810, 541820, 541830,  
541840, 541890, 541910, 541990

**Procurement Designation**  
Small Business

