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Concern's  
Knowledge  
Quarterly  
Review

# KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

SPECIAL ISSUE: GENDER EQUALITY



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Contact the editorial team on email: [knowledgematters@concern.net](mailto:knowledgematters@concern.net)**

**The views expressed are the author's and do not necessarily coincide with those of Concern Worldwide or any of its partners.**

**Cover Image:** From left: William Zoe, Martha Waaloe, community change makers and Harry Johnson, Concern staff member, participate in an engaging men and women workshop on gender equality/GBV, Grand Bassa County, Liberia. April 2013. Photo by Bernadette Crawford, 2013.

For more on the workshop, see the article by Bernadette Crawford on page six.

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## From the Issue Editor

Welcome to this special thematic issue of Knowledge Matters. To coincide with International Women's Day this issue of the publication focuses on gender equality. The issue provides readers with a snapshot of Concern's work in the area of gender equality.

The article by Samuel Fox highlights some of the priorities that will be in the new equality strategy. As the article notes, gender equality will be at the core of the new strategy.

In keeping with the spirit of organizational learning, the various contributors to this issue highlight both the successes and challenges that have accompanied the organization's gender equality work. For example, the article by Fiona McLysaght illustrates the learning journey undertaken by the team in Afghanistan. Isla Gilmore's piece shows how barrier analysis can be a useful tool in designing programmes for behavior change on gender equality.

The piece on the equality scale shows how Concern is approaching measuring and monitoring attitudes and practices to gender equality. Whilst the article from Zimbabwe explains how women's empowerment is measured

Finally, I encourage you to share Knowledge Matters with partners.

**Bernadette Crawford**

# FOREWORD

By  
**Dominic  
MacSorley**

The words of a Chinese proverb “Women hold up half the sky” conjures up a compelling image of women’s resilience and strength in holding their lives together and providing a future for their families.

The sky, however, is heavy in a world where girls are not given the opportunity of an education; where women are marginalised; where they perform two thirds of the world’s work but only earn one tenth of the income and where they own less than one per cent of the world’s productive resources. Despite the growing body of research showing clearly that enhancing women’s economic options boosts national economies; women lag far behind men, in access to land, credit, and decent jobs. The United Nations Emergency Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that 70 per cent of the one billion people living in extreme poverty are women and girls, largely because of the gender inequality that they experience in their lives.

The 8<sup>th</sup> of March each year is International Women’s Day, and it’s an important time for us reflect on the daily lives and struggles of those women and girls whose lives are steeped in poverty, who are marginalised, excluded and discriminated against. With the impact of the economic crisis, increasing conflicts and climate change, women are forced to manage an ever shrinking household income. As a result many are forced to seek out risky and potentially life threatening livelihoods.

International Women’s Day is an opportunity for us all to commemorate the bravery of women in confronting injustice across the globe and to reflect on the important gains that have been made in addressing gender inequality. However that is not enough. We also must talk about the challenges that remain and they are huge, how we will overcome them, what solutions there are, and what needs to be done at the programme and policy level to being a real and lasting change.

For despite the heightened international awareness of gender issues and the intensive efforts by agencies and organisations like Concern and its numerous inspiring stories of success, the picture is still disheartening. The disturbing reality today is that no country has yet managed to eliminate the gender gap. So much still needs to be done to ensure that women have access to and control over resources and access to services, that women and girls can live without fear of violence and abuse; and that they can reach a level of equal participation with men in economic decision making. Gender inequality is not inevitable and change is possible but we need to ensure internationally that continued resources, interventions and lobbying are exerted for this change to materialise

Realising that women and girls are the solution to global poverty is a powerful insight the wider world is yet to awaken to. In the words of former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, “There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women”. Gender equality is good for everyone, both male and female and it starts at a young age through ensuring that girls get an education.

Thus, central to our work is our belief that we cannot address extreme poverty without addressing inequality, and fundamental to our work on addressing inequality is addressing gender inequality. Concern is committed to challenging the structures which maintain inequality within societies, in order to create a world where no-one lives in poverty, fear or oppression.

This special issue of Knowledge Matters is a great opportunity to highlight the diverse array of work that we are doing in seeking to address gender inequality.

The articles highlight how we are addressing issues of gender inequality across a number of interventions such as ‘Realigning Agriculture to Integrate Nutrition’ in Zambia, to our new emerging work on ‘Engaging Men’ on gender equality in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This work is particularly exciting as it recognises that we can’t focus and work solely with women and girls to achieve gender equality. Men and boys are the other side of the gender equation and they are critical as allies if change is to take place.

**I hope you enjoy reading the articles and that they inspire us to do more. Finally, I want to thank all those who have made the current issue of Knowledge Matters a reality. ■**



**Central to our work is our belief that we cannot address extreme poverty without addressing inequality, and fundamental to our work on addressing inequality is addressing gender inequality**

# Reflecting on Liberia's journey of transformation

By  
Bernadette  
Crawford

## Introduction

In this article I seek to outline the journey of transformation which the Liberia country programme has been on for the last two years. I start the article by providing a brief overview of the Liberian context before going on to talk about the contextual analysis and the subsequent exciting work that has followed, on engaging men and women on gender equality/GBV

### Overview of the Liberian context

Having achieved middle income status in the 1970s, Liberia is now one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the 2013 Human Development Report, Liberia ranks 174 out of 185 countries. It is seen as a low human development country when measured against such indicators as life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, gross national income per capita, etc. This is largely as a result of the 14 years of civil conflict (1989-2003) during which over 250,000 people lost their lives, and almost half of the country's population was displaced.

Women and girls were particularly vulnerable during the armed conflict when rape was used by fighting forces to terrorize, destroy and humiliate communities. According to a United Nations World Health Organisation Report, entitled, 'Sexual Gender-Based Violence and Health Facility Needs Assessment', almost 80 percent of women suffered physical or sexual violence, three out of four were sexually violated or raped, and large numbers of women were abducted and turned into sex slaves or gang raped. This legacy of violence has persisted post war and continues to contribute to a culture of impunity and fear.

### Contextual Analysis

In 2012, Concern Liberia carried out a contextual analysis in Grand Bassa and Lofa counties, as the initial step in the design of its new integrated Irish Aid Programme. Through the process of reviewing secondary data, community consultation through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the issue of gender inequality, the low status of women and girls, high prevalence of violence and male dominance over women emerged as critical issues.



## The training at times generated quite heated debate

A key recommendation from the contextual analysis was to begin a process of understanding the issues of masculinities within the Liberian context. There was a manifest need for Concern to understand the underlying factors fuelling high levels of violence and understand the pressures that men and boys face to behave and perform and 'Be a Man'. Understanding that men and boys are immersed in gender norms, and social expectations, be they positive or negative, are a key aspect of bringing about social change.

### Changing mind sets

Steven Botkin, the Director of Men's Resources International was contracted in April 2013 to support the process of understanding the links between masculine norms and both positive and negative behaviours. A two day training workshop was organised for programme managers and field staff. The training was grounded in the principle that men are not born violent, but rather it is a learned behaviour that society pressurises men to take on. Staff were brought through sessions on:

- personal reflections about men, gender and masculinity;
- listening skills;
- cross gender dialogues – whereby space is given for women to talk about what they want from men and equally space for men to talk about what they want from women;
- understanding the cycle of violence – how it is fuelled by processes of socialisation;
- strategies and skills to break the cycle of violence
- becoming a male ally for women – to join together as equal partners 'side by side'

The training at times generated quite heated debate. Some men felt challenged and uneasy about thinking about alternative masculinities and ways of behaving in society. Through the facilitated activities men opened up and discussed how stressful and tiring it is to always have to behave in a way that reflects being 'tough and strong' where you are not permitted to cry, how it's not a nice feeling for your children or wife to be afraid of you when you come home. At the end of the training, staff could see how they could bring about positive behavior change in their own lives.

As the workshop concluded, plans were set in motion in terms of how to move forward and incorporate the new approach within the integrated programme. It was decided that facilitated discussions on the issues of engaging men and women on gender equality could be incorporated



Richard B. Davis and Veronica Wrokpoh from the Grand Bassa programme lead a session at the Change Makers training workshop. Photo by Bernadette Crawford, 2013.

into existing programme activities, such as the farmer field schools, parent teachers associations or community savings and loans groups. To do this well, we needed another phase of training for the community development officers. To consolidate the gains made, an Equality Officer was recruited.

## Creating change makers

In preparation for the next phase of training, ie the training of community development officers, Steven Botkin, the desk officer, Roisin Gallagher and I developed the training manual that would guide the training and the approach within communities. In September 2013, Steven returned to Liberia to co-facilitate the training with the Equality Officer, Edwin Morlu. After the five day training, staff skills had reached such a level that they travelled to Grand Bassa county, and led sessions with Concern staff and led a two day training with 'Change Makers' who had been identified from target communities.

The energy and vision for change amongst staff was overwhelming. Many of the staff had made concerted changes in their own lives since the first training in April, such as including members of their family in decision making, sharing issues of financial decisions with their wives, taking more responsibility for household chores and child care. Hearing about the changes they had made in such a short period should inspire us all that change is possible in a relatively short period of time.

To help ensure that the work undertaken is effectively monitored and evaluated, the team is making use of the new Concern equality scale. The scale will be used to gather baseline data in relation to the attitudes and practices that currently exist amongst programme participants. The scale is being complemented with a small number of Focus Group Discussions as well as being utilised for activity monitoring. For more on the equality scale, see the article on page 24.

## Next Steps

This year will see field staff begin the next phase of the journey of facilitating change sessions with community members. There is great energy and excitement about what the process can bring to people's lives. Already the initiative has inspired changes within the lives of our own staff. To hear from the team repeatedly the realisation that the 'Change has to start with us', is a message that needs to be reiterated and spread across the organisation. When the realisation comes from within, this brings so much power and positive energy that change is possible.

To read the visit reports and access the training manual check out the Equality Intranet page (<http://intranet/People/SAL/PALU/approaches/Equality/default.aspx>). ■

# Reflecting on developing Concern's new Equality Strategy

By  
Samuel Fox

Concern Worldwide's work on addressing inequality is guided by four key Concern documents: the Policy Statement (2005), the current organisational Strategic Plan (2011-2015), the Equality Policy (2005) and 'How Concern Understands Extreme Poverty' (2010). Concern believes that the success of our work and the reduction of extreme poverty depend on our ability to reduce inequality, particularly gender inequality. This very clear message guides the new equality strategy.

Concern's previous equality strategy ran from 2008 to 2010. It was reviewed in part during an equality audit in February 2011. One key recommendation to emerge from the audit was the need to develop an action plan. However, given the absence of a strategy, priority was placed on developing this. As someone who was involved in facilitating the development of the strategy, I seek in this article, to reflect on that process.



**The biggest shift seen in this strategy is the clear focus on addressing gender inequality in poor and vulnerable contexts**

## Overview of process

An extensive document review was the starting point in the process, focusing on key internal as well as selected external documentation. Literature review summaries were used in developing questions to be explored and fed into a consultative process, which was held from September 2012 to April 2013, both internally (home and overseas staff) and with a small number of external organisations. A series of facilitated discussions were conducted focusing on equality more broadly. The discussions also looked at a number of other equality themes: including gender based violence (GBV), engaging men and boys and addressing inequality in emergencies. I found the discussions to be varied, rich and insightful.

A series of questions were presented for consideration during the consultations and literature review exercise. The questions were clustered around a series of themes/topics. A sample of these questions are captured below.

<b>THEMES/TOPICS</b>	<b>Guiding questions</b>
<b>Engaging men and boys</b>	<p>Should the new equality strategy have a specific focus on engaging men and boys in addressing gender inequality in all our programmes?</p> <hr/> <p>What would be the added value of this focus?</p>
<b>Gender Based violence</b>	<p>Do we want to have a vision for the strategy where Concern's programmes – Health, HIV and AIDS, Education and Food, Income and Markets - will systematically address the issue of gender based violence?</p> <hr/> <p>Can programmes take into account the endemic nature of GBV, the effects that GBV have on deepening poverty and a recognition that gender inequality must be addressed to prevent GBV?</p> <hr/> <p>What kinds of prevention and response approaches should Concern engage with?</p>
<b>Addressing equality in emergency contexts</b>	<p>How do we ensure that inequality is addressed and factored into programme design in emergencies?</p> <hr/> <p>Do we need to strengthen Concern's equality/ gender approach in emergencies in order to ensure a positive impact on women and men, boys and girls affected by emergencies?</p>

### **Emerging priorities**

The consultative process led to a number of key priorities being identified. These included the importance of: leadership and commitment, systems, policies and strategies that promote gender equality and non-discrimination and programmes which effectively address gender inequality.

### **What the strategy promises?**

The raison d'être of the new equality strategy will be about providing guidance on how to implement the Equality Policy. By adopting this approach, I can see the strategy driving change on equality and more specifically on gender equality.

The strategy also outlines key focus areas for the next five years for addressing inequality in terms of programme development, implementation and monitoring, as well as guiding our internal mechanisms, policies, practices and organisational culture. I believe that it is through focusing on both programmes and organisational procedures that Concern can promote a culture of equality that values diversity, respects all staff, and challenges any forms or attitudes of oppression and discrimination.

**Figure 1: Strategic Themes of the Equality Strategy**



In my opinion the biggest shift seen in this strategy is the clear focus on addressing gender inequality in poor and vulnerable contexts. The strategy also highlights the importance of addressing inequalities in both development and emergency contexts. However, for this new vision to succeed, Concern must ensure organisational capacity in this area. This will allow for the strategy to be translated into practice. The strategy is currently awaiting approval and will be circulated more widely once approved. For any further information on the process of developing the strategy or related discussion papers please contact [bernadette.crawford@concern.net](mailto:bernadette.crawford@concern.net) or [samuel.fox@concern.net](mailto:samuel.fox@concern.net) ■

# Building Resilient Communities— Supporting Women as Agents of Change in Bangladesh

By  
Mahmudun  
Nabi Khan &  
Saroj Dash

Concern Worldwide is currently implementing a European Union funded multi-country programme covering India and Bangladesh. The programme is called 'Increasing Resilience and Reducing Risk of Coastal Communities to Climate Change and Natural Hazards in the Bay of Bengal'. For those familiar with the programme it is better known as 'Paribartan'. Paribartan seeks to build the resilience of communities to prepare and adapt to the effects of climate change.

In this short article, we share some of the experiences that we have had in Bangladesh in building communities that are resilient to climate change. Given the theme of this issue of Knowledge Matters, we have highlighted the role that gender equality initiatives have played. Historically, vulnerable groups such as women tend to suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change. For more on this see the article by Bernadette Crawford and Dom Hunt entitled 'Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction' in issue six of Knowledge Matters.

The overall objective of 'Paribartan' is to contribute towards poverty alleviation amongst poor communities in the coastal areas of the Bay of Bengal, through reducing their risk to the impacts of hazards and climate change. In order to achieve this, the programme has targeted a number of result areas. Foremost amongst these, involves increasing the capacity of target communities to respond to and recover from the impact of hazards through a number of preparedness measures.

One of the preparedness measures involved completing a risk and vulnerability assessment.

A key finding which emerged from the assessment was that women are disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of climate change. As a result of this, Concern in collaboration



Khey woen, a women leader shares the findings of the risk and vulnerability assessment with members of the community. Photo by Mahmudun Nabi Khan, 2012.

with its local partner, Shushilan facilitated the development of Community Based Action Plans as well as the formation of village volunteer groups. In a bid to ensure gender equality an equal ratio of men and women were included in the volunteer groups.



## Historically, vulnerable groups such as women tend to suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change

In May 2013 cyclone Mahasen hit the Bay of Bengal. For the first time, vulnerable members of the community, such as women and children did not lose their lives due to a climatic event. No doubt part of the reason for this success was the work done by the village volunteer groups in activating the early warning systems. The fact that women were part of the village volunteer groups ensured that the needs of female community members were adequately taken into account in dissemination of the early warning messages and facilitating timely evacuation to cyclone shelters.

Furthermore, the programme has also targeted women leaders as agents of change when it comes to building resilient communities. To this end, Khadija Begum, a women leader was selected as one of the first programme participants to pilot a climate smart composite model. The model is a combination of a storm resilient house, water harvesting and storage system and saline resistant vegetable cultivation. The model has shown promising results in a number of areas, such as food and nutrition security, water crisis management, and reducing vulnerabilities. The success of the model helped improve the livelihoods base of Khadija's family. She has also got community recognition as someone who is prepared to be an agent for change.



Khadija Begum, standing beside her home. Photo by Mahmudun Nabi Khan, 2013.

As noted at the start of this article, evaluative evidence has indicated that women tend to suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change. However, as 'Paribartan' is showing, this does not need to be the norm. One way of overcoming the challenges is by empowering women through their active participation in resilience-related initiatives. In fact, the success of the village volunteer groups has led to the female members, forming a 'Women Leaders Forum'. Through this forum women, such as Khadija are able to share their experiences with regard to climate change both at local and national level. This shows the positive role that women can play in building resilient communities. If you are interested in finding more about the programme, a mid-term review of the programme is now available. ■

# Conservation Agriculture in Malawi: the impact on women

By  
Gwyneth  
Cotes

## Introduction

In 2011 under a grant from Accenture Ireland, Concern Worldwide started the implementation of a Conservation Agriculture (CA) project. The concept of Conservation Agriculture is based on three key principles. These principles are: minimal soil disturbance, planting in permanent planting basins rather than ploughed ridges; maximising soil cover through mulching; and rotating the main staple food with a legume and a third crop (usually groundnuts or soya in Malawi). Together, these techniques reduce the amount of time needed to farm, prevent soil erosion, retain soil moisture to prevent against the effects of drought, and reduce nutrient loss from the soil.

## Project overview

Agriculture in Malawi, as in most of the world, has strong gender dimensions. Women's roles in agriculture tend to be very specific, with women responsible for field preparation, planting, and weeding. Women are also typically the primary caregivers for children, and responsible for managing the household as well, leaving less time for farming.

A report from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), entitled, 'Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap', stresses the need for labour-saving and higher-productivity approaches to farming to improve women's participation in agriculture. Increasing female farmers' access to productive resources and better approaches could increase yields by 20-30 percent.

In 2012, Concern partnered with Trinity College Dublin in Ireland, to investigate how participation in Concern's Conservation Agriculture programme affected women's time, labour, agricultural production, food security, and decision-making abilities.



The study compared women who had been supported to start using Conservation Agriculture techniques with men CA farmers, as well as with female conventional farmers. The study entitled, 'The Impact of Concern's Approach to Conservation Agriculture on Women' can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base.

### **Project results**

The primary finding from the study was that Conservation Agriculture significantly reduced the amount of time women spent in farming activities. On average, women who use CA techniques spent about 34 fewer days per year in agriculture-related activities. In particular, women were able to reduce the time they spent clearing and preparing fields, and weeding.



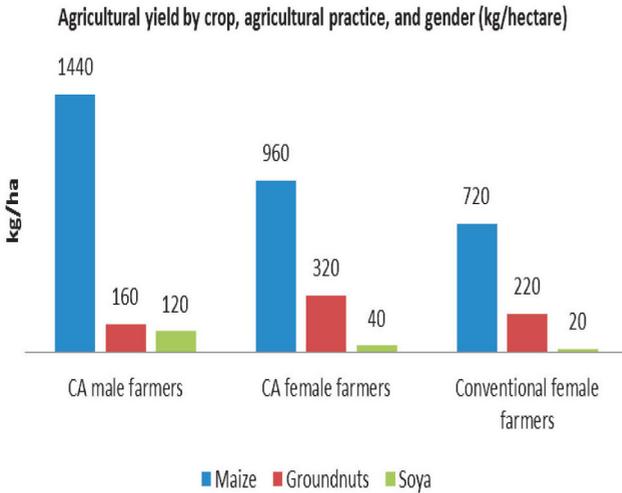
**The study found that women who practiced Conservation Agriculture had higher agricultural yields than those who practiced traditional agriculture**

Although women were initially apprehensive about adopting many of the CA techniques, fearing lower yields and more weeds, the study found that women were very positive about the results of CA, explaining that weeding was less intensive due to increased soil cover.

The study found that women who practise Conservation Agriculture had higher agricultural yields than those who practise traditional agriculture. However, male CA farmers harvested 50 percent more per hectare than female CA farmers. The reasons for higher yields among men were not clear, but could be related to differences in access to agricultural inputs or levels of support from agricultural extension workers. Interestingly, women who received support from female Lead Farmers recorded higher yields than those who were supported by male Lead Farmers, indicating a need for more female agricultural extension workers and Lead Farmers to support women farmers, or to make male extension farmers more sensitive to the specific needs of female farmers.

Women engaged in Conservation Agriculture had higher levels of decision-making power at the household level, and women reported increased involvement in decision-making around the selection of crops to be planted and other farm-related decisions. Women who participated in Concern's CA project also reported experiencing greater self-confidence and were more likely to hold leadership positions in their communities.

Figure 1: Agricultural yield by crop, agricultural practice, and gender (kg/hectare)



The results must be interpreted carefully though, as it is possible that women who have greater independence, confidence, and decision-making power in the home were more likely to adopt CA techniques. However, the study showed some gains in women's positions, with 40 percent of women in the study saying that they felt their opinion was worth more since they began participating in Concern's Conservation Agriculture programme.



**The results of the study show that Conservation Agriculture has clear benefits for women, particularly in terms of increased time, reduced labour, and increased agricultural production**

### Conclusion

The results of the study show that Conservation Agriculture has clear benefits for women, particularly in terms of increased time, reduced labour, and increased agricultural production. There may also be additional benefits in terms of improving decision-making abilities and women's empowerment. As a labour-saving approach, Conservation Agriculture is an important tool for increasing women's participation in agricultural production and improving food security. ■

# Gender Analysis

By  
**Bernadette  
Crawford**

Gender analysis refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access and control of resources. As well as their roles and responsibilities, their different but equally important experiences, priorities and capacities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.

When we talk of gender, we are referring to the socially constructed, rather than the biological characteristics that have come to define male and female ways of being and behaviours within specific cultural contexts. Gender varies across cultures, age, class, ethnicity, income, education, and time; thus, it is important that a gender analysis does not treat women or men as a homogeneous group and it is important to disaggregate data as much as possible. For example the experiences of younger women are likely to be different for older women in a context and a gender analysis should reflect these differences, as it will affect your programme design.



**When we talk of gender, we are referring to the socially constructed, rather than the biological characteristics that have come to define male and female ways of being and behaviours within specific cultural contexts**

**Table 1: Differences between practical and strategic needs**

<b>Practical Needs</b>	<b>Strategic Needs</b>
What people need in order to carry out their traditional gender roles. Are easy to identify by women and men based on their division of labour. Tend to be quite visible and tangible.	What women and men need in order to equalise their position or status in society. The basis of the disadvantage often more difficult for people to identify. Tend to be less visible – relating to issues of power..
Tend to be immediate, short term.	Tend to be long term.
Examples such as basic services such as water, fuel, shelter and income.	Examples such as increasing women’s role in decision making.
Access to health care and education.	Representation in community forums, having a voice.

Addressing issues of gender inequality needs to factor in an understanding of practical and strategic gender needs in a given context. We should be addressing both as they are intrinsically linked and essential if we are to address gender inequality within our programmes.

### **Why is a gender analysis important?**

Given ‘How Concern Understands Extreme Poverty’ and the recognition that Inequality is a key barrier for people to move out of extreme poverty and recognising that gender inequality is one of the most prevailing inequalities in the contexts that we work, it is essential that we understand the reality of women and men’s lives.

### **A gender analysis will help you to:**

- Understand men’s and women’s roles and position in society and to understand who does what and why.
- Understand the power dynamics within the household and the wider community. This analysis of power and gender relations will help you to identify what makes someone vulnerable and explore assumptions about issues such as the distribution of resources and the impact of culture and tradition.
- Understand the context better and the realities of different groups, their different needs, priorities and capacities and why a situation has developed the way it has.
- Understand how men and women may be affected differently by an intervention and to predict how different members of households, groups, and societies will participate in and be affected by planned programmes.

- Identify how your programme could challenge or maintain the existing gender inequalities.
- Identify appropriate entry points and measures of equity that promote equality within a particular context.

## When and who should carry out a gender analysis?

To be most effective, a gender analysis should be part of each step of the development of a programme: from conception and design to implementation and evaluation. It is **essential** that a gender analysis is carried out before a programme has been designed, as part of the contextual analysis and planning phases.

It is important to think about the composition of the team, and ensure that you have women and men on the team. When leading discussions with women in many contexts it is better that you have females on the team, who can facilitate these discussions. In many contexts it may be more appropriate and effective to have separate discussions with men and women rather than mixed groups.

## Key questions for a gender analysis

The information that you need to complete a gender analysis is usually collected using focus group discussions and interviews. The process does not have to be complicated but it is key that the basic questions guide the process, *see table 2*.

## Using the various gender analysis tools

To do a gender analysis a range of methods can be used to collect data; formal interviews, surveys, mapping, household interviews, focus group discussions, informal conversations, transect walks and observations. It should be noted that regardless of the tool or method used, information should account for differences between men and women, boys and girls, and should ask questions for the reasons behind these differences. Since gender relations will change in each context and over time, a gender analysis should be done each time a new programme is developed.

An example might help to illustrate the points raised above. Take the case of primary education, a gender analysis can tell us that a gender gap exists in most countries; that is, there is a gap between girls' and boys' enrolment and retention in school. In the majority of countries where there is a gender gap, the gap works against girls, but in others, it may work against boys.

In India, an average six-year-old girl can expect to spend six years in school, three years less than a boy of the same age. Girls in rural areas are at even greater disadvantage: their risk of dropping out of school is three times that of a boy. In other contexts a boy might be at higher risk of missing out on education. Boys are often pulled out of school and sent to work to boost family income, and thus, their drop-out rate is higher than that of girls.

**Table 2: Key questions to guide gender analysis**

(Adapted from the United Nations Development Programme)

Key questions	Relate to	Sample tools to gather information
Who does what? Why?	Activities	Daily Activity Profile—24 hour clock Moser Framework Task Analysis
How? With what?	Access to resources	Harvard Framework for Gender Analysis
Who owns what?	Ownership of resources	Access and Control Analysis
Who is responsible for what?	Roles and responsibilities	24 hour clock Gender Game
Who is entitled to what?	Rights	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
Who controls what?	Income and spending power	Access and Control Analysis Income and Expenditure Mapping
Who decides what?	Power	FGDs – about institutions – who is represented - who can influence Institutional mapping
Who gets what?	Distribution	Benefits and incentives analysis
Who gains- who loses?	Redistribution	Institutional constraints and opportunities
Why? What is the basis for this situation?	Rules and laws Norms/Customs	Secondary data review of existing laws FGDs with women and men – re customary laws

In their efforts to balance the needs of both girls and boys, organisations are increasingly using gender analysis to investigate the source of the gap and what measures can be adopted to reduce the distortions in the educational system.

### **Where do I get more information on gender analysis?**

There are a plethora of guidance notes on each of the tools captured in table 1. These guidance notes can be found on the equality intranet page. Just look for the ‘Toolkit for Gender Analysis’ and ‘Equality Analysis Resources’ document on the equality intranet page.

If you need more information, please contact me at the following email address, [bernadette.crawford@concern.net](mailto:bernadette.crawford@concern.net). ■

# Strengthening Equality in Concern Pakistan

By  
Emily  
Bradley

Concern Pakistan has made considerable strides in strengthening its work on equality, both in its programmes and within the organisation itself. An equality audit conducted in 2011/12 highlighted programme and organisational strengths as well as gaps and areas for improvement. Specific follow-up action points were identified and consolidated in an Equality Action Plan and the decision was made that a designated Equality Coordinator be appointed to ensure its roll-out.

Concern Pakistan's Equality Resource Team (ERT), comprising country office and provincial equality focal persons, was also re-activated, providing a platform for sharing ideas, resources and collective learning. The ERT was previously established in 2007 but with the onset of a large scale emergency in 2010 had since become inactive. ERT members play a critical role in implementing the Equality Action Plan at field level and actively promoting equality within the organisation.

Strong commitment from Concern Pakistan's senior management has been a key driver in strengthening equality in the work and culture of Concern. Significant investments were made in enhancing staff and local partner organisations' capacity to address inequalities and plans are in place to continue this into 2014. In addition, specific sessions on equality have been included in Concern's Annual Partnership Workshop.



Concern staff participate in equality training, Islamabad, Pakistan. Photo by Emily Bradley, 2012.

For example, in 2013, Rozan, a specialist national NGO in Pakistan working on engaging men and boys to address gender inequalities, facilitated a session with Concern and Partner staff at the workshop.

Major efforts have been made to enhance the “visibility” of equality. For example, a specific session on equality is included in the staff induction schedule and posters summarising Concern’s equality policy have been designed, translated into the local language, Urdu, and are on display in all Concern offices. Updates on equality work are included as a specific item in reporting. This all helps to keep equality on the agenda and ensures that staff are kept updated on related progress.



**In this context, one of the major challenges in Concern Pakistan is the promotion, retention and recruitment of female staff**

Equality has also been integrated into programme logframes and monitoring and evaluation plans, ensuring indicators are equality-sensitive and sex and age-disaggregated data is gathered. In addition, some specific tools were developed to support Concern and partner staff in practically mainstreaming equality in programmes. For example, user-friendly sectoral checklists were developed for mainstreaming Equality, Protection and Accountability at all stages throughout the programme cycle, striving to strengthen programme quality for greater impact.

Concern Pakistan is also working to strengthen how we engage men and boys to address gender inequalities and is engaging with inter/national networks and organisations around this eg the Men Engage Network and Rozan.



**A shift in attitudes from within and greater consciousness of and belief in equality is required to ensure changes are not merely cosmetic, but that they lead to strategic change and are sustained**

In Pakistan, gender underpins and often amplifies other inequalities (eg religion, ethnicity, disability etc.), with women suffering multiple inequalities. In 2012, Pakistan ranked in 134th position out of 135 countries on the Global Gender Gap Report, which was largely attributed to women’s low levels of educational attainment, low participation in the workforce and poor health indicators.

In this context, one of the major challenges in Concern Pakistan is the promotion, retention and recruitment of female staff. The current gender imbalance of the team poses further challenges in engaging with female programme participants and ensuring their participation in programmes.



**Strong commitment from Concern Pakistan's senior management has been a key driver in strengthening equality in the work and culture of Concern.**

Consultations have been held with female staff to understand better the barriers they face and to identify strategies to address these. Similar consultations with men are also planned to explore their perception of the obstacles and to identify practical solutions. At present, opportunities are being provided to senior female staff to participate in senior management team meetings on a rotational basis so as to gain experience participating in senior-level decision-making fora.

However, in contexts like Pakistan, transforming "mindsets" for greater equality is one of the most significant challenges. To do this is to challenge age-old norms, beliefs and ideologies, which are passed from generation to generation and are deeply ingrained in the social fabric and socialization processes.

A shift in attitudes from within and greater consciousness of and belief in equality is required to ensure changes are not merely cosmetic, but that they lead to strategic change and are sustained. With belief, comes commitment, perseverance and action to achieve equality and justice. In the future, Concern will continue to promote the values and benefits of embedding a genuine belief in equality, to influence change beyond Concern and into the foundations of everyday family and community life. ■

# The Equality Scale

By  
**Bernadette  
Crawford**

## Introduction

Concern Worldwide views inequality, and in particular gender inequality, as one of the key barriers and obstacles to people in developing countries moving out of extreme poverty.

Understanding prevailing gender inequitable attitudes and norms amongst both men and women in any given context is essential to inform programme design and to monitor the success of programmes. However being able to show measurable results in this area is a challenge. Since the start of 2013 we have focused on developing an easy to use quantitative monitoring tool to measure attitudes relating to gender equality and suitable for programmes that address economic, political, socio-cultural and affective inequalities. When we set out to develop the tool we were specifically focussed on creating scales that would allow us to:

- Identify changes in attitudes over a short period of time (for instance after training)
- Incorporate within baseline and endline studies in order to monitor for progress in changing attitudes and practices to gender equality
- Utilise the scale in a number of different contexts in a manner that was easy to administer and interpret

## Development of the Equality Scale

The Concern scale was developed based on existing scales, in particular the 'Gender Equitable Men' scale and 'Women's Empowerment Scale'. The rationale for developing a new tool was that other tools were not developed for application within the countries we work. Also, most of them had a narrow focus on a specific aspect of inequality

With the assistance from Promundo, an international NGO with experience in measuring gender equitable attitudes and engaging men on issues of equality, two questionnaires, one for women and one for men, with a series of closed-ended statements were developed, to allow for piloting of the scales. The tool was pilot tested in Bangladesh, Rwanda and Tanzania. The tool was administered to 545 men and women who were randomly selected from our staff and programme participants in the three countries.



**The results of our analysis of the pilot phase show that there were no significant differences between men and women in terms of their attitudes towards issues of gender equality**

### **Findings from the Pilot**

The results of our analysis of the pilot phase show that there were no significant differences between men and women in terms of their attitudes towards issues of gender equality. At first glance this may sound counter-intuitive.

However, it is in line with our expectations. As gender roles are perpetuated over time and space, becoming normalised, that is, they come to be seen as much the natural order as sex differences, and so there is no real reason for men and women to have different responses. We expect that in many contexts we will see this because of the strength of socialisation processes that leave women also accepting the gender norms and roles that prevail.

In a similar vein, very few differences were identified across countries, which suggest that elements of the survey are appropriate for use in a number of contexts – this will continue to be tested in different countries (the tool has subsequently been used in Chad and Liberia, with the results awaiting analysis). However, this along with the findings on the analysis by sex, would seem to suggest that each of the scales can be used more widely.

### **Conclusion**

The equality scale is designed with the intention of allowing programmes to measure the impact of their work in the area of equality. We all know how difficult can be to use tangible results in this area. It is hoped that staff and partners will find the tool useful in measuring the impact that their work is having. The tool will soon be circulated across country programmes. It is important to note that the tool should not be used in isolation. It needs to be complimented with qualitative tools, such as focus group discussions. If you would like to find out about the tool, please drop me a line ([bernadette.crawford@concern.net](mailto:bernadette.crawford@concern.net)) ■

# INNOVATIONS engage men in maternal and child health in India

By  
Ariel  
Higgins-Steele

Gender considerations and dynamics are part of the daily work of Community Health Workers (CHWs), who are increasingly relied upon to mobilise individuals to improve community health. In recent decades, CHWs have been introduced in low-resource countries as a national cadre in the health system or through NGO initiatives.

As trusted members of the community, CHWs know issues their neighbours face and serve as links to health facilities and social services. CHWs also build individual and community capacities around health through activities such as outreach, community education, peer-to-peer counselling, and advocacy.

While CHWs are usually responsible for community health for all individuals in their area, much of the routine work of CHWs is related to maternal and child health. CHWs work to inform women, especially pregnant women, about routine care and danger signs related to their health as well as the health of their children. CHWs sometimes work alongside health workers who come to communities for specific outreach events such as immunisation.

CHWs can also use their knowledge on health topics and role in the community to involve men more actively in maternal and child health. CHWs can be a trusted source for information that could help inform household decision-making. This can involve, for example, talking through a birth preparedness plan for a pregnant woman.

Men's knowledge and support of when a woman or



MHAs attending a refresher training, Odisha, India. Photo by Ariel Higgins-Steele, 2012.

child should seek care at a health facility, as well as appropriate home-based care; is critical for the uptake of healthy behaviours which leads to better health outcomes. CHWs are key agents who can help achieve this as part of their work.



### **These interpersonal ways of sharing information and advice allow men to gain important information that can help them better care for their families**

Recognising the importance of male involvement in maternal and child health and the unique role of CHWs, Concern Worldwide's Innovations for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health initiative developed and implemented a pilot project involving male CHWs to work with female-only CHW cadre in India (locally called Accredited Social Health Activists or ASHAs). The premise of Concern's project is that male CHWs can complement and support the work of ASHAs. Male CHWs, called Male Health Activists or MHAs, share tasks with female health workers, as well as engage with male members of the community in organised small groups and through peer counselling with individuals. These interpersonal ways of sharing information and advice allow men to gain important information that can help them better care for their families.

Importantly, as part of this project, MHAs are encouraged to support the work of ASHAs and other female health workers so as not to create imbalances in their work and to avoid any gender issues arising. Among male community members, MHAs convey messages that are intended to improve gender dynamics at the household level, for example, informing a man that his wife should reduce household chores and intense physical activities during her pregnancy.

An evaluation of this project demonstrates that male CHWs were a welcomed addition to the community health both by female health workers and community members in this location in India. MHAs made contributions along the continuum of care for maternal and child health by providing advice and information to community members, especially men, and linking individuals to facility-based care. (More information on these evaluation results can be found in our evaluation brief and by viewing a short video.)

As CHWs are asked to take on more and more health-related responsibilities, such as non-communicable diseases, it is important to identify ways these health workers can be supported and equipped with strategies that incorporate gender considerations. Some solutions, such as the MHA project, can be found in having additional individuals at the community level with complementary responsibilities aimed at the same goal: improving health outcomes. ■

# Using barrier analysis for gender equality behavior change – Experiences from Tanzania

By  
Isla Gilmore

## Introduction

'I know about rights, but they don't apply in my home. When I come home at night, I leave my rights outside the door.'

'The greatest barriers we have to improving our lives are our husbands.'

The above statements from female beneficiaries of our livelihoods programming in Tanzania have stuck in my mind.

I haven't quoted these statements in support of criticising men, as this is not productive especially as there are strong cultural traditions about gender in countries where we work. What these statements say to me is that we have been missing something important, or rather someone important in our work to promote equality – the man.

We have been mainstreaming equality for many years, but we have not really been working with men to support equality. Our programmes have always aimed at benefitting the family unit by targeting either men or women depending on the focus of the programmes, but has our work really contributed to significant changes in the way men view women and how men and women relate to one another? In some cases yes, but we know we can do so much more.

In 2013, the livelihoods programme decided to do something differently. It aimed both to empower women to own and control assets and engage men and women in improving gender equality. The programme set out to train community mentors in each village to work in pairs (male/female) to hold interactive discussions with men and women in the community. The intention was to introduce concepts of power and gender, and practical ways men and women can make small changes.

## Approach – Barrier Analysis

A Barrier Analysis, which is part of the Designing for Behaviour Change (DBC) approach, was undertaken. It was decided to conduct a barrier analysis on three key behaviours we felt would be most helpful to understand in detail. We looked at women attending and participating in meetings, women making decisions on key household assets and men helping women with workload in the house.

A barrier analysis helps us to identify the significant barriers and enablers (determinants) to a person performing certain behaviours. We define the behaviour as an action, for example 'women aged 18-60 attend and participate (defined as contributing an idea, asking a question) in village meetings (in past 12 months)' and then we ask screening questions to find around 45 'doers' and 45 'non-doers' of the behaviour. The interview continues using questions that cover the 12 determinant areas believed to be influential in behaviour change. The four most influential are:

- 1 and 2: Perceived negative and positive consequences of doing the behaviour – the person believes something good or bad will happen to them;
- 3: Perceived social norms – the belief that certain people around them approve or disapprove of the behaviour (for instance husband, mother, neighbours, etc);
- 4: Perceived self-efficacy/ skills – the perception that the person is knowledgeable/skilled and has the time to perform the behavior.

Other determinants include whether the person thinks the negative effects of not performing the behavior will affect them; and culture and divine will (whether God/religion approves of the behavior).

The questions are almost identical for doers and non-doers, which allows direct comparison of the answers. By comparing the collected data, it is possible to see the differences in the two groups, and analyse why people do or do not exhibit the behaviour. The approach is both qualitative because the interviewees provide free answers, and quantitative because the doers and non doers' answers are grouped into themes and compared statistically for significant differences.



## Using this approach for behaviours relating to equality was not easy because equality is complex

### Challenges

Using this approach for behaviours relating to equality was not easy because equality is complex. For example, we wanted to analyse behaviour concerning the role of married women making decisions in the household. This is a difficult area to pin down into a specific behaviour (an action). We had to define the type of decision (to use, sell, buy), the level of decision making the woman is able to do (makes decision alone without asking her spouse; discusses together with her spouse to make joint decision; or is not able to take part in the decision because her spouse doesn't listen to her opinion), and the asset (cash, livestock, and crops). These formed the screening questions which determined whether the interviewee was categorised as a 'doer' of the behaviour or a 'non-doer'. Normally in a barrier analysis the screening questions tend to be less complex. But for this particular behaviour, the screening questions were complicated with multiple options for answers which was challenging for interviewers to classify the interviewees.

Having so many options also meant that the difference between a doer and non doer was a thin line. For example, some women managed one asset alone or on equal terms with her husband, but not another, and we decided on the criteria that made a doer and non doer (in this case: a doer was a woman who makes decisions either equally or alone on two out of three assets). This felt a little subjective, even though we had also used baseline survey results to gauge the general level of decision making.

Women in one location were more likely to make their own decisions due in part to the arrangements of polygamy (each wife had their own house and piece of land in the Western Tanzania context) or culture in that area (Southern Tanzania traditionally is matrilineal therefore women are more frequently making decisions without men). However, classifying these women 'doers' (and therefore we are really saying they are empowered) was simplistic. The issues that arose in the answers from polygamous married women, for instance, showed great disparity in their ability to make decisions on their husband's assets which were seen as higher value and important to them.

There were challenges in defining the criteria for doers and non-doers, and finding a sufficient number of doers and non-doers in the community which is considered a sufficient sample size for a barrier analysis survey. However, the results were worth the trouble.

## Findings and application to the programme

Taking the above example, many women who did make decisions (doers) believed that equal decision making improves relationships and communication, reduces conflict, and increases the likelihood of people's needs being met in the household. The community mentors can promote these benefits. A main barrier for those not making decisions (non-doers) was the belief that men are the heads and the leaders; therefore it would be hard and unacceptable for women to make decisions. Non-doers also believed that their husbands don't want them involved and they are much more likely to believe that religion and culture disapproves of women's decision making than doers.

It is clear that the programme needs to address the barriers by working with positive role models, facilitating discussions with traditional and religious leaders, and encouraging husbands to involve their wives in decision-making. It would also be important to raise awareness among women to help them change their attitude and behaviour concerning the traditional and faith-based view that decision-making is the domain of men.

**Figure 1: Small positive changes can improve gender relations in the household**



Other interesting findings concerning men were found in the analysis of the behaviour 'Married men (18-50) share workload with women in the household (three chores from list, twice per week)'. In defining this behaviour, we defined the chores, and how many times per week the man must perform the chores for the interviewer to categorise him as a doer or non-doer, depending on the context.

Doers were significantly more likely to know the benefits, described as 'my responsibility as member of the household'; 'improving relationships, intimacy, and communication'; and 'helping to reduce her workload'. Again, it will be easy to promote these views in the discussions. Non doers believed people (such as neighbours and family members) would look down on them, and that their culture doesn't allow them to help in the house. These findings will be used in the programme through community discussions to try to change the minds of those who believe this by using role models and discussion.



**Overall, I would recommend the use of the barrier analysis and the wider DBC framework in our work**

### **Concluding remarks**

Is any of this new? We may have guessed some of these answers, but having reliable evidence on the motivations of men and women and barriers between doers and non doers could really make behaviour change approaches more relevant and strategies more successful in the long term. It was not until attending a training session in Bangladesh on the Designing for Behaviour Change (DBC) framework, which includes the barrier analysis, that I realised the tools we are already using are not necessarily the best. The reason is that there is no statistical comparison between doers and non doers in other research tools, and thus an emphasis on determinants that, when addressed adequately, are likely to really make a change.

While equality is not as straight forward as other areas for barrier analysis, notably health, we believe it really did support the behaviour change project in terms of design and content. We now have six interactive sessions with cartoons on flipcharts for discussions. We just have to wait for results. The first community mentor sessions started in the last quarter of 2013.

Overall, I would recommend the use of the barrier analysis and the wider DBC framework in our work. Much of our work is actually about changing behaviour. Ask anyone in the Strategy, Advocacy and Learning Directorate to give you support for your own programmes in all sectors. ■

**Figure 2: Sharing workloads can improve gender relations in the household'**



# Integrating gender equality into agriculture and nutrition interventions

By  
Marjolein  
Mwanamwenge  
& Bertha  
Bwalya

## Introduction

The Realigning Agriculture to Improve Nutrition (RAIN) project, implemented in Mumbwa district in Zambia's Central Province, integrates agriculture, nutrition and health interventions with a strong focus on gender issues, to improve nutritional status within the critical 1,000 days from conception until a child reaches their second birthday. The project is a research project, implemented in conjunction with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Concern Worldwide Zambia (CWZ).

There is considerable evidence of the importance of women's empowerment in the pathways linking agriculture to nutrition. However, there is currently little evidence on the most effective means of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as they relate to nutrition programming. RAIN is contributing to an understanding of how women's empowerment can improve nutrition outcomes as well as developing the approaches and methodologies to promote gender equality and empowerment within agriculture and nutrition interventions.

### Link between women's empowerment and nutrition

Analysis undertaken by IFPRI of composite indices built up from the RAIN baseline data show that women's empowerment has a positive association with minimum dietary diversity among children aged 6-23 months. This means that women with greater empowerment are able to divert resources so that infants and young children in their households can get a balanced diet.

The results also show that women's empowerment has a positive significant effect on the likelihood of visiting a health clinic in the last six months. Examination of the link between women's empowerment with height-for-age Z-score (HAZ) and stunting among children 24-59 months reveals a similar pattern; women's empowerment is positively associated with HAZ and

negatively associated with stunting rates among the older children. There is a positive link between women's autonomy and a child's nutritional status.



**The project design is based on the hypotheses that the beneficial effects on nutrition from agricultural programming will be better realized when gender is integrated directly into objectives and programming”**

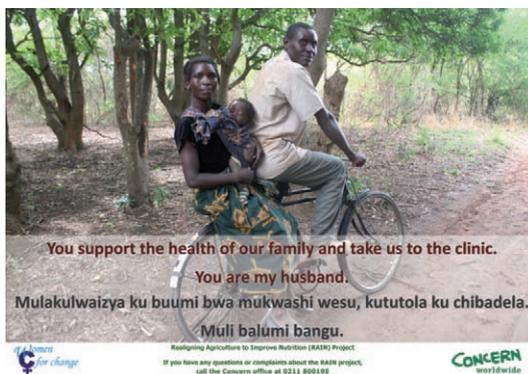
## Pathways for agriculture to impact nutrition

Although improved nutrition may seem like an obvious outcome from agricultural programming, in the past, many agriculture interventions have focused on large-scale market based interventions, rather than household's nutrition. IFPRI researchers have identified seven pathways through which agricultural programming can impact nutritional outcomes. These are:

- 1) Household production and consumption of crops;
- 2) Agricultural income to be spent on food;
- 3) Health care;
- 4) Interactions with the food market, natural resource and health environments;
- 5) A woman's control of income and assets in making household decisions, and thus increased spending and allocation towards nutrition;
- 6) Modulation of her time available for child care and feeding, as well as self-care;
- 7) Her dedication of labour and energy to agricultural tasks.

Although the last three objectives have a clear focus on gender, all pathways have gender dimensions, making gender a key component of linking agriculture and nutrition. The RAIN project aims to affect several of these pathways, and explicitly to improve women's knowledge, skills and decision-making power within the household as well as free up time for care. The project design is based on the hypotheses that the beneficial effects on nutrition from agricultural programming will be better realised when gender is integrated directly into objectives and programming.

**Figure 1: Poster campaign: Promoting positive male behaviours**



## **Integrating gender in nutrition and agriculture programming**

One way to address gender within agriculture programming is to simply target women for programme participation. However, this approach ignores the multiple inequalities women may face. Therefore, the gender component of the RAIN project focuses on both women's empowerment at the individual level and on raising awareness and promoting greater gender equality at the level of the community.

At the start of the project, a gender needs assessment was conducted to look at gendered attitudes and behaviours within communities related to agriculture and nutrition and the related barriers that they present to good nutrition outcomes. The project's gender strategy was based on this assessment. The strategy outlined a number of activities that need to be implemented by the project.



### **There is currently little evidence on the most effective means of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as they relate to nutrition programming**

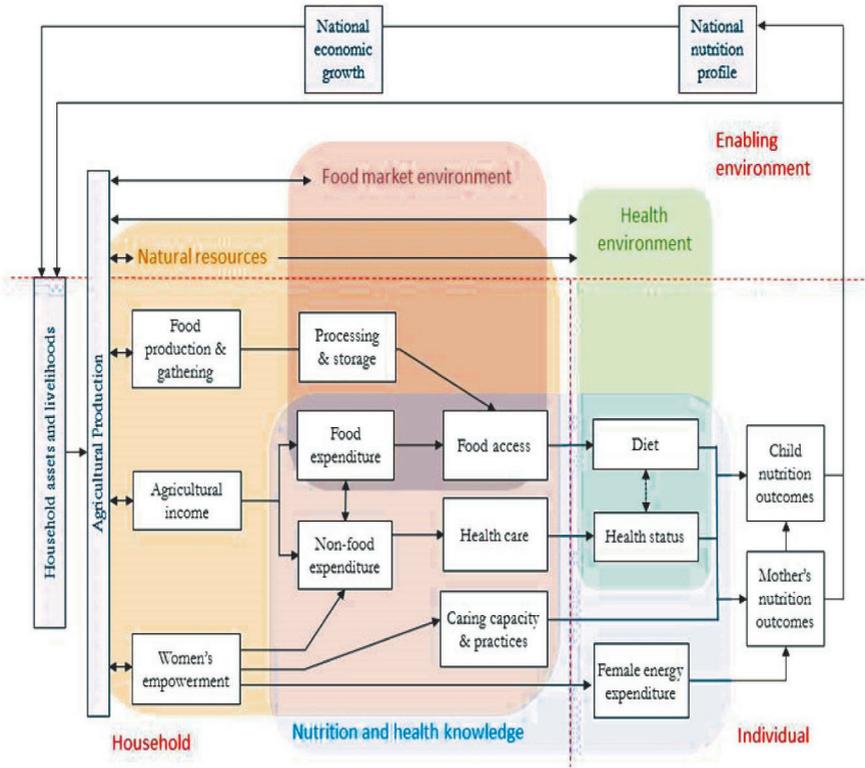
The project focuses on training women group members and their husbands, traditional leaders and communities on the importance of gender equality and women empowerment in improving nutrition. For example, partner and government staff are trained as gender trainers. Women groups and their husbands receive gender training and women group leaders receive training to increase leadership skills and participation of women in community structures.

Posters and brochures are developed with key gender messages and distributed within the communities, see figure 1. Labour saving technologies are introduced, such as the promotion of fuel efficient clay stoves and fast growing fuel trees (glyricidea).

As you may be aware RAIN is one of the research models that Concern is investing significant resources into in order to generate new knowledge, which will hopefully influence policy and practice. Knowledge and learning generated by the project is shared through annual learning events and the production of policy briefs. Please note that these policy briefs can be downloaded from the Knowledge Base.

In 2013, a learning event, chaired by the Minister of Gender, ran on the theme of gender and nutrition with an explicit objective to raise awareness and better integrate women's empowerment into the activities being planned by government and donors to scale up nutrition in Zambia.

Figure 2: Pathways for Agriculture to Impact Nutrition



(Source: Gillespie, Harris, Kadiyala. The Agriculture-Nutrition Disconnect in India – What do we know? IFPRI discussion paper 01187, June 2012.)

A new phase of the project is planned with a stronger focus on understanding the domains of women's empowerment that are most strongly associated with positive nutrition outcomes and the methodologies that can effectively promote change in these areas. The new phase will more directly engage men through community dialogues and peer-to-peer awareness-raising while investing more in the women's groups as a means of mutual support. ■

# Gender Equality in Afghanistan - A challenging journey but moving in the right direction

By  
Fiona  
McLysaght

Afghan women are routinely excluded and marginalized from public life. Women's invisibility is both actively and passively accepted in Afghanistan, especially in the most remote and rural areas. It is a constant challenge for organisations like Concern to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable women are included in the programmes in a meaningful way.

To achieve women's participation it is essential that all members of the team are committed to challenging stereotypes and to pushing out the boundaries in the course of their work. For example, culturally, it is not acceptable for men to visit women's self-help groups. This means that women cannot avail of the same level of training and capacity building as men, and do not have the same access to the resources as men. This makes it critical for Concern to recruit female staff so that we can access the women at the community level. In the Afghanistan context this brings with it many factors to consider, as female staff cannot travel to communities without being accompanied by a male family member. So as part of the recruitment process we make financial provisions for the additional costs involved of male relative 'chaperones'.

A gender budget is set aside for the recruitment and retention of female staff. This budget is used for the associated and additional costs for extra and intensive training and includes additional costs for family travel and often male relatives 'chaperones' have to accompany women to the field in the most remote areas.



**It is encouraging to see the positive impact that the Women's Empowerment programme has had on the lives of thousands of Afghan women**

Women are actively encouraged to apply for advertised positions, with some positions assigned exclusively for female staff. Due to the heightened risks faced by women in Afghanistan, transportation to and from work is provided for female staff members. In addition, the Concern HR manual enshrines proactive and positive benefits for its female staff. There is a strong and dedicated group of Afghan female staff that are blazing a trail by acting as role models for other women thinking of joining Concern.

Concern staff conduct literacy classes for girls and women. Learning to read and write is life-transforming for the women and their families. Many of the girls use the groups' literacy programme as a stepping stone into formal education. Women who become proficient in a livelihood skill are empowered to earn money, which is used for food, household items and for their children's education.



### **“The commitment of the male staff is crucial to women’s engagement with the programme”**

It is encouraging to see the positive impact that the Women’s Empowerment programme has had on the lives of thousands of Afghan women. For example, Aminata a programme participant, weaves baskets in her home and now gets commissions to make baskets and decorations for large wedding parties. Aminata is confident and determined. She now supports her family financially and has facilitated her four sisters to attend school. Aminata has now left the group as she accessed the skills she needs to succeed in the jobs market.

Men at community level are often initially resistant to women’s participation in the programme. In order, to get around this challenge male staff members carry out discussions and negotiations with the elders and with male relatives to negotiate a space for women. The commitment of the male staff is crucial to women’s engagement with the programme.

The situation in Afghanistan is immensely challenging for women and cannot be over stated. Through creative and committed interventions inroads can be made to break down these barriers. It is vital that funding remains strong and flexible for Concern’s gender equality work in Afghanistan over the coming years. Otherwise the gains made will be lost during this tense transition phase in the conflict. ■

# Engaging Men on maternal and child health issues in Sierra Leone

By  
Nancy Seisay,  
Mohamed  
Dauda and  
Peter Bailey

## Introduction

This article discusses the approach taken in Sierra Leone where men are brought together to learn and discuss about the key issues that cause, and the behaviours that may prevent, difficulties during pregnancy, birth and early childhood. These groups are called 'Men's Orientation Groups' (MOG). Sierra Leone has some of the highest maternal and under five mortality rates in the world 217/1000 live births and 857/10,000 live births respectively and therefore contributing to the reduction of these remains one of the focuses for Concern Sierra Leone; MOG are one of the strategies Concern is using to tackle this issue.

## Background

In the second half of 2012, the idea of mobilising and training men's groups in hard-to-reach rural communities in Tonkolili District came as a result of the numerous concerns voiced by women during the pregnant women's club sessions facilitated by the Concern health team. Some of the concerns raised included; violence against women perpetrated by men, lack of financial support from husbands, heavy domestic chores preventing women to seek health care including ante natal care (ANC) visits.

The situation is made worse as a result of the long distance to health facilities and poor roads that cannot be accessed by vehicles. As a result, Concern decided to engage men for their full involvement in maternal and child health promotion at community level as part of the European Union and Irish Aid-funded 'Sustainable Health Actions for People's Empowerment' (SHAPE) project.



**Engagement of men's group in maternal and child health promotion is not known to be adopted by other NGOs in Sierra Leone**

The weekly health sessions aim at increasing the knowledge of men regarding facts about pregnancy, women and men's behaviour during pregnancy, common complaints and danger signs in pregnancy, and immediate actions to be taken. It also deals with a wide range of child health issues often disregarded by men including immunisation, exclusive breastfeeding and febrile illnesses. Men are encouraged to bring their female partners for antenatal care and also make them aware of the consequences of violence and unequal treatment in the household and community.

Engagement of men's group in maternal and child health promotion is not known to be adopted by other NGOs in Sierra Leone. The approach is a Concern Sierra Leone-led initiative that is being piloted in rural communities in Tonkolili District.



**The promising results from this project support a key learning running throughout this issue of Knowledge Matters that men must be engaged if women are to be empowered**

From the inception of the MOG sessions in 2012, 14 groups were formed and completed a curriculum containing 16 health sessions on maternal and child health topics in five of the six chiefdoms in which the health project is implemented.

Some of the health topics include: Myths and facts on pregnancy, ANC, Baby danger signs, Care of the new born, danger signs in pregnancy.

### **The Case of the men's group in Mafanta community**

Concern Worldwide has been mobilising men's orientation groups in the Mafanta community, Tonkolili District as part of the SHAPE project. In Mafanta, the MOG members have started changing their behaviours with respect to helping their wives to have safe child birth and post natal services. Sallay Turay, who is 25-years-old has benefited from her husband (Daniel Conteh 35-years-old) attending the MOG. Sallay completed her fifth ANC visit during her second pregnancy and had her first child birth in a health facility as result of her husband's involvement in men's orientation group sessions.

When, Sallay reported to her husband that she had not menstruated for three months, Daniel accompanied Sallay to Malone Clinic the following day for their first ANC visit. Throughout Sallay's pregnancy, Daniel said, he ensured that his wife completed five ANC visits as he learned from the MOG sessions that every pregnant woman should complete at least four and should be supported by their husbands at home.

It's disappointing to hear from Daniel that the first pregnancy Sallay had resulted in a stillbirth due to the inability on their part to recognise danger signs in pregnancy and a limited knowledge on the importance of ANC visits. With Daniel's head and eyes down, he said "at month eight of

my wife's pregnancy, she complained to me of fever, pain in her stomach, and weakness. I asked her to go to the traditional birth attendant who gave herbs for drinking and asked her to take bed rest; the following day, my wife got much worse and I was told by an elder community member to take my wife to Malone Clinic where she had a dead baby delivered". This is not uncommon in Tonkolili where the SHAPE baseline showed that only around half of women deliver at a health clinic with a skilled birth provider.

According to Daniel, he was persuaded to attend the MOG sessions by one of its members and during his first session learnt about supporting your wife during pregnancy. Daniel said he found the health sessions educative, interactive, entertaining and useful. As a result, he decided to join the group and graduated after five months. Daniel reported that when his wife started having labour pains during the second pregnancy, he decided to rush her to Malone Clinic considering the knowledge he had gained from the MOG sessions. "I am happy because, my wife had a safe delivery at the clinic and she was given three days post natal care and my baby-boy received his first vaccination and my wife was given her vitamins" Daniel said.



Sallay, Daniel and their child, Mafanta, Kholifa Rowalla Chiefdom, Tonkolili District, Sierra Leone. Photo by Mohamed Dauda, 2014.

## Conclusion

The promising results from the project indicate that men on the whole, are eager to be part of the pregnancy and childbirth process. Our findings support the recommendation that men must be engaged in this topic if women are to be empowered and supported through this critical time in their lives. The promising results from this project support a key learning running throughout this issue of Knowledge Matters that men must be engaged if women are to be empowered. ■

# Measuring Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality—Experiences from Zimbabwe

By  
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Concern views empowerment as the ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had previously been denied. It is the ability to influence the choices available. Empowerment describes a process and gender equality, a state. Thus empowerment and the state of being empowered are linked to the achievement of gender equality which refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Concern believes that many facets of empowerment also represent greater equality between men and women. Concern uses a tool called the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) to measure empowerment. WEAI was developed in 2011 to track the change in women's empowerment levels that occurred as a direct or indirect result of interventions under Feed the Future, (the US government's global hunger and food security initiative). WEAI is composed of two sub-indexes shown in figure 1. One measures the five domains of empowerment for women (5DE) namely: production, resources, income, leadership and time. The other measures gender parity index (GPI) in empowerment within the household.

## Designing the programme for empowerment

At the peak of Zimbabwe's socio-political and economic challenges most gender related interventions involved encouraging the meaningful participation of women, and ensuring that women were key beneficiaries in interventions such as food AID and HIV and AIDS prevention programmes. Focusing on practical gender needs at this level provides little scope to change women's subordinate position in society.

Figure 1: Diagram showing the WEAI 5DE and related indicators



A contextual analysis carried out in Concern operational districts found that women and young people were lagging behind in terms of social and economic empowerment leading to their marginalisation and further impoverishment. Some notable recommendations included prioritising the needs, views and workloads of women and young people in programming; supporting interventions that address structural gender inequality and specific youth issues; setting targets for women and young people’s involvement and using indicators of empowerment.

Concern focuses on achieving the three higher levels of empowerment as defined by the Longwe Empowerment Framework which are: Awareness (men and women are aware of the difference between sex and gender and that gender roles are cultural and can change); Mobilisation (women’s equal participation with men at all levels of decision making in informal and formal institutions including local development bodies); and Control (women achieve a balance of control over the decision-making process and hence over resources and benefits) after addressing the first two lower levels of empowerment.

Two indicators were designed and can be measured to show the impact of the programme on gender equality, equity and empowerment over time:

- **INDICATOR 1:** Men and women report change in the amount of power and control that women have relative to men regarding household income and (self-identified indicator).

- **INDICATOR 2:** Number of decisions made by the VIDCO (Village Development Committees) that are valued or prioritized by women and young people

## Measuring women's empowerment

A baseline survey was carried out using WEAI to ascertain the existing levels of empowerment. Unlike the WEAI trials in Bangladesh and Guatemala, in Zimbabwe the tools were modified to meet the upper three levels of the Longwe Framework which Concern's Food, Income and Markets (FIM) programme had as result areas. WEAI shows the percentage of women who are empowered and also their margins of empowerment or disempowerment. A woman is considered empowered if she has weighted indicators that reflect 80 percent total adequacy. The greatest strength of WEAI is measuring gender parity in empowerment within the household. This reflects the percentage of women who are as empowered as the men in their households and shows a gender and development approach as opposed to only focusing on women.

The baseline carried out in the three districts in Zimbabwe showed that 13.3 percent of women are empowered. There is also evidence of significant progress towards the 80 percent threshold with an average 5DE score of 67 percent. This can be compared to findings in the other trial sites. For example 5DE scores from sites in Uganda and Bangladesh were 37.3 percent, 31.9 percent respectively while the weighted scores in the two countries were 77 percent, and 73 percent respectively. The average WEAI figure obtained by the baseline is 0.672. It is lower than those obtained in the three country pilots; Uganda had (0.789), South Western Bangladesh had (0.749) and Guatemala obtained (0.692).

## Parity and Empowerment

The gender parity Index (GPI) measures the comparative empowerment of men and women. It constitutes 10 percent of the WEAI score whilst the remaining 90 percent of WEAI is contributed by the 5DE. The study showed an average GPI of 52.3 percent meaning that 52.3 percent of women have gender parity with the primary male in their household, which means they have a 5DE score greater or equal to their male counterpart in the household. Of the 47.7 percent of women who are less empowered, the empowerment gap between them and the male in their household is 16 percent. Thus the overall GPI in the sampled areas is  $\{1 - (47.7 \text{ percent} \times 16 \text{ percent})\}$  or 0.924.



**Organisational investment in human resources is important in terms of enhancing the capacity of staff to understand equality and empowerment**



Gender is about both men and women: the study showed that both men and women are disempowered (ie empowerment score is less than 80 percent) Thus in some cases you would see women with a low GPI meaning that they are less empowered than their partners yet still their partners were not empowered enough to reach the 80% threshold to qualify as empowered.

## **Age and Empowerment**

Only 9.3 percent of women who are less than 30 years were empowered as compared to 16 percent amongst those greater than 30 years. This confirmed the finding of the situational analysis that beyond poverty there are other structural inequalities. 58 percent of young men aged 15-30 years have full control over decision making compared to those aged 30 years and above (51 percent).

## **Lessons and recommendations**

When designing programmes with empowerment domains in mind, it is necessary to target strategically gaps and measure change, with clear indicators. It is crucial to target both men and women and to address empowerment at both the community and the household level because some men are also disempowered according to the set threshold.

In general, there is little investment in quality monitoring and evaluation approaches for gender equality and empowerment programmes. Accordingly, many programmes have limited evidence of their impact. Donors can be part of the problem since they want to see the demonstrated results of the intervention but do not always include the funds required for an effective monitoring and evaluation system. In Zimbabwe, Concern invested in a baseline that is specific to gender and empowerment. This involved developing specific indicators to help improve the quality of programming for gender equality and empowerment and developing reporting tools.

Organisational investment in human resources is important in terms of enhancing the capacity of staff to understand equality and empowerment. Concern carried out refresher training for all staff on equality and empowerment. Investment was also put into employing staff specially dedicated to gender and equality.

Concern's experience in Zimbabwe has shown that gender mainstreaming at national and international levels need specialists to steer the process and develop gender awareness and analysis skills of key staff. A high level commitment to mainstreaming and gender is needed. Concern managed to include equality as a key pillar of its strategic plan. This together with a sound policy framework was important in the attainment of empowerment. ■

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## Evaluation Digest

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**Here is an overview of evaluation studies done over the last quarter:**

Evaluation of the Sundarbans Development and Alternatives Resources Integration Project in Bangladesh by Golam Mahbub

Evaluation of the Strengthening Local Responses to HIV and AIDS Programme in India by Aine Costigan

Evaluation of the Integrated Humanitarian Support for Disaster Affected Populations in Pakistan by Niall Roche, et al

Evaluation of the Increasing Resilience and Reducing Risk of Coastal Communities to Climate Change and Natural Hazards in Bangladesh and India by Anshu Sharma, et al

Evaluation of the Pilot Conservation Agriculture Project in Zambia and Malawi by John Reid

Evaluation of the Community Health Systems Strengthening Project in Burundi by Bonnie Kittle

Evaluation of the Cash Transfer Programme in Malawi by Deborah Gourlay, et al

Evaluation of Concern's Emergency Response Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo by Sarah Bailey

Evaluation of the Improved Security Through Provision of Vocational Skills Project in Uganda by David Hirst

Evaluation of the Health and Nutrition Project in Malawi by Chiimwemwe Msuka, et al

Evaluation of the Irish Aid 3 Funded Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project in Liberia by John Odolon

Evaluation of the Maximising Rural Communities Livelihoods Options Programme in Burundi, Ethiopia and Tanzania by Paul Smith

Evaluation of the Flood Resistant Shelter Project in Bangladesh by John Watt, et al

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## Research Digest

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### **Here is an overview of research studies done over the last quarter:**

An analysis of donor governments' disaster risk reduction spending in Pakistan

Examining Differences in the Effectiveness and Impacts of Vouchers and Unconditional Cash Transfers

The Global Hunger Index 2013 Report

Promising Practice in School-Related Gender –Based Violence (SRGBV) Prevention and Response Programming Globally

Testing the Effectiveness and Sustainability of an Integrated Care Group Model as Compared to the Traditional Care Group Model

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## Knowledge Matters basics

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**Knowledge Matters** is a Concern Worldwide internal organisational peer reviewed publication. The publication is committed to encouraging high quality analysis and fostering intellectual excellence in the understanding of Concern's work. It does this by reviewing all of Concern's evaluative and research work, as well as commissioning articles by Concern staff members. Articles are very short – 600 – 1,000 words. Usually you only have space to make two or three interesting points. Here are some tips on writing a short feature article:

- Start by imagining your audience – a Concern colleague. Why are they interested – why do they want to read what you have to say? When you identify what your most important point is, say it straight away, in the title or first sentence.
- What can others learn from your story? Focus on this. Remember to back up your story with evidence. This can be got from evaluations.
- It's easier to get people reading if you start with the human perspective – mentioning real people and real-life events. (You don't have to give names).
- Use short sentences. Use Concern's style guide to help you.
- Keep paragraphs to a maximum of six lines long.
- Use clear language. Many of the readers of Knowledge Matters are non-native English speakers, so think carefully about using idioms or colloquial language that might not be easily understood by others.
- Always avoid assuming too high a level of knowledge of the topic you are writing about, on the part of the reader.
- Use active sentences ('we held a workshop' not 'a workshop was held by us')
- Use short and clear expressions.
- Keep your title short - no more than eight words.
- Where necessary use photos to accompany the narrative but ensure that you follow the Dochas Code of Images and Messages.



## For whom is the publication

All staff involved in designing, implementing, managing, monitoring, evaluating and communicating Concern's work. This publication should also be shared with partners.

## What this publication includes

- Promising practice
- Organisational learning
- Promotion of multi-sectoral and integrated approaches to programming
- Links to full reports

## What it doesn't include

- Targeted recommendations
- Additional evidence not included in the papers cited
- Detailed descriptions of interventions or their implementation

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## Editorial Working Group

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**Connell Foley:** Editorial Adviser

**Samuel Fox:** Editorial Adviser

**Michael Commane:** Language Editing

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