

Engaging men for gender equality: Promising practice from Concern Tanzania



Introduction

A growing body of evidence has stressed the importance of engaging men in gender equality work¹. A number of programme experiences with men and boys worldwide have confirmed that well-designed group education, counselling and health promotion activities carried out in health clinics, schools and via community outreach and mass media outlets can influence men's attitudes and behaviours in gender-equitable ways.

Specifically, this growing evidence base shows that men and boys can and do change attitudes and behaviour related to sexual and reproductive behaviour, maternal, new born and child health; their interaction with their children; their use of violence against women; questioning violence with other men; and their health-seeking behaviour as a result of well-designed programmes.

Concern Tanzania's focus on Livelihoods

Concern worldwide, hereafter called Concern is currently implementing a three year livelihoods programme in Tanzania. The Women's Social and Economic Rights (WSER) Programme (running from January 2013 to December 2015) funded by the European Union and implemented by the Concern country team in Tanzania and their partners Kimas, Caritas and the Kasulu Consortium, in two regions; Mtwara (Masasi District) and Kigoma (Kigoma Rural and Kasulu Districts).

Learning from the evaluation of a previous Livelihoods programme in Tanzania, the Concern team realised women's Economic empowerment alone is not sufficient to change the power inequality that prevails. Focusing solely on women or 'feminization' of development, programmes have had limited results on alleviating women's gendered obligation and burdens.



**'The greatest barriers we face to improving our lives are our husbands'
'I know my rights but they don't apply in my home. When I come home,
I leave my rights at the door'** Quotes from women in Livelihoods Programme Evaluation

The team recognised that they were missing something important or rather someone important in their work to promote gender equality – the men.

¹ Barker, G., Kato, J. 2012. *Report of Desk Research on Theories and Promising Practices on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality: Learning from others and providing recommendations for Concern Worldwide*, Washington: Promundo

Overall, the programme has a multiple and complex range of activities that aims to empower women both economically and socially, It recognises that women in the context are less able to access, control, and benefit from returns to assets (land, property, income, education, social status) as they face barriers from their socially constructed status as subordinate to men.

The WSER programme takes a gender and development, equality, and empowerment lens to working with communities². It is based on Concern's understanding of extreme poverty³ and the belief that inequality is a major cause of poverty in Tanzania. The programme focuses on enhancing individual and collective capabilities of women and men, focusing on them as change agents in their communities.



The programme is organised around three expected results:

- 1) Economic Assets:** Improving Women's economic assets and return on assets through increasing agricultural production, savings, credit and land tenure.
- 2) Social:** Increasing Women's involvement in and control over decision making in the household and community.
- 3) Advocacy:** on gender related policies and laws to ensure implementation

The programme aims to target 252,989 people in approximately 42,000 households in 40 villages over the three Districts (10 in Masasi, 10 in Kasulu and 20 in Kigoma). In each of the districts Concern works with one local Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partner: KIMAS in Masasi, Caritas in Kigoma Rural and Kasulu Consortium in Kasulu.

A baseline study was conducted in March/April 2013, which set the benchmark to measure changes in the programme area. Implementation of programme activities started in July 2013. A comparative midline study was conducted during the period of August and September 2014.

Building on research and evidence on engaging men, Concern through the WSER programme designed a component of the programme which followed a group education process to engage men as allies in women's economic empowerment. Men are engaged in group discussions –some with their partners – on issues of power, tasks and roles, communication and couple negotiation, decision making and planning, respect, participation, and non-violent relationships. The community dialogue approach has been specifically designed to address the social constructions of masculinities and femininities in this context.

² Within the programme *Empowerment* is considered to be about both process and outcome that comprises three dimensions—agency, structure, and relationships. These three dimensions are intimately related, structuring and influencing one another. It is critical when aiming for empowerment that issues of access to resources are addressed, but also building the agency of individuals to utilise and have control over these resources in order to reach the higher level outcomes of behaviour changes and representation of interests.

³ Concern uses a unique model to describe Extreme Poverty that focuses on the poor's assets, as well as their returns on these assets and the causes, maintainers and obstacles to people moving out of extreme poverty, in particular Inequality and Risk and Vulnerability.

BOX 1 Findings from Focus Group Discussions



'We started to realise that a lot of roles in the home can be done by anybody, by sharing these we can see the changes on the welfare of the family, how women have been treated and start looking at them as human beings' (Juma male respondent - Kigoma)

Our experiences to date

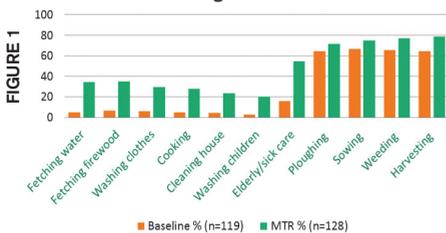
A mid-term review⁴ was completed in September 2014, utilising both a quantitative survey administered in a sample of 20 villages and 440 households. Qualitative approaches such as focus groups and key informant interviews were carried out in 7 villages, with all partners and the district land department staff. The findings provide evidence of the positive outcomes of the community dialogues on both household level decision making but also family dynamics and levels of conflict.

Throughout discussions during the mid-term review the community dialogues were continuously cited as an effective methodology for addressing rigid gender norms and gender roles within the household. They have provided a new space for women and men to unpack issues of gender inequities, perceptions and attitudes, and are proving to be a highly effective approach to bringing change within the household. During the review many men acknowledged the influence of how they were socialised and raised to become a 'real man' as key barriers to change.

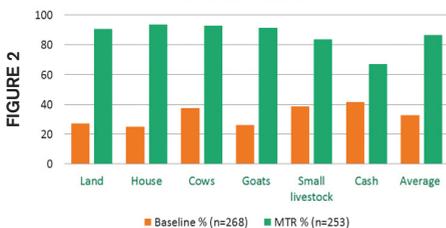
Across the districts both men and women talked about changes particularly around sharing of workloads in the household. Data from the midline survey back up these testimonies from with substantial changes in the percentage of household chores being shared between women and men (the target was to increase these by 10%), see figure 1.

Not only is this change positively affecting the workloads of women, but men now feel more involved in the family. Discussions also revealed how men have realised how approaching problems through discussion and dialogue has reduced the levels of conflict in the home, and instilled a mutual respect between husband and wife.

Sharing workloads



Shared assets



⁴ For more on the mid-term review see Crawford, B., Pain, C., Sadlier, M., and Fitzgerald, G. 2014. Engaging Men on Gender Equality in Concern Tanzania's Women's empowerment programme. The paper can be downloaded at www.concern.net.

Targets outlined in the proposal in relation to women's involvement and control over decision making in the household are set to be achieved. Figure 2 shows how female respondents with husbands had very modest control over household assets at baseline, but at midline there have been positive changes, with the notable exception of cash, which 'only' increased from 41.7 percent to 67.2 percent.

There has also been change in the levels of public participation amongst women, with the midline survey showing an increase in the percentage of females in leadership positions across various committees. However, it is difficult to say if this is the result of the programme or because of government policy to have quotas for women on such committees. However, one area where the programme can be seen as having a direct impact is in the promotion of females as leaders through their appointment as community mentors. The endorsement of being elected by the community and the commitment that they are giving to their new roles contributes to wider acknowledgement of the capabilities of women with the community

Lessons

Both men and women spoke passionately about the greater peace and harmony in the home and how their homes were now happier places to be. The frustrations and tensions that used to build up are now dealt with through discussing and resolving problems together.

It is true that it will not be possible to get every man on board immediately and it does require courage from men to do things differently in their lives. As more men get involved and begin to realise the negative impact that social and gender norms and masculinities has had on their life and their family their perceptions of what it is to be a man can be influenced. There are opportunities now for the programme to work with men who have completed the sessions. These men will be key agents of change within their communities.

Engaging men in gender transformative approaches leads to positive outcomes for women, children and men themselves. Including men as equal partners, involved caregivers and supportive members of society is a responsible approach that considers relationships as a whole and synergies between people rather than pieces of them. Men have shown that they can change their attitudes and behaviours around care giving, decision making and gender-based violence when given the space to do so.

For more information on this programme contact:

Edna Lugano, WSER Programme Manager, Concern Tanzania edna.lugano@concern.net or

Bernadette Crawford, Concern Equality Adviser, Concern Worldwide Bernadette.crawford@concern.net

CONTACT US

www.concern.net/womenofconcern

Concern Worldwide is a registered charity CHY 5745



www.facebook.com/concernworldwide



www.youtube.com/concernworldwide



www.twitter.com/concern



Concern Worldwide:
52-55 Lower Camden Street,
Dublin 2, Ireland.
T +353 1 417 7700

CONCERN
worldwide