



Faith and gender in Development

Summary of Current Channels of Hope Gender Learning and Evidence

Gender norms are deeply entrenched in communities and are often a source of injustice and systemic poverty. Addressing gender inequities can catalyse transformation in communities and break cycles of poverty and deprivation.

World Vision (WV) supports programming and policies that transform individuals, relationships, systems and structures towards gender justice for a more equitable world that promotes the dignity and well-being of every man, woman, boy and girl.

World Vision Channels of Hope

WV is child-focused, community-based and Christian. In collaboration with CABSA¹ in 2003, WV mobilised the potential of faith leaders and faith-based organisations as essential community partners to specifically address the AIDS pandemic. The methodology transformed faith leaders and faith-based organisations as WV trained, equipped and empowered them to reach out to their communities to address the pandemic and related social issues.

In 2005, WV designed a longitudinal operational research (OR) project to assess the effectiveness and impact of its three core HIV programme models including CoH.^{2, 3}

The results indicated the following:

- At baseline, 86 per cent of faith leaders believed HIV is a punishment from God. In the CoH intervention sites, only 58 per cent held this belief afterwards.
- Before CoH was introduced to communities, 26 per cent of faith leaders would not allow a faith leader living with HIV to preach. After the implementation of CoH, that percentage was down to just 9 per cent.
- A person from a CoH area was 12% more likely than before to access voluntary counselling and testing for HIV while non-government organisations (NGOs) representatives who participated in the CoH process were 21% more likely.

The significance of personal spiritual transformation should not be underestimated, as this has, in many instances, had a powerful impact on subsequent changes in behaviour and attitudes with regard to gender issues and gender equality.

Groningen four-country Evaluation, Project Evaluation Report – Executive Summary, November 2014

¹ For more information on the Christian AIDS Bureau for Southern Africa (CABSA), visit

² Chege, Jane and the World Vision Uganda and World Vision Zambia Core HIV Models Project Implementation Team 2010. *Assessing the effectiveness and Impact of World Vision's core HIV&AIDS models: Results from Uganda and Zambia*, World Vision International Study Report.

³ Jane Chege and the World Vision Uganda and World Vision Zambia Core HIV Models Project Implementation Team; July 2012. *The effectiveness and impact of the Channels of Hope methodology in enhancing HIV response at the community level.*

- A CoH area resident was 2.5 times more likely to participate in a support group for people affected by HIV.

These positive research results and requests from participating faith leaders in the field encouraged WV to adapt the content and develop new curricula based on the successful CoH methodology to address other development issues.

Thus, CoH for Gender, CoH for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, CoH for Child Protection, and, most recently, CoH for Ebola were born.

Channels of Hope for Gender

Gender imbalances rob many children worldwide from a full life. Girls are perceived as less valuable than boys, and they are treated accordingly.

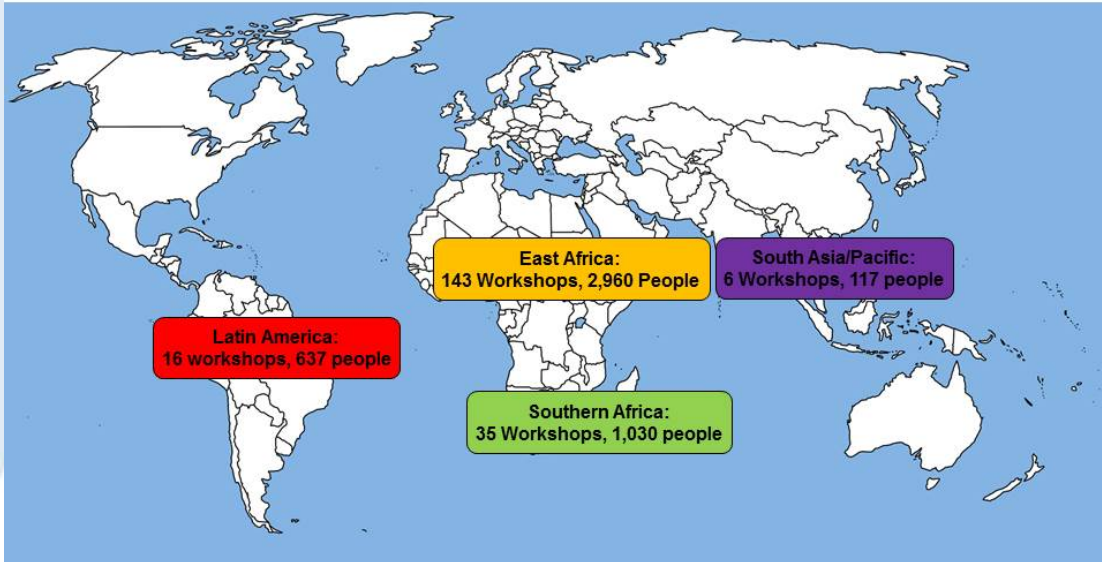
CoH for Gender is an innovative approach to explore gender identities, norms and values from a faith perspective. The curriculum dispels cultural gender biases and contributes to the transformation of perspectives on gender identity and relationships at both household and community levels. Since inception, CoH for Gender has brought about change of attitudes in many faith leaders⁴, transforming the messages they communicate on the worth of female and male members of their communities. This resulted in a positive ripple effect in the communities they serve.

Current footprint

⁴ World Vision. *Solomon Islands: Community Vision 4 Change, Project Summary*. World Vision. *Channels of Hope, World Vision Solomon Islands, 2012*.

Footprint of CoH-Gender in 2014

Number of workshops and participants



200 CoH workshops reached 5,744 faith leaders in FY14



Research underwrites programme effectiveness

To objectively assess successful transformation on gender issues in the targeted areas, WV partnered with various academic institutions to review both qualitative and quantitative household and community changes. The research not only informs the periodic revision and improvement of the methodology where necessary, it also serves to account for the effectiveness of the programme to donors and partners.

Below follows brief background summaries of the most recent research partnerships including the purpose, methodology, key findings and recommendations of each study.

Evaluation of Honiara Community Vision for Change Project⁵

Research Partner	Australia National University (ANU)
Purpose	<p><i>To determine:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>change in negative attitudes around gender-based violence (GBV) and gender inequality, especially towards recognising women’s rights</i> ▪ <i>openness to discussion GBV and gender inequality</i> ▪ <i>commitment to change in social norms</i>
Location and time	Five communities in the Solomon Islands from 2012 till November 2014.
Methodology	<p>Base-line study (2012) and an end-of-phase evaluation (2014) which included review of relevant documents, key informant discussions with WV International Solomon Island (WVSI) staff and a survey of 300 people from randomly selected households in the five project communities.</p> <p>In addition to ANU’s evaluation, WVSI’s staff conducted a qualitative evaluation from July-August 2014 in accordance with WV’s Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, ‘Learning through Evaluation with Accountability and Planning’. The review report was included in ANU’s documentation review.</p>

Key findings

The evaluation found that, that over the three years, the Community Vision for Change (CV4C) project played an important part towards reducing violence in the targeted Solomon Islands communities, most notably in the following areas:

Towards recognising women’s rights

- The percentage of men who believe a woman can accuse her husband of rape rose from 70 percent to 83 percent.

⁵ Wu, J., Kilby, Dr P., *Evaluation of Honiara Community Vision for Change Project*, Australia National University and World Vision Solomon Islands 2015.

- The percentage of women who believe that women should **not** make decisions fell from 34 percent to 4 percent.
- The percentage of men who believe the Bible says that 'man is boss' fell from 83 per cent to 66 percent.

Openness to discussion

- Men in general became more willing to discuss GBV and gender relations.
- Women talked openly about community perceptions of GBV, the role of the church and women's experiences of gender inequality and domestic violence.
- Women became more outspoken and critical about the lack of response from the police, churches, and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Commitment to change

- Church elders and pastors who are members of the Community Hope Action Teams (CHATs) showed a high level of commitment to tackling GBV and support for the CV4C Pilot Project.
- Some church leaders, including some who underwent training as part of the CV4C Pilot Project, preferred to provide counselling to the perpetrators and urged forgiveness by the survivors and reconciliation of the couple. This reveals that mixed messages on protection for survivors of violence and gender inequality are given across some churches.
- Women and men hear messages on GBV and gender inequality in church differently, with 63% of women and 34% of men recounting that pastors give the message to never use violence.

I was a violent person to my wife, my children, my neighbourhood and my community. Now I treat my wife equally, and appreciate her as an individual, a wife, and there is mutual trust and love in our marriage. My children do not have fear and distrust in me anymore and we now have open relationship and love for each other ... After twenty three years of marriage now, my wife and my children are experiencing a truly happy life.

Participant in the CV4C Pilot Project, Solomon Islands

Recommendations

The following recommendations have informed a project redesign for a second, three-year project.

- Effectively engage national and influential church leaders throughout the project.
- Conduct regular follow-up training (at least annually) to keep the messages given in church strong and consistent, to influence participants' perceptions and behaviours on GBV and gender inequality and to keep motivation high.
- Achieve broader reach by training church staff, church women's groups and communities as well as WV staff.
- Focus training on available options for safety and legal rights and not encouraging women to go back to perpetrators of violence.

- Adapt supporting training materials better to the local context – use local stories and delivered in conjunction with local theatre companies and bands. Test materials before roll-out.
- Though CHATs could learn about support services, existing, established national structures such as SafeNet continue to undertake this work.
- Focus group discussions revealed that community chiefs play a major role in referring serious cases of GBV to support services. Therefore, engage with community chiefs and involve them in CoH for Gender training.
- Financial support should be in place to support community teams in project-related activities.
- Bolster current monthly project tracking to develop a coherent monitoring plan to regularly review project progress.



Fred Sikini (top left), Sun Valley Community elder, conducting community outreach using CoHG messages | WVSI

Importantly, the evaluation suggests the project offers a model to continue into the future, with its learnings and recommendations to be incorporated into the next project stages.

[Groningen four-country evaluation](#)⁶

Research Partner	Centre for Religion, Conflict and the Public Domain, University of Groningen and Knowledge Centre Religion and Development, Oikos (Netherlands)
Purpose	<i>To determine:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the relevance and effectiveness of CoH for Gender training/workshop methods as catalyst for engaging faith leaders in promoting positive gender identities and relationships examined. ▪ the overall CoH for Gender effectiveness for scaling up in promoting attitudes and behaviour changes in gender programming assessed.
Location and time	Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania (two communities each) between July and September 2014.
Methodology	Key informant interviews with a selection of religious leaders, group interviews with a selection of church members and community members.

Key findings

⁶ Groningen four-country evaluation, *Project Evaluation Report – Executive Summary – CPDG and CPDG Evaluation Report Presentation – 2014.11.13.*

Overall the evaluation found CoH for Gender methods highly relevant and effective for the faith leaders interviewed, leading to significant personal change and increased promotion of positive gender identities and relationships. In addition, members of communities in which CoH has been introduced also described visible change in gender relations within the (faith) community. Other findings included:

- CoH for Gender impact on personal, household, church and community levels
 - Increased sharing of roles and responsibilities, between men and women, girls and boys within households.
 - In some settings improved awareness and activity levels were reported on issues related to gender-based violence (GBV) and how to act when GBV occurs.
 - Introduction of alternative rites of passage to address female genital mutilation (FGM).
 - Almost all faith leaders interviewed reported personal change.
 - The most reported examples of impact in church contexts were:
 - preaching (more focused on love and responsibility and regularly addressed gender and family relations more specifically)
 - initiatives to sensitise church groups on gender issues
 - growing recognition of women in lay leadership roles in the church and leadership opportunities in the broader community
 - Congregations formed Congregational Hope Action Teams (CHATs), but it was difficult to establish how CHATs ensured further roll-out of CoH for Gender in the broader community.
- CoH for Gender motivated some church leaders to take an active role in caring for their environments (e.g. planting trees to reverse deforestation).

In a few cases CoH for Gender even directly influenced change in control of family resources; in one case a couple created a flourishing family business and another young family managed to build their own home.
 Groningen four-country Evaluation, Project Evaluation Report – Executive Summary, November 2014

The evaluation also pointed out that while religious leaders can be very influential, traditional and other leaders in communities are often equally or even more influential. In most of the communities included in the evaluation, it is primarily women who attend church. As such, religious leaders have influence with the female population but less with the men. It also suggested that CoH for Gender may be less effective in a setting where religious leaders and other stakeholders are polarised, e.g. because of theological differences.

Recommendations

The CoH for Gender methodology can be adapted to help leaders of any faith address gender inequity in their communities. The evaluation indicated that training materials for Muslim leaders should be developed as a priority and furthermore calls for interfaith workshops to encourage interfaith cooperation, understanding and dialogue, on gender issues and beyond.

In terms of overall integration and community ownership the evaluation recommended:



- Strategically link CoH for Gender to other community engagement tools such as Citizen Voice and Action for local-level advocacy to focus on the leadership of certain community sectors to ensure better community engagement and ownership.
- Involve community leaders and stakeholders and extend CoH for Gender to other community structures.
- Enhance elements of CoH for Gender that deal with environmental sustainability.

Finally the evaluation also recommended developing strategies to engage high- and mid-level church leadership in the CoH for Gender approach and to partner with African networks and people that have a track-record on working within mainline churches and theological contexts around gender issues.

World Vision Uganda Case Study⁷

Research Partner	Internal evaluation
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>To capture changes that occurred as a result of implementing CoH4G (i.e. knowledge-levels, attitude and practice changes in staff and faith leaders).</i> ▪ <i>To document success factors and emerging better practices and draw attention to challenges to ensure progress towards the outcomes and goals of CoH4G.</i>
Location and time	Two World Vision Area Development Programmes in Uganda in August 2014.
Methodology	Desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Key findings

Personal and household

- Faith leaders reported sharing decision-making, responsibilities and meals with the entire family; husbands, wives and children all actively participated as equals.

Congregational

- Faith leaders advocated for gender equity in their congregations and preached about GBV, HIV and AIDS, polygamy, child marriage and sexual abuse.
- Faith leaders established CHATs to spread hope and encourage women to take on leadership roles. They also held seminars on gender equity and counselled congregants who sought advice; ultimately establishing a congregational cultural movement.

Community

- Catalysed faith leaders encouraged and established child protection committees and interdenominational community-based organisations that focus on gender equity.

Faith leaders recognised ‘...[we] are actually fulfilling our duties as pastors’.

World Vision Uganda Case Study, Internal Evaluation, August 2014

⁷ World Vision Uganda Case Study. *Internal Evaluation*, August 2014. Key author, Bradley Dawson.

- Faith leaders also reported increased HIV and AIDS counselling and testing and reduced cases of child neglect, domestic violence and child sacrifice.

WV Uganda

- CoH for Gender furthered the inclusion of gender equity programming and church engagement, and strengthened communication and collaboration among key internal stakeholders.

In Uganda, we [now] look at gender as a foundation for achieving child well-being.

– Gilbert Kamanga,
National Director,
WV Uganda

Recommendations

This case study specifically lists recommendations for implementers of CoH4G. Suggestions for NOs to fully engage and empower faith leaders and communities to affirm gender equality, include amongst others to:

- standardise indicators for inclusion in WV’s compendium of indicators, strategy, detailed implementation plans, etc.
- implement a CoH4G pilot project, review the outcomes and impact, and make recommendations.
- develop and disseminate a business case for CoH4G scale-up.
- promote CoH4G as a holistic approach, not a singular project and integrate it into strategy, policies, protocols and procedures as a cross-cutting approach.

World Vision Faith and Gender in Development Project: CoH G Research⁸

Research Partner	Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>To better understand the implementation of CoH – seeking to strengthen the unfolding process and outline strategies for best practice in other CoH sites.</i> ▪ <i>To assess how CoH supports, strenghtens or inhibits community systems and trust, how receptive the local communities are to CoH G, and to what extent CoH G speaks to the nature of gender relations and GBV within the particular community.</i>
Location and time	Atlantis in the Western Cape and Mbashe in the Eastern Cape (South Africa) from August 2014 till September 2016.
Methodology	Participatory ethnographic case study approach.

Intermediate research results on this study should be available by January 2017.

Research drives programme evolution

The research results of the above studies clearly underline that CoH for Gender plays a constructive role in helping to create a more equitable society in the areas where the

⁸ World Vision Faith and Gender in Development Project: CoH G Research, *Overview of Research_Nov14*.



programme has been implemented. The results also highlight much scope to adapt and improve the methodology, which formed the basis for conducting the research. The CoH for Gender team is already working on implementing these recommendations.

But almost more excitingly, the research results shed light on a myriad of opportunities, not least of all the role that CoH for Gender can play in uniting diverse religious communities to jointly address gender issues in pursuit of a more equitable world that promotes the dignity and well-being of every man, woman, boy and girl.

Contact Information

For more information on program collaboration or research opportunities, contact Maclean Dlodlo at channels-of-hope@wvi.org.