



ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY: PROMISING PRACTICES

Case Studies from the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund

CASE STUDIES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CASE STUDIES COMPILED AND EDITED BY UN WOMEN: Jennifer Cooper, Natalia Mattioli, Julia Miguez Morais, Maryline Penedo and Alice Ziffer. **UNDP CONTRIBUTORS:** Raquel Lagunas and Lucio Severo. **SUPPORT FROM THE MDG ACHIEVEMENT FUND:** Paloma Duran, Patricia Fernandez Pacheco, Raul de Mora Jimenez and Nurit Boderman-Ostow. **CASE STUDY CONTRIBUTORS:** Amy Auguston, Fida Al-Barghouthi, Nelson Machicao Beltrán, Rafael Bonilla Caceres, Augustin Chabwine, Lisa Cristina Gómez, Nemat Guenena, Do Kim Lang, Aya Matsuura, Diacuy Mesquita, Mahmuda Nasreen, Gloria Ardaya Salinas, Naima Lahbil Tagemouati, Elena Vega and Kaoru Yamagiwa. **SPECIAL THANKS** to all who participated in supporting the successful joint programmes at the country level and made this study possible.

© United Nations 2013. Manufactured in the United States of America. The analysis and recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views of the MDG Achievement Fund Secretariat, UN Women, affiliated agencies, the United Nations or its Member States. Textual material may be freely reproduced with proper citation and/or attribution to the authoring agencies, as appropriate. All rights reserved for photographic material, which cannot be reproduced in any digital or traditional format without permission except as part of this publication (such as when reposting a PDF file with attribution).

Copyediting and graphic design: Suazion, Inc.

Photography: MDG Achievement Fund unless noted.

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY: PROMISING PRACTICES

Case Studies from the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund



FOREWORD

The Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) was created with the support of the Government of Spain, continuing the history of multilateral cooperation. In December 2012, the Cabinet of Spain approved the fourth Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation for 2013–2016, contextualizing it in the international development agenda, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and the new post-2015 development agenda. The plan also addressed the challenges of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, the European Union agenda for change and G20 development agreements.

In this context, women's rights and the integration of a gender perspective are the hallmarks of Spanish cooperation, thus strengthening the commitment that began with the approval of Law 23/1998 on international cooperation and subsequent development plans.

In a particularly difficult time for the international community, Spain is committed to contributing to human development, assisting in poverty eradication and promoting the full realization of human rights, while strengthening the integration of gender-specific programmes and, when necessary, continuing to support existing programmes serving specific groups of women.

This explains the work performed under the MDG-F Gender Thematic Window, which involved an investment of \$90 million, and the efforts to integrate gender concerns across the Fund's other thematic windows, with lessons learned for consolidating this work in the future. Promoting a dual strategy to ensure access to rights and freedoms for all women also represents Spain's commitment to multilateral cooperation for development.

Gonzalo Robles
Secretary-General of International Development
Cooperation, Spain

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| Acronyms | iv |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Learning from Experience to Build a Better Future | 1 |
| OVERVIEW OF THE PROMISING PRACTICES | 5 |
| Freedom from Violence | 6 |
| Improved Capabilities and Resources | 10 |
| Increased Participation in Decision-Making | 13 |
| Conclusion | 14 |
| FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE | 15 |
| BANGLADESH: United Nations Joint Programme on Violence against Women | 17 |
| COLOMBIA: Educational Communication Strategy within the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence | 23 |
| MOROCCO: Multi-sectoral Programme for the Fight against Gender-based Violence | 35 |
| TIMOR-LESTE: Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights | 39 |
| VIET NAM: National Study on Domestic Violence against Women | 53 |
| IMPROVED CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES | 65 |
| BANGLADESH: Role of Food Security and Nutrition Interventions | 67 |
| BOLIVIA: Productive Patrimonial Assets Building and Citizenship Programme for Women in Extreme Poverty | 73 |
| DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: Women's Participation in Stabilization and Conflict Prevention in North Kivu | 77 |
| ECUADOR: Participatory Formulation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage Sector Gender Policy | 83 |
| EGYPT: Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in the Pro-poor Horticulture Value Chain in Upper Egypt (SALASEL) MDG-F Programme | 91 |
| ETHIOPIA: Leave No Women Behind | 97 |
| HONDURAS: Women Finding Their Way | 109 |
| VIET NAM: Taking a Value Chain Approach towards Local Economic Development and Women's Economic Empowerment | 115 |
| INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING | 125 |
| BOLIVIA: Gender-Based Political Violence | 127 |
| GUATEMALA: Institutional Strengthening of the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women and the Presidential Secretariat for Women at National and Local Levels | 137 |
| MEXICO: Gender Mainstreaming to Establish Effective and Democratic Water and Sanitation Management | 141 |
| NAMIBIA: Application of the Community Conversation Enhancement Methodology for Gender Equality in Namibia | 145 |
| NICARAGUA: Gender-Responsive Budgeting at National and Municipal Levels | 149 |
| PANAMA: Indigenous Women's Participation in Water Management | 153 |
| STATE OF PALESTINE: Gender Mainstreaming in the Ministry of Culture | 157 |

Acronyms

| | |
|------------|--|
| AIDS | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| ECLAC | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| FAO | Food and Agricultural Organization |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GRB | Gender Responsive Budgeting |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ITC | International Trade Centre |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MDG-F | Spanish MDG Achievement Fund |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| PAHO | Pan American Health Organization |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference of Trade and Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCHR | United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| UNODC | United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| UNWTO | United Nations World Tourism Organization |
| UN-Habitat | United Nations Human Settlements Programme |
| VAW | Violence Against Women |
| WFP | World Food Programme |
| WHO | World Health Organization |



INTRODUCTION: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE

The collection of case studies on lessons and results for gender equality and the empowerment of women has relevance for the advancement of the next internationally agreed development agenda. In this agenda, there is already much consensus on the need for a stronger focus on gender equality within the overall post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework. “Already, there are many discussions and debates on what should replace the MDGs and what shape the post-2015 development agenda should take. There are ongoing deliberations on

many different policy models to reduce poverty and inequality, achieve development, foster peace and security, promote and protect human rights, and protect the environment. In each of these, the need to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment should take centre stage, supported by a universal normative framework to which governments around the world have committed."¹

Advancing Gender Equality: Promising Practices – Case Studies from the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund presents lessons and results of specific relevance to shaping the post-2015 development framework. It contains lessons to enhance knowledge of both why results for gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to advance an overall development agenda, as well as practical examples of how to make this a reality. In many ways the programmes documented here anticipate the gaps that have been identified in relation to the promotion of gender equality in the MDGs. As such, they provide an evidence base that links to many of the key issues currently under discussion and offers opportunities for replicating successes in policy and practice.

Areas addressed by the programmes include overcoming violence against women, access to sexual and reproductive health services, women's asset and property ownership, and participation in public and private decision-making. Programmes also present effective practices to address inequalities through partnership with some of the world's most excluded groups of women and girls: indigenous, Afro-descendant, ethnic minority, rural and young women; survivors of violence and conflict-related sexual violence; and HIV positive women. They represent the unified efforts of many actors and demonstrate how United Nations, government and civil society actors can work together to leverage individual strengths and achieve significant collective results. A hallmark of many of the case studies is that they demonstrate the means to challenge the underlying structures that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and inequality as a key component of programming.

¹ UN Women, 2013, *A Transformative Stand-Alone Goal on Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment: Imperatives and Key Components*, p. 7.

Background and Methodology

The MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F, www.mdgfund.org), established in 2007 through an agreement between the Government of Spain and UNDP on behalf of the United Nations system, is one of the largest and most comprehensive development cooperation mechanisms devised to support MDG attainment. Through its 130 joint programmes in 50 countries and eight different thematic areas, the MDG-F has gathered valuable and unique knowledge on how countries can advance in development goals through joint efforts that engage in different UN agencies, governmental institutions, the private sector, communities and civil society entities.

The MDG-F's approach, anchored in the principles of national ownership, the coordination of efforts by UN agencies and a multidimensional perspective in its development programmes, has proved to have an impact on people's lives throughout the world. Some indicators validate this: 840,000 children have better nutrition, 300,000 people have safe, affordable drinking water, 100,000 people received job training, 625,000 women and girls gained access to violence prevention and protection services and 14.3 million young people were helped by new youth employment laws. All this thanks to the joint efforts through the United Nations.

MDG-F has been an outstanding supporter of programming to advance gender equality. Stemming from the commitments established in 1995 at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the MDG-F adopted a dual strategy for advancing gender equality with a portfolio of 13 targeted joint programmes promoting gender equality as a central goal, and gender-mainstreaming guidance² for 117 joint programmes targeting other development areas in eight funding windows

² MDG Achievement Fund, 2006, "Guidance for the Development of Gender-Responsive Joint Programmes", available at: www.mdgfund.org/sites/all/themes/custom/undp_2/docs/MDGF-JP-Gender-Guidance.pdf.

that are aligned to the MDGs.³ To capture promising practices in how successful gender equality results were achieved, the Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue Knowledge Management Initiative was launched in 2010 under the coordination of UN Women to facilitate knowledge sharing across the eight joint programming windows established through the MDG-F. A call for proposals on Effective Practices in Promoting Gender Equality for MDG Achievement (the Documentation Initiative) was launched in September 2011 to identify and document innovative, promising and potentially replicable practices. After a careful review with UNDP and the MDG-F Secretariat, 14 proposals were selected to document promising practices with a high potential to contribute to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality.

The following cases studies were developed with support from the Documentation Initiative:

- One from the Children, Food Security and Nutrition Window (Bangladesh);
- Two from the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Window (Bolivia and Democratic Republic of the Congo);
- Two from the Culture and Development Window (Ecuador and State of Palestine);
- Two from the Democratic Economic Governance Window (Mexico and Panama);

- Four from the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Window (Colombia, Ethiopia, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam);
- Two from the Private Sector and Development Window (Egypt and Viet Nam); and
- One from the Youth, Employment and Migration Window (Honduras).

In addition, the MDG-F Gender Window Community of Practice Knowledge Transfer Initiative was launched in July 2011 by UNDP to facilitate the generation, exchange and application of knowledge on joint programming for gender equality based on the experiences of the funding window on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. As part of this initiative, the UNDP Gender Team contributed submissions from joint programmes in this window that did not participate in the Documentation Initiative, including from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Guatemala, Morocco, Namibia, and Nicaragua.

As a result of these joint efforts, 20 promising practices have been included. With a view to inform evidence-based policy and programming in support of women's rights and gender equality, this Global Compendium presents the main findings of such analyses, including progress and results achieved, lessons learned from each programme and its sustainability, scaling up and replication potential.

³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women, 2013, *Two Roads, One Goal: Dual Strategy for Gender Equality Programming in the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund*, available at: www.unwomen.org/-/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/3/f2_MDGF_TwoRoads_Web.pdf.pdf. Two Roads presents the initial findings of parallel UNDP and UN Women analyses of the effectiveness of the dual strategy to promote gender equality through a joint programming modality.



OVERVIEW OF THE PROMISING PRACTICES

This publication is organized according to three major areas identified by UN Women for inclusion in the post-2015 framework:

- 1) **Freedom from violence** against women and girls, including experience related to concrete actions to eliminate or respond to violence. This issue is addressed by seven of the studies included in this Compendium. Five of them derive from programmes within the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Window (Bangladesh, Colombia, Morocco, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam); and two from the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Window (Bolivia and Democratic Republic of the Congo).

- 2) **Improved capabilities and resources** include improved knowledge and health—including sexual and reproductive health and rights; and access to resources and opportunities to build women’s economic and social security. These issues are addressed by ten of the promising practices: four from the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Window (Bolivia, Ethiopia, Namibia and Timor-Leste), two from the Development and the Private Sector Window (Viet Nam and Egypt), one from the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Window (Democratic Republic of the Congo), one from the Children, Food Security and Nutrition Window (Bangladesh), one from the Culture and Development Window (Ecuador) and one from the Youth, Employment and Migration Window (Honduras).
- 3) **Increased participation in decision-making** in public and private institutions, and in families and communities. This theme is analysed in nine of the studies: four from the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Window (Bolivia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Timor-Leste), one from the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Window (Bolivia), two from the Culture and Development Window (Ecuador and State of Palestine) and two from the Democratic Economic Governance Window (Mexico and Panama).

Many programmes adopted strong holistic and multi-sectoral approaches, and therefore addressed more than one thematic area.

Freedom from violence

MDG-F programmes’ emphasis on eliminating gender-based violence reflects the growing recognition of it as “a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality”.⁴ MDG-F programmes address various types of gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, trafficking in women and girls, violence against women and girls in armed conflicts, violence against women in politics, violence against sex workers and harmful traditional practices, among others. Based on a clear understanding of the multifaceted nature of gender-based violence, the MDG-F has called for comprehensive, holistic and multisectoral responses—from developing legal and policy frameworks to prevent and eliminate violence against women to providing quality support services to survivors and balancing the unequal gender power relations that are the heart of violence.

Reliable **data and knowledge** on the extent, patterns, causes and consequences of gender-based violence is essential to raise awareness and clarify misconceptions, as well as to guide evidence-based national policies and programmes and to monitor States’ progress in addressing the problem. Launched in 2010, the first-ever national study on domestic violence in **Viet Nam** has yielded a solid body of data on the prevalence and forms of domestic violence, its impact on women’s health, protection and risk factors, perceptions related to domestic violence, and strategies and services used to address it. With advocacy efforts backed by evidence, the issue of domestic violence has entered the national public dialogue. Viet Nam plans to repeat the study in 2015, which will allow assessing progress.

In **Bolivia**, the Bolivian Association of Councilwomen is maintaining a record of cases of harassment and political violence against elected women. Documenting such cases has made it possible to define acts of harassment or political violence, which influenced the crime-classification structure of the ground breaking Law against the Harassment

4 United Nations General Assembly, 2006, In-depth study on all forms of violence against women: Report of the Secretary-General, 6 July, A/61/122/Add.1. Available at: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/5826715.82698822.html>.

| Case study country | MDG-F funding window | Issues addressed by the promising practice | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | Freedom from violence | Improved capabilities and resources | Increased participation in decision-making |
| Bangladesh | Children, Food Security and Nutrition | | Women's access to land and productive assets | Women's empowerment within families |
| Bangladesh | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | Data on violence against women Community outreach to change attitudes Strengthened support services available to violence survivors Government capacity building | | Policy adoption and implementation |
| Bolivia | Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding | Political violence against elected women and candidates | | Data on political violence against elected women Law on political violence against elected women Protocol on cases of violence |
| Bolivia | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | | Income-generating activities: training and advisor services, non-reimbursable monetary transfer | Improved services for identification documents Women's participation in citizenship education programmes |
| Colombia | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | National media campaign for prevention of violence | | |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding | Holistic support services to survivors of sexual violence | Income-generating activities: technical and financial assistance Secured land tenure Savings and credit mechanisms Health/hygiene and education services | Women's empowerment within families and communities |
| Ecuador | Culture and Development | | Culturally and environmentally sustainable income-generating activities Culturally appropriate childbirth models | Gender and Interculturality Heritage Policy |
| Egypt | Development and the Private Sector | | Gender sensitization of Farm Associations Capacity building of female workers Challenged stereotypes regarding women's employment | Participation and leadership in Farm Associations |
| Ethiopia | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | Community mobilization to change harmful behaviours | Literacy Community sensitization on reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS Strengthening of reproductive health services Income-generating activities: Technical assistance and access to credits | Women's empowerment within families and communities |

| Case study country | MDG-F funding window | Issues addressed by the promising practice | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | | Freedom from violence | Improved capabilities and resources | Increased participation in decision-making |
| Guatemala | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | | | Strengthening of women's machineries |
| Honduras | Youth, Employment and Migration | Community-based training on violence against women | Income-generating activities: technical and financial assistance Vocational training | |
| Mexico | Democratic Economic Governance | | Improvement of access to water and sanitation | Women's participation in water management |
| Morocco | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | Holistic support services to survivors | Income-generating activities for survivors | |
| Namibia | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | | Community dialogues around HIV/AIDS | |
| Nicaragua | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | | | Gender-responsive Budgeting and Planning at national and local level |
| Panama | Democratic Economic Governance | | Improvement of access to water and sanitation Community education on water management | Women's participation in water management |
| State of Palestine | Culture and Development | | Enhancement of cultural capabilities | Gender mainstreaming at Ministry of Culture Culture policy analysis and formulation |
| Timor-Leste | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | Community based awareness campaigns on human trafficking, gender-based violence and the Law against Domestic Violence Strengthening of support-service providers and coordination mechanisms | Strengthening of Conditional Cash Transfer programme Institutional resource allocation Institutional capacity buildings | Enhanced policy framework on gender-based violence and human trafficking Gender-responsive budgeting |
| Viet Nam | Development and the Private Sector | | Income-generating activities: strengthening of a cooperative of women weavers Strengthening local support services | Women's leadership in cooperatives |
| Viet Nam | Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment | National data collection on domestic violence | | |

of and Political Violence against Women, enacted in 2012 and the first of its kind in the world.

To improve services in six **Bangladesh** districts, data collection activities have focused on the number and type of incidents (such as acid attacks, rape, murder, physical abuse, dowry related disputes, early marriage, family conflict and suicide) and types of support provided (such as court cases, counselling and legal aid). From September 2012 to May 2013, 44 sub-districts reported a total of 811 incidents that have been included in the pilot database. Discussions are underway to expand data collection nationally.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women describes violence against women as “a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men”.⁵ Consequently, eliminating gender-based violence demands transforming the social and cultural norms regulating power dynamics between men and women.

In order to advance in this direction, several MDG-F programmes developed **prevention strategies** aimed at challenging gender-based stereotypes and sociocultural patterns of behaviour that legitimize, exacerbate or tolerate violence against women. In **Colombia**, a large Educational Communication Strategy was designed based on the findings of a study that examined the country’s social and institutional tolerance of gender-based violence. Aiming to raise public awareness of the problem, to educate and mobilize institutional and social actors in preventing violence, and to sensitize audiences and build new patterns of masculinity and femininity, large-scale campaigns demystifying and condemning violence were disseminated through mass and alternative media and social mobilization activities. The strategy had both national and local coverage, with specific lines of communications adapted to the territorial and ethnic characteristics of the pilot areas.

5 United Nations General Assembly, 1993, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 20 December, A/RES/48/104, available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>.

In **Timor-Leste**, sensitization on human trafficking was carried out through drama performance and music in order to reach illiterate populations. Moreover, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign was a vehicle to disseminate the recently approved Law against Domestic Violence, particularly to challenge the misperception that that the law was conceived to separate families rather than to keep them together. Community theatre was also used to engage villagers in **Bangladesh** with information on gender-based violence, human rights and women’s empowerment: key messages on how to respond to gender-based violence reached 178,629 community members.

Survivors of gender based violence require timely access to shelter and medical, psychological, legal, economic and other counselling and **support services** in order to overcome the multiple consequences of abuse and rebuild lives. Established in 2009 in **Morocco**, the Batha Centre is managed by a local women’s association and empowers women-survivors of violence. The multifunctional centre provides a chain of services that range from crisis intervention (i.e. shelter, psychological counselling, clinical services) to support designed to empower survivors through training and provide access to economic opportunities. The centre has become a recognized model for Morocco and other countries in the region. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, three Multipurpose Community Centres provide holistic support services for the entire community, and particularly for survivors of sexual violence. With a focus on empowerment, the centres provide health and psychosocial assistance, literacy courses, childcare and support for income-generating activities.

All partners engaged in combating gender-based violence—such as law enforcement officials, judicial officers, medical personnel and social workers—require **capacity development** support to ensure the effectiveness and appropriate sensitivity of assistance they provide to survivors. A system that unites mandatory and systematic training, clear guidelines and protocols greatly improves response. Women’s knowledge of existing protections and remedies is equally critical.

In **Timor-Leste**, the joint programme developed a manual on investigating gender-based violence and subsequently trained police officers in a very broad range of issues related to gender-based violence and human trafficking. Such training has since become institutionalized, ensuring sustainability of the results attained and continuity of the work that began under the auspices of the joint programme. Such work also included developing standard procedures, protocols and guidelines—for support services and procedures such as data collection, forensic medical examination, and child referral and protection—and distributing these to various local partners who provide such services. The joint programme also strengthened the country's district-level coordination mechanisms, improved communications among service providers and enabled timely support to survivors.

In **Bolivia**, a Protocol for Attending to and Processing the Victims of Harassment and Political Violence in the Electoral Jurisdiction has been developed, aimed at officials of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and Departmental Electoral Tribunals. The gender joint programme in **Bangladesh** trained sex workers to improve their knowledge of HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence and available support services, such as legal aid.

Case studies also demonstrated that the participatory development of a sound **policy and legal framework** provides a solid foundation for preventing violence against women and improving survivor support. In **Timor-Leste**, a wide multisectoral, multi-stakeholder consultative process underpinned the formulation of the national plan on gender-based violence and led to the plan's approval in May 2012. Estimating costs involved in future implementation of the plan was instrumental to advocating for and obtaining an allocation of funds from the national budget. The Timor-Leste national action plan to combat human trafficking was drafted using similarly wide stakeholder consultations with community leaders, service providers, teachers and students. **Bolivia** also enacted the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women in 2012, as the final result of a cumulative process that began in 2000.

Improved capabilities and resources

There is increasing recognition that the often skewed distribution of capabilities, such as knowledge and health—encompassing sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights for women and adolescent girls, as well as resources and opportunities, such as productive assets, decent work and equal pay—needs to be addressed with renewed urgency to build women's economic and social security. Economically empowering women is critical to both realizing women's rights and achieving broader development goals of economic growth, poverty reduction, health improvement, access to education and improved social welfare. However, women around the world continue to face social and legal barriers to owning and inheriting property, land and other resources; accessing assets, credit and other services; or obtaining decent employment. Conscious of these numerous obstacles, the MDG-F has actively promoted improving women's capabilities and resources as a way to advance women's rights and to attain the MDGs.

Support to **income-generating activities**—via small-scale businesses or cooperatives that create an income source for women—has been a prominent MDG-F strategy of improving women's economic autonomy. In **Viet Nam**, a weaving cooperative enhanced its productivity and profitability by improving its managerial, organizational, technical and marketing skills, as well as gaining access to and benefitting from the increased availability of local raw materials. This has resulted in higher member income, new employment opportunities for women in the community and, ultimately, women's improved confidence, social standing and family or community support.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, 627 persons (largely women-survivors of violence) received technical training and start-up equipment and supplies to initiate income-generating activities. In addition, 43 land-cession contracts were executed to secure land tenure for 3,124 households, of which 1,643 were headed by women. Such programmatic interventions helped economically empower

vulnerable women and improved food security and nutrition for all household members.

In **Ecuador**, the MDG-F supported income-generating activities on the basis of their viability, environmental sustainability, potential for cultural revitalization of the indigenous and African-Ecuadorian peoples, and potential to advance gender equality. The joint programme facilitated the creation of 1,500 new income-generating positions, with women filling 800.

Collateral and other requirements by traditional financial institutions often exclude poor women from access to credit to start new or improve existing businesses. To overcome this barrier, the MDG-F supported the adaptation of **financial mechanisms** to women's needs and national contexts. In **Bolivia**, 4,445 poor indigenous women received an average of \$1,000 in financial assistance to engage in income-generating activities in fields such as agriculture, livestock farming and artisanal production. In **Honduras**, financial assistance provided to 1,071 vulnerable urban and rural youth, including 502 girls and women, allowed them to start small businesses. Young people also received gender-sensitization and vocational training, as well as technical assistance to implement their business plans.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the MDG-F facilitated the creation of 200 Mutual Societies for Solidarity for savings and credit. More than 75 per cent of their members are women, who can now access small credit lines to support household needs including home construction, acquisition of small livestock and educational expenses.

Conditional cash transfer programmes are increasingly recognized as pathways to both shorter-term poverty alleviation and longer-term prevention of intergenerational poverty transmission through investing in human capital, including education, healthcare and nutrition. In **Timor-Leste**, the Bolsa de Mãe programme provides a set amount of cash to select vulnerable populations, particularly women-headed households, with conditions for receiving funds linked to children's immunization and educational attainment. In order to support

more efficient and effective social reintegration of vulnerable groups, the MDG-F has also supported processes that identified and clarified vulnerability criteria, while strengthening the monitoring system for recipient compliance with cash-transfer conditions. The programme has allowed vulnerable women to have a measure of social protection, namely access to cash, as well as provided access to education and health services for their children.

Because women across the world play a key role in both **food security** and child nutrition, many programmes under the MDG-F Window on Children, Food Security and Nutrition target women as key change agents. In **Bangladesh**, rural women have received support to improve the yields and efficiency of homestead vegetable gardening and livestock rearing, becoming economically empowered as a result. Women's self-esteem and their roles in families are changing as well, as demonstrated by women's increased mobility and participation in family decision-making. The programme has also challenged and succeeded in changing certain traditional practices and beliefs that are detrimental to the health of women and their children, particularly those related to maternal nutrition and newborn feeding practices. As a result, women are now prioritizing and valuing their own food and nutritional needs.

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of women's poverty, a number of MDG-F programmes applied a **holistic** approach that combined women's economic empowerment with political empowerment, access to health and education, and community-level social mobilization. In **Ethiopia**, women-participants of the Leave no Women Behind programme improved their incomes and household food security through capacity building and access to credit. They also received training on reproductive health, literacy, health and hygiene, and other life skills. Participating women were targeted by all the intervention areas, which resulted in all around improvement of their lives. MDG-F programmes also actively engaged male community members, educators, health staff, associations and cooperatives in activities ranging from trainings to community dialogues and service provision. Increased access to and control over

resources and improved self-esteem led to significant improvements in women's status within their families and communities. Key behavioural changes included: reduced prevalence of child marriage and other harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation; reduced stigma and discrimination against women living with HIV and AIDS; increased school attendance, particularly among girls; and more equitable division of labour at household level.

In **Bolivia**, disadvantaged indigenous women augmented their incomes with the technical support and financial assistance provided by MDG-F programmes. Women's self-esteem and their participation in decision-making increased as a result of participating in citizenship education programmes. At the same time, 1,887 women obtained identification cards, making it possible for them to claim and exercise their political and civil rights and to access financial services.

Sexual and reproductive health is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of women's autonomy and, therefore, as central to sustainable development. The right to sexual and reproductive health implies that people, both men and women, are able to make free and informed decisions about their body, health, relationships, marriage and childbearing, free from coercion or violence. Such rights are closely linked to development priorities such as preventing child marriage and sexual violence, and halting transmission of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In **Namibia**, communities are taking action around HIV and AIDS through a methodology based on trust, accountability and participation. Results include a rise in the number of people opting for voluntary counselling and testing services, increased condom use, improved understanding of gender inequalities in the context of HIV and AIDS, and breaking new ground for discussing the previously taboo subjects of sex, child abuse, gender-based violence, early pregnancy, and HIV and AIDS stigma.

In **Ethiopia**, public discussions were used to sensitize community members on reproductive health, family planning, gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS, maternal health and harmful traditional practices. Parallel to interventions to increase demand, the programme also strengthened the supply side of reproductive health service delivery by providing drugs, obstetric equipment and other reproductive health materials to local health centres. This holistic approach contributed to an increase in the number of deliveries attended by trained health professionals and the number of those seeking voluntary counselling and testing for HIV and AIDS.

In **Ecuador**, the Ministry of Public Health has designed an innovative intercultural health system, including a culturally appropriate childbirth model that respects indigenous ancestral traditions. The implementation of this model has motivated a higher number of women from different communities to seek assistance in healthcare facilities, not only for antenatal care, but also for childbirth.

Increased participation in decision-making

The low numbers of women in public decision-making, from national parliaments to local councils, must be remedied to ensure that women feature prominently in democratic institutions and that their voices are heard in public and private deliberations. This has its roots in unequal power relations in the family and community. In some cases, even threats of violence prevent women from seeking or effectively carry out their public service roles, as was the case in **Bolivia**.

Participatory and gender-responsive **local planning processes** have great potential to bring women's voices into decision-making. In **Mexico**, three southern states have conducted gender-sensitive evaluations of water management mechanisms to identify women and men's needs and challenges related to water management and access. MDG-F programmes have also strengthened key sectoral institutions—responsible for water management, access to public information and civil protection—to integrate culturally and gender-sensitive approaches into their work, and facilitated civil society organizations' participation in water management decisions and activities. Similarly, women's participation in the administrative boards that manage rural aqueducts in **Panama** has been identified as key to the sustainability of MDG-F interventions, because women migrate less and hence maintain greater permanence in the community.

Some practical barriers to participation are relatively easy to surmount given political will. In **Bolivia**, only 22 per cent women participants of the MDG-F joint programme voted, for **lack of identity documents** and information. Now, 12,817 women are enjoying full citizenship and rights for the first time, having obtained the birth certificates and identification cards required to vote or access credit. Today, 97 per cent of participating women take part in local and national electoral processes and can also register organizations authorized for political participation. Of women-participants in the MDG-F-supported training sessions on exercising citizen rights, 30 per cent have been nominated for elected community

and productive organizations' leadership posts—and more than half of the nominees have been elected.

A strong **women's machinery** is instrumental to improving the consistency of government action to advance women's rights and gender equality by providing leadership, advocacy and technical support to mainstream gender in all policy areas. In **Guatemala**, MDG-F support improved the capacity and recognition of the Presidential Secretary for Women and the Office in Defence of Indigenous Women, ultimately enabling the integration of both gender and ethnic equality approaches in government planning and budgeting processes, at both central and departmental level.

Acknowledging the necessity of public commitment and action to furthering progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, the MDG-F has supported the elaboration of **gender equality policies** and the integration of a gender perspective into policies, plans and budgets. In 2011, the Ministry of Culture of the **State of Palestine** approved the first-ever gender-responsive Palestinian Culture Sector Strategy and its action plan, which set measures to overcome the obstacles that hinder women's participation. The ministry's Gender Unit also received capacity-building support to facilitate the implementation of the new strategy.

Women's increased participation has the potential to make gender equality a central objective and consideration when developing public policies that can advance women's human rights. In **Ecuador**, the Ministry for the Coordination of the Natural and Cultural Heritage adopted a ground-breaking Gender and Interculturality Sectoral Policy in 2011, aiming to promote equal opportunities for the indigenous, African-Ecuadorian and Montubio nationalities and peoples, with a special emphasis on women.

Finally, budgets are a clear reflection of a government's social and economic priorities. Therefore, implementing commitments towards gender equality requires intentional measures to incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting frameworks and to fund specific investments

addressing gender gaps. **Gender-responsive budgeting** seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. In **Nicaragua**, 15 pilot municipalities have effectively mainstreamed gender considerations into their development plans and budgets. The national budget and those of the ministries of health and labour have also mainstreamed gender. Moreover, nine national government commissions and seven local governments have institutionalized gender units.

In **Timor-Leste**, key governmental, parliamentary and civil society stakeholders have enhanced their knowledge of gender-responsive budgeting. As a result, 20 per cent of the Ministry of Education and Health budget is now targeted to women and

children, and the budget allocated to implement the Law against Domestic Violence has increased. In parallel, a new non-governmental working group on gender-responsive budgeting has begun to advocate for fair budget allocations for women's needs, and some of the key demands it put forward have already been successfully taken up by the parliament.

Conclusion

Case studies follow in their entirety. They are intended for use by both policy-makers as well as programme practitioners. While they are not prescriptive, the lessons and experience that they contain can inform actions to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women among a wide spectrum of development actors.

FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE



UNITED NATIONS JOINT PROGRAMME ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Joint Programme: UN Joint Programme on Violence against Women, Bangladesh

MDG-F Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO. Government agencies: Ministry of Education (MOE), Local Government & Rural Development (LGRD), Ministry of Expatriate Welfare & Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW), Ministry of Information (MoI), Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW), Ministry of Women & Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Youth & Sports (MoYS).



Empowering Vulnerable Women



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Violence against Women (the Programme) aimed to contribute to the long term sustainable socioeconomic development of rural Bangladesh through poverty alleviation in rural areas, and by supporting poor women under development programmes as indicated in the Bangladesh Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and based on its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Programme has encouraged the adoption and implementation of policies for preventing violence and supporting survivors by enhancing the capacities of the government, improving information (data) and providing support to NGOs and civil society. It has also invested in changing the attitudes and behaviour of men, women, boys and girls to reduce violence against women (VAW) and discriminatory practices such as dowry, early marriage and trafficking. In addition, it has supported the extension of services for survivors of gender-based violence with immediate care, relief and rehabilitation through a comprehensive package including the expansion, renovation and improvement of the existing shelter system in select programme intervention sites.

2. Initial Situation

When the programme began, organizations responsible for ensuring access to services - the Union Parishad¹ standing committees on Women and Child Welfare, Culture and Sports - were inactive. Furthermore, the funds for the District Legal Aid Committees (DLAC), which were allocated to ensure legal services to survivors of violence, were going unused. There was a lack of communication between the Union Parishad standing committees, human rights organizations at national and district levels and the DLAC.

Analysis also demonstrated that survivors did not have information about the facilities provided by the government and NGOs, and that the majority

of women were not aware of their rights. As a result, they were unable to obtain necessary support. The Government of Bangladesh and other organizations also had inadequate systems for providing information on services and rights, nor were these systems enabled to collect prevalence data, record the number of cases filed or track the causal factors linked to VAW. Consequently, the problem remained unaddressed.

In the seven districts where UNFPA worked with the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs (MoWCA), there was no shelter available where survivors of violence could obtain holistic support. Women and girls were not able to come forward to speak against the perpetrators, as abuse and violence against women, particularly domestic violence, were generally perceived as a private matter.

3. Strategy

An objective of the Programme was to develop a mechanism to set up effective linkages between different service providers and the survivors, as the main concern was that while there were agencies with resources available to provide support, they were unable to benefit survivors due to lack of information. The Programme focused on building the capacities of the Union Parishad standing committees (UP-SC) on Women and Child Welfare, Culture and Sports, in collaboration with the DLAC, to ensure the provision of legal services to female survivors among marginalized groups. A database was piloted in 44 unions under six upazilas (sub-districts) in six project districts, with information on women survivors of violence and the services provided. The database was compiled with upazila-based information and first shared with the respective Upazila Women's Affairs Officers. It was then further analysed and shared with the respective District Women Affairs Officers.

Recognizing the consequences of violence against women on poverty reduction interventions, the Programme linked with the programmes Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets

¹ The smallest rural administrative and local government units in Bangladesh.

(REOPA)² and The Local Governance Support Project: Learning and Innovation Component (LGSP-LIC) (two projects implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives together with UNDP) to address the issue of gender-based violence. The project was implemented in Barguna, Habiganj, Narsingdi, Feni, Satkhira, and Sirajganj districts until June 2013 by BRAC³ as the technical and field implementation partner.

An important objective of the Programme was to empower rights holders, especially rural women, and including vulnerable groups, by increasing access to justice through capacity-building and sensitization, awareness building and mobilization of communities. The targeted rights holders included members of REOPA WCG (Women Crew Groups—women employed under the social safety net scheme) and also local communities.

Another objective was to build the capacities of duty bearers by activating and building the capacity of two nationally mandated committees (UP-SC and DLAC headed by District Judges) for rendering support to survivors; enhancing capacities for the local level government officials, Union Facilitation Teams (Local Youth) and Women Development Forum members (elected UP women leaders) for providing support and care for women and girls who are vulnerable, and/or have survived violence; and supporting the establishment of linkages between UP-SC and human rights organizations at national and district levels.

It also invested in significant community outreach efforts, including through the effective use of community theater to reach large populations, many of whom are illiterate.

2 REOPA is a social safety net project that works to provide employment primarily to vulnerable rural women through road maintenance projects. It currently employs 24,440 such women to work in groups of 33 on project sites nationwide. Women are selected through a lottery after they have been short-listed as destitute, socially marginalized and unable to meet the basic food needs of themselves or their families.

3 BRAC is an international NGO whose mission is to “empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Our interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enable men and women to realise their potential”.

4. Progress and Results

In order to address issues related to data and information needs, a VAW database was piloted in the six districts of the project. The database is building an evidence base regarding the violence affecting women in 44 unions under six Upazilas of six districts. The Women Development Forum, Union Facilitation Teams (Local Youth), members of REOPA Women Crew Group and the BRAC Palli Shomaj (Village Federation) are collecting field data. This information is compiled by BRAC as the field partner and then shared with the respective Upazila and District Women Affairs Officers. One aim was to strengthen the coordination of information between the demand side (community members, UP/UZ⁴ Standing Committee, UZ/District Women Affairs Offices) and the supply side (DLAC and District Administration including police, hospitals, shelter homes, BRAC and other NGOs). The pilot testing intervention under the project has actively involved the respective six Upazila Women Affairs Officers (UWAOs) and the corresponding six District Women Affairs Officers (DWAOs) who are currently reporting monthly on VAW incidents to the district administration and to the central level.

As a result of this pilot initiative, data have been collected on the number and type of incidents (such as acid attacks, rape, murder, physical torture, dowry, early marriage, family conflict, suicide and hilla marriage⁵) as well as type of support provided (such as court cases by DLAC, counselling and legal aid by BRAC, shalish⁶ by the UP, and others). From September 2012 through May 2013, a total of 811 incidents were reported from 44 unions and have been included in the pilot database.

Working through the REOPA programme allowed direct access to the Women Crew Group (WCG) members, many of whom endured various forms of violence in their lives. Over 97 per cent (23,638) of WCG members received training as a part of the BRAC Community Empowerment Programme,

4 Upazila, second lowest level of local government.

5 Temporary, often forced marriages.

6 Traditional system for informal dispute resolution.

including medical aid, counselling and rehabilitation. They were also made aware of their rights under Bangladeshi law, and that common cultural practices such as beatings or child marriages are illegal. Over 23,800 REOPA WCG members received a service card each with a hotline number and information related to obtaining immediate support if faced with violence. As a result of their participation in the training, the women have become aware of issues such as gender-based discrimination; the concept, categories and causes of violence against women; steps to take for prevention and protection against violence; and relevant laws. A positive outcome of the training was that 90 per cent of the participants reported understanding that women must be free from these injustices in order to fully enjoy their rights and to effectively participate in society. After receiving the training, the WCG members also reported becoming more confident about asserting their rights. They are combating violence in their own lives, as well as in the lives of others.

Capacity-building activities also targeted District-level officials and were attended by District Commissioners, Additional District Commissioners, Upazila Executive Officers, police superintendents, civil surgeons and judges. Over 4,900 district, Upazila and local government officials and members received sensitization and capacity-building support so that they could provide counselling and survivor support.

Over 4,900 UP members received training on VAW issues. All of the male UP members participated in this training. The objective of the training was to sensitize elected representatives about gender-based discrimination and violence against women in the family and society, so they have the capacity to prevent violence and be able to take effective steps to provide emergency support to survivors. Before the training the members were not interested in attending because they felt that VAW was not an issue of concern. They believed the training to be only for women and that there was nothing relevant for them to discuss about VAW. Gradually, upon becoming better informed about gender-based discrimination, they became more aware about discrimination and VAW issues in their personal, family,

as well as community lives. UP members have since made commitments to assist survivors of VAW and to continue discussions on VAW prevention with community members.

The capacities of 2,335 local youth (Union Facilitation Team members) and 1,003 elected women leaders on VAW have been enhanced so that they can act as whistleblowers in their communities to bring justice for the poor women who do not know what actions to take if a survivor of violence approaches them and solicits support. They have also become sensitized about different laws related to violence against women in Bangladesh and are now able to give guidance and aid to the survivors through knowledge of immediate measures to take in cases of violence and about the types of facilities available.

Popular theatre was used in this programme as a tool for information dissemination to the rural population. BRAC staff assisted local artists to develop community dramas focused on the issue of violence against women. Over 535 village level popular dramas on VAW, human rights and women empowerment were staged where 178,629 community members attended and heard key messages on how to respond to VAW.

Key results of the interventions include:

1. 100 per cent of marriages have been registered (total 15,511)
2. 1,056 community members solicited legal, medical and counselling services
3. 858 family conflicts have been resolved
4. 243 early marriages have been stopped

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Concerted efforts and support from different actors are key for stopping violence against women. Success depends on strong linkages between women's groups, local government bodies and national government services.
- It is important to provide typically excluded women with information regarding the availability of services and assistance in their areas.

- Working through existing networks, such as those developed around the REOPA, helps to leverage resources and to maximize results.
- Popular Theatre is an effective tool for information dissemination, awareness building and increasing the knowledge base of rural populations on various socio-economic issues that affect their lives and to mobilize women and men against social ills and injustices.
- There is no alternative to government institutions for ensuring sustainability of project outcomes. Much can be achieved through strengthening the capacity of all government offices working on VAW.
- Involvement of the district authority, who plays a convening role of the concerned Government officials from different sectors and promotes positive attitudes toward sharing responsibilities, is the driving force for delivering the utmost support required to the survivors of violence.
- Service provision and community mobilization go hand in hand, so that local people become more aware of women's right issues and seek service to redress the VAW.
- Identification and celebration of positive masculine practices toward women's empowerment and facilitation of community dialogue hold potential to instill self-reflexive practices among participating men to bring positive changes in their communities.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

- **Developing a national VAW database:** Continue creation of a credible database on VAW in Bangladesh, including completion of the Policy Dialogue on the National Database on VAW in order to highlight key national achievements, challenges and the way forward based on studies, findings and field experience.
- **The importance of reaching out to rural areas:** Increase popular theatre and dramas in order to have a greater impact on information dissemination on ending VAW, as popular theatre and dramas have proven to be extremely effective.
- **Capacity-building of government staff at community level:** Promote the application of lessons learned through follow up trainings, which provide an opportunity for members to share their experiences, as well as to reinforce the content learned.

7. Main sources

- Hardcopy booklet on VAW, database mapping, case studies (which will include a multimedia CD with all the relevant documents, tools and manuals)
- Active database on VAW
- Lessons from the implementation of the MDG-F Joint Programme to address Violence Against Women in Bangladesh (forthcoming)

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY WITHIN THE INTEGRAL PROGRAMME AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence in Colombia

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN Women (lead agency), UNFPA, IOM, High Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, Council of the Tourist District of Cartagena, Council of the District of Buenaventura

Ending Female Genital Mutilation



Singing Against Gender Violence



The impact of the MDG Achievement Fund



Closing the Door to Gender-Based Violence



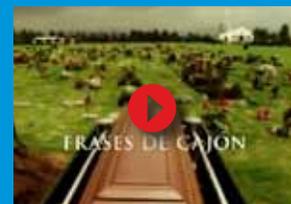
Equal Opportunities for Women



Violence against Women Is Everyone's Business



Preventing Violence against Women



Thinking out of the Box to Protect Women

1. Introduction

From 2008 to 2012, the Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence (the Programme) designed and implemented an Educational Communication Strategy (the Strategy) aimed at reducing the Colombian population's social and institutional tolerance to violence against women. With a clear conceptual focus—combating gender-based violence demands a transformation of the cultural and social beliefs that lie at the heart of the problem—the Programme assembled a great diversity of actors from government institutions, civil society and the media to join forces in the design and dissemination of culturally sensitive messages demystifying and condemning violence. The various campaigns launched as part of the Strategy were disseminated through mass and alternative media and through social mobilization actions. The strategy gained national and regional coverage, with specific lines of communication tailored to the territorial and ethnic characteristics of the pilot cities of Buenaventura and Cartagena.

2. Initial Situation

The Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence sought to contribute to the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence (GBV) in Colombia, with a special emphasis on the most prevalent and most serious forms in the national context: partner violence, sexual violence, trafficking of persons, conflict-related violence and harmful traditional practices which violate the rights of indigenous women.

The Programme, carried out by UN Women, UNFPA and IOM from 2008 to 2012 was based on three components. The first was prevention, aimed at promoting the transformation of individual, social and institutional behaviors, attitudes and practices that promoted and legitimized GBV. The second was strengthening quality holistic services for survivors of GBV. The third was the development of a legal and public policy framework for GBV. In addition to actions on a national scale, the Programme identified four pilot territories—Buenaventura, Cartagena, Pasto and the indigenous communities of Pueblo Rico and Mistrató—in which all the strategic axes of the three components were focused.

From the moment of its conception, the Programme was based on the premise that the first and essential step in designing effective strategies to combat GBV is to understand the cultural and social context and other driving factors. With this aim the Study on the Social and Institutional Tolerance to Gender-based Violence in Colombia was carried out. This study, undertaken in 2010 on the basis of a survey of 1,080 persons and 300 institutions providing health, justice and education services in 10 of the country's towns and cities, made it clear that the "social and cultural beliefs deeply rooted in Colombian society, generating rigid gender roles and patterns of sexist, patriarchal and discriminatory behaviors, facilitate, allow, excuse or legitimize violence against women." To bring relevant changes in the GBV situation, therefore, requires an emphasis on the transformation of discriminatory ideas and practices historically embedded in the Colombian population. It was with this objective that the Programme designed its Educational Communication Strategy.

The Strategy was developed in the context of a favorable legislative framework, after the passing of Law 1257 of 2008⁷ and Order 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court,⁸ which oblige public institutions to develop communication strategies for the prevention of violence against women.

3. Objectives

- Educate, inform and mobilize audiences—collectively and individually—to build and adopt new patterns of masculinity and femininity, new behaviours and partner and family roles.
- Challenge stereotypical patterns of masculinity and femininity.
- Educate and mobilize institutional and social actors to prevent GBV, detect it early and act.

7 Law 1257 of 2008, which lays down rules for awareness-raising, prevention and the prosecution of forms of violence and discrimination against women, reforms the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and Law 294 of 1996 and lays down other provisions.

8 Order 092 of the Colombian Constitutional Court covers the protection of the fundamental rights of women who are victims of forced displacement on account of armed conflict.

4. Key Actors

One of the Strategy's key success factors was its ability to call on a considerable diversity of institutional actors, at both national and local levels; civil society, especially women's organizations; international cooperation organizations; communications media; the private sector and opinion leaders. Following are the main actors involved:

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- The High Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women
- The Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies
- The Inter-institutional Communications Committee for the Prevention of Violence against Women
- The Town Council of Pasto
- The Council of the Tourist District of Cartagena
- The Council of the District of Buenaventura
- Inter-Institutional Networks for Decent Treatment in Cartagena, Pasto and Buenaventura

PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION ACTIONS

- The European Cinema Festival Foundation in Colombia
- The Woman is Audio-visual Foundation
- The Red Kayman Foundation
- The Tridha Foundation
- The Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra
- Corpocarnaval

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

- Caracol Television
- El Tiempo Publishing House
- AVON
- Babilla Ciné
- El Espectador – Cromos
- Semana Publications
- RCN Radio
- Colmundo Radio
- Colombian Union of Advertising Companies

5. Strategy

The Educational Communication Strategy:

- Anchored in the fundamental premise that combating GBV requires a change to the cultural and social beliefs that lie behind the problem;
- Based on the findings of the Study on the Social and Institutional Tolerance to Gender-based Violence in Colombia;
- Adheres to the precepts of the Secretary-General's "UNITE to End Violence against Women" campaign;
- Incorporates the promotion of non-violent masculinities;
- Combines and complements educational and capacity-building processes with mass and inter-personal communication;
- Promotes alliances with mass and alternative communications media;
- Articulated through social organizations to carry out social mobilization and citizen actions;
- Includes artistic, recreational and sporting components;
- Covers both national and territorial levels, with culturally sensitive lines of communication suited to the country's territorial and ethnic diversity; and
- Promotes, supports and works hand in hand with local and national Colombian State strategies in this area.

Considering all these elements, the Programme designed and implemented a Strategy which included, among others, four strands of work:

- The "Nothing justifies violence against women" campaign;
- Support for the Colombian State communication strategy "Woman: You have rights;"
- Regionalization of the Buenaventura strategy "Not one more;" and
- Regionalization of the Cartagena strategy "Hey, Man! Don't beat the beauty."⁹

⁹ "Oye men, no le pegue a la negra"

The Programme focused its strategic lines of work in four pilot territories, the cities of Cartagena and Buenaventura among them. Both cities have some characteristics in common: a high level of Afro-Colombian communities, large marginalized sectors and high levels of segregation and poverty. For an integrated approach to GBV, both cities had important characteristics: a committed institutional framework in the case of Cartagena, and a weak institutional framework but active civil society in the case of Buenaventura. The Educational Communication Strategy took as its starting point the recognition of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the pilot territories and, in each of them, it proposed culturally sensitive communicative actions, with messages that recognized and valorized their particular ethnic and territorial features.

THE “NOTHING JUSTIFIES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” CAMPAIGN

The strategy for the Campaign’s design and implementation developed in four stages:

Stage 1: Collecting information and constructing the over-arching arguments of the Strategy’s main ideas (Tolerance Study)

Seventeen of the beliefs and prejudices identified in the Tolerance Study were selected. They touch on patterns of femininity and masculinity, concepts of love in the couple, the view of violence as a means of solving conflicts and the justifications given for VAW. For each of these beliefs the qualitative and statistical evidence available was analysed and an argument was developed to counter the stereotype with reality.

Stage 2: Public relations and strategic advocacy with public and private bodies, opinion leaders and high level members of the Government to secure the signing of a National Pact against GBV in Colombia

The Programme mapped relevant institutional and social actors. Government bodies and political parties were visited; with the aim of exploring their VAW-related practices, training dynamics, their interest in promoting the Communication Strategy and the body responsible for this. The institutions

were approached with evidence, including the Tolerance Study findings, in order to speak a common language and establish key principles and messages. The Programme secured undertakings from various institutional actors.

Stage 3: The high impact mass communication campaign aimed at raising the awareness of the population of the seriousness of the VAW problem in Colombia

Using the slogan of “Nothing justifies violence against women,” seven radio slots (on sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual violence, physical violence and male honour as an excuse for violence), two television commercials, three poster designs and three postcard designs were developed. The campaign counted on the collaboration of famous male and female actors who donated their images and voices, which also benefited the mobilization of the communications media around the campaign.

Two commercials were the center of the mass communication. The first promoted the social disapproval of male aggressors’ behaviours. The second argued that the consumption of alcohol did not justify violence against women.

The launch of the campaign benefited from the participation of the United Nations system in Colombia, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Equality for Women, survivors of GBV, journalists and male and female actors. More than 40 media outlets covered the launch of the Campaign, which continued making news in the media for months afterwards through continued free press actions.

The Campaign established a strategic alliance with one of the most important communications media in the country, Caracol TV, thanks to which it obtained: an average of 20 prime time broadcasts per day, free of charge, of the two television commercials produced by the Programme; 10 videos made by the channel, with its artists and journalists as spokespersons for the Campaign; the activation of the channel’s social networks with hash tags referring to the topic; the reading of Twitter messages on Caracol Channel news



broadcasts; and the creation of a five-minute section on the Caracol Channel News focused on analysing the problem of GBV. It is calculated that Caracol TV's contribution to the Campaign, in the form of pro-bono exposure, amounted to some US\$760,000 per month.

Stage 4: Social mobilization, media presence, community education and awareness-raising

Having established the Campaign, the Programme focused on social mobilization. "Citizen Brigades" were set up in the cities of Cartagena, Buenaventura, Pasto and Bogotá to mobilize citizens, artists, senators, journalists and opinion leader towards the eradication of GBV. As part of the 25th November celebrations, some 1,200 phrases expressing social tolerance to GBV were gathered together to be buried in a symbolic act to commit citizens to socially sanctioning aggressors.

SUPPORT FOR THE COLOMBIAN STATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In June 2009 the Inter-institutional Communications Committee to Prevent Violence against Women in Colombia was formed as the body responsible for the design and implementation of the Colombian State Communication Strategy. The Committee is made up of 13 national bodies with responsibility for the prevention of and response to GBV, the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence in Colombia and a feminist organization with expertise in gender and communications. This Committee, without precedent in Colombia, worked in a coordinated manner during one year to design the "Woman: You have rights" communication strategy, approved in June 2010.

The Colombian State Communication Strategy had as objectives providing information on the State's legal mandate; debunking the myth of violence against women being "natural;" promoting male



and female officials' and survivors' understanding of GBV; and building confidence around the new legal framework.

The Strategy defined three target groups: institutions and officials of both genders at national, departmental and local levels, non-perpetrator men and society at large.

Implementation of the Strategy turned on five components:

- **Social mobilization**, to disseminate the educational content;
- **Mass communication**, to give public recognition from State institutions to the commitment to non-violence against women.
- **Internal State communication**, that is, communication from the State for the State, with an internal message for government institutions themselves, reinforcing the role and institutional mandate, with the recognition and enforceability of women's rights.
- **External communication** from the institutions, by means of the channels each institution uses to communicate with other groups—private institutions, social associations or the public—as part of its institutional activity.
- **Advocacy**, public relations and education and sensitization of communications media.

The Campaign was designed to cascade through the various administrative levels, that is, from national level to its offices at departmental, district and municipal levels. By 2011, 12 municipalities and 16 departments (half the departments in the country) had committed to it. The Campaign adopted the motto of “Woman: You have rights. We are with you,” under which were produced: three television commercials with their respective radio audio tracks; six radio spots; an educational video and a video clip about Law 1257 of 2008; a video with the most significant figures about the GBV problem; five posters and five postcards.

The campaign included male spokespersons as presenters, public figures who placed their image and their voice at the Campaign's service to transmit a clear message rejecting GBV and promoting women's right to a life free from violence. Thus, the strategy incorporated the promotion of a non-violent masculinity, fostering a masculinity committed to change and to combating discrimination and challenging behaviors and beliefs that tolerate and perpetuate GVB. At the beginning there was resistance to this from the women's movement, which argued that by choosing men as spokespersons, men were having their say again, instead of women. It is important to emphasize that this tension diluted, thanks to the positive attitudes of the spokesmen and the good media response to the campaign.

One of the most innovative aspects of the campaign was its emphasis on work within public institutions, for which a discourse of effectiveness, efficiency and the duties of the civil service was adopted. The campaign promoted the dissemination of knowledge about women's rights and the obligations of public institutions under Law 1257 of 2008, informing, educating and raising the awareness of female and male public servants about the re-victimization they sometimes inadvertently inflicted on women through lack of knowledge.

The campaign established alliances with the private sector, using an approach of co-responsibility between State, society and business for combating discrimination and gender inequality. Action plans were implemented in 18 private companies in the areas of cosmetics marketing, development credit, design, art and fashion, transport, extraction of mining resources, universities, communication and technologies.

REGIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY: BUENAVENTURA—"NOT ONE MORE"

The regionalization process of the Educational Communication Strategy started in Buenaventura on 25 November 2009, on the occasion of the celebration of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, when the Programme joined in with the call made by local women's organizations under the motto of "Not one more... because indifference is our worst ally and impunity its greatest enemy."

For the Strategy's design and implementation the Programme worked with women's organizations and Town Council bodies participating in the **Decent Treatment and GBV Prevention Working Group**. Together they defined the strategies, design and content of each of the activities.

The Educational Communication Strategy in Buenaventura had as its objective "to inform the citizens of Buenaventura about and raising their awareness of the problem of GBV, with a focus on women's rights, through mass and alternative communications media." Later, in 2011, the Strategy broadened its field of action to the dissemination

of the Public Policy of Equal Opportunities for the Women of Buenaventura.

Three target populations were defined:

- **Women:** to promote in them the construction of an identity as citizens with rights, including the right to a life free from violence;
- **Men:** to inform them that violence against women is a crime and to urge them not to exert it; and
- **The communications media:** as allies to reduce social tolerance, through raising the profile of the problem and the dissemination and promotion of women's rights.

The motto "Not one more" sought to send a clear message rejecting violence as well as demanding an end to impunity. The Working Group was unanimous that the campaign images should be in keeping with the social construction of Afro-Colombian



women and they should also demonstrate the possibility of building solidarity and care among women. The goal was to generate a positive valorization of Afro-Colombian women, thus questioning the racialization and hyper-sexualization which had been culturally constructed around them and which had come to justify sexual violence throughout the country. The image is of two women protecting one another and the logo is an open hand held upwards in a “stop” gesture.

The Social Tolerance Study provided input for the creation of the media items. A song “Not one more” was composed. Various media items were created (posters, postcards, radio spots and videos), including one specifically directed at men, and a particular item to raise awareness and recognition of trafficking as a form of GBV, jointly produced with the Inter-Institutional Committee to Combat Trafficking.

Social mobilization was a central component to the Strategy, promoting marches, demonstrations and public hearings, and artistic expressions such as film clubs and theatrical works. High media impact events were organized, such as a football match on the occasion of 25 November 2010 with the participation of ex-professional footballers from Buenaventura and members of the Colombian women’s national team, under the motto of “More football against GBV.”

The Programme built alliances—mainly with women’s organizations—that invigorated the Educational Communication Strategy and gave it social sustainability. Public institutions actively committed to the Strategy and, if they did not provide financial resources, they provided human, technological, logistical, communication and dissemination resources to support the activities. The private sector joined in through local communications media (mainly radio), which undertook to publicize the “Not one more” strategic actions; provide information on women’s rights, Law 1258 and the ways women survivors could get help; present GBV-related news items from a women’s rights approach; and prevent violence against women by encouraging reporting and using non-sexist graphics and written and spoken language.

REGIONALIZATION OF THE STRATEGY: CARTAGENA – “HEY, MAN! DON’T BEAT THE BEAUTY”

In Cartagena, the Educational Communication Strategy of the Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence was structured around the Action Plan 2009-2011 of the local Public Policy “Women of Cartagena in full Enjoyment of Our Rights”. With regard to the prevention of GBV, this Plan contained the following actions:

- Awareness sessions on GBV and mass dissemination of Law 1257 of 2008;
- “Districts free from GBV” competition;
- Prevention of prostitution, trafficking of women and sexual exploitation; and
- The “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty, because this woman is respected”¹⁰ programme.

The Programme’s four actions turned on joint work with Cartagena institutions, the Participation and Social Development Secretariat, the Women’s Affairs Group Coordinator and women’s organizations.

An **Inter-Institutional Communications Workgroup** was formed with the aim to develop a campaign:

- Culturally sensitive and suited to the characteristics of the population of Cartagena;
- That incorporated the content and results of the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of GBV;”
- Focused on three target groups: women, men and communications media; and
- Using mass and alternative media and inter-personal communications initiatives.

The central motto of the campaign was “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty” in the voice of famous Caribbean music singer Joe Arroyo. In the beginning, both the campaign message and the choice of a man as spokesperson generated unfavorable reactions from women’s organizations, which had not been consulted on this matter. Nevertheless, the campaign’s excellent reception from Cartagena society eventually eliminated any reservations.

¹⁰ “Oye, men, no le pegue a la negra, que esa negra se me respeta”



Later, in order to reach poorer neighborhoods, the Communications Workgroup decided to use *champeta* music, as something for which the community had ownership and which was particular to Cartagena. And so “Hey, Man! Don’t beat the beauty” moved from Joe Arroyo’s salsa to a champeta rhythm in the voice of Viviano Torres, designated as the new spokesperson of the campaign. To publicize the campaign, various media items were developed (posters, postcards, six radio spots and two videos), which were widely disseminated by local communications media. Alternative communications were also used, such as invisible theatre, puppets, new technologies and the mobile discotheques known locally as *u6*.

The campaign is also an excellent example of inter-institutional coordination. The Programme and Cartagena Town Hall established a permanent alliance. The administration demonstrated openness, and several departments committed human, technological or logistical resources, as was the case with the Transport Secretariat, Secretariat of the Interior, the Institute of Recreation and Sport and the Citizen Culture Programme. The National Police made available to the campaign a permanent 30 minute weekly slot on its station. The private sector joined in via non-violence pacts. At the same time, the Cartagena Strategy was in keeping with the Colombian State “Woman: You have rights” strategy and with the “Nothing Justifies Violence against Women” Programme strategy.

6. Progress and Results

The Educational Communication Strategy of the Colombian Integral Programme against Gender-based Violence aimed to contribute to reducing

the Colombian population’s social and institutional tolerance to GBV. To assess its impact, and that of the Integral Programme as a whole, the “Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia” will be re-run by 2014. Its results will provide evidence-based data on the extent to which the Strategy has succeeded in bringing about transformations in the beliefs and practices of the Colombian population towards violence against women.

Nonetheless, in the absence of hard data about its impact, indirect evidence does exist pointing to the Strategy having led to significant cultural and institutional changes. In the interviews held to write this document, greater awareness of the forms of GBV and of the obligation to respond to them was reported on the part of public institutions; as well as an increase in intentions to report by women survivors of violence and a better response by Family Police Services participating in the Programme.

Turning to the Programme’s immediate results and outcomes, the following are worthy of note:

- The creation of the Inter-institutional Communications Committee to prevent Violence against Women in Colombia;
- The regionalization in 2011 of the “Woman: You have rights” strategy with a view to its being implemented nationwide. Twelve municipalities, 16 departments (half the departments in the country) and 13 private sector companies signed up to it;
- The raising of awareness of the communications media and public opinion to the GBV problem, as reflected in the more than 800 interviews, press releases and publications

made during the Programme's implementation, as well as in the strategic alliances established with various communications media, especially with Caracol TV;

- The mass dissemination of the "Nothing Justifies Violence against Women" campaign, via:
 - The production of seven radio spots (on sexual harassment, psychological violence, sexual violence, physical violence and male honour as an excuse for violence) using the voices of famous national figures from the world of entertainment, which were broadcasted on 600 community stations across the country by agreement with the Ministry of Communications, on 25 Cadena Caracol stations via its Corporate Social Responsibility Office and on 35 commercial stations on a paid basis;
 - The production of two television commercials (on the social sanctioning of aggressors and the consumption of alcohol as a justification for violence) and their broadcast on eight regional television channels, via the Television Commission's Civic Code; and on 20 broadcasts a day by Caracol TV via its Corporate Social Responsibility Office;
 - Three posters and 10,000 copies distributed and used at 100 bus stops and on billboards located at high traffic areas; 100,000 postcards in three different designs distributed at restaurants, hotels, theatres, motels and at public events nationwide;
 - A free press strategy with considerable exposure in the press and on radio and television, which started with raising expectations around the campaign launch and was attended by 40 communications media. From September 2011 to March 2012, the free press strategy ensured the Campaign's presence on 130 radio, press and television items (34 per cent local media and 66 per cent national media) which, had they been arranged on a paid basis, would have incurred a cost of nearly US\$400,000;
 - Citizen mobilization, in the form of cultural actions and citizen brigades in Cartagena, Buenaventura, Pasto and Bogotá.

- The formulation, within the framework set by the National Commission for the Regulation of Advertising in Colombia, of technical specifications for gender-sensitive advertising to be incorporated into the Code of Advertising Self-regulation issued by the Commission.
- The mobilization of a broad range of institutional actors at national and local levels, women's organizations, communications media and international cooperation to work in a coordinated fashion.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

Approach: The approach used to structure and implement the Strategy, under the organizing principle that it should contribute to changing the patriarchal culture that was at the heart of the problem of violence against women, facilitated the taking of decisions on the how, where, what and with whom.

Inter-institutional: The processes of inter-sectoral dialogue and consensus, in spite of taking up much time and coordination effort, made it possible to join forces, establish institutional processes and create ownership on the part of all the actors involved. Linking all the actors in the process (institutional bodies, women's organizations, mixed organizations and communications media) enhanced the Programme's recognition as agent and interlocutor, while at the same time clearly placing GBV on the public agenda and in social debate. The permanent, free-flowing dialogue between the actors opened new channels of communication, coordination and support to define common objectives for citizen mobilization and collective lobbying.

Evidence-based: Basing the design of the Strategy on the results of the "Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia" facilitated the construction of key messages that challenged the deepest-rooted and most change-resistant beliefs and prejudices that normalized, downplayed and legitimized violence against women. Moreover, approaching institutional bodies with statistical data and qualitative evidence provided a technical case that facilitated the engagement of decision-makers.

Adaptation to context: Communication starts with understanding the setting, from the macro-structure to micro-spaces. The use of culturally sensitive messages, which acknowledge and celebrate territorial and ethnic identity, is an essential prerequisite for understanding, reflection and transformation. The participation of local actors and, especially, local women's organizations and local communications media, is essential to draw the attention of local territories to the communication strategy.

Masculinities: Engaging men to transmit a message rejecting violence contributed to the promotion of new models of non-violent masculinities, at the same time as easing the opening of discussion and gaining the attention of communications media. The tensions which originally arose from giving men's voices center stage, rather than women's, relaxed in light of the favourable social reaction to men coming out against GBV, when they were seen and heard not as aggressors but as part of the solution.

Civil servants: Carrying out campaigns within public institutions made it possible to set up clear mechanisms for information, awareness-raising and training on the responsibilities of institutions towards the prevention of, response to and sanctioning of gender-based violence. Involving civil servants as agents for the communication, transmission and transformation of social patterns, meant that administrative units were less resistant to change and to the transformation of mind-sets and practices that tolerated GBV.

Media agenda: Generating information and new understandings of GBV produced a significant reaction on the part of communications media. Carrying out actions with high media impact in a short period of time made it possible to place and keep the GBV issue on the media agenda and encouraged institutions publicly to take up positions on the problem.

Community mobilization: The use of alternative communications media and social and citizen mobilization around the rejection of violence against women were key factors in reaching different sections of the public and securing their

involvement. The sustainability of the process lies in consolidating and broadening this community base. In the case of Colombia, support for the Integral Programme ended when the process and social base supporting it were still being consolidated. More time and continuation of the financial and coordination support would have been needed.

Public-private alliances: Corporate Social Responsibility is an area to be explored as it lowers costs and, if the results are positive, reduces institutional resistance. The alliances the Programme established with various communications media, especially Caracol TV, contributed to significantly broadening the Programme's reach at no extra cost.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

To guarantee the sustainability of the Communication Strategy, the Integral Programme placed an emphasis on the design and approval of action plans by each of the stakeholders involved from the institutional, social and private sectors.

Moreover, the Communication Strategy created numerous communication items directed at different groups and contexts, which could be reused by other GBV awareness-raising, information and education strategies.

The main challenge for the sustainability of the processes triggered by the Strategy is a weakening of the original political will. Thus, in the case of Buenaventura, even though the Public Policy of Equal Opportunities for Women provides for continuing the Educational Communication Strategy, this has not happened to date. In Cartagena, in spite of the Town Hall having included a "communication strategy for a life free from violence" within its 2012-2015 Action Plan, continuity has been difficult on account of administrative instability.

Regarding the possibility of replication, mindful that the cultural matrix which originates and perpetuates GBV is based on patriarchy, the "Study into the Social and Institutional Tolerance of Gender-based Violence in Colombia," its interpretive design, its

methodological approach and its measurement tools can be reproduced in other countries with a similar social and cultural environment, as was suggested in the “International Congress on Non-Sexist Advertising” held in Mexico towards the end of 2011 where the Programme was invited to give a presentation on its experience. The existence of the significant regional development of legal instruments for protection against gender-based violence means that the Strategy’s conceptual and methodological approach is relevant at a regional level and the Strategy could be reproduced in other neighboring countries.

Through a knowledge exchange mission with the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme on Gender in Brazil, the Brazilian programme has adapted the methodology of the Colombian study on institutional tolerance of GBV. The study served as an input for the Brazilian communication/advocacy strategy, which also focused on innovative aspects to fight against racial discrimination.

MULTI-SECTORAL PROGRAMME FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Tamkine: Multi-sectoral MDG-F Joint Programme for the Fight against Gender-based Violence through the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Morocco

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN Women (lead agency), UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, FAO, ILO, UNAIDS. Government agencies: 13 Moroccan Ministries: Family and Solidarity, Economy and Finance, Justice, Health, Agriculture and Fishing, National Education, Communications, State Department, Labour and Continuing Education, General Direction of Local Communities, High Planning Commission, National Security, Royal Police. More than 40 NGOs and civil society networks



Fighting Violence against Women



1. Introduction

“Tamkine” means empowerment in Morocco, and this is the key strategy through which the Multi-sectoral Joint Programme (the Programme) addresses violence against women. Taking a multi-sectoral approach, it joins together 13 national entities and over 50 NGOs. It aims to prevent and protect women and girls from all forms of violence by addressing the inter-linkages between poverty and vulnerability.

With programme support, women survivors of violence have greater access to legal, psychological, social and economic support. Since 2008, 4,651 women have benefitted from the programme-supported centres for women survivors of violence. The number of counselling centres has grown from 38 in 2008 to 52 in 2010. One example is the Batha Centre, a multifunctional centre where women find a safe space for themselves and their children and are able to develop livelihood skills in confectionery, goldsmith art, cookery, etc. It is run by the association *Initiatives pour la Protection des Droits des Femmes* (IPDF—Initiative for the Protection of the Rights of Women). The Centre mission goes beyond providing access to short-term care. It ensures support for women and their children and aims to prevent the recurrence of violence by promoting gender equality through education, advocacy and awareness-raising programmes. It also aims to offer improved access to quality services in terms of economic, social and political empowerment for women and girls.

2. Initial Situation

Tamkine was created to advance the fight against violence against women, and facilitate women’s empowerment in Morocco. Progress had been hindered by the lack of protection mechanisms and institutional care for abused women and girls, the lack of regulations of interventions in the field of the fight against violence against women and girls and social and cultural norms that propagate hierarchical roles of men and women and legitimize violence against women.

In Fes, at the time of the Centre’s creation, seven out of ten married women were victims of domestic violence. A total of 66.4 per cent of all women in the area had been victims of psychological violence, 49.5 per cent of physical violence, and 26.7 per cent of sexual violence. This situation was exacerbated by the lack of state structures to care for and empower women in crisis. The existing multifunctional centres were suffering from lack of a clear institutional vision regarding their implementation, their intervention strategies and their role in women’s empowerment.

The Centre’s interventions were hindered by the implementation of [Law 14/05](#) regarding the conditions to open and run establishments of social protection (EPS – *Etablissements de Protection Sociale*), because the law only took into account abandoned children, women in a situation of family abandonment or exclusion, elderly without any support and the disabled. Centres for women survivors of violence were thus not fully considered under the law, resulting in an unclear institutional mandate. IPDF and its partners thus had to define the mission and organization of the Batha Centre and re-define its services to ensure that women survivors of gender-based violence and their children had access to quality services, while respecting Moroccan law.

3. Strategy

The Programme in Morocco had to gather a large number of partners, from various sectors and institutions. This gathering required the establishment of a governance structure that would facilitate this innovative cooperation as well as ensuring the operationalization of the Programme.

To respond to the needs of women survivors of violence specifically in the Fes region, IPDF, in cooperation with its Moroccan government partners and United Nation agencies, set out to establish a multifunctional centre able to provide survivors of gender-based violence with immediate support (psychological, clinical, shelter) during crisis, as well as a set of services that would support longer-term recovery and empowerment. The fundamental premise behind the services provided at the Centre is change through empowerment.

Initially, the creation of the Centre faced challenges in terms of the cooperation of national institutional partners, as it was difficult to secure substantial institutional engagement. A challenge was identified in communicating a clear vision of the Centre's mission to the partners. However, participation was eventually ensured through the signing of cooperation agreements. The partnership with Morocco's national institutions was central to the success of the Centre's strategy to fill the institutional and legal void regarding care for women survivors of gender-based violence. These 'contractual-partnerships' ultimately legitimated and facilitated the implementation of the Centre's services, guaranteeing governmental support for the Centre, particularly in the fiscal sense.

The common strategy that was developed based on the overall objective enabled the provision of multi-sectoral services affording continuous care for women. The ensemble of services provided (admission, support, shelter, training and integration into the workplace) constitutes a chain of services that is uninterrupted and guarantees continuous care and support. It also links to services available outside of the Centre, such as in hospitals, police stations, etc.

The Center is based on three fundamental principles:

- A strict confidentiality policy ensures security and privacy for the users;
- Physical separation between living, clinical, administrative and financial spaces; and
- The women are the main actors in their empowerment.

The chain of services provided to women survivors of violence allows them to escape crisis situations, and to gain practical skills and personal empowerment. The Centre provides integrated services that go beyond simply offering admission and support, such as trainings and integration into the workplace. These services support women in becoming independent economic actors. Empowerment is not only the goal, but also the means to protect women against the recurrence of gender-based violence. Support for these women along the empowerment process is possible thanks to the partnerships developed with both governmental and

non-governmental organizations in the field, as well as UN agencies, each bringing their own capacities and specialties to the chain of services.

The Centre's management also relies on a continuous strengthening of the staff's capacities through trainings, and is directed by 'research-action,' which aims to provide an updated diagnosis of the context and on the issue of gender-based violence, so that the intervention strategy established in partnership with state and association actors adapts accordingly to be as relevant as possible.

4. Progress and Results

In 2009, the Centre offered shelter and care to more than 1,000 women. By January 2010, this number had almost doubled, with more than 1,900 women being welcomed at the Centre .

The Centre and its chain of services succeeded in raising awareness among the population about women's rights and gender-based violence. Radio was an important vehicle for this aspect of the programme. With the support of UNESCO, various communications materials such as posters, pamphlets and flyers were produced. Trainings to strengthen Batha Centre's staff communication capacities were also organized.

Partnerships, especially with institutional partners such as the Ministry for Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development (MDSFS – *Ministère pour la solidarité, la femme, la famille et le développement social*) were consolidated, and the increased visibility of the Centre also led to better cooperation with key local actors, including the Police and other government actors. These partnerships are keys to sustainability of investments.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Importance of the fundamental rights of women: consider the survivor of gender-based violence as an autonomous person, avoid her re-victimization and allow her to be the actor of her own empowerment process.

- Importance of the implementation of a confidentiality policy in any structure that supports women survivors of gender-based violence.
- Importance of strong partnerships with the public sectors, particularly actors specialized in trainings and professional integration. Importance of partnerships in general and of coordination with all the actors along the chain of services, from admission to workplace integration.
- A participative process with consultations of all the actors involved during the Programme's conception allows for more sustainable results. The national partners' actions will be more coherent with the Programme objectives and the institutions will integrate the actions through the governance system. Therefore, some of the Programme actions will be consequently integrated into the sectoral plans of the partners.
- The Programme participants must be represented in all bodies.
- If the project covers multiple regions, its governance bodies must not all be located in one place. Decentralization gives voice to the local actors and decision-makers and helps to avoid a homogenization of responses to different needs.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Conventions agreed upon and signed by IPDF and the Wilaya¹¹ guarantee official state support to the Centre for five years. The sustainability of the Centre's work is also supported by the use of tools and manuals that were developed, such as the Manual of Procedures and the Communications Plan.

¹¹ Second-level administrative subdivisions of provincial governments.

During Phase II of the Programme, a concept note involving six agencies was written and sent to the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in April 2012. As Tamkine comes to an end, action is taken to keep some elements of its coordination structure. An inventory of actions that pursue Tamkine's initiatives is being prepared. Elements of this Programme were also integrated as an intervention axis in Outcome 3 of the UNDAF 2012-2016 in Morocco, prompting UN agencies to sustain their Joint Programming efforts to fight against gender-based violence.

This initiative could be replicated, as long as it is adapted to the institutional and organizational local environment. The Batha Centre is a good model to follow for adaptation in new contexts. Reproducing this experience also requires a partnership between the public sector and civil society in order to ensure that services are provided up to the point when the women are equipped to integrate into the workforce.

7. Main Sources

Modélisation du Centre Multifonctionnel Batha pour l'autonomisation des femmes victimes de violence base sur le genre.

Rapport de modélisation de l'expérience marocaine du Programme Conjoint Multisectoriel MDG-F «Genre» en termes de coordination et de gouvernance: modèle identifié. June 2011.

Rapport de l'évaluation finale du programme conjoint multisectoriel de lutte contre les violences fondées sur le genre par l'autonomisation des femmes et des filles au Maroc.

SUPPORTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Joint Programme: Timor-Leste: Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights in Nation-building of Timor-Leste

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, IOM, UNDP



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme entitled Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Timor-Leste (the Programme) sought to protect women and girls from domestic violence, sexual abuse, economic hardship and human trafficking. Institutionalization and national ownership were pursued by strengthening protection mechanisms such as the Law against Domestic Violence or the draft Law to Prevent Human Trafficking; strengthening the capacity of the government and other stakeholders; promoting economic empowerment of the most vulnerable; and improving support services for survivors. This report presents selected promising practices implemented under the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) Joint Programme, from which lessons and challenges for replication in the future have been drawn.

2. Initial Situation

For Timor-Leste, newly independent and one of the poorest countries in the world, achieving gender equality has represented a long-standing challenge. Women face limited access to health, education and employment, which makes them vulnerable to gender-based violence, especially domestic violence and both domestic and international trafficking.

Sexual and gender-based Violence (SGBV) is a critical issue for women in Timor-Leste. Domestic violence is the most reported crime to the National Vulnerable Persons Unit (NVPU) of the police.¹² A study conducted in 2005 indicated that 47 per cent of women suffered physical, psychological or sexual violence by their partners. Other studies¹³ indicated that 38 per cent of women aged 15-49 experienced physical violence from the age of 15, and 36 per cent who were or had been married reported violence—physical, sexual or emotional—by their husbands or partners.

12 *National Statistics Directorate, Ministry of Finance. 'Timor-Leste Demographic and Health Survey 2009-2010'.*

13 Office of Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality, 'National Action Plan on Gender Based Violence', May 2012; UNFPA, 'Gender Based Violence in Timor-Leste Case Study', October 2005; Asia Pacific Support Collective Timor-Leste (APSTCL), 'Baseline Study on Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Cova Lima and Bobonaro', August 2009.

Domestic violence is still considered a private matter and survivors and their families often opt for family mediation or seek remedies using traditional justice. This, combined with the fear of family shame, has prevented survivors from reporting GBV/domestic violence (DV) cases to the police or relevant service providers. At the institutional level, however, due to inadequate facilities, non-existent Standardized Operation Procedures (SOP) for dealing with such cases and frequent rotation and insufficiently trained staff, the NVPU has encountered difficulties to respond to GBV/DV cases.

Women's weak position in society also makes them vulnerable to both domestic and international trafficking, since Timor-Leste is a destination for sex trafficking of women to and from other Asian countries. There is reported national trafficking, but little reliable data available on its incidence and scarce services for support.

Since its independence, the government of Timor-Leste is committed to the protection of women's and children's rights, and has ratified international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). However, their commitments had not been fulfilled due to the lack of relevant legislative frameworks, implementation plans and functional systems and procedures.

After domestic violence was declared a priority at the first National Women's Congress held in 2000, a National Law against Domestic Violence (LADV) was drafted by 2004. However, the LADV had to be put on hold to ensure harmonization with the new Penal Code that was still being drafted. Similarly, comprehensive legislation for human trafficking adapting the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) was urgently required.

As the Alola Foundation was the sole national actor dedicated to combating human trafficking, in 2008, the Inter-Agency Human Trafficking Group started to discuss sustainable and coordinated actions

In 2010, Timor-Leste's Law against Domestic Violence was passed by Parliament eight years after it was first drafted. "This law is very important for Timor-Leste, because domestic violence here is very common," said Armando da Costa, Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI). "This law is not aimed at imprisoning people, but to honor human rights."

involving different actors. The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAPCHT), presented in September 2009, was followed by the draft of the Law against Trafficking in Persons (LATP) in 2011.

The lack of reliable data and management system has also been an obstacle for capturing a clear idea of the extent of GBV and human trafficking in the country. The government has been mandated to establish a uniform data collection system to comply with the CEDAW General Recommendation. Articles 8, 16, and 23 of LADV refer to the recommendation further detailed in the National Action Plan on GBV (NAP-GBV). Likewise, the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (NAP-CHT) and Child Protection Policy refer to the development of SOP to address human trafficking.

In response to an internal crisis between 2006 and 2008, the Poverty Social Action Policy was developed and adopted by the Council of Ministers in January 2008. One of the schemes introduced in the policy was the conditional cash transfer scheme called "Bolsa da Mãe" (BdM). BdM provides a set amount of cash to specific vulnerable populations, particularly women-headed households. Children's immunization and educational attainment were established as conditions to benefit from the scheme. According to the Baseline Study on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Study in Covalima and Bobonaro, financial difficulties can affect the relationship between husband and wife, leading to domestic violence, and can also encourage women to opt for or to force their daughters into prostitution. In this regard, the BdM also contributes to the prevention of GBV through the economic empowerment of vulnerable women.

Child protection and service providers supporting survivors of GBV and human trafficking exist mainly in the capital Dili, leaving the rest of the country with limited availability. They include NVPU and Child Protection Officers (in all 13 districts); Uma Mahon (shelters) run by NGOs and churches; Fatin Hakmatek (safe rooms) managed by NGOs; and NGOs that provide legal aid. Nevertheless, as pointed out in some reports including the CEDAW Initial Report in 2008, the 'roles and responsibilities of individual organizations and government institutions had not been clearly defined, sometimes prohibiting the survivors of violence from benefiting from the range of assistance available from all the sectors.'¹⁴

While the concept of Gender-responsive Budgeting (GRB) is still new to Timor-Leste, the Government of Timor-Leste has taken some steps towards gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive budget allocation. In 2008, the Government presented its commitment to promote gender equality through a Gender Integrated Approach (GIA). In the 2009 budget, the government reiterated its commitment to GIA. The specific Resolution on Formulating Gender-responsive Public Budgets (28/11), which calls on the government and parliamentary committees to use and apply GRB instruments, was approved by the National Parliament. The establishment of gender focal points and the subsequent Gender Working Group were the first steps to operationalize the Government's commitments.

Finally, women's NGOs in Timor-Leste have also advocated for increased government budget allocations for women's needs and have maintained

¹⁴ CEDAW General Recommendation No. 12 (4).

constant dialogue with the Parliament. The CEDAW¹⁵ alternative report prepared by NGOs in March 2009 addressed a wide variety of women's concerns, including GRB, and increased women's involvement in decision-making, such as determination of priority problems, planning and budget allocation.

3. Objectives

The MDG-F Joint Programme on Supporting Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Timor-Leste aimed at supporting the Government of Timor-Leste to improve the conditions of women and girls in Timor-Leste through protection of their rights and their empowerment. It was envisaged that the Programme would contribute to the realization of the UNDAF Outcome of 'Consolidating stronger democratic institutions and mechanisms for social cohesion where the vulnerable population will benefit from quality social welfare and social protection services.' The Programme worked toward the three following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Improved protection of women and girls through the establishment of legal frameworks and mechanisms to uphold their rights;
- **Outcome 2:** Reduced vulnerability of women and girls through improved outreach mechanisms and services, and the establishment of a social protection scheme;
- **Outcome 3:** Improved social and economic situation of women and girls through fair allocation of resources using gender-responsive budgeting.

4. Key Actors

In addition to UN Women (lead agency), UNDP, UNICEF, IOM and UNFPA as implementing agencies, a wide variety of stakeholders have actively participated in the implementation of the Programme. Among these are the Office of the Secretary of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI) at central and local (district and suco) levels, Ministry of Social Security (MSS), Ministry of Health, National

¹⁵ NGO Working Group on the CEDAW Alternative Report, 'NGO Alternative Report, Implementation of Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): March 2009.'

Police, National Vulnerable Persons Unit (NVPU), Women's Caucus of the National Parliament, NGOs, network members, as well as community members, including school children. Government actors as duty-bearers were expected to fulfill their responsibility to protect vulnerable populations through knowledge and skills building. Civil society actors were expected to advocate for women and children's rights and the protection of survivors while enhancing the quality of their service provision through programme technical support and improved knowledge and skills.

5. Strategy

The key strategy of the Programme was institutionalization and national ownership. While the Programme design was in large part led by the implementing UN agencies due to time constraints, needs and priorities based on their prior interventions and discussions with the government and civil society were reflected to the extent possible. In addition, the Programme was designed at the time of the country's internal conflict (2006–2008), which considerably limited the possibility of government and civil society participation in this phase. The Programme adopted upstream and downstream interventions to influence gender equality and build the capacity of stakeholders in different spheres at the central and local levels.

Five districts with potential high risk of GBV, trafficking, and child abuse, including Dili, were selected for the implementation. For the institutionalization of knowledge and skills, technical trainings and support for development of practical tools and mechanisms were included in the Programme design.

6. Progress and Results

Seven promising practices have been selected for documentation and are presented below under three categories: A. Support for legal frameworks and mechanisms; B. Support for outreach mechanisms and services provision; and C. Support for fair allocation of resources. These practices have been selected on the basis of interesting lessons learned and possible replication.

SUPPORT FOR LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND MECHANISMS

Participatory Development of National Action Plans on Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking (NAP-GBV)

SEPI-led multi-sectoral/multi-stakeholder participatory process for the NAP-GBV draft. The technical drafting committee, comprised of 17 stakeholders from various governmental and non-governmental institutions was formed under SEPI. Eight meetings were held to discuss the content and two national and four district consultations were organized to raise awareness and seek inputs and challenges related to GBV. NGOs were consulted based on their direct experience with analysing and treating the problem of GBV “from the ground.”

NAP-GBV focuses on four strategic priority areas of (i) prevention of gender based violence; (ii) provisions of services to survivors; (iii) Lori ba Justice (appeal to justice); and (iv) coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. It lays out specific goals, outcomes, outputs, activities, target groups, as well as a timeframe for implementation. Responsible actors are also clearly identified.

Wide consultation for development of The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking

(NAP-CHT). A subcommittee was formed under the Interagency Human Trafficking Group and its members received training from IOM. The first draft of the NAP-CHT was shared and consulted on with 320 community stakeholders in 13 districts, including community leaders, service providers, teachers and students. The inputs from the community were taken into consideration and the document was finalized by February 2012. In parallel, several trainings on human trafficking were offered to almost 930 governmental and NGO personnel, and 2,310 suco (local) council members and community leaders.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Participatory process and institutionalization are key for success. As described above, the wide consultative process used in developing the NAPs and led by the technical drafting committees was

key for national ownership of the document. The programme design, which tightly combined the legal/policy aspect and the institutionalization of knowledge and skills, also helped national stakeholders to prepare for implementation.

Inclusion of costing and clear responsibilities in the NAP-GBV is an important step, but more detailed financial assessment is essential.

The fact that the NAP-GBV identifies responsible actors and costs significantly improves planning and implementation. Nevertheless, even more specific budget analysis, such as human resource costs for implementation, is necessary. For instance, different stakeholders expressed their concerns that the implementation capacity at the district level was not sufficient.

Enhanced coordination between the government and NGOs for implementation of NAP-GBV. NGOs are identified as major partners in many areas, and especially in service provision and coordination between government and NGOs. Establishing national-level networks will be imperative for the implementation of the plan.

Joint Effort for Capacity-building of the Police and Institutionalization

UN joint manual and training on GBV investigations. Once the first draft of the GBV investigations manual was finalized under UNFPA coordination, a joint training of trainers (ToT) on GBV investigation was held. Twenty-one selected police officers from different districts, including the head of NVPU, participated in the event and received training on a very broad range of issues related to GBV and human trafficking.

Continuous strategic discussions towards institutionalization. One of the main concerns identified by UNFPA, NVPU, and other relevant stakeholders was the frequent rotation of NVPU police officers and their insufficient capacity and resources to respond efficiently to GBV cases according to the established standards. Therefore, measures to ensure a minimum of three years continuation of NVPU officers in their posts and inclusion of the GBV/DV training in the basic

“There are misunderstandings in the public about whether the (Domestic Violence) law will weaken families, so we have to raise awareness to change mistaken negative perceptions of the law. We want people to understand that domestic violence is a crime and that violence in the family hurts families.”

ARMANDO DA COSTA, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY (SEPI)

training at the police training centre have been included in the NAP-GBV. Most recently, the GBV investigation training has been institutionalized in the Police Training Centre and SEPI. Through UNFPA support, six courses on GBV investigation were organized for all national police officers recruits at the Police Training Centre.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Cohesion of donors/development agencies. UN agencies realized the importance of joint training for increased efficiency and effectiveness. In the security sector that involves various stakeholders and donors, close collaboration to minimize duplication and maximize the results is crucial. Strong partnerships with the Timor-Leste Police Development Programme (TLPDP) on the GBV investigations manual and provision of training also proved effective. This unity among donors and agencies transmitted a coherent and consistent message that was very well appreciated and received by the police and other stakeholders.

Budget constraints continue to be challenging. NVPU operates with facilities that are inadequate to perform their duties professionally and successfully. Without a specific government budget allocation, it is difficult for the Police Training Centre to regularly carry out basic GBV training. It is essential that advocacy for increased budget allocation is emphasized through different channels, including the governmental Gender Working Group and non-governmental GRB working group, if the situation is to improve.

Outreach to Community-level Stakeholders

Outreach of the Law against Domestic Violence with ‘easy to understand’ materials. With UNFPA technical support, SEPI developed a simple ToT manual on LADV targeting suco-level audiences such as suco chiefs, council members and local referent networks. The manual includes case studies, role plays, and interactive discussions. A total of 442 suco council members and 256 referents from local networks were trained. A simple brochure on the LADV was produced and used for awareness-raising. This booklet explained the key elements of the law and ‘a step-by-step’ case reporting process with photos.

16 days activism campaign as an opportunity for outreach. The theme of the campaign, ‘The Law against Domestic Violence, protecting me, protecting my family,’ was chosen to highlight that the law was conceived to keep families together and not to separate them, as was commonly perceived. In 2011, the Association of Men against Violence (AMKV) joined the campaign and played a key role in tackling the resistance shown by men to the approval of the law. While this initiative was successful, the targeted audience was very limited and improvements must be considered for the future.

Joint Directory of service providers for GBV and trafficking. UNFPA, IOM and the Alola NGO produced a booklet entitled “Who Can Help” that listed contacts of useful services in case of GBV in Dili and each district. This booklet was conceived for use by service providers, schools, hospitals and suco-district officers. To reach children and illiterate persons, posters with emergency numbers were printed and displayed in these locations.

Innovative Awareness-Raising on Human Trafficking through Art Performances

In Dili and Baucau Districts, awareness-raising on human trafficking through drama performance and music were proposed directly by the sucos. To respond to their request, IOM supported sensitization of performers, and provided a selection of good case studies as well as a storyline for the actors selected by the community. The drama performance was open to all members of the community. In Baucau, local youth composed and performed music with the lyrics focused on human trafficking. IOM also cooperated with MTV Exit and developed a programme on combating human trafficking in Tetun, the local language, which was broadcast and viewed in two districts. Considering the high rates of illiteracy, especially in the districts, this type of community-based socialization is an excellent and effective approach that other communities and stakeholders can replicate.

Community-based innovative awareness campaign.

IOM reached 2,540 people through different community-based awareness campaigns on human trafficking (awareness-raising in five districts, trained journalists, advocacy through newspapers, TV shows). Moreover, three small grants per district were assigned to communities to develop innovative awareness-raising campaigns.

Two layers of Trainings for Trainers. UNICEF carried out extensive outreach for child protection, reaching all the sucos in 13 districts through two layers of ToT. First, Child Protection Officers (CPOs) in 13 districts were trained as trainers. In a second phase the CPOs trained the members of the Child Protection Network (CPN). Finally, CPN members were able to address targeted audiences, in particular students and children. Different types of materials such as child protection flip charts, guidelines, posters, booklets, and brochures were produced and distributed.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Continuous awareness-raising at the community level is key for changing the mindset. There are many social and cultural factors that create barriers to mindset change regarding GBV and human trafficking, among these patriarchal society, consideration of GBV as a private matter and the role of community leaders in mediating cases. For these reasons it is important that people have a chance

Anger Management Training for Prisoners

As part of the IEC initiatives, UNFPA supported Anger Management Training for GBV/DV offenders to prevent recidivism. This initiative was based on the anger management training manual developed by UNFPA in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice in 2006. In cooperation with SEPI, the National Department of Prison Service (NDPS) and the Ministry of Justice, this initiative was replicated in 2010 and 2011. Ninety-two people (mostly prisoners and some prison guards) received trainings on how to identify and manage emotions and anger, how to manage stopping violence in relationships, and how to maintain non-violent relationships. The sessions also included meditation and yoga as methods for anger control. The participants also received information on the LADV. In addition, trainings were organized to target the correction officers in Gleno and Becora prisons who dealt with the offenders, and 40 officers participated in total. Currently, the DPTS has requested that all corrections officers in Timor-Leste (over 200 staff) undergo this training and that the training is permanently included in the programmes of the prison services. Furthermore, based on recommendation from prisoners, anger management training will be carried out in one of the districts with higher risk of violence, and the participants will be youth who belong to martial arts groups.

to better understand domestic violence and human trafficking. This can be achieved by constantly providing information on relevant national laws and involving the community as active participants in the awareness-raising process.

Information education and communication (IEC) strategy for harmonized and joint public awareness.

Although some joint IEC initiatives were undertaken, more coordinated public awareness activities could have been organized under the UN Joint Programme. If a joint IEC strategy would have been developed at the initial stage of the Programme, more synchronized actions with a consistent message could have been delivered and the visibility of the Programme would have been higher.

SUPPORT FOR OUTREACH MECHANISMS AND SERVICES PROVISION

Reduced Vulnerability of Women and Girls through Bolsa de Mãe (Conditional Cash Transfer)

Improved identification of vulnerable women.

UNDP supported the development of a technical note on policies and implementation guidelines of the 'Bolsa da Mae' (BdM). This technical note outlined and defined vulnerability identification criteria and operational procedures for the conditional cash transfers. This intervention was much needed to provide fair access to resources for the most vulnerable while mitigating the potential tensions in the family. To ensure the link with increased attainment of education and vaccination, a monitoring system for compliance with conditionality was also strengthened. The technical note contributed to the Bolsa de Mae Decree Law promulgated in April 2012.

Systematization of beneficiary data. The establishment of a central database system for BdM along with the registration of ongoing beneficiaries contributed to the systematization of information allowing the Ministry of Social Security (MSS) to access beneficiary profiles at both the central and district levels. This also enabled a more accurate selection of beneficiaries along with improvement of general implementation and monitoring. By

February 2012, over 15,000 beneficiaries in 13 districts were registered.

Building the capacity of the district staff to systematize data and link it to the central data system was a remarkable success.

Twenty-one MSS staff members, 13 CPOs in the districts, and 65 social animators in sub-districts have been trained and are now capable to monitor, carry out evaluations, collect data and identify possible beneficiaries for the cash transfers.

Better access to social protection for vulnerable population.

Vulnerable women have better access to social protection through access to cash, education and health for their children. According to interviews with beneficiaries in Oecussi, Suai and Dili districts nearly all would spend the cash for their children's schooling. It has been acknowledged that economic vulnerability can trigger domestic violence; therefore, the BdM scheme represents an input towards prevention. A divorced woman who was interviewed during the BdM disbursement in Metinaro district of Dili said that she had experienced domestic violence due to financial difficulties. Now she feels protected and empowered, and she can send her children to school.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Missing linkage with vulnerability to GBV. The re-defined criteria and registration questionnaires for BdM scheme do not contain information on vulnerability to GBV. For the future, the MSS and UNDP suggested to use the data available so that potential victims and survivors are informed of the existence of the BdM scheme and can have access to its benefits. The database will also be shared among the three Ministries of Education, Health, and Social Solidarity.

Missed opportunity of a strategic linkage with Gender-Responsive Budget (GRB). Stressing the strategic linkage between the BdM scheme and GRB would have allowed the MSS to advocate more strongly on the need to increase the BdM budget as it related to access to health and education.

SUPPORT TO STRENGTHENING THE REFERRAL MECHANISM AND SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION, HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND GBV

Development of SOPs and capacity building on GBV.

With UNFPAs technical support, two comprehensive SOPs on GBV and GBV data collection were developed by the MSS. The SOPs aim at guiding service providers to respond to all forms of GBV in a coordinated and multi-sectoral manner. They explain the fundamental principles, roles and responsibilities of each service provider. The SOPs also include interview guidelines, reporting, legal assistance, case management and step by step referral pathways. The SOPs were launched in all 13 districts and addressed to 256 stakeholders from various service providers. The existence and implementation of the SOPs will also contribute to quality control of the services and data collection as a whole (elements of recording, analysis, and information management including data sharing and confidentiality).

Targeted referral guidelines for child protection and capacity building.

With UNICEF support, referral guidelines for child protection were developed targeting two different audiences. A comprehensive

‘step by step’ guideline was addressed to the child protection network members, and an ‘easy to understand’ message was targeted to communities and children. The first one provides clear information on the responsible actors and actions, while the second one focuses on ‘whom to inform’ when children experience or witness violence/exploitation.

Medical forensic examination institutionalized and available at the regional level.

An area that became crucial with the adoption of the LADV is the medical forensic examination, which can provide the necessary physical evidence in cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. With the assistance of the AusAID Justice Facility and UNFPA, the MDG-F supported the local NGO PRADET to improve and finalize the original medical forensic examination protocol and to carry out pilot trainings for its use.

Enhanced Coordination Mechanism. Establishing and strengthening the coordination mechanism in Dili and at the district level improved the communication among service providers and enabled timely support to the survivors. Two

Increased Capacity for Medical Forensic Examination

With the assistance of the AusAID Justice Facility and UNFPA, the MDG-F supported the local NGO PRADET to improve the original Medical Forensic Examination Protocol (MFP). This Protocol was endorsed by the National Institute of Health (Ministry of Health) in late 2010. With MDG-F support, 20 midwives and doctors from five hospitals in five districts (Oecussi, Suai, Baucau, Maliana, and Maubisse) have been trained in the use of the MFP and graduated in April 2012. Given the lack of consistent electricity supply, computers, printers and photocopy machines in many locations where this kind of examination is performed, carbon paper is used in order to have a duplicate of the evidence recorded. Such a simple idea can make a difference. Prior to the recent graduation of health care workers on the use of the MFP, Dili-based PRADET was the only organization that could provide a medical forensic examination, and survivors who did not have access to the service in the districts had to be brought to Dili. Now that 20 nurses, midwives and doctors have acquired this knowledge and that new Fatin Hakmateks (safe rooms) have been (and will be) established in Oecussi, Suai and Maliana, it is expected that an increased number of survivors will be able to undergo this examination according to the national recommendations. This, in turn, will support the efforts of the Office of the Prosecutor to proceed to trial, relying now on solid physical evidence and not only on witness testimony.

government-led GBV working groups were formalized in Dili and several local referral networks were established in the districts. The Directorate of the National Social Reinsertion in the MSS coordinates the service providers meetings to ensure coordinated responses to GBV cases as well as child protection issues, whereas SEPI coordinates the strategy and advocacy meetings. Even though the Child Protection Network existed prior to the MDG-F Programme, numerous trainings and operational support strengthened the network and regularized the meetings. The monthly national-level meeting, which is attended by all the CPOs, is now also used as a forum to discuss and coordinate DV issues with the Women's Unit of MSS.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Absorption capacity towards actual implementation is still a challenge. As the plan for annual training and continuous operationalization of the SOPs has already been included in the NAP-GBV, it will be crucial for the government to allocate sufficient funding to guarantee continuity. Furthermore, some officers, especially CPOs, NVPU staff and service providers such as NGOs are responsible for all three areas (GBV, child protection and human trafficking). Due to the fact that the training was provided in the same period, it may take time for them to clarify and absorb each procedure.

Cross-reference and complementarities of SOPs. Whereas the SOP on GBV makes reference to the Child Protection Referral Guidelines and the SOP on Human Trafficking, the latter do not link with each other in a comprehensive manner. It could be partly because the documents have been developed in two different moments. One of the service providers expressed some confusion about the different procedures and suggested comparisons and clarification of the three procedures in the future.

Sustainability of the referral networks at the district level. Despite the enhanced referral networks and procedures in place, some challenges remain. A local GBV referral network in one of the districts used to be coordinated by a local NGO, but,

in accordance with the LADV, the coordination role has now been handed over to the MSS. NGOs at the focus group meetings have noted that the network has been inactive despite enhanced referrals. This inactivity may be attributed to the heavy workload of the CPO, lack of skills or insufficient budget. It appears that the capacity and feasibility to operate the networks may need to be discussed among the stakeholders, who could consider either increasing the human resources or delegating the coordination role to another service provider as a temporary measure, so that the momentum and solidarity of the networks are not lost.

Enhanced conditions for achieving formal justice are necessary. Despite the existence of the LADV and penal code, GBV survivors continue to face challenges to bringing their cases to court. The main reasons include lack of knowledge about formal justice mechanisms, lack of confidence, economic dependence on perpetrators, lack of community support and cultural constraints, geographical constraints to access courts and weak capacity of judicial and police actors.

SUPPORT FOR FAIR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

Support to Strengthening Institutional Capacity on Gender

Increased knowledge of and interest in GRB by government stakeholders. One of the key achievements in GRB is the increased interest of government stakeholders achieved through training and south-south exchange on good models implemented in Mozambique and India. After a GRB assessment that showed the baseline and capacity of GRB in Timor-Leste, needs for capacity building were identified. As a response, several trainings were conducted accordingly, addressed to the targeted stakeholders. SEPI staff, parliament members and civil society received training on GRB and budget analysis and the Annual Action Plan (AAP). The Inter-Ministerial Gender Working Group (IM GWG) also was sensitized on GRB and gender mainstreaming in their work. Selected SEPI staff was trained through the ToT in order to be able to reach other ministries and district-level GWGs. SEPI played a key role in reviewing and

providing inputs in sectoral AAPs and budgets of several ministries and secretaries of state. The fact that 20 per cent of the Ministry of Education and Health budget is targeted to women and children, and the budget for implementation of LADV in 2011 has reasonably increased are attributed to SEPI and the Ministry's effort.

Other ministries also took action in this direction.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Social Solidarity have initiated the GWG meeting for strategic gender mainstreaming discussion within the Ministry. They have identified institutionalization of knowledge as one of the crucial actions and have requested UN Women for technical assistance in conducting internal trainings on the GRB concept and GRB analysis of the AAP.

Development of GRB tools for institutionalization of knowledge. Under SEPI's leadership three comprehensive tools were developed during the training process. The GWG resource kit is targeted for all the GWG members. As the appointment of GWG members was still underway at the time of developing the kit, it will be used in the future for new members. SEPI, with support from UN Women, will continue to carry out trainings at district levels using the resource kit. The second tool is GRB strategies/guidelines for civil society, and the third is a comprehensive GRB training package for different stakeholders and new staff. The development of these very useful tools will take forward the gender mainstreaming and GRB work at national and district levels.

Costing for the NAP-GBV. Costing of the NAP-GBV carried out with NAP-GBV stakeholders was a significant achievement. It played a key role as an advocacy tool for the budget request and allocation, as well as identification of gaps. Each activity cost was estimated and therefore each implementing agency and partner was aware of the budget for respective activities. As the implementation proceeds, however, the necessity of more detailed costing and additional requirements, especially for human resources, have been identified. SEPI and stakeholders could consider elaborating on the costing.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Implications of late start on implementation.

An overall challenge for the GRB component was the late start of the implementation due to organizational changes of UN Women and difficulties in recruiting the staff. As a result, capacity building training and tools development were significantly delayed. Due to the tight schedule of the training, trainees did not have enough time to internalize and apply their new skills.

Strengthening of enabling environment for GRB implementation. The Director of Planning at SEPI pointed out the challenges for implementation of GRB during an election year, which hampered the process and diverted the politicians' and governments' interests. While the appointment of the GWG members was underway prior to the elections, the changes in the political structure that were to be announced in early August 2012 may also have had an impact on the appointment and the operationalization of the GWG system. There is no installed mechanism to ensure GRB in the budget process at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and having MoF more involved in the institutionalization of GRB is essential. SEPI is also advocating for membership in the Budget Review Committee to influence the budget review more effectively.

SEPI-led process for capacity building with increased practical application of their skills is important. A coordinator was appointed within SEPI to accelerate implementation of capacity-building. As a result, staff was provided with mentoring and hands-on training for project management, including management of a team of experts in GRB, procurement processes and financial procedures. One of the main lessons learned was the insufficient involvement of the trained SEPI staff in the actual provision of training and development of tools. While SEPI staff had some opportunities to facilitate and train the district GWG members, further use of their new skills could have been maximized. Co-facilitation of the training or mentoring by the trainer (expert) will be a good approach for the staff practical training. In developing the GRB strategies and guidelines for civil society, involvement of civil society in the process could have been also maximized.

Pool of trained trainers at the national level. A significant number of government, parliament and NGO staff received initial training on GRB. Tools and guidelines will be all available by the end of the Programme. It is a priority not to lose this positive momentum and continue with the training and application of the new skills, strengthening coordination between and among government, civil society and the parliament. To further institutionalize the GRB knowledge across the government and the civil society, it was suggested to create a team of trainers in charge of training institutions and civil society.

Strengthening the NGO GRB Working Group

Increased knowledge on GRB and its practical application. To introduce the concept and roles of NGOs in the area of GRB, UN Women organized several workshops where NGO advocates enhanced their understanding and knowledge on this topic. The workshops not only introduced the concept but also involved hands-on exercises to analyse the government budget. “This practical application of the analysis was eye-opening for us to unpack the government budget and use the result as an advocacy tool,” said one of the NGO participants. They also found that mentoring by the consultant on their analysis of the government budget was very helpful.

Collective advocacy as an NGO GRB working group. With the support of UN Women, the NGO GRB working group was gradually established to enhance their joint work and advocacy, and started to meet monthly after the first GRB training. The working group played a key role to unite women’s NGOs and non-traditional partners, i.e. NGOs for transparency. Despite the very recent creation of the group, it actively discussed joint actions, advocated and started to write joint letters to the government. During 2010, they had written joint request letters to SEPI, the President of the National Parliament, and the Ministry of Finance to advocate for NGOs’ increased role in monitoring gender-responsiveness, and actively participated in the budget hearing. In October 2011, the NGO GRB working group submitted a formal question to the National Parliament requesting the following:

- To provide enhanced support to GBV survivors through:
 - Establishment of shelters (Ministry of Social Solidarity)
 - Establishment of a crisis centre (Ministry of Health)
 - Inclusion of curriculum on Law against Domestic Violence (Ministry of Education)
 - Provision of vehicles to National Vulnerable Persons Unit (NVPU) and National Police of East Timor in 13 districts (Secretary of State on Security)
- To increase the budget for the CEDAW Committee.

The NGOs’ demands partly met. Dialogue with the Parliament was strengthened in the past two years. The NGO GRB now has a regular meeting with the Parliament Commission that deals with gender issues to share information and advocate for an increased budget. They have continued to lobby regarding the above request, and as a result, they managed to get a positive response and the following actions have been taken to date:

- Two shelters are in the process of construction;
- LADV has been included in the curriculum for secondary schools and above;
- 15 vehicles have been allocated to NVPU;
- Discussions on the establishment of the Crisis Centre is under way; and
- A budget of US\$67,000 was allocated to the CEDAW Committee.

Joint study tour increased communications between the government and civil society. Representatives of the NGO GRB working group also participated in the GRB study tour to Mozambique and India supported by the MDG-F. This, besides increasing the knowledge of GRB mechanisms, enhanced information exchange and discussion among the Timorese government and civil society participants. The multi-sectoral composition of the group created a good environment for joint thinking.

7. Sustainability and Replication

The overall design and the main strategy of this Programme, namely institutionalization and national ownership, are closely linked to its sustainability.

1. Support to the legislation on domestic violence and human trafficking, and their action plans contributed to making the Government responsible and accountable for its commitment towards prevention of such cases and protection of survivors.

In case of the NAP-GBV, long and short-term goals along with costing for the next three years and specified responsible actors are key factors for sustainability.

2. Support to operationalization through capacity-building and development of protocols and tools was an essential element of the programme towards institutionalization and sustainability.

Amongst the different trainings in the programme, institutionalization of the GBV Investigation at the end of the MDG-F Programme implementation demonstrated the success of sustainability. Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders were involved in the development of protocols

and tools; final documents were translated and made available in the local language (Tetun); and the stakeholders received relevant training to apply them. Moreover, an initiative such as the two layers of ToT in child protection to reach grassroots level actors also contributed to sustainability. Support to and strengthening the networks systematized the mechanism towards sustainability.

3. Political will and sufficient government budget allocation are key for sustainability.

Despite all the positive aspects above, implementation of the plans, the performance of each actor and the operationalization of networks and meetings after the MDG-F Programme period hinge on the political will, sufficient government budget allocations and the motivation of the responsible actors. The Government's commitment to gender equality, especially in its operationalization and budget allocation, is still weak. To advocate and support the Government to take a more gender-sensitive approach to its budget planning and allocation, the Programme also attempted to institutionalize GRB. GRB still being a new concept for Timor-Leste, continuous capacity-building and mentoring, as well as monitoring for government and civil society actors will be essential.

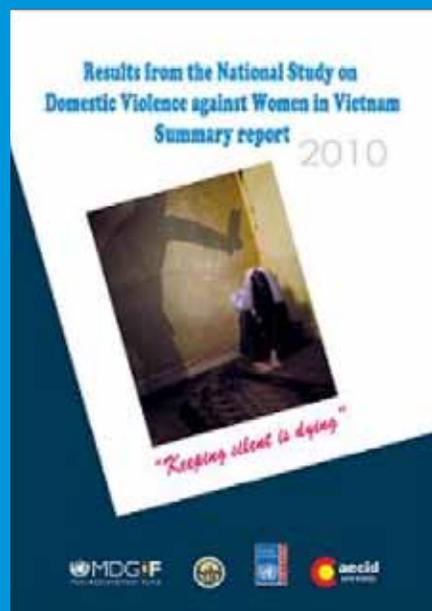
| Scaling up | Replication |
|--|---|
| Further technical and financial support to implementation of the NAP-GBV: sustainable quality service provision, capacity-building, and continuous public awareness-raising. | Technical support to costing of the NAP-CHT and its operationalization upon approval of the NAP-CHT and the LAHT similar to the support to NAP-GBV. |
| Further technical support to GBV data collection and its systematization. | Support to the government-led, multi-sectoral and participatory process for developing policies and actions plans. |
| Support to strengthening/establishment of the local referral networks (GBV, child protection, human trafficking). | Support which combines policy/legislation development and capacity-building of stakeholders. |
| Continued and scaled up capacity-building support to government stakeholders on GRB at the national, district and sub-district levels including establishment of a systematized pool of experts. | UN joint/coordinated training as a model for aid effectiveness. |
| Continued technical and financial support to NGO GRB working group. | Community-led/based public awareness-raising. |

NATIONAL STUDY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Joint Programme: Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UNFPA (lead agency), WHO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, IOM, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC, UNAIDS, General Statistics Office, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Provincial Statistics Offices



Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality



Women Have New Hope



1. Introduction

On 25 November 2010, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the results of the first ever National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam were released at an event in Ha Noi. The dissemination of its findings has contributed to raise awareness on the extent of domestic violence in the country and presented evidences to policy makers and civil society actors to design and implement evidence-based policies and interventions to prevent and address domestic violence against women. The Viet Nam Government plans to carry out a new study in 2015 to assess the progress made since 2010 to eliminate domestic violence. Although the Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality adopted a holistic strategy to promote the rights of women, the present report concentrates on the methods and results of the national survey.

The study found that 34 per cent of ever-married women reported that they had suffered physical or sexual violence from their husbands at some time in their lives. Ever-married women who were experiencing either of these two types of violence amounted to nine per cent at the time of the survey. When all three main types of partner violence—physical, sexual and emotional—were considered, more than half (58 per cent) of Vietnamese women reported experiencing at least one type of domestic violence in their lifetime. The study findings also show that women are three times more likely to be abused by their husband than by any other person.

2. Initial Situation

Viet Nam's commitment with gender equality is evident in its efforts to improve the national legal and policy frameworks to advance women's rights and end violence against women. Domestic violence was, for the first time, officially recognized as an obstacle to national development in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy approved in 2002. In 2006, the Law on Gender Equality was passed. It was followed by passage in 2007 of the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

However, despite important legislative advances, there is a gap between the theory and the practical implementation at all levels. Major contributing factors include domestic violence being considered a private family matter, in which society should not interfere, violence being accepted as normal behaviour, and limited knowledge about domestic violence among both the population and the duty bearers. Before 2010, there was also a lack of reliable data on this issue. While some small-scale quantitative and qualitative studies had been undertaken before, available data was not nationally representative and the actual extent of the problem was not fully known. With limited data on and understanding of domestic violence, there had been insufficient response to address gender-based violence in Viet Nam.

There was, therefore, a real need for more sound evidence for policy advocacy and design, as well

“This report highlights the urgency of breaking the silence. All of us owe it to the women who suffer from domestic violence, and the women who took part in this survey, to step up, speak out and end domestic violence.”

JEAN MARC OLIVE, WHO REPRESENTATIVE IN VIET NAM

as for baseline data against which the impact of the Law on Domestic Violence could be measured. Specific and in-depth research was identified as a priority to learn more about the prevalence, causes and consequences of domestic violence in the country.

There was also a need to promote collaboration among different institutions responsible for addressing domestic violence. While the state management agency for the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control is the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, a number of other ministries and government agencies have also important roles to play, including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Public Security and the General Statistics Office. However, information exchange and collaboration among different agencies were limited.

In this context, the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam was implemented in 2009-2010, within the frame of the United Nations-Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality.

3. Objectives

The 2010 National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam aimed to contribute to the elimination of domestic violence in Viet Nam, by ensuring availability of regularly generated data to be used as a basis for formulating and implementing interventions to prevent and respond to violence against women and for monitoring and evaluating progress.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Estimate the prevalence, frequencies and forms of violence against women;
- Assess the extent to which domestic violence against women is associated with a range of health and other outcomes;
- Identify the factors that may either protect or put women at risk of domestic violence; and
- Document and compare the strategies and services that women use to deal with domestic

violence, perceptions about domestic violence against women and how much women know about their legal rights.

The study also had the following indirect objectives:

- Improve understanding about violence against women in Viet Nam;
- Increase national capacity and collaboration among researchers and women's and other civil society organizations working on domestic violence;
- Increase awareness about and sensitivity to domestic violence among researchers, policy makers and health care providers; and
- Contribute to the establishment of a network of people committed to address domestic violence.

4. Key Actors

The General Statistics Office (GSO) was responsible for the overall management of the survey and the implementation of the fieldwork. The GSO was considered the key institution, due to its extensive experience in data collection and analysis, its nationwide network of local statistical offices and the capacity to mobilize field workers.

The World Health Organization (WHO) was responsible for providing technical assistance and for the overall coordination of the study.

The Sub-Working Group on Gender-Based Violence integrated experts from the United Nations agencies participating in the Joint Programme: UNFPA, WHO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO, IOM, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC and UNAIDS. This Group was used to discuss the substantial contents of the study, such as the questionnaire, training materials and the list of stakeholders to be involved.

The National Survey Steering Committee was established in mid-2009 to take the overall responsibility for the implementation of the survey fieldwork. The Vice General Director of the GSO led the Committee. Members included high-level representatives from the GSO, the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Gender

Equality Department from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST).

The research team consisted of seven core members, including two experts from the GSO, one expert from MOH, two national consultants, one international consultant and one staff member from WHO Viet Nam. This diversity brought different views into the study and ensured technical soundness. National and international NGOs, the academia, mass organizations and bilateral cooperation were also involved.

5. Strategy

The process around the elaboration and dissemination of the Study consisted of the following steps:

1. Data collection
2. Report writing
3. Dissemination of results
4. Feedback from field workers

STEP 1: DATA COLLECTION¹⁶

The research included a quantitative component (a population-based survey) and a qualitative one (in-depth interviews and focus group discussions).

Quantitative component

The quantitative component followed the methodology developed for the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence, with a few modifications in terms of the sample and the questionnaire. From December 2009 to February 2010, a nationally representative sample of 4,838 women of 18-60 years old women was interviewed throughout the country. The response rate of the survey was 78.2 per cent. The refusal rate was low compared with other surveys carried out in Viet Nam, with only 1.6 per cent refusing to participate.

¹⁶ Detailed information on the methodology can be found in Chapter 2 of the report *Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam*.

Preparation of the questionnaire and other survey tools

The process of adapting the WHO Multi-country Study survey questionnaire Version 10 to the Viet Nam context involved many stakeholders from different technical backgrounds who had interest in the survey. There were numerous requests to include additional questions to collect data on other issues, such as child abuse and HIV/AIDS. After long negotiations, the final contents of the questionnaire were decided, taking into consideration the following factors:

- Safety of respondents;
- Focus: adding many questions on different topics may weaken the focus of the study;
- Resources: more questions means longer time to complete one questionnaire and, therefore, more working hours to complete the field data collection; and
- Ethical considerations involved in adding questions on specific topics.

The adapted questionnaire was pre-field tested in Ha Noi and Tien Giang. Respondents were asked to answer questions, as well as to provide feedback on the clarity and acceptability of the questions and the way in which the questionnaire was delivered.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

It is not advisable to include various topics in efforts to capture a lot of information, since each topic requires specific steps, questions and set-up to collect reliable data. It may appear feasible and appropriate to include some topics (e.g. questions on child abuse). However, new topics can create a new set of issues, which may not be appropriately addressed (e.g. what an interviewer should do when a case of child abuse is disclosed during the interview).

Selection and training of field workers

Field workers were selected from among women aged 30-60. Previous experience in survey work was required, so the field workers were selected from the staff from Provincial Statistics Offices

(75 women) and the GSO (seven women). Important skills sought were the ability to interact with all classes of people, a nonjudgmental attitude, maturity and life experience, good interpersonal skills to build a rapport with the respondent and experience in dealing with sensitive issues.

Selected field workers were trained during two weeks in November 2010. Data entry designers also attended the training, so that an appropriate data entry system could be developed. All staff signed a confidentiality agreement on the final day of training as part of their work contract.

Since interviewers already had survey experience, it was possible to develop a shorter two-week training curriculum based on the standardized programme from WHO, which is normally three weeks. Two days were dedicated to gender sensitization, followed by training in interview techniques, discussion of the questionnaire and role-playing. One day in the second week was dedicated to practice in the field (pilot study). The site for the pilot was selected to represent an average site in Viet Nam. Seventy-eight women completed the pilot interview. The answers were analyzed and the data for key indicators, such as rate of women who suffered from different types of violence, was generated.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- Many field workers expressed that they did not have enough training on how to handle difficult situations, especially when interviewing survivors of domestic violence, and they had been left with feeling of regret for not being able to provide greater support. Training should better prepare the field workers to know what they could do and could not do when interviewing domestic violence survivors. Knowledge of referral services is essential, and should be standard practice.
- Although the percentage is not known, some interviews with women with disabilities were discontinued when the field workers felt that they were not adequately equipped to continue. However, women with disabilities should not be excluded. Special considerations and resources

are required to ensure that women with disabilities are not excluded from the survey.

- It is critical to recruit more field workers than the exact number required in the actual survey. The Viet Nam experience recommends 20 per cent more field workers to be trained and be available than the number required to carry out the field work.
- It is advisable to have a large enough sample size when carrying out a pilot test, since results from the pilot may act as a reference point for data checking. In the case of Viet Nam, the key indicators (e.g. rates of physical, emotional and sexual violence) showed similar rates, both in the pilot test and in the national survey. Therefore, when rates from a certain site were very different from those of the pilot site, the survey team was able to ask questions for quality assurance (e.g. were the questionnaires completed appropriately?) and for potential need for further investigation in the qualitative component (e.g. what are possible reasons for certain areas to have much lower/higher rates of violence?).

Conducting field data collection

Fieldwork was conducted between December 2009 and early February 2010, with 4,838 women interviewed. To prevent burnout, gender violence studies recommend a maximum of 100 interviews per interviewer. Further, experience from other studies has shown that it is advisable to finish one cluster in one day, so that safety and confidentiality are not compromised. As each interviewer was expected to conduct three interviews in one day, and since each cluster consisted of 12 households, it was decided to organize teams of five members, with three interviewers, one team leader and one field editor. For the fieldwork to be completed in two months, 14 field teams were formed. Team leaders were responsible for overseeing all activities of the team in each cluster. Field editors ensured that questionnaires were completed and correctly filled out, and interviewers conducted the face-to-face interviews.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject, the Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on

Domestic Violence with Women¹⁷ were strictly applied. One example is the name assigned to the field survey. To avoid jeopardizing interviewees and interviewers, pre-judgment among the interviewees and potential interventions to prevent disclosure of information, the survey did not use the word “violence.” Instead, “National Study on Women’s Health and Life Experience” was used as the safe name. This was the title used to inform the Provincial Statistics Offices and to ask for their support to send invitations to potential participants and arrange for the interviews.

As recommended in the WHO guidelines, women were not interviewed in their homes but received a letter of invitation in advance and were interviewed in a central neutral location, usually the commune centre. This modification was decided on due to the common living style in Viet Nam, where many generations live together, which may not be ideal to maintain privacy and safety during interviews. Although the interviews were conducted in one room with three to four women being interviewed at a time, allowing sufficient space between tables and chairs preserved privacy.

At the end of the interview, which usually took around 85 minutes, the interviewed women were given a pocket-sized booklet containing general information on domestic violence and available services for survivors. These materials were mixed with leaflets on other general health issues, so that whoever viewed the materials did not identify the real purpose of the survey (domestic violence). The aim was to avoid any potential violence against the interviewed women by her partner or husband after participating in the survey.

At the end of the interview, women were asked how they felt, better, the same or worse compared with before the interview. Eighty per cent of interviewed women reported feeling better. What is striking is that women who experienced violence by partners were more likely to feel better than those who did not experience violence, even more for women who

had suffered more severe levels of violence. Among those who reported both physical and sexual violence, almost 90 per cent stated they felt better after the interview.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, the guidelines on ethic and safety considerations must be applied strictly in all actions. Appropriate words (e.g. avoid the word “violence”) should be decided and used in all the official documents and communications.
- Field workers sometimes expressed feelings of depression after interviewing women suffering from domestic violence. In these cases, other team members provided support to comfort each other. However, it would be more helpful to have additional support systems during and after the field data collection.
- Good cooperation among the survey teams, the Provincial Statistical Offices and communal offices is the key for the smooth operation of the fieldwork. To establish a good relationship, all relevant offices need to be aware of the survey plan in advance.

Processing and analyzing data

A central data entry system was created in the Census and Survey Processing System (CSPRO 2.5), with an extensive error check programme. All data were double entered to minimize data entry errors. Dummy tables, a data dictionary and analysis syntax in Data Analysis and Statistical Software (STATA) were adapted and created for conducting data analysis. Weighting was done to correct for the effect of sampling. Univariate, exploratory and descriptive analyses of the results from the questionnaires were performed.

Qualitative component

After completion of the quantitative component, the qualitative research was carried out in April 2010. It sought to contextualize the violence and to provide a better understanding of perceptions about the violence by community members and authorities,

¹⁷ WHO. ‘Putting women first: Ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women’. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2001.

perceived causes of violence, risk factors, how violence escalates, consequences of violence and how family members, neighbors and other people may intervene in cases of violence.

Selecting participants, sites and research tools. Based on the above-mentioned specific objectives, the following target groups were identified:

- Women survivors of violence;
- Village leaders, chairs and vice-chair of the Communist Party, police officers, officers from the Women's Union and a Health Care Provider at the local level;
- Women from the community; and
- Men from the community.

The selection of women suffering from domestic violence was thoroughly discussed. After analysing different options, it was decided to select and contact women participating in projects on domestic violence or receiving services. The option of going back to the quantitative component to identify the respondents suffering from domestic violence was also discussed, but not selected, for ethical reasons and to maintain confidentiality of the study.

In terms of sites, it was decided to select communes not targeted in the quantitative component, so that the safety of the women who participated in the quantitative interviews was not jeopardized. Three provinces, representing northern, central and southern Viet Nam, were finally selected.

The research tools (e.g. guidelines for interviewing women suffering from domestic violence, guidelines for men in community, etc.) were tested by completing five interviews with women suffering from domestic violence, interviews with one man and one local leader and two focus group discussions (one with women and one with men). Based on the results and feedback from the pilot test, the questions and guidelines were fine-tuned and finalized.

Conducting field data collection and analysing data. The field data collection was conducted during March-April 2010 by three teams composed, each of them, of four senior researchers and one assistant researcher who had undergone specialized training.

To ensure homogeneity in the application of the guidelines, all researchers attended a one-day preparation workshop.

In total, five women survivors, five key informants (a staff member from the Women's Union, a health care provider, a policy officer, a village leader, a chair and vice-chair of the Communist Party), ten women and ten men per province, underwent in-depth interviews. Two focus group discussions for women and two for men were also conducted in each province.

STEP 2: REPORT WRITING

Upon completion of the field data collection and the subsequent data processing, the research team gathered in a five-day intensive writing workshop, where they could focus on report writing without any distractions from daily work. At the end of the workshop, a first draft of the report had been produced.

STEP 3: DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Since domestic violence is a sensitive topic, it had been envisaged that a sudden release of the results might provoke unfavorable reactions by some of the key stakeholders, particularly policy makers. Therefore, the process of findings dissemination was carefully planned and implemented involving the key stakeholders and promoting a shared understanding on the study. The key steps included:

- Finalization of the draft report by incorporating inputs from the key colleagues involved;
- Consultation meeting with the key stakeholders;
- Pre-launch meeting to present the study; and
- Official launch of the study report.

Finalization of the draft report

Copies of the draft report were distributed to the technical advisory members for review, prior to the closed consultative meeting. The copies were treated as strictly confidential and were sealed and hand-delivered to reviewers, to prevent information leakage and to assure confidentiality of the findings.

Reviewers were those who were closely involved in this study and who would be responsible to support the dissemination, communication and utilization of the data after the official launch. Reviewers were asked to provide feedback and raise questions regarding the study and its findings prior to the public view. This provided an opportunity for reviewers to discuss and anticipate issues that might arise during the release of the findings.

Consultation with the key stakeholders

The first consultation workshop took place on 24 June 2010. It had a twofold objective: to collect comments to improve the draft report and to develop strategies to communicate the results in an effective way, by anticipating concerns and questions from the public. The participants were technical experts, including representatives from the GSO, key line Ministries, the Viet Nam Women's Union, national NGOs, academic institutions and the UN.

The consultation workshop highlighted some issues that needed to be addressed before the official launch:

- Some participants did not have a comprehensive understanding of the survey methodology, and thus questioned the methodology as well as the credibility of the data.
- There were questions related to the sampling technique and sample size, questioning the national representativeness of the findings.
- Some participants were concerned that this study excluded men from the picture.
- There were some interests to see data from similar surveys conducted in other countries.
- There was a call for relevant agencies to be present at the launch, in an attempt to address questions related to mechanisms and services in place to respond to domestic violence.

Pre-launch meeting

Prior to the official launch of the study, a half-day pre-launch meeting was organized to explain the study objectives, scope and methodology, present

the findings and discuss and clarify any issues necessary for endorsing the findings. The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy General Director of the GSO. The participants were representatives, directors of departments, decision makers and technical experts from key Ministries. The participants shared their comments and endorsed the report for the official launch.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

It is important to obtain support from the leadership and management of the relevant ministries and institutions prior to the official launch, by clearly explaining the study methodology and the findings.

Launch of the report

The report *Keeping Silent is Dying: Results from the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam* was officially launched on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November 2010, in Ha Noi. More than 200 colleagues participated, representing government institutions, national and international NGOs, academic institutions, mass organizations, media, donors and UN agencies.

Presentations were made on the methodologies and scope for the quantitative and qualitative components, the key findings and recommendations for further research, followed by a questions and answers session. The agenda included presentations by the key duty bearers, such as the MOCST, to support the key findings and to share their view in responding to domestic violence. The launch also included a media briefing session. With support from the One UN Communications Team, the launch was featured in many media outlets, including newspaper, online news and TV.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- It was essential to count on the representation and interventions of the key line ministries, such as the GSO and MOCST. This showed the ownership of the data by the government of

Viet Nam, meaning that the findings were credible and could be used for further work on prevention and response to domestic violence.

- It is fundamental to provide clear explanations on the study methodology to prove credibility of the results. There were many interventions from the public saying that the results may be high due to the study methodology, but the research team was able to present a strong case for the methodology.
- It is necessary to arrange a separate briefing and Q&A session specifically for media, so that they can receive comprehensive and accurate information to use in their articles, even if they do not stay for the whole event.
- For wider dissemination of the findings, the launch at the central level may be followed by launches in other major cities and provinces of the country.
- The launch does not mark the end of the communication and advocacy. A strategy is needed to continuously disseminate and communicate the study findings to various stakeholders. It is important to continue addressing the questions of the data use, influence on policies and programmes, to what extent the recommendations were realized and how to sensitize policy-makers and the general public about the consequences of the violence to the family, the society and the country.

STEP 4: FEEDBACK FROM THE FIELD WORKERS

Immediately upon completion of the fieldwork, it was decided to acknowledge the contribution of the field workers and to seek their feedback to learn to what extent the training had been useful and how they addressed difficult situations, as well as to identify possible areas for improvement. An appreciation letter and a feedback questionnaire were sent to all field workers. In total, 45 questionnaires were returned.

Overall, the feedback showed that the training had been useful in terms of providing sufficient knowledge on domestic violence, asking questions in ways that were easily understood by respondents,

completing the questionnaire, keeping confidentiality and addressing unexpected interference. The field workers also expressed that the field data collection had proceeded well in terms of ensuring safety of respondents and field workers and emotional well-being of field workers. Logistical preparation and support was highly appreciated. The feedback indicated that the study also had some impacts on the field workers in terms of their level of awareness and understanding of domestic violence issues.

“ Participating in the survey was an important change for me. From conducting the survey, I realized that domestic violence was a big issue for women. ”

“ I realized that all cases of emotional violence are extremely painful, though they do not leave visible injury or marks on a body, like physical violence does. A pain in one’s heart is no less serious. ”

The feedback also identified areas for improvements, especially the need to better prepare the field workers for dealing with depressing feelings after interviewing a woman suffering from domestic violence:

“ I had an interview with a female teacher who told me that she had a harsh life and her teardrops kept falling down on her face and soon we began our conversation. The interview ended late but successfully. That night I could not sleep. In my mind, I still remembered the image of the woman who suffered from physical violence. Her husband even offended her dignity and spiritual well-being. ”

6. Progress and Results

The National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam filled the data gap on the issue of domestic violence against women in Viet Nam. Its findings are being used to:

- **Present concrete evidence to policy makers** and development practitioners to develop and implement evidence-based policies, programmes and interventions to address violence against women.
- **Measure progress.** Data collected in the survey can be used as a baseline to measure changes brought about by policies, programmes and interventions addressing violence against women. The General Statistics Office plans to repeat the study again in 2015, with the aim of assessing progress made to eliminate domestic violence since 2010.
- **Increase awareness of domestic violence.** The findings from the study were used when developing key messages and communication materials for further awareness among general public. With advocacy backed up by evidence, there has been increased attention to domestic violence by parliamentarians, communist party members, and leaders of relevant ministries and local authorities. In all advocacy events, leaders of the key government agencies played an active role, such as a co-chair, to enhance the advocacy efforts. Gender-based violence, which was absent from the past gender strategy, is now one of the priorities in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 (Objective 6) and the National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015 (Project 4).
- **Further knowledge of different gender violence issues.** The study has led to the initiation of additional research utilizing raw data from the survey, e.g. domestic violence and HIV/AIDS, by UNAIDS, and the cost of domestic violence, by UN Women and UNFPA.

Officials involved in the implementation of the study have increased their knowledge and strengthened their capacity to carry out surveys on domestic violence, so that they are expected to play an important role in conducting the foreseen 2015 study.

The high credibility of the study is due to the fact that the preparation, implementation and dissemination of the results were all done with the involvement of key officials from the relevant ministries and institutions. This was possible as the Programme brought various institutions to work together and regularly share information. Prior to the Programme, information exchange and collaboration among different institutions was limited, and research findings produced by one were often not fully utilized by others, as there was a lack of ownership.

In addition, the study had a significant **impact on those who were directly involved**, such as the interviewers and the respondents. Domestic violence is a sensitive topic, usually unspoken. Going through the questionnaire, the respondents gradually became aware of the issue of domestic violence, and received information on where to seek help in case of need. For most of those women suffering from violence, the interview was the first occasion to talk about their experience. Many of them expressed that they felt valued and thankful for being heard and that participating in the survey had changed their awareness:

“ I feel a lot better having talked with you. I could not figure out why I told you all these secrets of my life that even my mother is not aware of. I thank you very much for listening to my unhappy stories. I'll take your advice. ”

Many of the fieldworkers reported also being transformed through their participation in this study:

“ I have gained more experience and understanding about life and society and developed a better sense of responsibility for myself and my community to deal with cases of violence ... also I have become more self-confident and gained more courage. ”

“When interviews were completed, I myself felt stressed from seeing respondents crying a lot as they suffered from violence. After interviews, the interviewed women expressed their sincere thanks with smiles and they even wanted to invite us to their houses. This makes me think we made a small contribution to a long-term issue of domestic violence.”

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

As lessons learned have already been presented in the description of the practices above, this section will briefly summarize the main lessons and the way forward.

Involvement of key stakeholders. Requiring the involvement of the key stakeholders, such as MOCST, MOLISA, MOJ, MPS and the UN, from the very conception of the research to the dissemination of the results, contributed to the success of the study, as stakeholders gained ownership of the study and its findings.

WHO methodology. Using the well-established methodology developed by WHO as a basis for the national study led to robust data and allows for comparison with other countries.

Data needs. The survey must balance data needs while keeping a strong focus on the key issues. It is not advisable to include many different topics, since each topic requires specific questions and set-up to collect reliable data.

Safety guidelines. Due to the sensitive nature of the survey, the guidelines on ethic and safety consideration should be strictly applied in all actions.

Well-being of the field workers. Some field workers expressed feelings of depression after interviewing women suffering from domestic violence. It would have been necessary to provide some support mechanisms during the fieldwork.

Further analysis. The raw data generated by the study can be further analyzed to produce more useful information. This requires having precise guidelines on who can access and use the raw data, under the close supervision of the GSO.

Communication and advocacy. The strategy put in place to implement the study mainly focused on collecting and analysing data, paying less attention to the dissemination of the results. For the most effective use of the data generated, a well-thought Communication and Advocacy Plan, with sufficient budget, is of paramount importance.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Viet Nam Government plans to repeat the survey in 2015 to obtain estimates of prevalence and patterns of domestic violence against women. The results of the 2015 study will allow assessing progress made to eliminate domestic violence since 2010. The preparation and the implementation of this future study will be based on the process followed in 2009-2010.

As established in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020, the Viet Nam Government has committed to collecting key gender data on a regular basis, to use it as a basis for improving its legislative and policy framework and to monitor the implementation of the gender-related laws, policies and programmes. With support from the Programme, a Gender Statistical Indicator System (GSIS) has been developed and approved in 2011. The GSIS incorporates a list of key gender indicators, including indicators on domestic violence, and regular data collection is required. This calls for continuation of the data and knowledge generation efforts initiated in 2010.

IMPROVED CAPABILITIES AND RESOURCES



ROLE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS

Joint Programme: Promoting and Protecting Food Security and Nutrition for Families and Children in Bangladesh

Thematic Window: Children, Food Security and Nutrition

Main Participants: WFP (lead agency), FAO, UNICEF, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Save the Children, Helen Keller International, Action Contre la Faim, ICDDR, BRAC

Image courtesy of WFP



1. Introduction

The World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have carried out a Joint Programme on Promoting and Protecting Food Security and Nutrition for Families and Children in Bangladesh (the Programme) to improve maternal and child nutrition in one of Bangladesh's most impoverished regions. The focus on women as the change agents for improving both food security and nutrition makes this program a unique initiative. This experience shows that although women's empowerment was not an explicit objective at the outset of the Programme, the community-level engagement to increase women's participation in food security and nutrition has been crucial to advance their rights, and that empowerment has been a very positive result of the Programme.

2. Initial Situation

The social status of women as compared to men, in families and communities, is considered one of the critical factors in explaining the reasons behind high levels of undernutrition in the region of Upazila, Bangladesh. Lack of education, learning opportunities, societal restrictions and access to resources are serious constraints that prevent women from bringing about changes in health and nutrition behaviours for themselves and their families. Men traditionally grow and purchase food; therefore, they decide what the family eats. Social and cultural factors also restrict women's participation in the social, economic and political spheres. These same barriers prevent women's mobility outside of their homes and limit their access to information and to the outside world.

“At the beginning of the interventions, the status of women in the community was very low. The intervention is the first of its kind in the area, which attempts to make significant changes in women's lives.”

ASSISTANT PROGRAMME MANAGER AT WFP

3. Objective

The overall goals of the Programme were to:

- Contribute to the reduction of acute malnutrition and underweight prevalence among children 0-59 months and acute malnutrition in pregnant and lactating women; and
- Reduce the proportion of the population that is food insecure (i.e. those with inadequate calorie and nutrient intakes).

4. Strategy

Based on baseline survey evidence, the Programme was designed to take immediate steps to improve the nutritional status of women and children in the community and the overall food security of the larger community.

The joint interventions included the following:

- Enhancing food security through homestead gardens and income-generating activities;
- Managing malnutrition among families and children;
- Enhancing education in schools through school feeding;
- Promoting nutrition education in schools;
- Improved infant and young child feeding practices; and
- Prevention of micro nutrient deficiencies, particularly anemia among children.

5. Progress and Results

Women's empowerment was analysed through their active participation in project activities, which resulted in improved perceptions of themselves and the perceptions of others and contributed to Programme outcomes.

CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of themselves. Programme interventions required women to take part in activities outside their homes. The Programme organized entire day trainings, visits to the outreach centers and courtyard sessions. These systematic interactions helped women to review and reconsider their self-image. They were able to overcome their inhibitions and became more confident, and their awareness of these changes made them feel proud of their accomplishments.

“Now family members pay attention to my words.”

TASLIMA, PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

Perceptions of family members. Women are now involved in a variety of activities that they were not involved in before. The training programmes have instilled in other family members a sense of confidence in the capabilities of the women. As a result, women are able to bring about changes in the diets of their families and improve the overall food security situation of their households. Women reported that mothers-in-law are beginning to give them credit for proper care of the children. This makes them feel more valued as members of the family and increases their self-worth.

CHANGES IN HEALTH AND NUTRITION PRACTICES

A number of traditional beliefs that are detrimental to the health and nutrition of pregnant women and young children are deeply entrenched in the communities. The diets and movements of pregnant women are strictly monitored and both the quantity and quality of diets during pregnancy are restricted. In order to counteract these traditional beliefs, the

Programme organized regular sessions to promote healthy practices for pregnant and lactating women and young children. The training sessions provided women with information on what, how and why to feed their babies and how to take special care of them. It also provided information on diet diversity and the nutritional value of different food items. Following these sessions, women started to visit doctors more frequently and rely on medical information rather than depending on traditional beliefs.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

“I do not bother my wife regarding when and what to feed my baby as now she has more knowledge than me.”

HELAL, HUSBAND OF PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

Within the family. Participants reported that major decisions such as purchasing, selling or mortgaging land, daughters' weddings or children's education were usually taken by men in the community. However, after their involvement in the Programme, women started taking part in some of these family decisions. Women appear to have increased responsibilities on certain issues such as feeding of children and daily meal preparation. Women are mainly responsible for homestead gardening. They follow the Programme's training and the guidelines provided by the Department of Agriculture Extension staff to cultivate their gardens. They also have increased control over the products, independently deciding to sell vegetables to their neighbours.

Outside the family. The community is largely conservative and traditionally does not provide scope for women's independent participation in social ceremonies or functions outside their homes. During the project women participated in activities outside their home and therefore interacted with people other than their families. Women who had participated in the homestead garden training felt that they had the freedom to ask for

support and to discuss any kind of issue with the Livestock Officer or the Department of Agriculture Extension Officer. Women used to avoid strangers in the communities, especially men. After the intervention they have become confident in expressing themselves in front of strangers.

INCREASE IN WOMEN'S MOBILITY

Traditionally women travel only when accompanied by an adult male member of the family. Prior to their involvement in the project they could hardly move out of their homes or village. Their movements were restricted to neighbouring households or to their villages of birth. After the intervention, women started travelling outside of their homes to get health support for themselves and for their children. The most remarkable change is women's increased access to the health facilities. Although most of the visits were to the community clinics, the women interviewed seemed confident that they would be able to travel anywhere.

CHANGES IN THE MEN

The evolving role of women in the communities is also accompanied by a subtle change in the men. Men became more receptive to their wives' knowledge and abilities and women reported that men were seeking their advice or inputs. Before the Programme men used to be the sole decision-maker when it came to purchasing food or seeking health care. After the Programme, women were increasingly having more influence and input in this decision-making process.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Women have become economically empowered through their vegetable gardening and goat rearing activities. They have benefitted both socially and economically by producing quality vegetables, sharing their acquired knowledge with family members and neighbours and

saving money through selling their vegetables. Homestead gardening has improved their household's food security and has also become an important source of nutritious food for their families. Depending on the size of their gardens, some women have sold vegetables and other garden items like vegetable seeds, which have increased their income.

“Earlier I thought money should be kept with my husband. But after my involvement with the programme I have realized that I must have some resources in my hands. I have become aware.”

RINA, PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

6. Lessons Learned and Challenges

The increase in knowledge does not automatically translate into changes in practice. In bringing about even subtle changes, women encountered resistance from family members. The process of change requires convincing family members, in this case, mothers-in-law who are traditionally the prime authority on household and child-care issues.

In Bangladesh's highly stratified society, where women are on the lowest rungs, it is not possible to bring about change in any arena without having elements of empowerment built into the activities. The integration of nutrition education and homestead gardens provided by this Programme provided the vehicle for changes in nutrition practices that contributed to improving food security in the families. Countering entrenched beliefs has not been an easy process for the women. Change involved working with mothers-in-law and other elderly women who were considered the authority on these issues in the communities.

The Programme was based in extremely remote rural locations where government facilities do not exist. Continued interaction with the outside world, through community nutrition workers and agriculture extension officers, helped women access knowledge and experience which otherwise would have been unavailable.

Mobility is considered an important indicator of women's empowerment. It reflects women's ability to access services and knowledge and requires interaction with people outside the family. Mobility is also an indicator of the families' and society's acceptance of women moving outside of defined parameters for personal or professional reasons.

An improvement in women's self-confidence has also increased their desire to be further involved in decision-making, especially in major issues such as children's education, marriage of their daughters and taking mortgage on the land.

The level of economic empowerment achieved by the women is directly related to the size of their garden. Women with a small piece of land are in a better position to have control over their income, as they are able to sell their products within the village. However, whilst commercial production increased the potential income generated, it also increased women's dependence on male members of the family to sell her products in the market.

7. Sustainability and Potential Application

The homestead garden approach is of particular relevance to Bangladesh where eight per cent of the land is considered homestead land. This report provided insight into how activities such as homestead gardening and nutrition education have an effect that is more far reaching than anticipated.

It underscores the need to expand the project design frameworks of food security and nutrition interventions that tend to be too focused on project outcomes, and less focused on the social factors that can determine the overall achievement of the project goals.

The comprehensive approach used for the multiple interventions in the Programme areas have been designed for both medium and long-term impacts so that food security and nutritional status are achieved, as well as sustained.

Efforts have been made to systematically include all partners throughout the entire programme lifespan and beyond. Regular involvement and participation of government ministries and local level organizations was also ensured from the beginning. This enables local institutions and stakeholders (both government and non-government organizations) to scale up, replicate and successfully expand the scope of the projects in practical ways.

PRODUCTIVE PATRIMONIAL ASSETS BUILDING AND CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN IN EXTREME POVERTY

Joint Programme: Productive Patrimonial Assets Building and Citizenship Programme for Women in Extreme Poverty in Bolivia

Supporting Greater Economic Autonomy and Empowerment of Indigenous/Peasant Women Entrepreneurs in Bolivia

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: UNDP (leading agency), UN Women, UNIDO and FAO.
Government entities: Vice-Ministry of Equal Opportunities (VIO)



1. Introduction

For the Government of Bolivia, poverty reduction is the highest priority on the National Development Plan agenda. In line with national priorities and international commitments to achieving the gender-related Millennium Development Goals, the Joint Programme on Productive Patrimonial Assets Building and Citizenship Programme for Women in Extreme Poverty (the Programme) has provided indigenous rural women from the poorest areas of Bolivia with sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their families and is simultaneously strengthening their abilities to fully exercise their citizenship and political rights.

To achieve its aims, the programme has introduced seed and start-up capital, with some participants having also received venture and shared venture capital contracts. The Programme has built skills among women to improve the management of their businesses, the quality of their products and their marketing and uses facilitators to foster contact between women's enterprises and markets. The programme also employed a strategy to increase the exercise of women's citizenship and political rights through the provision of identity documents and citizenship education for women, communities and local authorities, ensuring land ownership is in women's names and guaranteeing their inclusion in housing programmes and the defense of their ownership rights.

The programme has created an institutional environment that is increasingly favorable to providing information to and educating members of rural communities, municipal governments and a variety of government and non-governmental institutions on the basic rights of women.

2. Initial Situation

In Bolivia, women's participation in the labour market, particularly in rural areas is low. In 2009, 77 per cent of women worked in the rural sector, 16 per cent in the service sector and only 6.4 per cent in manufacturing. Also, 63 per cent of women were family workers or unpaid apprentices, and 24.6 per

cent were self-employed. Only 9 per cent of women were formally employed and thus entitled to social security benefits (health and long-term insurance).

Rural poverty has also driven an increasing number of people to migrate to the cities, a trend which by 2007 had turned 13 per cent of the rural households into single parent households headed by women, thus worsening rural poverty rates. Poverty was also compounded lack of landownership, access to financial services or support to procure resources needed for economic activities, together with the enjoyment of full civil rights often hindered by lack of awareness and of identity documentation.

3. Strategy

The Programme has introduced an innovative strategy to provide assets for excluded rural families. The strategy consists of two interrelated elements. The first was through a non-reimbursable direct monetary transfer component that provided seed capital, startup grants, joint venture and risk capital. The second element was focused on training and advisory services, including: a) the development of suppliers who, once a market for their goods had been guaranteed, would ensure that the production of livelihoods for the families involved would be sustainable; b) the provision of housing; c) changing the procedures of land deeds to allow women to be sole owners or share property rights with their spouses, thus consolidating their right to own or inherit land; and d) legal and civic services providing identification documents and civic education for the full exercise of citizenship.

The Programme targeted poor women living in rural areas. The focus on tailored business assistance and technical training, combined with civic capacity strengthening and the full exercise of women's rights has proven effective. From the women's perspective, the value added of the Programme was the increased income that enabled them to better meet the daily needs of their families, including improved food security and child education. Also, identity documentation and organizational strengthening contributed to their stronger positioning and participation in decision-making in their homes and communities.

4. Progress and Results

The Programme contributed to reducing poverty by providing financial support and financing to women entrepreneurs, and empowering them in decision-making in family and community issues. Women in 2,507 Rural Economic Units (REU) received funding for an average of US\$1,407, and 212 collective REUs for an average of US\$7,582, with the participation of 4,445 women. The Programme improved employment rates or created employment for 4,640 women. Funding contributed to a substantial productivity growth, with reported incomes increasing by up to 50 per cent. In addition, nearly 2,000 women received basic management training and learned how to account for expenses and revenues in order to better understand how much money their businesses were making or losing, and many others received technical assistance to improve production. Participating women reported assigning an average of 63 per cent of their profits to address their children's needs and their family food needs. The remaining 37 per cent was used for their own needs or family savings. Prior to participation in the Programme, 63 per cent of the women were not qualified for financial services. By the end, all women in the Programme had access to services such as savings accounts, credit lines, remittances, and payment for services, among others.

The Programme has also enabled 12,817 women to fully enjoy their citizenship rights for the first time by helping them obtain birth certificates and identification cards, which are required to have access to bank loans and to exercise the right to vote. In the interviews conducted, 94 per cent of the women declared that they had progressed significantly with the support of the Programme.

The political advocacy and social control capacities of women's organizations have also been strengthened by contributing to increased rights awareness through leadership training sessions for women, and broadening their scope and participation in public life (unions, associations, etc.). Due to the lack of identity documentation and lack of information before the Programme was implemented, only 22 per cent of women participants voted. Today, 97 per

cent of them take part in local and national electoral processes. Equipped with identity documentation, the women are able to create organizations authorized for political participation. Thirty per cent of the women entrepreneurs who participated in training sessions on the exercise of citizen rights have been nominated for electoral lists for the election of community and productive organizations leaders. Out of the total candidates, 60 per cent have been elected. In addition, 15 per cent of the participating women are active involved in community organizations. Municipal authorities have also been educated on women's rights, and four municipal governments have projects underway to expand support to gender equality.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- The Programme has shown that rural women can benefit significantly from direct support through non-reimbursable funding to strengthen their business, generate income, and improve their self-esteem and to be acknowledged as players in their own development process. This also translates into improved well-being for the family.
- The Programme has shown that capacity-building among women is best achieved by providing tailored, on-site, technical assistance that addresses a specific demand and by giving priority to practice. This kind of technical assistance generates important productivity leaps, whereby small businesses become medium-sized and even larger business initiatives.
- Capacity-building and awareness-raising activities addressed to political authorities and community leaders have proven to be effective to increase levels of support to the Programme and develop a favorable and gender sensitive environment.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The intervention methodology developed during the four years of the Programme (2009-2012) and

based on Bolivia's specific conditions will serve as the key blueprint for a new public policy framework design focused on reducing poverty and empowering women, according to UNDP Bolivia Deputy Representative Claudio Providas. The Minister of Productive Development and Plural Economy is already developing this policy. Due to the combination of focused financial support and public policy tools, findings, practices and lessons from the Programme can be applied in rural areas, medium-sized cities and suburban areas, with a focus on women in extreme poverty but also on other vulnerable groups, such as youth and the elderly.

The key to the sustainability of the Programme is local commitment and ownership. Two municipalities have agreed to continue providing identity documentation civic services with their own resources. Eleven municipalities have signed

agreements and provided resources to support women's businesses, and the Programme model is starting to be scaled up by the national Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy. Agreements have also been signed with five municipalities to co-finance and expand women's cooperatives. Further, the Department of Equal Opportunities has strengthened its regulatory tracking system to monitor changes in relation to women's economic empowerment.

7. Main Sources

Final External Evaluation Report for the Programme, 'Productive Patrimonial Assets Building and Citizenship Programme for Women in Extreme Poverty', Marcela Alcocer and Gustavo García, 6 consulting services. June 2012.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN STABILIZATION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION IN NORTH KIVU

Joint Programme: Project to Support Stabilization and Conflict
Prevention in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Thematic Window: Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Main Participants: UNDP (lead agency), FAO, UNICEF, Ministry of
Agriculture, Ministry of Planning, OXFAM, ADRA, Caritas



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme “Project to Support Stabilization and Conflict Prevention in North Kivu” (the Programme) aimed to contribute to improved security and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s troubled province of North Kivu. It adopted a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding based on conflict analysis. The focus was on community-based reintegration of returnees (ex-combatants and displaced persons) and survivors of sexual violence, improvement of absorption capacity and livelihoods, and community-based prevention initiatives. Special attention was paid to the needs, participation and empowerment of vulnerable women, including survivors of sexual violence, widows, women heads of households and poor women.

2. Initial Situation

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of the poorest countries in the world. Human Development Indicators are among the lowest in the world. Added to the structural causes that underlie these data, years of conflict have severely affected the country and directly and indirectly caused over 5.4 million deaths since 1998; 45,000 people continue to die each month.¹⁸ Insecurity still prevails in most of the country.

The issue of stabilization and peace in the eastern DRC remains a major challenge for the country. In the Beni Territory, which is the Programme intervention area, the displacement and return situation is as follows:¹⁹

| Returnee and displaced households/persons | | |
|---|--------|--------|
| | 2009 | 2010 |
| No. of returnee households | 19.015 | 23.548 |
| No. of displaced households | 2.962 | 18.602 |
| No. of displaced persons | | 89.223 |

¹⁸ Mortality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An ongoing crisis, International Rescue Committee, December 2007.

¹⁹ Bulletin annuel des statistiques sociales de la Province du Nord/Kivu, Ministère du Plan, Division Provinciale du Nord/Kivu, May 2011.

Especially worrisome are threats to women’s security in the face of military operations. With alarmingly high rates of sexual violence, women still largely assume the responsibility for caring and providing for children, which is affected by huge constraints in access to resources such as land.

The economic activities of the Beni Territory essentially depend on agriculture, livestock farming and trade. The agrarian system, dominated by subsistence agriculture, consists of small-scale farmers using traditional cropping techniques (hoes, machetes, coupe-coupe, etc.) with poor yields. The development of agriculture is constrained by the lack or poor state of the agricultural service roads, lack of improved seeds, fertilizer and agricultural supports, as well as lack of agricultural credit. The two major constraints to the development of livestock farming are the lack of veterinarian products and the continuous insecurity with the presence of armed groups who steal livestock.

At the social level, the prevailing situation in the health and education sectors is marked by the lack of infrastructure (dilapidated buildings that are no longer in compliance with building codes) and equipment.

The situation of women is also characterized by their absence at the decision-making level. Local traditions do not favor the inclusion of women in decision making because the main role attributed to them is to take care of children and household tasks.

It is in this context that in 2009, international partners set up a comprehensive programme aimed at the stabilization and reconstruction of the eastern DRC, the **Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern Congo (STAREC) Programme**. Within the framework of this Programme, in 2009 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) launched the Programme “Project to Support Stabilization and Conflict Prevention in North Kivu” aimed at the economic revitalization, restoration of social services and promotion of social cohesion as vectors of peace consolidation in the Beni Territory.

3. Objectives

The aim of the Programme was to contribute to improved security and stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's province of North Kivu.

4. Strategy

Through a holistic and multi-sectoral approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding based on conflict analysis, the Programme intended to contribute to the safety and stabilization of population in North Kivu. In all of the community bodies on which the Programme relied (community support networks, sanitation committees, management committees, farmers'/producers' organizations, and more), an equal representation of women and men was required. With the aim of overcoming structural discriminations tending to exclude women from information and decision-making spheres, specific efforts were made so that would be involved in all phases of the Programme, from the initial analysis to planning, implementation and monitoring.

Multi-purpose Community Centres (*Centre Communautaire Polyvalente, CCPs*) were at the heart of the gender strategy developed by the Programme. The CCP is a holistic support service aimed at women's empowerment through the provision of social services such as psychosocial assistance, literacy and child-care, as well as the promotion of income-generating activities. As opposed to the domestic space, CCPs allow women to participate in the public sphere within their communities to influence local decision-making. Based on previous local initiatives, three new CCPs were built within the framework of the Programme. Women's participation in CCP management structures was actively encouraged. As a consequence, the supported CCPs have almost 50 per cent of women among their board members.

Multi-purpose Community Centres (CCPs) provide multiple psychosocial and economic services for the entire village community and particularly, for the survivors of sexual violence. Setting up psychosocial self-help groups within the CCPs allowed participants, both women and men, to reflect on conflicts

experienced at the community level and ways to overcome them by focusing on their specific gender needs. Twenty-three people, of whom 16 were women and 7 men, were trained to assist traumatized people, with a particular focus on survivors of sexual violence. As a result of their psychosocial and mediation assistance, a large number of persons who were marginalized and/or rejected by the family have been able to reintegrate communities. Survivors of sexual violence, grouped in the CCPs, received agricultural support (inputs and skills) for the implementation of agricultural activities carried out in these CCPs.

Community radio has played a key role in the promotion of gender equality within the targeted communities. The Joint Programme set up a new community radio station (in Isalé) and strengthened an already existing one (in Béni) with the goal of promoting dialogue on peaceful resolution of conflicts, peace consolidation and social reintegration within the communities. To achieve this, the Programme supported the creation of several listening groups and five Community Alliance Nodes (*Noyaux d'alliance communautaires, NACs*), composed of 50 per cent women, who were encouraged to have an active role in the community. The two community radio stations also included a large number of women/girls as journalists and in their Management Committees.

Community radio has effectively promoted discussion and reflection on women's rights and gender equality. As an example, members of listening groups reported that they changed their opinion on the schooling of young girls and early marriage following community radio awareness-raising broadcasts and the active participation of girls in the radio and listening group activities. This is a first step to promote equal opportunities for girls and boys in access to education.

To facilitate the understanding of women's situations and to address specific problems of protection, the Programme promoted the creation of young and women's forums, as spaces where women could openly discuss their concerns. In total, 20 women's forum and 11 young forum were put in place. Additionally, 21 Local Committees against Sexual Violence have been created.

REVITALIZATION OF LOCAL ECONOMIES AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Within the framework of the CCPs, technical training and start-up equipment and supplies were provided to initiate income-generating activities. Supported income-generating activities (sewing and tailoring, baking, soap-making, embroidery, weaving, etc.) were largely run by women, especially women survivors of sexual violence. In total, 627 persons (488 women and 139 men) were involved in these activities linked to the CCPs.

Three markets were built in the Beni Territory. Markets not only serve as places for buying and selling produce, but also for social exchange, education and information. Each market is managed by a Community Committee, with almost 50 per cent women. For instance, one of the markets was provided with a storage warehouse for the unsold agricultural stock, which is very useful for women because they can keep their merchandise there upon returning from the market, thus saving them the trouble of carrying heavy loads over long distances.

Tenure security is essential in a territory where land access is very limited. Within the framework of the Programme, 43 land cession contracts were signed, allowing securing 172 ha for 3,124 households, of which 1,643 were headed by women (53 per cent). Farming these lands that are near to the villages has resulted in:

- Increased economic empowerment of women (widows, divorcees, heads of households, people living with HIV and survivors of sexual violence, etc.) who could then support their household needs (food, health care, education, etc.);
- Improved food security (increased food availability and accessibility) and the nutritional status of household members (notably through increased consumption of vegetables and the introduction of new crops such as soya);
- Reduced risks for the women from the remoteness and isolation of the fields. The plots farmed by the households were grouped together in a large site, so that women were not left alone in the field. Due to this secure land access, 624 women were then able to leave the dangerous Virunga Park.

Poor agricultural practices, common in the area, limit the development of the sector and can lead to a loss of production of around 40 per cent. With the aim of limiting these losses, households were trained in good agricultural practices and provided with tools and quality seeds. Training was addressed to both women and men, including the promotion of a more equitable distribution of farming tasks. The harvest assessments showed that farmers trained in good agricultural practices succeeded in tripling their production. Analyses on yield and revenue are currently being carried out in order to confirm these results.

Processing infrastructures reduce women's working hours and lighten the burden of their tasks, as well as increase productivity. The Programme set up 50 processing machines (corn mills, rice hulling machines, palm oil mixers), managed communally by the Farming Organizations, 60 per cent of which are run by women.

The Joint Programme promoted the creation and strengthening of Mutual Societies for Solidarity (Mutualités de Solidarité, MUSO). These are solidarity groups of savings and credit consisting of around 20 people each. It is a mechanism for attracting the microfinance institutions (MFIs) to cater to groups that, up to then, have had little or no access to these institutions. In collaboration with another project, Programme d'appui au secteur de la microfinance (PASMIF, Micro-Finance Support Programme), there are now over 200 MUSOs (consisting of over 75 per cent women) in the Beni Territory. They have allowed women to access small credits to support their household needs, contributing to the construction of their homes, acquisition of small livestock, children's education and more.

IMPROVEMENT OF BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

The Programme supported the improvement of basic social services, notably in the health/hygiene and education sectors. Four health centers, one nutritional center and two health units were built and equipped. This allowed for the improvement of vaccination rates of children and antenatal care for women. In the Mbutaba Health Centre 2, for example, the use of maternity services increased from 30 to 50 per cent.

Similarly, the filtering of springs and development of sustainable water points (springs or wells) contributed to a considerable reduction in water-related diseases. The provision of 3,500 tiles for household toilets and the construction of toilets in schools and health centers has improved local sanitation in the villages. Girls and women assume most of the tasks concerning water and sanitation (water collection, cleaning of showers and toilets) and are the main users of these facilities, since they are responsible for accompanying their young children. Therefore, mainly women were consulted regarding the choice of site and type of infrastructures.

Girls' school enrolment was encouraged in the awareness-raising sessions for parents and through community radio stations. Awareness-raising sessions were held to sensitize fathers and mothers on the importance of education by concentrating on having adolescents continue their schooling after primary school and to inform them about issues of pregnancies and early marriage.

Literacy courses were attended by 103 people (84 women and 19 men). Learning how to read and write encouraged the women in the rural communities (an environment where most of the adults are illiterate) to actively participate in community activities. They can now read correspondence from their children and read posters in Kiswahili. Their participation in the life of the community has changed because they can read, understand awareness-raising themes and follow the immunization schedule of the children, among many others benefits.

5. Progress and Results

All actions carried out within the framework of the Programme (CCPs, Local Committees for Peace and Development, agricultural activities, community radio, markets) paid special attention to the promotion of women and girls' empowerment and the strengthening of their leadership and their participation in local decision-making spaces. The analysis of the collected data shows indisputably that the Programme has contributed to trigger changes in terms of women's position and gender

equality in the communities, even if these changes are still fragile and must be consolidated.

The observed changes can be grouped into three main categories: empowerment of women in controlling their own destinies, strengthening of women's skills and cooperation between women and men.

Women's participation in the Programme has helped them to recognize that they have value and can contribute substantially to the life of the community. One of the major achievements of the Programme has been to allow women to express themselves and their concerns within the community. In the Beni Territory, local customs did not allow room for women to express themselves. Only men could speak. CCPs and women's forums gave women an opportunity to talk about their problems and concerns.

Most of the activity in the CCPs, notably the income-generating activities, not only integrated many women (at times over half of the group), but were also led predominantly by them. This allowed women to have an impact on the decisions within these organizations and thus defend their interests within the community. The concept of parity has begun to be admitted and accepted in the community, including by the men.

CCPs and the linked income-generating activities are designed to empower women to take charge and be autonomous. It must be realized that in the Beni Territory, even if women contribute to the family budget through their work, they do not normally have access to it, nor are they consulted on how the men dispose of it. The Programme has not only supported women to start income-generating activities and, thus, put resources in their own hands, but also strengthened women's capacities to manage these resources for the benefit of the whole family. This is also translating into reshaping attitudes in the family, and resulting in greater respect by the men for their wives.

The population of Beni Territory, which is a rural territory, is predominantly illiterate, particularly the female population. One of the Programme's

main achievements has been its contribution to the strengthening of women's and girls' capacities as a result of their participation in technical trainings, training in management and literacy courses. Similarly, the community radio awareness-raising contributed to an increase in the enrolment of young girls and, in turn, to the reduction of early marriage. Also significant are the behavioural changes observed in men. In many cases, they are the first to encourage their wives to participate in community activities, notably in the CCPs and income generation.

6. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- **Win-win strategy.** The fact that women, through their activities, can contribute to the life of the family and the community, and the fact that they are no longer excluded from decisions regarding the use of money are signs of a development towards gender equality. This is therefore a component that needs further work so that women's empowerment will not be perceived by men as a loss of their power, but as a way for providing women with the means to contribute to the growth of the family and community for the benefit of all.
- **Community radio is a means par excellence to promote changes in rural areas,** where social and cultural traditions persist to the disadvantage of girls and women. Proof of this is the considerable increase in girls' enrolment in the schools following the awareness-raising sessions, community discussions, the campaigns on the importance of education for young girls and the information and discussions held in the community radio forums.

7. Sustainability and Potential Application

Social change is a long-term process. Thus, the behavioural changes triggered in the Beni Territory must be supported with respect to the weight of local customs. The role played by women within the structures where they are represented has to be consolidated given the traditional status of women in rural communities, which are characterized by resistance to innovations. To sustain the initial changes in the promotion of women and gender equality, further efforts must be made to support the CCPs and other structures and services set up by the Programme. Involvement of local authorities and civil society is of paramount importance.

PARTICIPATORY FORMULATION OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE SECTOR GENDER POLICY

Joint Programme: Development and Cultural Diversity to Reduce Poverty and Promote Social Inclusion

Thematic Window: Culture and Development

Main Participants: UNFPA (lead agency), UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNWTO, FAO and OHCHR, Ministry for the Coordination of the Natural and Cultural Heritage, National Secretariat of Planning and Development, Ministry of Public Health, Equality Councils



Building a Multi-Cultural Nation



Fighting Racism and Discrimination



Our Medicine, Our Culture



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Development and Cultural Diversity to Reduce Poverty and Promote Social Inclusion (the Programme) contributed to further the recognition and exercise of the rights of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women. Among other actions, the Programme supported the design and implementation of the Gender and Interculturality Sectoral Policy, where gender and intercultural approaches are addressed together. The Programme also contributed to the development of an innovative intercultural health system that includes the implementation of a culturally appropriate childbirth model. Through the Programme, several culturally and environmentally sustainable productive ventures were launched. These have created 1,500 income-generating enterprises, 800 of which are run by women.

2. Initial Situation

The 2007-2010 National Development Plan, the II Millennium Development Goals Report for Ecuador (2007), the Constitution of the Republic and the 2009-2013 National Plan for Good Living underscore the need to encourage awareness of and respect for cultural diversity as a means to contribute to a more inclusive society.

Objective 8 of the National Development Plan commits “to affirm and strengthen national identity, diverse identities, plurinationalism and interculturalism.” According to the Plan, “inequality and exclusion of the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples, lack of respect for their collective rights and a liberal approach to diversity have borne deep economic and social impact.” The opportunities to access social goods and services are determined by a person’s cultural and racial origin, place of residence and sex.

It is estimated that nine out of the ten persons who self-define as indigenous and seven out of the ten who self-define as Black are poor. Ethnic-racial discrimination further compounds gender-based discrimination. There are gaps between men and women regarding access to productive resources and to social, cultural and economic opportunities. Indigenous women show lower enrolment rates

in all school levels than indigenous men, and the highest illiteracy rates. The number of schooling years for indigenous peoples is 3.7 years, compared to a national average of 7.1 years, while the average for indigenous women is 2.7 years.²⁰

The child mortality rate for indigenous children is 59.3 and 32.6 for Afro-Ecuadorian children, while the national average is 25.8. Indigenous women suffer more problems connected with pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, family planning and access to gender-based violence services. While at the national level 74.2 per cent of births are assisted by professionals, only 30.1 per cent of indigenous women receive professional care. The national rate for use of contraceptives is 61.9 per cent, compared to 26.5 per cent for indigenous women. These indicators are relevant to the high incidence of maternal mortality among indigenous women due to structural factors, such as poverty, malnutrition and low education levels, and to social and cultural factors, such as racism and discrimination, present in health and education systems, which hinder women’s access to reproductive health services.²¹

In spite of this context marked by a legacy of inequality and discrimination, in recent years the country has taken important steps regarding the acknowledgement of the individual and collective rights of the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples, and of the rights of women. Important institutional mechanisms have also been established to foster and guarantee these rights through Equality Councils.

In the same vein, the Joint Programme on Development and Cultural Diversity to Reduce Poverty and Promote Social Inclusion aims “to advance social inclusion by bridging the gaps created by discrimination and strengthening the exercise of the rights of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio peoples and nationalities, under the mandates of the Constitution and the National Development Plan for Good Living.”

20 Joint Programme: Development and Cultural Diversity to Reduce Poverty and Promote Social Inclusion; see http://mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/Ecuador%20Culture_JP%20Signed.pdf (in Spanish).

21 Ibid.

The Programme focused on three lines of action: (i) design of intercultural policies to promote equal opportunities for all peoples and nationalities; (ii) support of productive cultural initiatives to foster cultural revitalization, organizational strengthening of the communities and sustainable livelihood building; and (iii) production of disaggregated statistical information about Ecuadorian cultural diversity to guide public and private decision-making.

In view of the double discrimination suffered by indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women (ethnic and gender discrimination), the Programme adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy to counterbalance the causes and consequences of this double discrimination.

3. Objectives

The gender mainstreaming strategy of the Programme aimed to “strengthen the exercise of rights to reduce discrimination and promote equal opportunities for groups excluded for reasons of ethnicity or gender through the design of intercultural public policies that take into account the strategic interests of women, particularly indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian.”

4. Key Actors

Eight United Nations agencies participated in the Programme: UNFPA, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNWTO, FAO and OHCHR.

The main Programme partner was the Sectoral Heritage Council, formed by the Ministries for the Coordination of Heritage, of the Environment, of Sports, and of Culture; the Alfaro City Corporation; the National Institute of Cultural Heritage; and the Government Council of the Special Regime of Galápagos. The Ministries of Tourism, Health, and Education, the National Water Secretariat (SENAGUA), the Secretariat of Peoples, Social Movements and Citizen Participation, the Institute for the Eco-development of the Amazon Region (ECORAE), the Ecuadorian Institute of Intellectual Property, the Ecuadorian Railways Company, and the

National Secretariat of Planning and Development participated as associated members.

The National Secretariat of Planning and Development (SENPLADES), as the public institution responsible for a participative, inclusive and coordinated national planning, played a key role in the inclusion of a gender perspective in national policies.

The Equality Councils included the Corporation for Afro-Ecuadorian Development (CODAE), Council for the Development of the Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples (CODENPE), Council for the Development of the Coastal Montubio People (CODEPMOC), and the Transition Commission for the National Council for Women and Gender Equality (CDT).

5. Strategy

The gender mainstreaming strategy adopted by the Programme focused on five main lines of action:

1. Supporting the Ministry for the Coordination of the Natural and Cultural Heritage (MCPNC) to design its gender and interculturality sectoral policy;
2. Implementing a culturally appropriate child-birth model;
3. Strengthening indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women’s organizations;
4. Promoting the visibility and dissemination of the works of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian writers; and
5. Supporting culturally and environmentally sustainable productive ventures.

6. Progress and Results

GENDER AND INTERCULTURALITY SECTORAL POLICY

MCPNC adopted the Sectoral Gender and Interculturality Policy in 2011 to promote equal opportunities for the indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio nationalities and peoples, with a special emphasis on women. A trailblazer in Latin America, this policy resulted from a participatory

process involving several institutional and social actors. The Interculturality Committee (Mesa de Interculturalidad) played a key role in this regard, by spreading the issues to other ministries.

One of the most innovative and significant aspects of this policy was the articulated integration of the “Gender” and “Interculturality” approaches, which required all programmes and activities to factor in both dimensions. The policy document begins by providing the rationale for a gender and an interculturality policy, and then presents a conceptual analysis for the combination of the two approaches and a diagnosis of the sector. Finally, the document defines the policy principles, objectives, guidelines, policies, programs and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, together with the policy budget, the compliance matrix and the evaluation of indicators. The Gender and Interculturality Policy is built upon seven priorities:

- Bridging the exclusion, racism and gender gaps;
- Strengthening intercultural dialogue with a rights and gender-based approach;
- Strengthening the systems and concepts on health and illness used by indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and Montubio nationalities and peoples;
- Promoting, safeguarding and preserving the natural and cultural heritage, and the sacred sites located in ancestral territories;
- Strengthening and promoting ancestral sports to preserve cultures and foster interculturality;
- Including nationalities and peoples and their ancestral knowledge in cultural heritage management, sustainable management of biodiversity, food sovereignty and climate change adaptation; and
- Promoting social and political participation in the heritage sector of representatives of the Ecuadorian nationalities and peoples.

The policy discussion process showed the need for a stronger gender and interculturality approach in national planning tools. Accordingly, a Toolbox for the Implementation of Gender and Interculturality Approaches was developed and included in the

Guidelines for Sectoral Policymaking, prepared by SENPLADES.

The implementation phase began in 2011 with the participation of the institutions that take part in the Sectoral Heritage Council and the future Equality Councils: CODAE, CODENPE, CODEPMOC and CDT. Several difficulties emerged in the process, due to institutional instability and the permanent change of the staff defined as focal points in the heritage sector entities, and of the representatives of some Equality Councils. Other factors affecting the process were the scarce knowledge of gender and interculturality shown by the heritage sector staff and the public sector at large, the compartmentalization of gender and interculturality knowledge within the future Equality Councils, and the difficulty integrating both variables of analysis. Finally, in the institutional political culture there was some level of resistance to change, to address the problems suffered by large sectors of the population, such as women and “the others.”

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CHILDBIRTH MODELS

Indigenous women have traditionally given birth in their homes with the assistance of midwives, their mothers or their mothers-in-law. They have been reluctant to use health facilities, where attention is centred around the doctor and their ancestral traditions (such as the birthing position, clothing, food and beverage, family participation, placenta handling and traditional medicine) are not respected. In order to counterbalance this reluctance, the Ministry of Public Health designed an innovative intercultural health system that includes a culturally appropriate childbirth model. The implementation of this model involved the following:

- Building or adapting more suitable delivery rooms that replaced the traditional hospital rooms with places where women can choose a birthing position adapted to their traditions and beliefs.
- Training and awareness-raising activities for the administrative and healthcare staff, midwives and community operators. The following training materials were developed to this end:

Methodological Guide to Culturally Appropriate Maternal Healthcare, Awareness-raising Modules in Culturally Appropriate Maternal Healthcare for Healthcare Staff and Knowledge Strengthening Modules for Ancestral Midwives (in Spanish). The Taking Care to Live Well (*Cuidémonos para vivir bien*) flip charts were particularly well received. These were designed for each of the country's regions (the Coast, the Highlands and the Amazon) and included sexual and reproductive health information with an interculturality and rights-based approach for the peoples and nationalities living in the three regions. They also contained information on prevention of family violence, sharing family chores and implementing emergency family plans, among others.

- Community information and awareness-raising campaign under the motto "Childbirth, just like at home."

There are currently ten services working under this intercultural reproductive health model (compared with the six services initially planned in the Programme) and progress has been made for its implementation in the rest of the country.

The culturally appropriate childbirth model has motivated a higher number of women from different communities to seek assistance in healthcare facilities, not only for pregnancy checkups, but also for childbirth. According to available information, in Río Verde (Esmeraldas) a monthly average of five women gave birth in a healthcare facility in 2007, while today almost 18 women per month seek this assistance. In 2010, healthcare facilities in Shushufindi, Limoconcha and Cascales (Sucumbíos) dealt with 397, 39 and 35 childbirths, respectively, while in 2011 the number of cases increased to 433, 63 and 40, respectively.

There was some initial resistance to the new model, particularly on the part of the traditional doctors. However, after a process of awareness-raising and training, a significant portion of the healthcare sector supports and is adopting this model. The new staff, and particularly the young professionals completing their intern year working in rural areas,

is more open and eager to commit to the change of paradigm that comes with the intercultural health model.

An important challenge is the high level of rotation of the healthcare staff, which requires a permanent awareness-raising and training effort for the new staff. To avoid this constant repetition, the concept of intercultural health should be included in the curricula of the health-related specializations and in the medical schools.

STRENGTHENING INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-ECUADORIAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Programme supported organizational strengthening and design and implementation of advocacy agendas for provincial, regional and national indigenous and African-Ecuadorian women's networks and organizations.

One of the projects implemented aimed to strengthen the grassroots organizations of women associated to the Confederation for the Chimborazo Indigenous Movement of the Peoples of the Puruwa Nation (COMICH). The project included a training programme on collective rights and indigenous women's specific rights that covered the following topics: food sovereignty, the Water Law, Riobamba nationality and interculturality, leadership and organizational management and family violence.

VISIBILITY AND DISSEMINATION OF THE WORKS OF INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-ECUADORIAN WRITERS

With the aim of recovering memories and knowledge, in 2010 several literary workshops were organized with indigenous women writers from Ecuador and other Latin American nations. The results were compiled in the anthology "It dawns in our lives" (*Amanece en nuestras vidas*), published in Spanish, Kiwcha and Shuar.

In 2011 the International Meeting of Women Writers and Poets of Indigenous and African Origin of Latin America and Ecuador was organized, with the participation of 22 women writers from Ecuador, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua. The results are compiled in the document

Corporation of Women Artisans of Nízag

Income generated by the Nízag weavers has contributed to their empowerment within the family and community. In Riobamba and in other areas the men, who at first refused to authorize women's participation in the local meetings, have eventually accepted their participation in the group of weavers. This attitude is stronger among those who have migrated or lived outside of the community.

The potential for empowerment of the income generated by these ventures needs to be assessed in connection with women's capacity to control this income. Although some women declared that the husbands kept part of the income, most of the women prioritized the family expenses, particularly their children's, and used the money for books and notebooks, clothes and shoes. It is worth noting that only a few used this income to meet their own needs. Thus, although women have gained more control over their income, the total family income remains in the hands of the heads of the family.

This resistance to change the gender power relations and the tension it creates can also be seen in the community. The income generated by the organization in charge of the venture goes through the community government but is managed by the association on the basis of a mutual agreement. However, this relationship is complex and charged with tension, as the males in power positions are consciously or unconsciously resistant to women's autonomous resource management.

The change in the role of women within the family and their participation in the public sphere of the community and the world outside the community through the group of weavers has called into question the patriarchal system, with its values and traditional mechanisms of family and community income control.

"A Necklace of Stories and Moons. An Anthology of Poetry by Latin American Indigenous Women" (*Collar de historias y lunas. Antología de poesía de mujeres indígenas de América Latina*).

SUPPORTING CULTURALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVE VENTURES²²

The Programme supported 28 productive ventures, selected on account of their viability, cultural revitalization of the indigenous and African-Ecuadorian peoples, environmental sustainability and gender equality. In addition to receiving financial support, the participants took part in a training programme that covered the following topics: organizational

strengthening, leadership and participation, the rights of women, peoples and nationalities and project design and management.

Out of a total of 33 activities organized for the 28 participating ventures, 14 dealt with agricultural production, six with craft-making, eight with community tourism and five were culture-related. The available information shows that 1,500 income-generating occupations, 800 of which were managed by women, were created by these initiatives.

For the participating women, the ventures not only represent a source of income: through the ventures they feel useful and committed to the development of the organization and the community, thus improving their self-esteem. Leadership has been strengthened, particularly among the women

22 Excerpts taken from the Programme Final Evaluation Report. Available at: <http://mdgfund.org/sites/default/files/Ecuador%20-%20Culture%20-%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf> (in Spanish).

that lead or coordinate the ventures. Also, the new economic role played by women entrepreneurs has given rise to changes in family and community roles and relationships, not always without tension.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- The combination of gender, interculturality and the new concept of heritage as key elements of a public policy bears great potential for the process of bridging social, cultural and economic gaps in Ecuador.
- The debates arising from the preparation of the Gender and Interculturality Sectoral Policy underscore the need to institutionalize this policy within the Ministry for the Coordination of the Natural and Cultural Heritage and its subsidiary entities, not only at the centralized government level but also in the territories.
- The initial resistance to the intercultural childbirth model shown by most healthcare staff has abated and today many professionals feel engaged with the project and support the process. The constant awareness-raising and training efforts have been key to winning over initial distrust. To consolidate the programme's achievements and further progress in the implementation of the model, the awareness-raising campaign needs to be continued and expanded to the rest of the country at all levels: healthcare staff, health community operators, women's groups and the community at large.
- The young doctors currently completing their intern-year working in rural areas where the culturally appropriate childbirth has been implemented have shown greater openness to

the new model. This is doubtless a great opportunity to position and disseminate the intercultural reproductive health model in the country.

- It is important that the concept of intercultural health is increasingly introduced in the initial education levels of all healthcare staff and in the curricula of medical schools and health-related specializations.
- The evaluation of the productive ventures supported by the Programme shows that they have contributed to the empowerment of the participating women by increasing their self-esteem, improving their knowledge of women's rights, affecting decision-making within the families, negotiating participation in meetings, increasing access to markets and forms of political representation and increasing negotiation power with other organizations or state institutions. However, there is a need for a deeper analysis of issues such as the access to and control of assets (home, land, livestock, tools), decision-making at home, representation in local power spaces and forms of negotiation.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

Given the positive results achieved by the Programme, the Ecuadorian State has decided to move to a second phase, financed by national public funds. This commitment illustrates the real and potential impact of the Programme, and the need to carry on the work until concrete and permanent changes are achieved in the living conditions of the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian population, and particularly of the women.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY IN THE PRO-POOR HORTICULTURE VALUE CHAIN IN UPPER EGYPT (SALASEL) MDG-F PROGRAMME

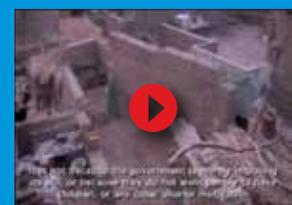
Joint Programme: Pro-poor Horticulture Value Chains in Upper Egypt

Thematic Window: Development and the Private Sector

Main Participants: UNDP (lead agency), ILO, UN Women, UNIDO, Egyptian Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Investment, Farm Associations, Post Harvest Centres



Empowering Egyptian Women 



Horticulture: Winning the Fight against Tomato Pests



1. Introduction

The Pro-poor Horticulture Value Chain in Upper Egypt (SALASEL) Joint Programme (the Programme) aimed at enhancing the efficiency and productivity of the horticulture sector in Egypt and improving the working conditions of small farmers and agricultural workers, especially women, along the various nodes of the value chain. The Programme adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy that cut across all programme areas, while focusing on raising awareness among the farming community about gender-related issues and inequities; mobilizing Women Committees within the Farm Associations and strengthening the capacities of women working in the Post-Harvest Centers.

2. Initial Situation

The rationale for the intervention is grounded in a number of realities, the first one being the significant presence and critical role of women in a key sector of Egypt's economy: agriculture. Agriculture and farming provide a livelihood for 55 per cent of Egypt's population and employ 30 per cent of the labour force. The 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development indicates that 46 per cent of Egypt's female work force is employed in agriculture.²³ Women perform agriculture and farming-related activities on family owned land as unpaid labour, as well as for non-family members, as paid workers. Women form the majority (75 per cent) of the work force involved in harvesting, handling, sorting and packing processes within the post-harvest centers (PHCs). Over 40 per cent of people working in agriculture or fisheries are women. However, women have little control over land or productive resources, even if they own the assets.²⁴ Women's working conditions and the benefits that they receive from their labour are neither commensurate with their role in the work place nor with their responsibilities at home and in the community. Furthermore, the increased phenomenon of men's migration in search of gainful work has eroded traditional gender-based roles in rural areas. Yet,

23 World Bank, World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development, 2012.

24 See: <http://rwac-egypt.blogspot.se/2012/03/rural-women-in-egypt-how-much-can-we.html>.

traditional gender norms remain tenacious, the result being that women and girls are at a disadvantage in both the public and private spheres.

The second reality is the persistence of regional disparities in Egypt's economic growth detracting from progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly MDG 3. Poverty in Egypt, according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, is on the rise. In Upper Egypt, poverty rose in both urban and rural areas from 21.7 per cent and 43.7 per cent, respectively, in 2008-2009 to 29.5 per cent and 51.4 per cent in 2010-2011.²⁵ Moreover, the dissimilar role and status of women as compared to men is most evident in Upper Egypt. The mobility of women, their access to education, infrastructure, social and health services and their control over resources is even more restricted than that of their counterparts in the Delta or in urban governorates.

This situation justified the implementation of the Pro-poor Horticulture Value Chain in Upper Egypt Joint Programme, which aimed at enhancing the efficiency and productivity of the horticulture sector in Egypt and improving the working conditions of small farmers and agricultural workers, especially women, along the various nodes of the value chain.

3. Objectives

The objective of developing a gender mainstreaming strategy in the Programme was to empower women within export supply chains by making sure they add value to the supply chains in new and measurable ways, and to ensure that these interventions would result in improvements to their standards-of-living and their role within their families and rural environments.

To measure the success of the mainstreaming process five specific indicators were defined:

- Number of Women Committees activated in the targeted Farm Associations (FAs);
- Number of women assisted by the Women Committees to start/upgrade a business;

25 See: <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/govt-poverty-rate-increased-252-percent-population>.

- Per cent average increase in the number of women joining the FAs;
- Per cent of FA revenues allocated to the Women Committees; and
- Number of women receiving assets through the project.

4. Key actors

The most important actors in this project were the FAs, which are the primary partners. FAs are provided a comprehensive development package by all UN agencies involved in this project, namely UNDP, UNIDO, ILO and UN Women, together with national counterparts like the Egyptian Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Investment.

UNDP ensured that effective and equitable business partnerships were forged between small farmers and the private sector, and built the productive capacities of small farmers by contributing to equipping the PHCs both directly through availing a small grant to each FA, and indirectly by facilitating cost-sharing arrangements between small farmers and private investors. Moreover, UNDP strengthened the capacity of FAs in terms of governance, financial management and business planning.

UNIDO aimed at enhancing the horticulture supply chain in Upper Egypt and strengthening its linkages to export and domestic markets, which is of utmost importance to the economic development of Upper Egypt.

ILO's key comparative advantage in entrepreneurship and enterprise development is the ability to conceptualize and articulate the employment dimension of enterprise development to design policies, strategies and programme interventions that place productive and decent work at the heart of enterprise growth and productivity.

UN Women's contribution cut across all programme areas while focusing on raising awareness among the farming community about gender-related issues and inequities.

5. Strategy

The gender mainstreaming strategy developed in this Programme was an adaptation of the Gender Equity Model (GEM) developed by the World Bank in 2001. GEM aims at promoting and guaranteeing gender equal opportunities in the labour market through the establishment of voluntary public private partnerships between the government and companies. Companies that receive the GEM seal (GES) use it as part of their marketing strategy. The GEM model and the process of certification are designed for all types of organizations, regardless of size, sector of business, or geographical location. The government provides technical support to the participating companies/ organizations that commit to the implementation of actions in the following areas: personnel selection and hiring; career development, including training and promotions; family-work balance and equity in benefits; prevention of sexual harassment; and finally, promoting a non-sexist public image through company advertising campaigns.

GEM was first piloted by UNIFEM and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in Egypt in 2007, in partnership with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the General Authority for Investment, the Ministry of Man Power and Migration and the National Council for Women. A total of 10 medium and large size companies participated in the programme. The success of the pilot was such that, in 2010, the Government decided to establish a new Gender Equality Certification Unit to scale up the model to include additional companies in the manufacturing sector, while also replicating it in the agri-business sector. The objective was to add value to the supply chain of horticulture sector, by addressing inequities in the working conditions of women, who are the primary actors in the chain.

The Programme adapted the GEM model to the horticulture sector in Upper Egypt by focusing on three critical axes:

- Gender sensitization of the management of the Farm Associations (FAs).
- Reactivation and mobilization of the FAs Women Committees around the issue of women's work and economic empowerment.
- Capacity development and awareness-raising of female workers within the Post-Harvest Centers.

The reactivation of the Women Committees served two main purposes. To start with, it reinforced and expanded the impact of the awareness-raising activities beyond the scope of the FAs to include additional community actors and beneficiaries. Furthermore, it helped strengthen the commitment of the FAs to women's economic empowerment, and imbued the process of gender mainstreaming in the operations and services of the FAs with the ethos and notions of accountability.

In that context, the Programme trained committee members to advocate and implement interventions aimed at rural women's economic empowerment as well as at reinforcing women's presence in the public sphere. It also provided assistance in developing the structure of the Committees, formulating the criteria for the selection of candidates and supporting the FA electoral process to guarantee a participatory approach to community development.

Topics covered in the technical trainings included post-harvest technologies, packing and packaging, a safe working environment and good hygiene practices, as well as self-esteem and time management. For awareness-raising, traditional training modules were used together with three info-graphics and four short films. Info-graphics are 3-4 minutes animations that explain a message in the simplest and most persuasive way to those who are literate and illiterate. The first info-graphic introduced the concept of equal opportunity in general; the second focused on equal opportunity in recruitment, hiring and career development; the third concentrated on the work environment and issues of harassment. The gender equality message was introduced through these info-graphics in a compressed form and in a culturally sensitive manner. Combined with the info-graphics were five-minute visuals portraying women performing jobs that are unusual in the Egyptian context, such as taxi driver, car park attendant, mini bus driver, butchers, etc. These visuals were used also in the Post-Harvest Centers as a tool to raise awareness about qualifications and the fact that women and men often can do the same job equally well.

6. Progress and Results

GENDER SENSITIZATION

The management of all six FAs participated in the gender sensitization trainings. Participants confirmed that, as a result of the sensitization and acquired knowledge, the FAs had become more inclusive and better positioned to reach out to women. Proof of which is a significant increase—almost 70 per cent—in the number of women members in the six FAs targeted by the Programme.

REACTIVATION OF WOMEN COMMITTEES

To date, six Women Committees have been activated and five have already run their elections, electing seven women per Committee. Each of the Women Committees has conducted a community needs assessment based on guidelines provided by the Programme and work plans have been developed accordingly to include priority actions addressing the specific needs of the women in the respective communities. In Gaaffar, the Women Committee launched an advocacy campaign to install water pipes. In Beni Suef, the Women Committee has succeeded in lobbying local authorities and mobilizing community stakeholders to resolve the problem of garbage accumulated in front of houses and schools. Similarly, the Committee succeeded in lobbying for the paving of the main road leading to the village. Furthermore, the reactivation of the Women Committees has motivated its members to speak up on behalf of the workers in the PHCs as well as other women in the community. In Qena, for example, the Women Committee is working on formalizing the status of 30 female and 15 male workers in the PHC.

Major achievements include assistance provided by three Committees to 40 women, enabling them to upgrade or start a small business. The impact of the support provided to women's income-generating activities is still not apparent. However, it is expected that the condition of women beneficiaries and their families will improve as a result of the added income from these businesses as well as from the asset transfer component.

In terms of empowerment, women in the Committees appreciate the prestige they gain in the community through their involvement in the committees. They also feel that they are tasked with expressing “the voices of women” in their communities, and accordingly feel responsible to ensure that the expectations of the women that they represent are met. However, Women Committees still have some weakness in terms of governance and budget. So far, none of the FAs have allocated resources to the Women Committees, mainly due to the precarious condition of the economy.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Even if it is too early to gauge the full impact of the mainstreaming process on the situation of women, preliminary findings indicate that the technical trainings received by the women have increased their productivity and led to the adoption of hygienic handling and packaging practices, which means a safer work environment.

Analysis of the discussions following the showing of the info-graphics confirmed the added value of the visual in conveying messages—both the explicit message and the more implicit one in relation to gender—and in generating reflection and discussion around gender inequality and women’s rights. The reactions of men participating in the sensitizations are reflective, rather than defensive, which is an auspicious start to any attitudinal change. However, promoting changes in gender relations is a long-term process that requires sustained efforts to address the root causes and the structural consequences of inequality.

“*Parents treat their sons differently from their daughters, thereby perpetuating the social norms and behavioural patterns that support gender inequality.*”

MALE PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT AFTER VIEWING INFO-GRAPHICS ON GENDER EQUALITY

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- The strength of the mainstreaming intervention resides primarily in the link between the social and the economic benefits brought to enterprises, which is critical to the willingness of enterprises to dedicate time and resources to participate in the trainings and to effect the necessary changes to ensure gender equality in their procedures and operations. In the case of PHCs, the motivating factor is the economic return accrued from training women on agro-industrial processes.
- Varying literacy levels of the participants (men and women) and the deep-rooted male dominated culture of Upper Egypt were important challenges that the Programme had to overcome when adapting the mainstreaming methodology.
- Visuals were much more effective in conveying messages than lectures, which require an attention span that is difficult for participants to sustain for an extended period of time.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

This gender mainstreaming process can be described as constituting a “promising practice.” The evidence collected shows that the process is effective in achieving progress towards intended gender equality and women’s empowerment. It also shows that under the proper circumstances, mainly if there is expressed political will and a measure of economic stability, the process has potential for replication and scaling up in both urban and rural settings.

The tools developed and tested in the Programme are works in progress. However, the approach adopted by the Programme should definitely inform government efforts at motivating the private sector to play a strengthened role in integrating women in the economy. Addressing both men and women and presenting the persistence of discriminatory practices in the public and private spheres as a broader community issue are highlights of this Programme, and the lessons learned from such experience must be taken up in future programming.

LEAVE NO WOMEN BEHIND

Joint Programme: Leave No Women Behind

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UNFPA (lead agency), WFP, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Bureaus of Women Affairs, Regional State governments of Amhara and Tigray



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme “Leave No Woman Behind” (the Programme) is an integrated programme aimed to empower women in the Amhara and Tigray regions. It stems from the recognition of the various dimensions of women’s poverty and responds with a holistic approach of complementary interventions, integrating economic empowerment with access to reproductive health, literacy and behavioural change at community level. Women participating in the Programme are targeted by all the intervention areas, which results in rounded improvement in their lives. Implemented through local structures, the Programme strengthened pre-existing capacities and contributed to building the Government’s service delivery capacity.

2. Initial Situation

Ethiopia suffers from some of lowest gender equality performance indicators in sub-Saharan Africa. While remarkable progress has been made in several of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it is lagging behind in MDG 3. The Global Gender Gap report 2010 ranks Ethiopia at 121 out of 134 countries in terms of the magnitude and scope of gender disparities.

Women and girls in Ethiopia are strongly disadvantaged compared to boys and men in several areas, including literacy, health, livelihoods and basic human rights. They also suffer from low status in their society and lack social support networks. Manifestations of discrimination against women are numerous and acute:

- The morbidity rate of 75.5 per cent for women, against 25.5 per cent for men; the maternal mortality of 590/100,000 live births; and adult HIV prevalence of 1.9 per cent for women, against 1.0 per cent for men, are indicators of persisting gender inequalities in the area of health and life expectancy. Overall, women’s health has been adversely affected by poverty, poor nutrition and restricted access to health care services due to financial constraints and cultural beliefs. Contraceptive use among

women is low at 20 per cent, and only 10 per cent of births were attended by skilled health personnel in 2011. Moreover, 28 per cent of women of reproductive age are chronically malnourished, with the problem being particularly acute in rural areas.²⁶

- Ethiopia appears to be on track to achieve gender parity in primary school enrolment by 2015, but the gender gaps are still larger in rural areas. Furthermore, gender disparity increases at higher levels in education, where the enrolment of adolescent girls is lower than boys.
- With regard to women’s participation in economic life, the 2005 National Labour Force Survey reveals that women represent 47 per cent of labour force in Ethiopia, with highly unequal participation: 68.5 per cent of employed women were unpaid family workers and 24.8 per cent were self-employed in informal jobs. In addition, women’s illiteracy and inability to meet the initial payment required to qualify for agricultural credit has limited their access to credit facilities. The Programme-supported baseline survey indicates that only 6 per cent of rural women have access to credit and 1 per cent have vocational skills training. Moreover, despite the widespread involvement of rural women in agricultural work, there is a persistent belief that “women don’t farm,” which discounts their vital contribution to Ethiopia’s key economic activity.
- Traditional attitudes, beliefs and practices that reinforce harmful gender roles contribute to constrain women’s participation in social development. Harmful traditional practices, including female genital cutting (national prevalence rate of 74.3 per cent) and child marriage disproportionately affect rural women and girls.

The Government of Ethiopia is explicitly committed to the achievement of gender equality. The Constitution clearly stipulates the rights of women and the Women’s Policy of Ethiopia reiterates the Government’s commitment to gender equality. The

²⁶ *Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey, 2011.*

revised Federal Criminal Code and Regional Family Law support measures on different forms of gender-based violence, including child marriage and female genital cutting. In addition, the national poverty reduction strategy has included “addressing gender inequality” as one of its eight pillars.

While there is general political will and commitment to address gender inequality, there has been limited capacity to fund and implement community-based interventions targeting vulnerable women. Generally, services have been skewed toward the wealthy, those living in urban areas, and adult men.

The Programme was conceived and designed to respond to the above challenges, with efforts to support social mobilization; access to reproductive health and HIV prevention services; life skills and literacy; and livelihoods. It has focused its interventions on the Amhara and Tigray regions, two of the most vulnerable of the country, with severe land degradation and a prolonged history of emergency assistance by the government.

3. Objectives

The Programme aimed to:

- Increase enjoyment of human rights at grassroots level through strengthened government efforts in promotion and protection of human rights and community empowerment, with special emphasis on adolescent girls and women.
- Strengthen regional efforts to strategically address gender disparities in literacy and educational attainment, sexual and reproductive health services and gender-based violence (GBV).
- Improve access to and demand for quality, gender sensitive and integrated reproductive health care, including HIV/AIDS prevention services at all levels.
- Increase enjoyment by target women and their family members of improved and sustainable livelihoods, with increased income, improved food security and enhanced resilience to shocks.

4. Key Actors

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have been the participating UN agencies. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) and Bureaus of Women Affairs (BoWA), through its regional and district offices, have been the lead and coordinating government partners for the Programme.

The Programme did not establish parallel implementation mechanisms; rather, it was integrated into the government decentralization system. The responsibility for implementation lied with the Regional State governments of Amhara and Tigray. The financial management system was also integrated in the Ethiopia public financial management system.

At the regional level, a Programme management team composed of focal persons from the regional Bureaus of Health, Education, Agriculture, Finance and Women’s Affairs (as lead) had the responsibility for implementation, monitoring and technical backstopping. At woreda/district level, line offices of the same bureaus were responsible for direct implementation. At village level, community based associations, like women’s associations, and government staff, such as health extension workers and agriculture and development agents were responsible for the mobilization of communities, selection of programme beneficiaries and implementation of activities.

The decision to implement the Programme through existing institutional structures and government staff has helped to create local ownership and to pave the way for sustainability.

5. Strategy

The Programme recognizes the various dimensions of women’s poverty and responds with a holistic approach of complementary interventions that combine livelihoods, access to education, access to health services and social mobilization. Women participating in the Programme are targeted by all the intervention areas, which results in all-rounded improvement in their lives.

Implemented through local structures, the Programme strengthens pre-existing capacities and contributes to build government's service delivery capacity.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

The Programme recognizes that improving the status of girls and women requires changing the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of community members, including men, boys and traditional and religious leaders. To encourage such change, it utilizes the Community Conversation (CC) approach, which is a process of engaging communities in an interactive discussion about cultural norms and values. Through participation in the CC series, individuals are empowered to think critically about issues such as gender equality, HIV/AIDS, harmful traditional practices, family planning and more. This interactive discussion allows participants to explore the way their behaviors and values, and those of their families and neighbors, affect others' lives. Through the Programme sites, 400 CC facilitators were trained to recruit community members and engage them in discussion, twice a month, for a period of one year.

Members of CC groups have often come to consensus about stopping harmful traditional practices, like child marriage and female genital cutting, and have agreed to take collective action against those practicing it. Moreover, on the individual level, CC graduates are making dramatic changes in their own homes and families for greater gender equality.

LITERACY AND LIFE SKILLS

Women who cannot read or write are often marginalized by their communities and are unable to fully participate in social and economic development. In its literacy and life skills program, Leave the Programme targets women who have not been engaged in other adult education programs.

These women are invited to join adult literacy classes, where they acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. They also receive life skills education on a wide range of issues, including

sanitation, hygiene, health and livelihoods. The national Functional Adult Literacy Manual is used, ensuring consistency and quality.

Literacy graduates are often beneficiaries in other Programme components and their newfound skills in reading, writing and math contribute to their success in livelihoods. Women participating in the literacy program have become strong advocates for education in their communities, and local teachers report that the newly literate mothers are especially supportive of their children's education.

Leave No Women Behind also supports local schools and functional adult literacy centers with additional supplies, such as exercise books, black boards, benches, chalk and stationery, and provides adolescent girls with sanitary napkins to help improve their school attendance.

HEALTH

The Health Extension Workers (HEW) program is a government strategy where trained community women go house to house and teach other women about 16 basic health extension packages. The Programme strengthens this government programme.

HEWs regularly participate in Community Conversation sessions to provide information about reproductive health and harmful traditional practices. Women and girls have separate groups, where they discuss family planning, gender based violence, HIV/AIDS, maternal health, seeking anti-natal and post-natal care and safe delivery. Members of the government initiative Women's Development Groups, who have their own focal point for promoting reproductive health in the community, often assist the HEWs with outreach.

In parallel with such interventions to create demand, the Programme also strengthens the supply side of reproductive health service delivery. It supports district authorities to buy drugs, obstetric equipment and other reproductive health materials for health posts and health centers. These drugs and services are provided to women free of charge. In addition, the Programme regularly sponsors trainings of HEWs

and other health staff on gender-sensitive reproductive health service provision, to ensure that women receive the highest quality care possible.

LIVELIHOODS

The establishment of rural savings and credit cooperatives is part of the Government strategy. However, few women join them, because women generally have limited access to assets that make them eligible. Few also have skills to engage in income-generating activities. As a consequence, the Government strategy usually caters to the needs of male farmers.

The Programme interventions target women who do not have sufficient access to government interventions. Based on community agreed criteria, poor and vulnerable women are selected by their communities to participate in livelihood improvements activities. They receive training on the basics of income generation, followed by training on a specific income-generating activity of their choice. Local Development Agents assist them in making their choice, and provide them with continual technical support (appropriate technology, market information, business management, book keeping, cooperative management, etc.) as they build their new business venture. The selected women also join a savings and credit cooperative and are required to save for a specific period of time before they take a loan (at a low interest rate) from the cooperative's revolving grant fund.

At the same time, the regional Agricultural Bureaus are supported to conduct a succession of Training of Trainers for their staff and development agents, in order to train women on income-generating activities and credit cooperative management.

MAINSTREAM STRATEGY: RESONANCE EFFECT

As a mainstream strategy, the Programme promotes what has been called the "resonance effect:" once a woman has been empowered through her participation in the Programme, she often becomes the Programme's strongest advocate. She wants to share her newly acquired knowledge and provide advice to her family, friends and neighbors.

Criteria for Selection of Livelihood Candidates

- Resident for more than 2 years
- Aged 18 years and above
- Ability to engage productively in an income-generating activity
- No bad credit or history of debt
- Willing to participate in all Programme activities
- Willing to share experiences with other women

Out of the above criteria, priority is given to landless women, female heads of households, school drop outs, women living with HIV/AIDS, women with disabilities and women with no chance of accessing other credit opportunities.

The Programme harnesses the power of the resonance effect by encouraging beneficiaries to share their new knowledge and insights with other members of the community. Thus the new ideas and information are accepted and internalized, not imposed by outsiders, making the Programme's impact all the more sustainable. For instance, in the Community Conversation series, each participant is expected to communicate what he/she has learned with 10 other people; in the Livelihoods program, each woman reaches out to 6 other women.

6. Progress and Results

The Programme reached 11 districts throughout the Amhara and Tigray regions. From February 2009 until February 2012, it engaged over 100,000 women and adolescent girls. Key achievements include:

- Reduced prevalence of child marriage
- Reduced stigma and discrimination against women living with HIV/ AIDS
- Reduced prevalence of harmful tradition practices, including female genital cutting

- Increased access of voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS by the community
- More equitable division of labour at the household level, as reported by CC participants
- Increased number of deliveries attended by trained health professionals
- Increasing number of women using family planning and pre- and post-natal care
- Increased attendance at Programme-supported schools, particularly among girls
- Newly fostered culture of saving among the participants and in the larger community
- Good return rate on loans

These key achievements are illustrated in the stories and quotes that follow.

REDUCED PREVALENCE OF FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

“There were efforts before to stop harmful traditional practices, but the Community Conversations has made a difference because we learn scientific information. The Health Extension Workers come and share their in-depth knowledge, and that helps us to decide. I have a 10 year old daughter and I’ve decided to not have her circumcised, because of what I learned here.”

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS PARTICIPANT

REDUCED PREVALENCE OF EARLY MARRIAGE

The Girls Must Decide: A Father’s Campaign Against Child Marriage

When Yenew Zeleke first joined the Community Conversation series in his village, he had a plan for his family. Married and a father of 5 children, Yenew had already arranged the engagement of his ten-year-old daughter to an older man. He believed that child marriage was a necessary part of his culture.

While in CC sessions, Yenew learned new information about harmful traditional practices, including child marriage. Health Extension Workers spoke about the connection between child marriage and obstetric fistula, and painful memories were stirred in Yenew: he had once taken care of a relative who suffered from fistula.

Armed with this new information, Yenew made a drastic decision: he cancelled the impending marriage of his ten-year-old daughter. He then enrolled all of his children, including the girls, into school. “Girls must be educated first and then they will decide who they want to marry,” Yenew said. “I arranged the marriage of two of my daughters, when they were 7 and 10 years old, but this is not going to happen to my other children”

Webete Adgo, Yenew’s wife and mother of his children, is overjoyed by his change of heart. She herself was forcibly married to an older man when she was 13, and she later ran away from her first husband. She states, “I wish the society was informed about harmful traditional practices during my childhood. If the husband is more than 18 and the wife is young, sexual intercourse is so hard.”

Webete also reports that after joining the CC series, she and her husband speak more freely about household decisions, and even share domestic chores. She is also now using family planning and participating in other Leave No Woman Behind activities, including literacy classes and livelihood training, all with the full support of her husband.

“ We had a lot of resistance to ending female genital mutilation. If a girl isn't circumcised, how would she get married, how would she have intercourse? The Health Extension Workers came to Community Conversations and gave us a lot of scientific information, especially about complications during delivery. It took a long time to convince us, but we don't circumcise our daughters anymore. ”

MALE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS PARTICIPANT

REDUCED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS AND INCREASED VOLUNTARY COUNSELING AND TESTING FOR HIV/AIDS BY THE COMMUNITY

No More Stigma: Living Openly and Educating Others about HIV

Today TekleHailu, age 35, is a successful businesswoman and a valued member of her community. Both of her business ventures, fattening sheep and the local café that she owns, are thriving. She says that her involvement with Leave No Woman Behind has been transformative: “In just two years' time, I am a different person. I feel so strong, with a bright future.”

In 2009, Tekle was diagnosed with HIV. A single mother of two, Tekle recalls, “It was a desperate moment. I was hit the hardest when I thought about my children. Are they going to face the same hardship in life? I was really confused.” Some of her neighbors suspected her status, and would avoid her and her children.

When she was identified as a Programme beneficiary, she was unsure about participating: “I didn't believe that I had the capacity to repay and did not want to pass the loan to my children. Thanks to the advice of development agents, that loan changed my life.” With the money, Tekle bought 10 sheep, raised the herd to 24 sheep, and sold 8 sheep. She then reinvested the money into a local cafeteria. With her profits, she is sending both of her children to school.

Thanks to adult literacy classes, Tekle can now write her name and do basic math. Tekle also attends CC sessions, where she shares her experiences and encourages fellow villagers to be tested for HIV. “Only five women [in our village] had declared our HIV status when the CC sessions began. We openly gave our testimony about living with HIV and repeatedly taught others the importance of voluntary testing. Today we are 24 people openly living with HIV,” Tekle says.

CHANGING GENDER ROLES AND DIVISION OF LABOUR OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES AND CONTROL OF HOUSEHOLD ASSETS

“ Before, at the end of the day, after coming from work, women used to wash our feet. But now they don't have to do it anymore. ”

“ Now I help my wife when she is cooking and I can also cook. ”

“ I arranged the marriage of two of my daughters, when they were 7 and 10 years old (this last one also FGC victim) but this is not going to happen to my other children. ”

A GROUP OF MEN PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS IN AMARA

INCREASED SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AND USE OF HEALTH SERVICES AMONG GIRLS AND WOMEN

Trainings and discussion groups led by health extension workers were used to improve the knowledge of adolescent girls and women on sexual and reproductive health issues, and CC sessions helped to change attitudes and norms. All these efforts combined with additional health supplies and training of health staff on gender sensitive service delivery, resulted in:

- Slightly increasing trend in women delivering at health centers and health posts assisted by a trained health professional.
- Significantly increasing number of women using family planning and maternal health services.
- Improved quality and easily accessible reproductive health service, which is able to respond to the created demand.

“Before the Community Conversation series, pregnant women wouldn’t come to the health post. They would just say, ‘St. Mary will help us.’ What I say to them in CC sessions is, ‘St. Mary is also at the health post.’ Now the women see [the Health Extension Workers] at the CC meetings and they feel comfortable with us. Before, they were afraid to come. They thought they would be operated on, or something bad would happen. But now, at least six women are having their babies at this health post each month.”

MASHOAMARE, HEALTH EXTENSION WORKER

Delivering in a Health Facility for the First Time

TewresAmare, age 35, was engaged in her local Community Conversation sessions when she learned that she was pregnant with her seventh child. Soon after, Tewres received a visit at home from both her local Health Extension Worker and a Women’s Development Group representative. Tewres recalls: “Once it is known in the CCgroup that you are pregnant, the Health Extension Worker and Women’s Development Group representative come to your home and tell you about the importance of delivering in a health facility. Throughout my pregnancy, my Women’s Development Group representative has continued to visit me, to follow up on my health”.

In her previous pregnancies, Tewres did not seek out any medical services: “I delivered my 6 children at home because I didn’t have any other knowledge, and that was supposed to be the way that you do it,” she says. But she now visits her local health centre regularly for antenatal services, and she plans to deliver in a health facility. When asked why, she replied: “The health workers give us good advice. They can provide painkillers if we need them, or even blood. They can save our lives”.

Tewres says that her seventh child will be her last, and that she will resume family planning after this pregnancy. She also wants a different kind of life for her 18-year-old daughter. She says, “I want my daughter to have fewer children than I did. She must use family planning. When you have many children, your health suffers, and you can’t afford to care for them.”

“When I first started the literacy class, I didn't know about the use of education and I thought it was a waste of time. I used to tell my children to not spend time studying at home. My husband was also surprised and thought it a waste of time when I started going for literacy classes. But now I have learned to write my name, I can read letters. Now I make sure my children go to school always. My husband also asks me to read his letters. He is happy with my learning and he has also joined the Leave No Women Behind community conversation meetings.”

A WOMAN PARTICIPATING IN ADULT LITERACY TRAINING IN TIGRAY

Three Generations, One Goal: Empowerment through Literacy

Nearly 50 women are crowded in a classroom. Some women are elderly and bent, their walking sticks leaning against the desks. Other women are nursing their babies as they scribble in notebooks.

Whatever their age, all of the women are here for the same purpose: to learn to read and write. They are students in literacy classes supported by Leave No Woman Behind. And their newfound literacy is complemented by their economic and social empowerment in other areas: many of the women are participants in other Programme interventions, such as livelihoods and the Community Conversation sessions.

One of the oldest women in the room is FeleguKiros, age 56. She recalls that she did not attend school as a child and was instead forcibly married at age 15 to an older man. When her local leadership approached her about joining literacy classes, she remembers that she felt grateful: “I want to read and write like others can,” she says. “There has never been a program like this before, for women as old as me, to learn.” Now she can already read and write her name, and is proudly able to put her signature on documents.

Another student is ChekoluTegen, a 36-year-old single mother of four children. In addition to attending literacy classes, Chekolu is a participant in the Community Conversation sessions, and she has received diverse income-generating activities trainings and a loan from the local cooperative. Now she is fattening and selling sheep, and has recently started to produce and sell local beer (areki).

Chekolu says that the literacy classes have contributed to the success of her business ventures. She explains: “I'm confident in running my business, because I can now do simple math and write down my savings. I'm so proud of myself, that I can generate my own income and look after my children.”

Her participation in the directed CC discussions has made another dramatic impact on her life: she says that before she joined the group, she was not using family planning services. But now she is using Depo-provera, and says that she undergoes HIV testing regularly.

She is also an active member of the local Women's Development Group and goes door-to-door in her community to promote family planning and safe delivery. She says: “Before Leave No Woman Behind, I was scared to talk in front of others. Now it's different. I feel comfortable expressing myself to my community.”

The youngest student, AmbenesGetewye, is 16-years-old. After reaching Grade 5, Ambenes dropped out of school last year to get married. She and her husband are participants in the CC discussions, and after attending one of the 12 sessions they have made an important decision together. She explains, “We've decided that we only want 2 children. We think that's enough.”

IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING AND ACCESS TO CREDIT, RESULTING IN INCREASED ASSETS AND REINFORCED WOMEN'S SELF-ESTEEM

Around 7,928 women have had access to skills training and a loan from a revolving fund and started small income-generating activities. The Programme supported the establishment of 77 savings and credit cooperatives and trained women with basic financial and business management skills and leadership. A total of 79 per cent of the cooperative leaders are women. The access and ownership of resources has boosted their self-esteem, changed gender relationships in the household and improved the status of women in the community.

Lakech Asrat

Lakech Asrat is a 28 year old woman with 3 children. She and her husband own 1/8th of a hectare of farmland, which was their main source of income. Lakech used to supplement the family income by engaging in petty trade. She was selected to be a beneficiary of the livelihood component in the Programme and joined a savings and credit cooperative. After being trained in cattle production, she received a loan of 2,500 birr and started shoat fattening. With the profit, she also rented additional farmland and bought an anti-weed sprinkler tool, which she rents out for 400 birr per day to boost the family income.

Lakech has also learned to read and write and basic mathematics by participating in the adult literacy classes.

She also attends community discussions on issues of HIV/AIDS and family planning facilitated by a mentor. She has attended antenatal care at the health post in the village during her last pregnancy. Talking about the benefits of the program, Lakech says, "I have stopped taking loans at high interest rates from money lenders. And I have reached out to four other women, communicating what I learnt in the Programme and recruiting them to join the Community Conversation programs."

COLLABORATION AMONG GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The Programme's integrated approach has also encouraged internal collaboration among sectors of the Ethiopian government, including Agriculture, Health, Women's Affairs, and Education.

"When we first started the programme, we were confused—we hadn't worked together like this before. We started to talk together and that helped us to fill in the gaps. Now I can speak confidently about what my colleagues are doing, and refer other women to them. Before, I just knew my own activities."

WOREDA (DISTRICT) OFFICIAL IN THE LIVELIHOOD SECTOR

"The integrated approach has brought a total shift in our working culture. We do not work separately anymore—we meet regularly and we can make sure that our efforts are coordinated. Together we can make a change more quickly."

WOREDA OFFICIAL

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

OVERALL

- Using an integrated approach is a savvy investment to yield maximum return on funds and human resources. Each Programme component reinforces and complements each other, creating synergies among sectors and empowering women in a holistic way. The Programme's integrated approach is also consistent with, and in turn reinforces, government Programmes and messaging about social and economic development.

- The lack of a baseline has posed a challenge in subsequent Programme monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, the lack of a pre-existing exit strategy is a current challenge.
- The integrated approach has encouraged multi-sectoral collaboration and coordination within the Government. Officials interviewed expressed overwhelming enthusiasm for this new multi-sectoralism, saying that it enabled them to have a greater impact in a shorter period of time.
- Multi-sectoral coordination is a greater challenge at the regional level. Despite initial hiccups, multi-sectoral coordination is working well on the district level, possibly because of the smaller scale means more opportunities for familiarity.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION: THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION SERIES

- By including men in the CC series, the Programme has engaged entire communities in a constructive and directive dialogue about gender equality. With men engaged as advocates and allies for women's empowerment, change is more deeply rooted and sustainable.
- A well-trained, skilled facilitator is of paramount importance to the successful implementation of a CC group. Without the guidance of a skilled facilitator, groups can flounder, and might even reinforce harmful attitudes and behavior.
- Between the CC series and the work of the local Women's Development Groups, there is a consistency of messaging around the issues such as reproductive health, hygiene and sanitation and education. As locals are hearing the same ideas from different trusted sources, the messaging gains increased legitimacy and there is a greater chance of adoption by the locals.
- CC facilitators reported that doing door-to-door visits to participants, particularly in the early weeks of the CC series, was helpful in improving attendance.

LITERACY AND LIFE SKILLS

- The link between literacy and livelihoods is especially strong, with several women stating that their newfound literacy and numeracy has enabled them to build successful businesses.
- Educating women has had the unintended but welcome consequence of engaging mothers in their children's education. As the women become literate themselves, they are convinced of the value of education for their children, and in turn become advocates for education in their communities.
- Moreover, school attendance rates have improved in communities where the Programme is contributing materials, including sanitary pads for girls.

HEALTH

- The CC series is a key platform for sharing health information within the community. The presence of Health Extension Workers at CC meetings, providing information and dispelling myths about family planning, HIV and FGC, has made a difference.
- By regularly attending the CC sessions, the HEWs also become familiar with various members of the community and are able to follow up where needed. For example, when a woman is pregnant, the HEW can visit her home and encourage her to come to the health post for antenatal services and safe delivery.
- While generating increased demand for reproductive health services, it is essential to improve the supply and quality of services available.

LIVELIHOODS

- Keeping interest rates comparatively low and not requiring collateral for loans has made credit more accessible for the poorest and most vulnerable women. While other livelihoods programs, with their high interest rates and collateral requirements, tend to favor wealthier women or men, Leave No Women Behind is unique in its targeting and prioritization of poor, female-headed households.

- Livelihoods beneficiaries need continuous follow-up and technical support by the local Development Agents to ensure success. Resources, such as transport and allowances for the Agents to visit the beneficiaries, should be continually allocated for such follow-up.

RESONANCE EFFECT

Once a woman has been empowered through LNWB, she often becomes the Programme's strongest advocate. She wants to share her newly acquired knowledge and provide advice to her family, friends and neighbors. It is important to capitalize on this effect and foresee the increased demand for services.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Leave No Women Behind Programme is an innovative and unique program in Ethiopia, already tested for its effectiveness and impact. The Programme directly addresses the needs of the community in a holistic approach through improving the opportunities and potential of girls and women, and involving in the process the community male members, educators, health staff, women's associations and the cooperatives. In addition, the involvement of community leaders in decision-making, and the inclusion of opinion leaders have strengthened community ownership of and confidence in the Programme and the Programme's credibility. At the same time, the Programme is institutionalized, implemented by and through the government structures. It works towards capacity enhancement of the regional governments and does not establish a parallel implementation system. Instead, it uses the financial and operational management systems of the Government of Ethiopia and builds on the Government's capacity to deliver services. In brief, the Programme has the potential to be sustainable beyond its lifespan, based on strong ownership and commitment at all levels and its catalytic nature to response to gender equality and women's empowerment.

At the time of writing, a sustainability strategy is being drafted and discussed with all implementing

partners at different levels. The strategy consist of strengthening existing structures, like the savings and credit cooperatives, to sustain themselves and continue when the Programme phases out, and reaching an agreement on smooth handover of Programme components like the adult literacy and Community Conversations. Some activities, such as procurement of drugs and supplies to health posts and centres will need financial support to continue after the Programme funds end. Therefore, the strategy also includes advocacy actions to involve and engage sympathetic donors.

Some quick facts on sustainability:

- In Amhara region, CC groups continue to meet after graduation, to discuss progress on community action plans. The CC facilitators lead the graduated groups, with no payment or stipend. That the groups continue to meet highlights the people's commitment to the CC process and their belief that it is beneficial to the community.
- The cooperatives are largely self-sustaining with the revolving fund, which indicates longer sustainability in general.
- A huge demand has been created in the community for the Programme's livelihoods package, including livelihoods trainings and access to loans. This intervention requires the most upfront resources (financial and otherwise). This initial investment to train the women and provide loans needs to be considered in the scaling up strategy.

Regarding potential for replication, the Programme strategy and approach is simple, structured, clear on what to do, who to target and how to address gender equality. Thus, the message is easy to replicate. The Programme has created a huge demand for expansion into other regions, and to increase the number of participating women in each community targeted. Beneficiaries and implementers alike stressed their desire to expand the Programme to reach more women. Such demand is indicative of effectiveness of the Programme's approach, but poses questions about how to scale up in a sustainable manner.

WOMEN FINDING THEIR WAY

Joint Programme: Human Development for Youth:
Overcoming the Challenges of Migration through Employment

Thematic Window: Youth, Employment and Migration

Main Participants: UNDP (lead agency), FAO, ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Farming, National Centre for Employment Training, Foundation for Rural Entrepreneurial Development (FUNDER), credit cooperatives



Youth, Employment and Migration



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Human Development for Youth: Overcoming the Challenges of Migration through Employment (the Programme) contributed to generating decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for vulnerable youth aged 15 to 29. Among some of its actions, the Programme developed skills-training programmes for employability and self-employment, and provided financial assistance through credit cooperatives, rural savings and a seed fund. In addition, it provided technical assistance and support to young men and women to implement their business plans. At the same time, it implemented awareness-raising activities on gender, employment and the prevention of violence. Girls and women represented 45 per cent of the total youth who participated in the Programme's capacity-development processes, access to credit and entrepreneurialism.

2. Initial Situation

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Americas. Poverty affects 72 per cent of the population, and in rural areas the situation is particularly serious, specifically in the western area. Over half of the population, around 4 million people, live in extreme poverty and their income cannot cover the basic food basket, while the rest of the population who live in poverty (over 1.5 million people) can pay for food but cannot cover their basic needs in education, health or housing.²⁷

The Honduran population pyramid shows a base consisting predominately of youth, with 67 per cent of the population less than 29 years of age. Youth unemployment and underemployment are pressing problems: over half of the unemployed population are under 24 years of age, while 40.7 per cent of employed youth are self-employed in the informal urban sector, i.e. with precarious jobs earning income below the minimum wage, without social protection, with long work days and with low or no union representation. This situation especially affects women, as reflected by a higher participation

²⁷ Informe de Desarrollo Humano 2009. UNDP, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

of women in the labour force than men, and a large gender pay gap: US\$5,828 average income earned by women compared with US\$9,835 earned by men.²⁸

In the past two decades, Honduras has experienced a considerable increase in emigration abroad. In 2012, 57 per cent of Honduran emigrants were men and 43 percent women. Nevertheless, although there are fewer women who migrate, various studies indicate that they are the most exposed to risks during journeys, including sexual violence and sexual trafficking. Similarly, in the homes where their companion has migrated, women have to take on both reproductive and productive roles, increasing their workload.

Based on this analysis, the Programme adopted a strategy for generating opportunities of employment and entrepreneurship for vulnerable men/boys and women/girls aged 15 to 29 years. The Programme set the initiative goal of 30 per cent female participation in the employment and entrepreneurship programmes. This goal, as shown below, was widely exceeded, reaching 45 per cent.

3. Objectives

The goal of the Programme was to contribute to creating decent entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for vulnerable youth between the ages of 15 and 29.

To achieve this, the Programme was structured into three main areas of activity:

- Increase the capacity to place young men and women who are vulnerable and have a high migratory potential into decent jobs.
- Strengthen the national and local institutional frameworks for the promotion of decent employment for youth, with an emphasis on potential emigrants and/or returned migrants.
- Strengthen the leadership capacity, ties and identity of young men and women and their participation in creating a vision of local development based on equality and shared principles and values.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

4. Key Actors

Seven United Nations agencies were responsible for the Programme implementation: UNDP, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNODC. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security was the main government partner of the Programme.

Other actors included:

- Relevant Ministerial Departments, in particular, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Farming, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Governance and Justice through the Directorate General of Migration and Foreign Affairs, the National Youth Institute and the National Institute for Professional Training (INFOP);
- The National Center for Employment Training (CENET), responsible for providing skills training for employability and self-employment;
- The Foundation for Rural Entrepreneurial Development (FUNDER), which coordinated the participating rural cooperatives and savings in the Programme and provided technical assistance to young men and women entrepreneurs;
- The four credit cooperatives through which credit was channeled in the urban areas: Cooperativa Mixta de Mujeres Ltda (COMIXMUL), Cooperativa Mixta Unidas para Progresar Ltda (COMUPPL), Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito Fronteriza Intibucana Ltda (COACFIL) and Cooperativa Mixta Regional Gualema Ltda (COMIRGUAL);
- The local governments of 23 municipalities of the Departments of La Paz, Comayagua and Intibucá.

5. Strategy

The Programme was implemented in three Departments, La Paz, Intibucá and Comayagua, two of which, La Paz and Intibucá, are characterized as rural, with a predominantly Lenca indigenous population. The Programme is aimed at vulnerable youth, who lack training and specialized skills and who do not meet the minimum requirements to

be granted credit by the financial institutions. With the aim to “increase the capacity to place young men and women who are vulnerable and have a high migratory potential into decent jobs,” the Programme developed the following strategies:

- **Strategy for Promoting Employability**, focused on job placement, which included the following actions:
 - Analysis of the training institutions for employability;
 - The creation of Local Youth Employment Boards;
 - Creation of Multi-service Offices (MSOs) for the promotion of employability and entrepreneurship at the municipal level;
 - Skills training for job management;
 - Agreements with local companies; and
 - Internships for trained young men and women.
- **Strategy for Entrepreneurial Development**, focused on self-employment, through the following processes:
 - Analysis of productive chains with strong potential;
 - Professional training in business management;
 - Financial assistance through: (i) a credit fund managed by credit cooperatives and rural savings; and (ii) a Seed Capital Fund managed through the Mayors’ Offices; and
 - Technical assistance and support to improve productive processes, marketing, etc.
- **Gender Awareness Programme**
 - Training workshops for youth, institutions and local businesses.
- **Solidarity and Productive Remittances Programmes**, aimed at community development, which include:
 - The organization of Committees of Family Members of Migrant Workers;
 - The establishment of communication with United States of America consulates;

- The establishment of communication with Honduran migrant workers' organizations in the United States of America; and
- The identification of social and productive projects.

MULTI-SERVICE OFFICES (MSOs)

MSOs are the core of the intervention model proposed by the Programme, since they are responsible for coordinating all of the local services of job placement and entrepreneurship, and connecting them with youth. The MSOs maintain a database with the curriculum vitae of the women/girls and men/boys who seek jobs, which is linked to the platform of job offers of the Ministry of Employment. Furthermore, the MSOs identify the youth who wish to be micro-entrepreneurs, guide them in training provided by the Programme, and finally, monitor their enterprises. The Programme is linked with the Mayors' Offices for the creation of MSOs within the municipalities, which is a key element for sustainability. As part of the Programme, four MSOs were created, whose operations were entirely assumed by the Mayors' Offices.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Programme provided financial assistance to young men and women who wished to initiate an enterprise and who had a viable Business Plan. This assistance adopted two methods:

- A Credit Fund, operated through credit cooperatives and rural savings; and
- A Seed Capital Fund operated through the local administrations in coordination with the MSOs.

Furthermore, youth participating in the Programme received technical capacity building and assistance to develop their Business Plan, which was subsequently revised and approved by the credit cooperatives, rural savings or the MSOs, as a pre-requisite for being granted credit.

Credit fund

The Programme created a youth-friendly Revolving Fund, i.e. without the requirements normally requested by financial institutions. In urban areas,

this fund was channeled through credit cooperatives, while in the rural areas it was channeled through rural savings.

In urban areas, the fund was managed by four credit cooperatives: COMUPPL, COACFIL and COMIRGUA). Two of these cooperatives, COMIXMUL and COMUPPL, are founded by and for women. However, within the Programme, they also provided loans to mixed entrepreneurial associations (i.e. consisting of men and women).

In total, 246 youth accessed credit to initiate their own business: 129 women individually, 106 men individually, and 11 mixed entrepreneur associations. The total amount granted was approximately HNL5.5 million: HNL3 million for women and HNL2.5 million for men. The following table shows the number of young men and women beneficiaries by cooperative.

| Cooperative | No. of entrepreneurs | | | Total per cooperative |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| | Women | Men | Mixed associations | |
| COMIXMUL | 43 | 0 | 8 | 51 |
| COACFIL | 13 | 18 | 2 | 33 |
| COMIRGUAL | 20 | 16 | 1 | 37 |
| COMUPPL | 53 | 72 | 0 | 125 |
| Total | 129 | 106 | 11 | 246 |

In rural areas, support for entrepreneurship was provided through the project *Emprende Joven Rural* (Rural Youth Entrepreneurship), implemented by FUNDER. Rural savings were in charge of funds allocation. Forty-five rural savings were selected, and a revolving fund was allocated for a total of HNL7 million. This fund benefitted 505 youth (220 female and 285 male).

Seed Capital Fund

The Mayors' Offices of Marcala, Comayagua and La Esperanza, in coordination with the respective MSOs, were responsible for the management the Programme's Seed Capital Fund, amounting to a HNL3.5 million. This non-refundable fund was aimed at supporting businesses that had already

been established but that needed improvements to continue operating. The MSO was responsible for assessing the businesses. Participants included 320 youth, of whom 167 were men and 153 were women.

GENDER AWARENESS PROGRAMME

In its original design, the Programme did not consider gender equality as a cross-cutting theme, but rather, this theme was confined to an Output focused on “awareness-raising to promote the sustainable participation of young women in the labour market within the framework of the Programme and to combat gender stereotypes.”

With this aim, a manual on Gender, Employment and the Prevention of Violence was developed, which served as a basis for conducting a series of five workshops on the following themes:

- Gender, the promotion of peace and job placement;
- Promotion of employment with a gender approach;
- Participation, organization, planning, motivation by achievement and effective communication;
- Training of trainers on the culture of peace, gender-based violence and interculturalism; and
- Training of trainers on culture, migration and local development.

At first, training was provided to a very limited number of youth, who were not involved in other components of the Programme. Later, this strategy was revised in order to provide a wider coverage and greater impact to the training. In this way, the training was expanded to male and female community leaders, youth participants in other components of the Programme, male and female trainers and decision-makers and local leaders. At the end of the process, a total of 521 women/girls and 660 men/boys had participated in the workshops.

6. Progress and Results

MULTI-SERVICES OFFICES (MSOs)

The respective Mayors' Offices were completely responsible for the four MSOs created within the Programme. All of them operated with a budget

from their own municipalities, and three were integrated within the physical and administrative structures of the municipality. Furthermore, the MSOs began to assume tasks previously developed by the Programme, such as: training for employability and for entrepreneurial development; assistance in the revision of business plans of the young men and women; facilitation of credit management with the credit cooperatives and rural banks; support in the set-up and operation of entrepreneurship; and coordination with the State institutions for technical assistance to the enterprises. At present, four women in the area, who were trained by the Programme, are responsible for the coordination of these four MSOs.

EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS

A total of 871 youth, of whom 40 per cent were women/girls, improved their skills to access the labour market. In turn, 825 youth (52 per cent female) have more tools to create and manage their own business. As a final outcome of the training processes, a total of 438 business plans were created.

CREATION OF RURAL YOUTH MICRO-ENTERPRISES

A total of 544 rural youth (45 per cent female) accessed microcredit managed by FUNDER and received training and technical assistance to start their own business. As a result, 371 new enterprises were launched, of which 326 were carried out individually and 45 in associations.

CREDIT-WORTHY YOUTH

Traditional banks consider the youth population to be high-risk, especially young women and youth from rural areas, because they do not own assets and they are prone to migrate. Consequently, it is difficult for them to access formal financial services. For example, prior to the Programme, FUNDER worked only with adults, mainly men. However, now, young men and woman make up part of its target population. In the same way, the credit cooperatives partners of the Programme have observed that most youth pay back their loan and that the credit default index within the Programme was very low, which served as an incentive to integrate this segment of the population in its portfolio of possible clients.

EMPOWERMENT

As shown, the Programme did not have in its design a strategy for mainstreaming gender. Despite this initial gap, the Programme managed to correct its focus and thus reach a high percentage of women and girls through its training, technical assistance and credit. At the end of the process, approximately 45 per cent of the entrepreneurial activities driven by the Programme were run by women/girls.

The Programme has not undertaken a rigorous analysis on its impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. However, various quantitative data demonstrate that the Programme triggered personal, familiar and social empowerment processes of the participating women. Therefore, and as was shown by various women involved in the training and entrepreneurship activities, the fact of having set up their own business and having generated their own income has significantly contributed to improving their self-esteem and their position within the household.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG WOMEN

Even without an initial gender mainstreaming strategy, the participation of women/girls in the Programme activities practically equaled that of men/boys. This shows that, despite the numerous barriers facing young women, they have a strong desire and motivation to access paid work and to become economically independent. To respond to these demands, any youth employment programme must, above all, re-examine the pre-conceived notions on the interest and availability for employment of women and, subsequently, set out measures aimed at eliminating the barriers or imbalances that limit their access in terms of family responsibilities, less economic and social capital and gender stereotypes, among others.

EMPOWERMENT

Gender equality issues must be integrated as a part of an overall holistic programmatic approach. The

lack of a gender strategy initially undermined the potential of the Programme to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. At first, the awareness-raising workshops on gender, employment and the prevention of violence were disconnected from other components of the Programme. The subsequent targeting of a much wider public, including men/boys and women/girls beneficiaries of the financial assistance and capacity-building programmes for entrepreneurship, strengthened the comprehensiveness of the empowerment processes promoted by the Programme. The experience also demonstrates that it is possible to adjust programmatic approaches during implementation to accommodate changes, as well as to deliver stronger results.

FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR YOUTH

The programme showed that with due supervision and support, young women and men can be credit-worthy. The credit cooperatives and rural banks participating in the Programme have shifted their initial orientation, focused almost exclusively on adults, to opening their credit portfolio to youth. Nevertheless, particularly in the case of the rural banks, it was observed that there was a need to develop management handover strategies, which would give more weight to the youth and women.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

The MSOs have already been absorbed by the Mayor's Offices, which constitutes a strong guarantee of sustainability of the Programme's activities. An example of this is the agreement reached by the MSOs and the ACCESO Program of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), through which the latter is committed to monitor the young men and women micro-entrepreneurs initially supported by the Programme.

Currently, the Ministry of Labour is replicating the experience in other areas of the country, with funds provided by the Government of Taiwan.

TAKING A VALUE CHAIN APPROACH TOWARDS LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Joint Programme: Green Production and Trade to Increase Income and Employment Opportunities for the Rural Poor

Thematic Window: Development and the Private Sector

Main Participants: ITC (lead agency), FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, Viet Nam Trade Promotion Agency (VIETRADE), Viet Nam Handicrafts Exporters Association (VIETCRAFT), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development



MDGs in Viet Nam



1. Introduction

The MDG-F Joint Programme on Green Production and Trade to Increase Income and Employment Opportunities for the Rural Poor (the Programme) set out to strengthen the sericulture value chain in Quy Chau district of Nghe An province in Viet Nam. It paid special attention to the strengthening of the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative, a group of women weavers belonging to the Thai ethnic minority. The cooperative was supported to enhance its productivity and profitability by improving its managerial, organizational, technical and marketing skills; increasing the availability of local raw materials; and strengthening local support services. This has contributed to enhanced women's confidence, better acknowledgement and support by male community members and ultimately, increased income for the Cooperative members and improved employment opportunities for women in the community.

2. Initial Situation

Reducing poverty and improving livelihoods in rural areas and among ethnic minority communities has been a continual challenge in Viet Nam, despite its status as a middle-income country since 2010. In rural areas of Viet Nam, agriculture remains the most important economic sector. However, the income generated from farming is often not sufficient for smallholder farmers to reach an income level above the national poverty line. The collection and processing of natural raw material from forest areas and the production of handicrafts, mostly undertaken at times when farm work slows down, constitute some of the most important sources of additional income for farmers. In fact, it is mostly the additional income generated from handicraft production that determines whether or not the smallholder farmer can lead a life below or above the national poverty line. Between 65-80 per cent of the household craft producers are women. Craft production is predominantly practiced at home and women can therefore combine it easily with their other responsibilities, such as farm work and family care.

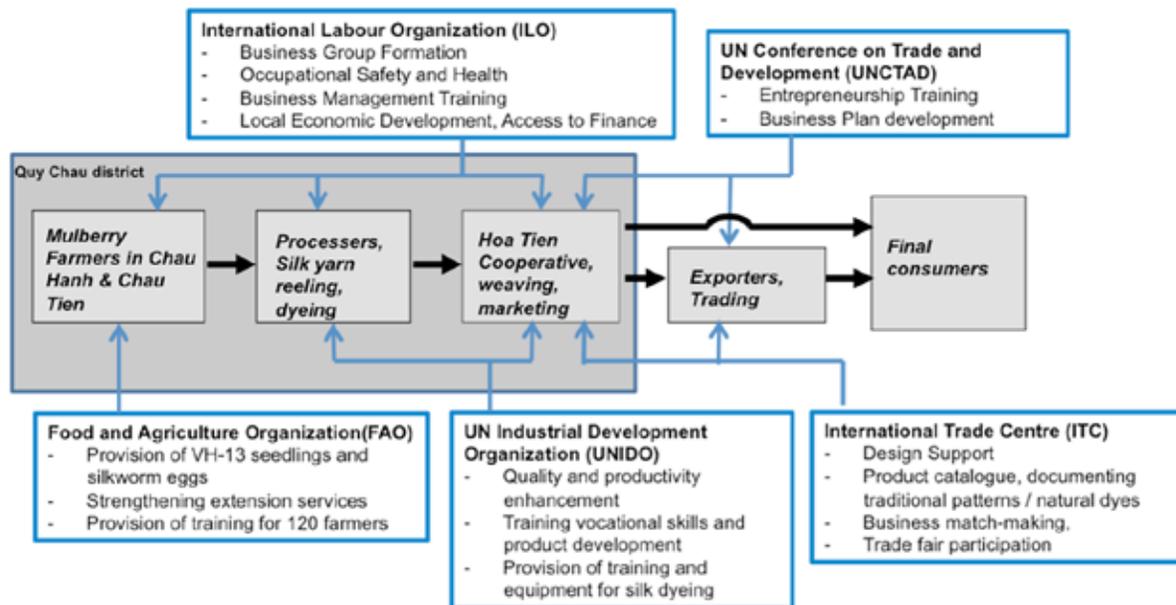
There is overwhelming evidence that, since women are mainly responsible for ensuring the well-being of their family, women's economic empowerment

has a direct impact on the overall quality of life of their family and can contribute to poverty reduction and accelerated economic growth. However, opportunities for women to start and expand successful businesses are still limited. Women face obstacles to obtain technical and managerial skills due to their limited access to education and technical training. Although training programmes on starting or improving a business are available in Viet Nam, most of them are designed for those with a certain degree of formal education, and they are less suitable for low-income women. Moreover, access to finance is very limited for poor people, especially women. Furthermore, women tend to work significantly longer hours than men, being responsible for a variety of tasks, including agricultural work, managing small businesses and being the primary caretaker of the family household. This leaves them little time to attend training, seek support from networks and institutions to improve their business or commercialize their products outside their villages. As a result, many low-income women face a continuous struggle to increase their income from their business.

Recognizing the need to increase income and to promote employment opportunities for the rural poor in Viet Nam, in 2010 the Government of Viet Nam and the United Nations launched a Joint Programme on Green Production and Trade to Increase Income and Employment Opportunities for the Rural Poor. The Programme supported the handicrafts sector, recognizing its importance as a major source of income for smallholder farmers and landless poor, especially women, who, as already mentioned, represent the majority of household crafts producers.

3. Objectives

The Programme aimed at increasing family income while preserving the handicrafts cultural tradition. It used a value chain approach to develop better integrated, pro-poor, and environmentally sustainable "green" value chains, by enabling poor raw craft material growers and collectors and grassroots handicrafts and furniture producers to improve their skills and products, and linking these to more profitable markets.



Within the handicrafts sector, value chains of particular importance and relevance to poor were considered for upgrading. Bamboo/rattan, sericulture, sea grass, lacquer ware, and handmade paper were selected as the target value chains.

This report presents the experience in strengthening the sericulture and brocade value chain in the Quy Chau commune district of Nghe An province. People in Quy Chau belong to the Thai ethnic group, one of the 54 ethnic minorities in Viet Nam. The majority of participants in the workforce in the sericulture sector are women, who do all the labour involved in brocade weaving. This report focuses specially on the process of strengthening of the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative.

4. Key Actors

The Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative, integrated by women weavers belonging to the Thai ethnic minority

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Nghe An province, which provided technical training and guidance

Viet Nam handicrafts exporters association (VIETCRAFT) and Viet Nam Trade Promotion Agency (VIETRADE), the two national implementing partners of the Programme

The five UN agencies responsible for the Programme: FAO, ILO, UNIDO, UNCTAD and ITC, whose inputs were structured along the value chain and are visually illustrated in the figure above

5. Strategy

The Programme used a value chain approach to improve the livelihoods of the people in Hoa Tien, through the strengthening of the sericulture and brocade value chain. As the first step, a detailed value chain analysis was conducted at the start of the Programme, which allowed identifying various challenges at different stages of the sericulture and brocade value chain.²⁹ Based on this analysis, a comprehensive and integrated plan for support was developed. The plan included promotion of decent work practices, technical skills training, gender equality and entrepreneurship development, access to business support services and finance, and access

²⁹ See: http://greentrade.org.vn/userfiles/Sericulture_Final.pdf.

to markets. This was combined with initiatives to enhance the capacity of relevant institutions to promote women's empowerment and workers' rights, and to increase women's participation and leadership in the value chain. Strengthening of the Hoa Tien Cooperative was a key element in the process. Each intervention is further explained in detail below.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF HOA TIEN COOPERATIVE LEADERS AND MEMBERS

Traditional beliefs and customs around brocade production are handed down from mother to daughter through the generations. In recent years, however, the traditional brocade activity of ethnic groups has been endangered as young women are increasingly being attracted to income-generating opportunities in the larger cities or province capitals. In 1997, the women weavers of Hoa Tien Village formed an informal group with the goal of dealing collectively with orders from customers. However, the group faced many difficulties because of poor management skills. After this experience, a cooperative was formally established in July 2010 by seven women leaders (which is the minimum according to Vietnamese law), with some 200 other women supplying their products to the Cooperative leadership for collective trading. The Cooperative's managers are elected by commune leaders and cooperative members. However, they had never received training in cooperative management, and were often faced with their own limitations in the management and operation of the cooperative, limited access to finance, and other challenges.

The Programme supported the strengthening of the Cooperative by improving their technical, managerial and marketing capacities. The Hoa Tien Cooperative leaders and members participated in a wide range of capacity building activities, with trainings on topics such as Business Group Formation, Entrepreneurial Behavior through EMPRETEC, Requirements and Opportunities of Fair Trade, and Effective Trade Fair Participation. They also participated in the Gender and Entrepreneurship Together for Women in Enterprise (GET Ahead) training, aimed at promoting enterprise development among women in poverty who want to start or are already engaged in small-scale business. Within the framework of this training, participants

were encouraged to reflect on gender roles and identify specific challenges they face as women, such as heavy workload due to household responsibilities combined with income-earning responsibilities, and to discuss how they could overcome these challenges to succeed in their businesses. The Business Group Formation training dedicated a special session to discuss gender equality and women and men's roles, in order to enhance the participants' awareness on the division of workload, decision-making and income within the family and in business groups, as well as understanding of the importance of gender equality in general.

STRENGTHENING THE GENDER-RESPONSIVE CAPACITY OF LOCAL SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS

While the Nghe An province had a policy for supporting handicraft production and encouraged the preservation and development of brocade, their support was limited. Besides, from a gender point of view, they did not fully recognize the specific challenges faced by women producers in growing a business, including low education, limited mobility, insufficient knowledge on managing a cooperative and the need to balance time between business and household responsibilities.

In order to improve the capacities of key local support institutions to provide gender-responsive services, the Programme conducted several Training of Trainers workshops addressed to the staff of provincial institutions including the DARD, the Provincial Cooperative Alliance, the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and the provincial Women's Union. Participants were trained to become trainers on key topics such as Strengthening Business Development Services (BDS), Business Group Formation (BGF), Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), and Gender and Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality. Gender was mainstreamed in all these topics, so that the new trainers could provide business training to local producers by integrating gender issues in each topic. They also learned participatory training methods to increase the effectiveness of the training for beneficiaries, especially those with limited formal education. Following the training of trainer's workshop, local institution organized trainings for the producers.

INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF RAW MATERIALS

Despite a tradition of planting mulberry for silk production for weaving, the production of local mulberry in Hoa Tien went down in recent years. With the introduction of cheaper silk, cotton, and wool yarns from China and Laos, the locally produced silk prices had dropped and many households had replaced mulberry trees with sugar cane. In order to ensure the quality of silk yarns and to keep a stable supply, many households were eager to go back to mulberry production and silkworm rearing. However, they lacked capital to purchase seeds and the required knowledge and skills to choose a suitable variety of mulberry seedling to grow the trees.

In order to revitalize the cultivation of mulberry trees, the Programme provided 160,000 mulberry seedlings of a high-yielding hybrid variety to some 75 households in Quy Chau district. The new variety mulberry trees have grown well, with plants and leaves being significantly larger than the mulberry variety being used before. Additionally, and in cooperation with the local DARD, the Programme trained approximately 100 farmers in proper planting, cultivation and harvest of mulberry trees, as well as in the use of fertilizers while minimizing environmentally damaging pesticides.

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH SAFETY IMPROVEMENT IN THE WORK AND HOME ENVIRONMENT AND PRODUCTION PROCESS

Based on the findings of an assessment on the working conditions in the sericulture and brocade production, the Programme conducted training on OSH. First, DARD's officials were trained to become qualified OSH trainers. Then, they trained women weavers in Chau Tien and other communes, including twenty women from Hoa Tien Cooperative, on how to improve productivity by creating safe and more efficient working conditions. Following the training, the Cooperative implemented a number of improvements, such as placing all the tools needed for weaving within arm's reach, using a chair with a backrest when possible to avoid back pain (e.g. for sewing), adding a soft cushion to be more

comfortable when weaving for extended periods and consistent use of protective equipment.

STABILIZING AND IMPROVING QUALITY OF NATURAL DYEING

In order to ensure that dyeing of silk yarn would result in consistent and colourfast fabric, the Programme provided the Hoa Tien Cooperative with a professional dyeing machine. Cooperative members were trained to use the machine effectively and safely. This allowed the group to produce higher quality and quantity of silk fabric more quickly.

PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION

Support was provided to expand and diversify Hoa Tien Cooperative's product range, which had been limited to traditional designs. National and international designers worked with the group to develop new products suitable for the international market.

FACILITATING THE MARKET LINKAGES BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL MARKETS

In order to raise the profile and competitiveness of Viet Nam as a top exporter of high quality handicraft products, the Programme supported the handicraft exporters association VIETCRAFT in the promotion of an international trade fair entitled Lifestyle Viet Nam. In 2012, the fair attracted 1,700 visitors, including over 1,300 buyers from Europe, up from 300 visitors in 2010, and provided an opportunity for handicraft producers and shops to establish business relationships with potential buyers within and outside of Viet Nam. Several Programme participating companies, including the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative, participated in the fair.

In order to diversify their customer base, the Programme facilitated linkages between Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative and exporting companies based in Ha Noi. Linkages were established with Greencraft, a fair-trade exporter, and Kana, a company managed by a female entrepreneur. The Programme also supported both companies in terms of product and market development. Ultimately the

creation of mutually beneficial business linkages offers the best prospects for sustainability beyond the Programme duration.

PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Despite frequent production of the brocade products by the Thai women in Chau Tien, the traditional meanings of different patterns depicted in the weavings were not always fully known or remembered by the producers. Recognizing the importance of documenting intangible cultural heritage for the Thai people themselves as well as for Viet Nam, and recognizing the value that the intangible cultural heritage can add to traditional handicraft products in national and international markets, the Programme documented the traditional patterns of the different ethnic minority groups, including the Thai group from Quy Chau. The patterns were carefully redrawn and their meanings were documented, thus contributing to the preservation of the rich ethnic minority cultural heritage of Viet Nam.

6. Progress and Results

INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND BETTER NEGOTIATION POWER BY THE COOPERATIVE BOARD MEMBERS

As a result of their participation in various trainings and trade fairs, Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative members, especially the Board Members, gained renewed confidence in working and communicating with people outside of Chau Tien commune. They are now better able to negotiate with customers with confidence. They travel to Ha Noi to deliver their products at least once a month and actively participate in festivals or trade fairs held locally or nationally to find new customers. In addition, with increased confidence and negotiation skills, the Cooperative members have gained new clients from different cities in Viet Nam as well as from other countries such as Japan.

The women from Hoa Tien are also more active and play increasingly important roles in their community. The Board Members of Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative are actively teaching weaving technique as well as basic business skills, such as

cost and price calculation, to other women who could not join training organized by the Programme.

“ I highly appreciate the support to sericulture and brocade production in Hoa Tien. I can see that women are feeling more confident after training and they have more active participation in local affairs. With increased confidence, two members of the Cooperative ran for the commune people’s council election in 2011 for the first time and have been elected. Perhaps this may be one of the impacts of the programme support. ”

**MR. LU VAN NHI, VICE CHAIRPERSON
OF CHAU TIEN COMMUNE**

INCREASED JOBS IN THE LOCAL AREA THROUGH THE INCREASED SALE OF THEIR PRODUCTS

Thanks to its participation in trade fairs, the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative could connect and negotiate with national and international buyers to receive new orders. This has translated into more brocade production and, consequently, more jobs. For example, a woman in Chau Hanh, another village group supplying products to the Cooperative, has more than doubled her production in one year. With the increased sales, the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative is expanding its membership: Three new women weavers joined the cooperative in 2012, and there are plans to expand with 10 more members during the next 3 years.

INCREASED INCOME FROM BROCADE WEAVING AMONG COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

Gradual increasing of orders from customers, combined with reduced material and production costs due to increased availability of raw materials and improvements in the production process, has translated into more benefits to Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative members, an increase of 125-167 per cent in their average income from

2009. In addition, each household is managing their finances better by monitoring the cash flow and regularly allocating some money for saving to prepare for emergencies or future expenditures.

INCREASED INCOME FROM MULBERRY CULTIVATION

Increased income was also achieved by reducing the expenditures for raw materials, as the weavers were able to produce silk yarns using the mulberry leaves and silkworms grown locally. The availability of local raw material was particularly important for the Hoa Tien Cooperative, which is located far away from the nearest city (200 km) and not easily accessible. While the local production is not yet able to secure sufficient silk for the whole production, the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative sources 40 per cent of the required silk yarn locally at present, and they hope to increase to 50 per cent in the future.

An interesting type of barter trade has also emerged in the community. Those without mulberry trees trade their silk worms to receive the mulberry leaves necessary for raising silk worms, while women with mulberry farms trade leaves for silk worms.

Mrs. Lang Thi Kieu

Mrs. Lang Thi Kieu is a widow from a poor household who lives with her two sons and daughter-in-law in Chau Hanh commune. Building on previous experience, and supported by the Programme, Mrs. Kieu is growing mulberry trees in a small plot of land of 600 m² along the riverbank. The trees produce sufficient leaves to feed one round of yellow silk worms, producing 11 kilograms of cocoons, which, in turn, generate about 1.1 kilograms of silk yarn worth about VND715,000 (equivalent to USD34).

INCREASED SUPPORT TO WOMEN BY MEN IN BROCADE PRODUCTION AND HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

While the community has had a tradition of men and women sharing workload, decision-making and income to support each other, men's involvement in the brocade production had been limited, as it was traditionally considered to be the domain of women only. However, with the increased realization of the importance of the brocade production for income generation and improved livelihoods, men are now more actively supporting women in sericulture and brocade production as well as household responsibilities.

“Although the Programme focused on women craft producers, its support has been useful for me as well. My wife shares with me new knowledge and skills to improve our livelihood. For example, with new knowledge on household finance, we are managing our household finance better, and we are able to allocate VND 1 million per month for saving. Sericulture is an important source of income. When my wife is busy with the brocade production, I take care of preparing meals and cleaning. I even help with some of the finishing process of the brocade products.”

MR. LU TRUNG HUY, HUSBAND OF THE COOPERATIVE'S ACCOUNTANT

INCREASED CAPACITY OF LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND LINKAGES ESTABLISHED

Local institutions have been strengthened to provide support to local women and men to improve local enterprises and promote gender equality. Provincial officials are now able to identify and address gender-specific constraints in their work. Additionally, by having the officials train rural women entrepreneurs, a strong linkage between the local service providers and the Hoa

Tien Textile Cooperative has been established. As a result, for instance, the Cooperative Alliance regularly supports the Cooperative by sharing information on trade fairs and subsidizing the fee for trade fair participation.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- **The handicrafts sector as a driver for local development.** Policy makers tend to give priority to the development of heavy industries and to overlook the handicrafts sector and rural small-scale enterprises. However, the Programme has proven that supporting the traditional handicrafts sector that has high cultural values can contribute to create jobs and promote local economic development in rural areas that are lagging behind in terms of social and economic development.
- **Women's economic empowerment is good business.** The handicrafts sector employs mostly women. Supporting rural women's enterprises at different stages of the value chain is particularly meaningful and effective in empowering women and, thus, increasing family income and well-being and promoting local economic development.
- **Gender analysis is a must.** In order to ensure that value chain upgrading activities contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, gender analysis should be conducted at the beginning of the Programme, so that inequalities in terms of opportunities, decision-making, workload and income can be properly addressed during the implementation. The Programme did not carry out such a gender analysis. Lack of information on gender relations did not cause much difficulty in the case of the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative, since the Chau Tien community is relatively more advanced than the average Vietnamese community in terms of gender equality due to the tradition of the Thai ethnic group. Nevertheless, this situation should not be taken for granted. When gender inequality is prevalent, there are high risks that women are unable to fully benefit from support interventions. Men may restrict women's participation in training or market activities, or women may be faced with increased workload or may not be able to exercise control over the additional income generated from their businesses.
- **Men's involvement. In this Programme, capacity building interventions targeted only women.** However, for future interventions it is recommended to target both women and men, conducting gender awareness training for all the actors involved in the value chain and ensuring men's involvement in promoting gender equality.
- **Working as a group contributes to increased productivity and profitability.** By organizing female producers to form a cooperative and strengthening this cooperative, the women managed to improve their business by lowering their production costs through collectively purchasing raw materials and reducing transportation costs through organizing collectively a trip to sell products at trade fairs and markets. Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative members contributed to create jobs locally, and they actively transferred new knowledge on business and weaving skills to women in other villages as well as fellow villagers interested in joining the Cooperative. Transfer of new knowledge and skills to women in rural areas by women from within their community is particularly useful in ethnic minority villages as they speak the same language and can communicate smoothly. It also contributes to boost women's self-confidence and to increase women's respect within their communities.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

Comprehensive support provided to strengthen the sericulture value chain in Chau Tien brought many positive changes in the lives of women and men in the village, including increased income, improved working conditions, improved local income earning opportunities and enhanced confidence among women. With their improved knowledge, skills and networks, it is hoped that Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative will continue to improve their business activities while maintaining an important tradition. The model of strengthening value chains that have women as predominant actors can be an

effective approach in empowerment of women and improving their livelihoods when conducted in collaboration with various agencies bringing their respective expertise to bear.

Although running a business is never without challenges, and the women from Hoa Tien will continue to face new challenges in the future, they are now equipped with new skills and knowledge, as well as networks and business linkages established through their participation in the Programme. With renewed confidence, they are ready and able to manage the Hoa Tien Textile Cooperative successfully and continuously improve the income and livelihoods of the Cooperative members and their families.

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING



GENDER-BASED POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Joint Programme: Integrated Prevention and Constructive Transformation of Social Conflicts

Thematic Window: Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Main Participants: UNDP, UNHCHR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNODC, Ministry of Autonomy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption and others

UN Photo/John Isaac



1. Introduction

The Bolivian Association of Councilwomen (ACOBOL), through the Joint Programme on Promoting Peaceful Change has been successful in creating strategies to address political harassment and violence against women in the context of politics. In particular, progress has been made on assistance to the victims of political violence, working at the same time on their empowerment and the development of a political and legislative framework, via the passage of a national law against political violence, the first of its kind in the world. The practices, lessons learned and challenges for the future are analysed below in more detail.

2. Initial Situation

In recent years Bolivian legislation has been improved to promote the political participation of women in public decision-making. This process, based on criteria of equity and parity has been gradually evolving. The Quotas Act of 1997 applied to the Legislature, although only to seats elected by proportional representation, equivalent to 48 per cent of total seats (62 seats out of 130).

In 2004, a new quota was introduced requiring one woman for every three nominations, but proved not to be a definitive solution. One weakness was the absence of sanctions for failure to comply with the law, despite the fact that the National Electoral Court and the Departmental Courts were charged with the responsibility of ensuring compliance. This gap made it possible, in many cases, for political parties and citizens' associations to undermine the law by presenting candidates who were in fact men posing on the lists as women.

After a lengthy process, the 2010 promulgation of decisive affirmative action in support of the political participation of women was finally achieved, applying the principles of equity and parity to the Political Constitution of the State and the electoral laws in force.

While Bolivia has registered significant advances in the participation of women in quantitative terms, these advances have brought new challenges. First, there is an evident need to carry out constant, sustained actions to verify the fair participation of women and men in election processes, as well as to establish clear sanctions for non-compliance. In addition, problems related to discrimination, manipulation and political violence against a growing number of women in public life have become recurrent, making it necessary to adopt sustained policies and concrete actions to enhance the political participation of women, including through freedom from violence.

3. Objectives

The actions taken, aimed at creating the spaces and mechanisms to challenge harassment and political violence against women, fall within the Political Representation Strategy of ACOBOL's Five-Year Plan. These actions commenced at the start of 2000 and have been guided by the following objective: To promote actions and operational instruments to defend against harassment and political violence against women, maintaining their political, civic and civil rights.

“I was locked in the council for over 13 hours. They told me what they wanted. I was threatened. The police union threatened me with sticks, until I signed my resignation... Yet the Mayor asked the other leaders who were there... that they would not say that I had been forced.”

MUNICIPAL COUNCILWOMAN

4. Key Actors

The Bolivian Association of Councilwomen is a national association founded in the city of La Paz in 1999. It is made up of Bolivian women mayors and councilors and is organized into nine Departmental Associations of Councilwomen (ACOs) with a national presence. Its purpose is to achieve the institutional and political representation of women councilors and mayors as regards their rights and emerging interests. ACOBOL forms part of the Federation of Bolivian Municipal Associations (FAM-BOLIVIA) and is part of its organic structure. ACOBOL has become the only non-state body with the capacity to attend to and advise in cases of harassment and political violence against women.

Political Rights for Women Action Committee, a body which has made it possible to articulate the efforts of other non-state bodies which have common goals of the defense and promotion of women's rights. The work done by carried out by this body has contributed to the empowerment of women and to lobbying efforts carried out to ensure that the anti-violence law was passed.

Plurinational women members of parliament were also key actors in promoting the passing of the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women in the Bolivian Plurinational Congress.

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the Intercultural Service for Democratic Strengthening (SIFDE) and the Departmental Electoral Tribunals also contributed to the design of the Protocol for Dealing with Cases, supporting the process and actively participating in the departmental workshops that were held, with proposals and contributions for the Protocol. SIFDE has included matters related to inter-cultural and ethical democracy in politics, which enriched the process.

UN Women supported the development of this process with the goal of promoting and formalizing the response to and handling of gender-based harassment and political violence in the electoral jurisdiction bodies in Bolivia through a Response Protocol, as well as supporting the adjustment process for the draft bill and advocacy carried out in the 2011 administration.

5. Strategy

In taking stock, four lines of action were identified, each of them with a specific strategy:

- **Development of actions to support those affected by harassment and political violence.** A decentralized intervention strategy was employed using the Departmental Associations of Councilwomen network, offering affected women technical advice.
- **Design, dissemination and updating of the Draft Bill against Gender-based Harassment and Political Violence.** From the start, a strategy has been developed to form alliances with other institutions interested in this matter, and advocacy work was jointly carried out with them aimed at having this bill made into law.
- **Design of the Protocol for dealing with cases before the Electoral Tribunal.** In designing the Protocol, a joint strategy was agreed between the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and ACOBOL with the support of the Programme, aimed at developing awareness-raising processes, enhancing capacity and validating the Protocol.
- **Actions to empower councilwomen.** A combined strategy was developed. One strand consisted of processes carried out for awareness-raising, training and information in general about this issue with various types of stakeholders; the other strand was through actions taken to empower and strengthen councilwomen's self-esteem, particularly in rural areas.



6. Progress and Results

PASSING THE LAW AGAINST THE HARASSMENT OF AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The legal reform process dates back to 2000 at a session of the Congress of the Republic's Commission for the People's Participation where "...together with the Vice-minister for Gender, Generational and Family Affairs, councilwomen publicly denounced the harassment and political violence which was being carried out against them in different municipalities of the country."³⁰ In 2001, the first acts of affirmative action aimed at women were carried out with the design of the First Draft Bill against Gender-based Harassment and Political Violence.

On the basis of this first draft, coordination work was done in 2002 with different institutions working in the field of gender equality, with the aim of systematizing and disseminating the Bill, a process which continued in 2003 and 2004 through the organization of dissemination workshops on a national scale. The next stage was the lobbying carried out at the National Congress's House of Senators in 2004. Though this did not result in the Bill's passage, it did demonstrate the importance of continuing the work. The formation of the Political

Rights for Women Action Committee supported the process in subsequent years.

One of the most important outcomes of the work done has been the formation in 2004 of the Political Rights for Women Action Committee, made up of representatives from various institutions working on gender issues:

- ACOBOL
- Vice-ministry of Women
- Vice-ministry of Justice
- Vice-ministry of People Participation
- Ombudsperson
- Union of Women Parliamentarians (UMPABOL)
- Citizen Participation in Democratic Development (DDPC-3)
- National Women's Political Forum
- Women's Coordinator
- Program of Assistance for a Representative Congress, State University of New York (PARK-SUNY)

From the formation of this Committee, women in various public bodies became more aware of and more empowered regarding the importance of harassment and political violence issues.

³⁰ "Incidencia política para la Aprobación de ACOBOL" ["ACOBOL's Political Lobbying for the Law"]; La Paz-Bolivia; 2009; p. 11.

Passage was finally achieved in the context of an enabling environment brought on by the 2012 administration, as well as media attention and consequent heightened awareness of the extent of political violence against women generated by the tragic assassination of Councilwoman Juana Quispe. As a consequence, the time was ripe to pass and enact Law 243 of 28 May 2012, the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women.

This Law does not limit its application to women in public office, but it extends its scope to women designated to or exercising a political/public role, which is different from the first draft bills presented. The Law classifies acts of harassment and political violence, categorizing them as slight, serious and very serious, and establishing the sanctions for each category, which makes it possible to clearly identify these acts and their sanctions. The Law defines harassment and political violence in the following manner:

- **Political harassment:** An act or set of acts of pressure, persecution, harassment or threats committed by one person or a group of persons, directly or through third parties, against women who are candidates, elected, designated or exercising a public/political role or against their families, with the purpose of reducing, suspending, preventing or restricting the functions inherent to their positions, to induce or oblige them to carry out, against their will, an act or omission in the performance of their functions or in the exercise of their rights.
- **Political violence:** Physical, psychological or sexual actions, conduct and/or aggression committed by one person or a group of persons, directly or through third parties, against women who are candidates, elected, designated or exercising a public/political role, or against their families, to reduce, suspend, prevent or restrict the exercise of their position or to induce or oblige them to carry out, against their will, an act or omission in the performance of their functions or in the exercise of their rights.

In cases of harassment or political violence, the report may be made by the survivor herself, her family members or any physical or legal person,

orally or in writing before the competent authorities. There are three pathways for reports: administrative, criminal and constitutional. In the case of the criminal route, an important advance in this legislation has been the introduction of new categories of crime in the Bolivian Penal Code. This route forbids conciliation, in order to prevent further pressure on the victims of harassment and political violence.

The tasks which remain pending and which have been defined by the Law itself are: i) regulation, for which the Plurinational Electoral Body is responsible; ii) the incorporation of rules governing the prevention of, response to and sanctioning of acts of harassment and political violence against women into the statutes and rules of procedure of political and social organizations, and the incorporation of specific provisions to promote and guarantee the political participation on equal terms of women and men, and iii) amendments to the personnel, disciplinary or other rules of procedure of public institutions, to include as offences the acts set out in Article 8 of Law No. 243.

Finally, mention should be made of the inter-institutional coordination work successfully carried out, a determining factor being the formation of the Political Rights for Women Action Committee, a body which facilitated awareness-raising work with various of the country's institutional and social bodies. The quality of this Committee had its basis in its ability to adjust the content of the draft bill and adapt its lobbying strategy to the new institutional political context, which came about in the country in the last ten years.

“*The patriarchal structure we have has been a limiting factor on the work, even though the Political Constitution of the State has included principles and rights to guarantee the participation of women in politics, attitudes and social structures are difficult to break.*”

JESSY LÓPEZ, ACOBOL LEGAL SPECIALIST

LESSONS LEARNED

- The ability of organizations to adjust to political and institutional changes has allowed them to survive and give actions continuity over time. The Political Rights for Women Action Committee has had the ability to adapt to the institutional changes that have occurred in the state apparatus. From its beginning, the Committee has been composed of public institutions, which in some cases have disappeared or have been transformed; nonetheless, the continuity of institutions such as ACOBOL, among others which have kept going over the years, has enabled this body to maintain one sole aim and perform its lobbying task.
- Involving key players (women and men), public policy decision-makers and empowering them around the problem of harassment and political violence has facilitated and made possible the passing of the Law. Lobbying activities were undertaken for many years before the National Parliament, now the Plurinational Assembly, without any favorable outcome; in the last two years, the strategy of involving and securing ownership of the issue by some women National Assembly members has led to the passage of this bill being expedited and prioritized through to its final definitive passing into law.

CASE-HANDLING PROTOCOL

The experience from recent years in political lobbying work for passing the Law shows the necessity of creating complementary tools to facilitate and guarantee compliance with the new legislation in force, whereby the Plurinational Electoral Body and, in particular, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and the Departmental Electoral Tribunals (TEDs) play an important role, which created the need to formulate a Protocol for Attending to and Processing the Victims of Harassment and Political Violence in the Electoral Jurisdiction.

The goal formulated for the Protocol is to “establish the basis for action and/or intervention by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Departmental

Electoral Tribunals with regard to attention to and processing the victims of Harassment and Political Violence, as well as their timely and agile administrative processing, to guarantee such events will not go unpunished.”³¹ The Protocol has been designed with a vision of enabling prevention, attention or processing through to the resolution of cases. Within this process, the possibility is also being examined of creating Units for Attention to Cases of Harassment and Political Violence within the TSE and TEDs, with competency to check on cases of women resigning from political office.

To realize the design of the Protocol, a joint strategy was agreed between the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and ACOBOL, with the support of UN Women, aimed at developing awareness-raising, capacity-building and validation of the Protocol through workshops held in forums for dialogue and generation of ideas in the country’s nine departments.

The organization and implementation of these workshops was coordinated by ACOBOL, the Departmental Associations of Councilwomen and SIFDE. They were targeted at municipal councilwomen and officials of the Departmental Electoral Tribunals. The following subjects were addressed in the forums: i) The Bolivian electoral system; ii) Gender and the participation in political elections of women; iii) The Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women; iv) Intercultural democracy; and v) The participatory construction of the protocol. ACOBOL was the body responsible for designing the minimum content of the Protocol.

One important aspect highlighted by the Director of SIFDE was the differentiated design of these forums, taking into account the political, social and cultural particularities of each department, which facilitated dialogue and the arrival at consensus. This methodology must be considered for replication in other processes for the collective generation of policy and also in capacity-building processes.

³¹ Draft Protocol for Attention to and Processing of Victims of Harassment and Political Violence in the Electoral Jurisdiction. ACOBOL, 2012.

To end this process the National Electoral Gender and Interculturality Workshop was held with the objective of “culminating and strengthening the process of capacity-building and dissemination of the main topics covered (electoral legislation with a focus on gender and interculturality, intercultural democracy and political participation: harassment and political violence), as well as validation of all the contributions received in the entire process at national level.” The results of the work done in the departmental workshops were presented in the Workshop, particularly from those contributions relating to the Protocol for Attention to the Victims of Political Violence.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Creating opportunities for dialogue between administrators responsible for dealing with cases and victims of harassment and political violence has enabled TED officials to gain a real grasp of the extent and importance of the issue. Those responsible for responding to cases of violence or political harassment did not initially grasp the full extent of the issue’s importance and the consequences that these cases have on the victims and on democracy. The discussion spaces designed for the construction of the victim care Protocol have made it possible for the authorities and TED staff to raise their awareness on this matter and undertake to improve the way in which they respond to cases, once the Protocol was approved.
- In spite of efforts made in the counselling support and handling of cases of harassment and political violence, very few cases are still settled in favour of the victim, with seven out of ten cases going unpunished. It is important that advice and support bodies monitor and support the progress of cases through to their conclusion. If this is not done, the risk is that the victim might abandon the case, either through fatigue or because the reason for the complaint has worsened, leaving the victim in an even more vulnerable situation. Further, it may discourage others from coming forward with complaints.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION AND RESPONSE TO CASES OF HARASSMENT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

ACOBOL began responding from the first years of its foundation, in the absence of a public body mandated to respond, to reports of harassment and political violence against elected women leaders of municipal authorities. The evidence collected during these years was an important input to the design of the Law.

To record and monitor the cases supported by the ACOs and ACOBOL, a Harassment and Political Violence Report Form was designed to record the complainant’s personal details, political information and the antecedents of the case reported. This form has a section that must be completed by a specialist on the basis of his/her experience to assess the type of action (harassment or violence), the gravity of the case and the recommendation for further action to be followed. A Guide to Systematization and Classification for the recording of cases dealt with in the ACOs (see box below) was designed in 2011. This tool is important to ensure consistency of data collection.

2011 Development of the guidelines entitled “Systematization and Classification: Gender-Based Harassment and Political Violence,” and structured into three modules.

Module 1. A summary of the antecedents to cases of harassment and political violence.

Module 2. Presents the basic elements for a conceptual understanding of the classification processes, giving examples of their practical application, enabling ACOBOL to achieve consistency of data generated by each of the ACOs.

Module 3. Sets out statistical information on the cases dealt with by ACOBOL (2000-2009).

The systematized record of cases made it possible to classify acts as harassment or political violence, which contributed to terms used in the Law

against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women. The main acts of harassment or political violence are related to the use of force to oblige women council leaders to sign all manner of documents and/or support decisions against their will (41.37 per cent), actions aimed at restricting or blocking the effective performance of their functions and/or powers (30.12 per cent) and discriminatory acts on the basis of social class, culture, race, etc. (16.47 per cent).

To complement this, information and/or awareness-raising processes were carried out on harassment and political violence. The ACOBOL web site (www.acobol.com.bo) was used to disseminate information on this topic, in addition to publications created by the Association on this issue. The need and importance of having this type of information-giving mechanism was made clear in the National Electoral Gender and Interculturality Workshop, organized by ACOBOL in collaboration with the TSE. In this Workshop, the elected women leaders of municipal authorities recognized that, in many cases, women who fell victim to harassment or political violence were not conscious of, or did not know that their political rights were being violated, which is why they did not report or take any kind of action.

Another important development has been the creation of the Observatory of the Political Participation of Women at Local Level in Bolivia. The Observatory was designed to be a space to bring to the fore and disseminate throughout society knowledge about the political participation of indigenous women, women of pre-Columbian heritage, peasant women, women of African heritage and urban women in the municipal arena, their potential and contributions to municipal development, and their participation on national and international levels, in addition to the gender-based harassment and political violence suffered by councilwomen on the municipal councils of Bolivia. The objectives of the Observatory are:

- To establish a local and national information platform with international links, to disseminate throughout society information about the issues of harassment and political violence and the relevant laws on violence in political and public arenas.

- Within the ACOBOL portal, to construct a database on gender-based harassment and political violence.
- To open a virtual debate forum to build national and international support for the issue and the problem of gender-based harassment and political violence.
- To bring into political discourse and to denounce before the national and regional political communities or other international bodies the fact that the local setting is where harassment and political violence against women can be most clearly witnessed.
- To promote and lobby for the creation of an international body to defend against these acts and occurrences of harassment and political violence against women.

In the Observatory one can find information on the political participation of women at local level, the activities of Bolivian councilwomen, legislation supporting their political participation, antecedents, data, actions and projections to prevent, respond to and sanction cases of gender-based harassment and political violence. The importance of this tool lies in the fact that women who are victims of harassment and political violence can access information on the issue and it will be important to update it with the content and procedures emerging from the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The records and correct classification by ACOBOL of cases of harassment and political violence became important inputs, which facilitated the classification of these acts and their incorporation into the new Law. One practice worthy of recommendation to institutions that attend to and/or process cases of harassment and political violence is to maintain consistent records of these cases, for which they should design tools enabling consistent data recording (using forms or other tools). Such records form the basis of responsive public policy design, in addition to providing a tracking mechanism.
- The technical and legal advice offered by staff of Departmental Associations of Councilwomen

does have limitations of a technical order, because not all the Associations are staffed with legal professionals. Political pressures may also create conditions that encourage members to abandon advising on and/or being involved in cases. This dual threat can contribute to fewer positive legal outcomes for victims.

- The majority of harassment and political violence cases take the form of pressuring women to sign documents and/or support decisions against their will. This situation brings with it the risk for councilwomen that, on top of the experience of harassment or violence, councilwomen may be coerced to approve decisions that are unlawful, which could create a series of future legal difficulties for them.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

- It is important to continue with the processes of strengthening the capacity of women mayors and councilwomen, particularly on the conceptual and procedural matters established by the Law. This work could be widened to women in public office at other levels in the State, (departmental assembly members, parliamentarians, etc.) who are potential victims of harassment or political violence.
- Linked with the above recommendation, it is also important to develop dissemination processes and the capacity-building of strategic women and men officials of public institutions who are responsible for handling cases of harassment and political violence, not only at the TSE and TED level, but in different public institutions. This work could be broadened to representatives and activists in political parties, citizens' association and indigenous peoples, as a preventive measure.
- After the new Law has been in force for some time, it is important to go through a process of evaluating its implementation and reach, identifying any possible omissions and difficulties encountered throughout its implementation.
- The budgetary limitations borne by ACOBOL and the Departmental Associations mean in many cases that legal professionals are not available to deal with cases of harassment and political violence. One of the solutions found in analysis is to outsource this service, which seems to be the most recommendable route. For this way of working to be successful, dialogue needs to be established in coordination with the professional bodies and/or universities to train legal professionals and provide them with a certificate of accreditation to attest to this additional training and to their capacity to deal with these cases, with the database of professionals available to victims of harassment and/or political violence in both the national ACOBOL office and the ACOs.
- It is important to have the information available in the Observatory of the Political Participation of Women at the Local Level in Bolivia updated with the content of the new Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women and, once the Care Protocol is approved, that flow charts are added as critical action paths, to be used as reference material both by municipal councilwomen who are victims of harassment and political violence and by those responsible for advising on and dealing with these cases.
- It is important to start a debate within ACOBOL over what the next step in its role should be in the national context in the light of the new institutional political framework. Its experience and leadership in the areas of lobbying, capacity-building and the promotion of its members' political rights could be well used in other areas of the State. At national level, there are some organizations (e.g. UMPABOL) with similar goals, but not with ACOBOL's institutional force. At departmental level, there are still no signs of the formation of representative bodies for women departmental assembly members. ACOBOL could become the leading institution in a new process, with a view to forming an association of women with political representation at national level, to represent women at all levels of State, whereby it would be possible to channel greater resources, optimize their use and undertake activities with greater impact.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF THE OFFICE FOR THE DEFENSE OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND THE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT FOR WOMEN AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Joint Programme: Strengthening the Institutional Environment
for the Advancement of Women in Guatemala

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: United Nations: UNFPA (lead agency),
UN Women, FAO, UNDP, PAHO/WHO; national partners:
Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), Office for
the Defence of Indigenous Women (DEMI)

Guatemala at Peace

YouTube



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Strengthening the Institutional Environment for the Advancement of Women in Guatemala (the Programme) has strengthened the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women (DEMI) and the Presidential Secretariat for Women (SEPREM), both at national and local level, by promoting multi-sectoral and inter-agency cooperation, as well as activities with different levels of government and civil society. Thanks to the Programme, progress was made in the implementation of gender policies, in services provision for survivors of gender-based violence and for the empowerment of women in decision-making processes.

2. Initial Situation

Guatemala is a country where women still do not participate widely in decision-making processes, and have limited economic opportunities. Moreover, high levels of structural violence against women persist. In this context the institutions devoted to women's empowerment have historically had limited capacity for implementation and monitoring of existing gender policies, which is further challenged due to their weak presence at departmental level. Although in recent years significant changes have been promoted by municipal legislation, Guatemala remains a highly centralized country.

3. Strategy

The Programme identified the need to strengthen SEPREM and DEMI for better monitoring of implementation and impact of gender policies. At the same time, the Programme had a wide geographical coverage both at central and local levels, with activities in seven departments and municipalities. Through this structure, the programme aimed to strengthen activities implemented by SEPREM and DEMI mainly at local level.

The Programme worked in four focus areas: a) Institutionalization of National Policy for Promotion and Integral Development of Women 2008-23

(PNPDIM), Plan for Equal Opportunities (PEO) and the Coordinated Agenda for Indigenous Women; b) Eradication of violence, discrimination and racism against women; c) Women's economic empowerment; and d) Social and political participation of women. At the same time, the Programme developed strategic interventions with Ministries, Departments and governmental institutions, and at the local level with municipalities.

4. Progress and Results

DEMI has seven offices at departmental level working for 39 municipalities (with 68 per cent of indigenous and rural populations) for prevention and provision of legal, psycho-physical-social support (group and individual therapy) to survivors of gender-based violence. An estimated total of 9,265 cases were treated by DEMI nationwide.

Human resources have increased, including at departmental level. At least 80 per cent of staff who had been employed as consultants under the Programme have been included in the organogram of SEPREM. In DEMI, progress was made in classifying positions according to the rules of the National Civil Service Bureau (ONSEC).

Departmental Delegations of DEMI and SEPREM supported by the Programme have influenced the national planning and budgeting processes with a focus on women's rights (mainly indigenous women).

At the local level, the Programme enhanced the participation of women in decision-making processes by strengthening and expanding the presence of SEPREM and DEMI in the territories, their dialogue with women's organizations at local level, strengthening their representation in the Council System of Urban and Rural Development and providing training in aspects of governance and women's rights promoted by both partners.

The Programme strengthened institutions that promote gender policies through inter-institutional and multi-sectoral action at national level as well as in the sectoral departmental working groups.

The Programme also made it possible for DEMI to provide direct services to women survivors of violence, discrimination and racism at central and local level. The Programme enhanced DEMI and Programme participants' expertise. The advocacy for community awareness at local level has been instrumental, to raise awareness around complaint procedures and characteristics of violence against indigenous women.

DEMI and SEPREM have been strengthened as public institutions, which has significantly improved their public image in the society, especially at departmental level. The political advocacy with departmental participants helped identify and position women leaders at local and community level, giving them support and training for lobbying and political negotiation.

The Programme was able to build leadership at departmental and local levels to manage the five per cent allocated within the Development Community Councils (CODEDES) budget for the development of specific training projects for women. In this way, DEMI and SEPREM have redefined their role in the departments as centers with the capacities to attend women and women's organizations needs and proposals.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- In relation to participation of women in the departments, gender-based discrimination remains a powerful force in the country and within institutions. This has been a hindrance for increasing women's participation in decision-making. Concerted efforts to challenge these attitudes will need to continue in order to register greater gains.
- It is important to strengthen mechanisms for registration of cases of violence treated. Most records are not up-to-date and lack sufficient disaggregated information by ethnicity, age and municipality. It is therefore recommended to establish automated record systems.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

DEMI and SEPREM have managed a transition process that includes the preparation of a toolkit to build capacity of their new officers, as well as the elaboration of good practices and lessons for future implementation, not only related to programme activities but also to relevant legislation.

Moreover, SEPREM will absorb 60 per cent of the staff positions that the Programme has promoted, ensuring continuity of established processes. At the departmental level, there is a need for continued support to offices that have recently opened. National partners have designed a transition plan to ensure the provision of local offices and services.

The issue of women's policies is on the public agenda. National partners should seek the support of women's organizations and international cooperation for advocacy and political lobbying as well as for monitoring the agreements established with other institutions in order to ensure sustainability.

In the area of economic empowerment, SEPREM is implementing national economic policies to promote women's access to credit, working directly with the Ministry of Finance to strengthen economic policies formulation.

7. Main Sources

Informe final "Guatemala: fortaleciendo la institucionalidad de las mujeres", October 2011. (Final Report "Guatemala: Strengthening the institutional environment for the advancement of women," October 2011.)

Evaluación Final Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, "Fortalecimiento la institucionalidad de las Mujeres en Guatemala," Naiara Tres-Castro Arnedo, Consultora, August 2011. (Final Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, "Strengthening the Institutional Environment for the Advancement of Women in Guatemala," Naiara Tres-Castro Arnedo, Consultora, August 2011.)

Evaluación de Medio Término Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, “Fortalecimiento la institucionalidad de las Mujeres en Guatemala,” Francoise Coupal, Consultora, August 2010. (Mid-term Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, “Strengthening the Institutional Environment for the Advancement of Women in Guatemala,” Francoise Coupal Consultora, August 2010.)

GENDER MAINSTREAMING TO ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE AND DEMOCRATIC WATER AND SANITATION MANAGEMENT

Joint Programme: Establishing Effective and Democratic Water and Sanitation Management in Mexico to Support the Achievement of the MDGs

Thematic Window: Democratic Economic Governance

Main Participants: ECLAC, FAO, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, PAHO, UNESCO, UNODC, UNDP, Veracruz Women's Institute, Veracruz Institute for Public, Tabasco Water and Sanitation Commission, Chiapas Water Institute, Chiapas Civil Protection Unit, Chiapas Institute for Public Information



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Establishing Effective and Democratic Water and Sanitation Management in Mexico to Support the Achievement of the MDGs (the Programme) aimed to improve the integrated management of water in peri-urban and rural areas of Mexico to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with regard to water and sanitation (W&S), and to combat poverty from the standpoint of environmental sustainability and gender equality. The Programme adopted a gender mainstreaming strategy focused on the institutionalization of gender units in key water-related public institutions and the promotion of women and civil society involvement in water management. It has led to increased democratic water governance, transparency and participation of civil society in the integral management of W&S, with special emphasis on women's participation.

2. Initial Situation

Mexico is reaching the overall MDG goal related to water access (89 per cent of population), yet there is still a large share of population that has no access to this resource in the quality and quantity necessary. In rural areas, especially in indigenous communities, there are thousands of marginalized and isolated localities with almost five million Mexicans not having access to water at all. Additionally, rapid urbanization in the main cities of Mexico is causing informal settlements with difficult access, no services and infrastructure and exposed to hydro-meteorological risks.

In Mexico, municipalities are the entities responsible for water access. However, their management and financial capacities are very weak, especially in poor areas. Furthermore, most institutions in charge of water access place a strong emphasis on infrastructure development, paying less attention to social participation issues.

Progressive realization of access to safe and affordable water for all is crucial for poverty eradication, women's empowerment and the protection of human health. Reduced time, health, and care-giving burdens from improved water services give

women more time for productive endeavours, adult education, empowerment activities and leisure. However, water resource use and management is highly gendered in Mexican society. While women are mostly responsible for domestic and community water, sometimes carrying the water for several kilometers, most water-related rights and decision-making are conferred to men. The Programme was put in place to improve population access to water, while increasing women's participation in water management and mainstreaming gender in water-related policies and institutions.

3. Objectives

The Programme aimed at improving the integrated management of water in peri-urban and rural areas of Mexico, from the standpoint of environmental sustainability and gender equality. The Programme focused in three states in the south of the country: Chiapas, Tabasco and Veracruz, characterized by high levels of social and economic deprivation, a significant proportion of indigenous population and high vulnerability to weather phenomena.

4. Key Actors

The Programme was implemented by eight UN Agencies: ECLAC, FAO, UNIDO, UN-Habitat, PAHO, UNESCO, UNODC and UNDP.

Strategic alliances were established with water institutions, gender institutes, civil protection units and institutes for public information at state level.

Civil society organizations, indigenous representatives, women groups and networks were active contributors to the process.

5. Strategy

The Programme adopted a dual gender strategy: on one side, a gender mainstreaming approach aimed at integrating a gender perspective in all Programme actions and, on the other side and simultaneously, specific interventions focused on women's empowerment and gender equality. Following are the three main axes of intervention:

GENDER-SENSITIVE DIAGNOSTICS ON WATER MANAGEMENT

The elaboration of the diagnostics followed a participatory approach that included: five workshops per state (for a total of 356 participants), 266 interviews with key informants and 139 questionnaires 139.

Workshops were based on the methodology proposed by the Women's Blue Agenda, developed and applied by the Gender and Environment Network since 2006. The aim was to identify women's and men's needs and challenges related to water access and management, from a gender and ethnic perspective.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WATER-RELATED PUBLIC POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS

The institutions in charge of gender issues in the three states were sensitized and strengthened to extend their mandates to environmental issues, such as water and disaster management. At the same time, sector institutions responsible for water management, access to public information and civil protection were provided with technical assistance and training to integrate gender and intercultural approaches into their work.

The Programme promoted citizen's involvement in water management. Several tools were developed to sensitize and train civil society organizations on social participation and transparency, including the Citizens' Guide to Inclusive Participation in Water Management and the With Information All Win – A Guide to Know Your Right.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

In several rural localities, local committees for water disinfection management were created and household based safe water systems were installed. Each process of installation was accompanied by a comprehensive strategy to foster women's participation in the management of the system.

6. Progress and Results

GENDER-SENSITIVE DIAGNOSTICS ON WATER MANAGEMENT

Three participatory diagnostics, one per state, were published under the title Water and Development: Local Agenda for Gender Equality. The diagnostics offer targeted and meaningful information on the issues of water, sanitation, gender and ethnicity in the three states. They present sex-disaggregated data on water situation in urban and rural areas, their availability, their uses and the vulnerability and hydro meteorological hazards. They also include information on women's political involvement, economic and labour market participation, maternal mortality, health, education and gender-based violence.

These diagnostics came to fill the previous gap on disaggregated data and analysis related to water access in marginalized communities. They have been used to support evidence-based advocacy action, as well as basis for the design and implementation of the Programme interventions in the communities.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN WATER-RELATED POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Gender issues have been effectively integrated into the agenda, policies, strategies and plans of key sector institutions. Some of the main achievements are:

- The Veracruz Women's Institute has increased its budget dedicated to water management issues.
- The Tabasco Water and Sanitation Commission has created a permanent gender focal point position and has regulated gender parity in local water management units (UDESAS).
- In Chiapas, gender areas have been created in both the Water Institute and the Civil Protection Unit.
- The Institute for Public Information in Chiapas is replicating the methodologies developed to promote women and indigenous participation in 23 municipalities of the state.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Several safe water systems ("water kiosks" and household based systems) were deployed in a number of rural communities of the states of Tabasco, Chiapas and Veracruz. These innovative facilities, for their simplicity and low maintenance, are a good example of sustainable solutions that are easily manageable by the community.

A local committee manages each safe water system. At present, women are the majority in these committees. Some of the water systems have become local microenterprises. Their impact on women's economic empowerment is still to be analysed.

In Sitalá, in the state of Chiapas, the water system is managed and operated by a group of midwives. Fifteen individual safe water systems have been installed in the midwives' houses, serving for both domestic and childbirth attending purposes. The systems were installed in collaboration with the Comprehensive Services Clinic -part of the Sanitary Jurisdiction of Ocosingo and Casa Materna. Thanks to the safe water systems, midwives no longer have to invest time and energy in fetching water. Additionally, the need for wood to boil water has decreased significantly, meaning less time, effort and respiratory complications. Midwives are coordinated with local authorities, which is a key factor for sustainability.

7. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- **Gender analysis is an essential tool.** Differences and inequalities between women and men influence how they perceive and participate in water use and management. Understanding gender roles, relations and inequalities can help

explain the choices women and men make and their different options.

- **Community involvement** is essential for the sustainability of the services and investments done in the water management sector, as well as to trigger behavioral changes in relation to water use and conservation.
- **Community representation** is always an issue. The term 'community' is often used as if it represents a homogenous, clear and defined structure. In actual fact it conceals a range of vested interests in terms of economic position, ethnic status, gender balance and age. It is of paramount importance to approach communities considering these complexities and to not fall back on false assumptions. Participatory gender diagnostics revealed differentiated women's and men's needs and interests.
- The role of **local and regional authorities** is essential to provide the required political, financial and practical support to water management local initiatives. While local communities usually perceive the advantages of cooperation, they frequently lack the financial resources, the technical skills, the expertise or the access to the relevant information to reach an agreement and put it into practice.

8. Sustainability and Potential Application

The strategy of sustainability put in place by the Programme is based on the institutionalization of gender units in key water-related public institutions and the promotion of women and civil society involvement in water management, as well as the installation of safe water systems based on appropriate technologies.

APPLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ENHANCEMENT METHODOLOGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN NAMIBIA

Joint Programme: Setting Things Right – Towards Equality and Equity

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: UNDP (lead agency), UNESCO, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF. Government agencies: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Ministry of Youth National Service Sports and Culture, Ministry of Safety and Security, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Regional Local Government and Housing and Rural Development, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Education

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



1. Introduction

Community Capacity Enhancement (CCE) through Community Conversations is a methodology used for mobilizing communities for action around HIV and AIDS built on trust, accountability and participation. It is based on a vision and recognition that communities have the capacity to prevent, change and sustain hope in the midst of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. It is an approach aimed at creating interactive spaces for facilitated conversations, reflections and applications based on relationships of trust and mutual respect.

The Community Conversation Enhancement was implemented by community facilitators who promoted dialogue on HIV and AIDS in the communities, and were able to stimulate community action on HIV and AIDS. The Programme also worked with Community Volunteers on issues of reproductive health especially for the Youth, and had direct reach to the communities in the agricultural interventions.

2. Initial Situation

Stigma, discrimination, cultural norms and practices remain the biggest challenges facing rural communities in Namibia, in relation to accessing treatment, care and support services. Multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships have been identified as key contributors to the high levels and rapid spread of HIV in Namibia.

Although Namibia is among the top five countries in terms of HIV prevalence in the world, the epidemic is now demonstrating a downward trend after peaking at 22 per cent in 2002. Routine antenatal surveillance measured an overall prevalence among pregnant women of 17.8 per cent in 2008. The epidemic has cut across all sectors of society and is severely affecting the population.

3. Strategy

The Programme has supported and strengthened the CCE, a UNDP-promoted initiative for responding to HIV and AIDS. The initiative aims to mitigate the negative impacts of HIV and AIDS at community

level, and scale up local responses. Other objectives of the Programme are to facilitate greater integration of community led initiatives through community capacity enhancement and community action, and to facilitate greater understanding of gender inequalities in the context of HIV and AIDS. The CCE facilitators held conversations with communities on matters such as gender-based violence (GBV), poverty, multiple partners, alcohol abuse, lack of information on basics of HIV and AIDS and several other issues of concern for the communities.

4. Progress and Results

Community Capacity Enhancement is providing an opportunity for communities to reflect on their cultural practices, norms and values. Communities in the five focus regions participated in awareness-raising sessions on GBV, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health. Results of the Programme included increased numbers of people going for Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) Services, increased use of condoms and opening new ground for discussion of “taboo” subjects such as sex, child abuse, gender issues, early pregnancy and HIV and AIDS stigma.

The CCE facilitators were very successful in engaging communities, raising social development issues and taking them up to the municipalities and regional councils for intervention. Increasingly, these have been including gender and HIV issues. The CCE facilitators confirmed that the solutions lie with and are generated from the community. For example, one community had passed a bylaw to regulate the hours of selling alcohol for all the business operators in the area. The community and local law enforcement officers enforce the bylaw. CCE has community, regional and national linkages and directly contributes to the National Strategy for HIV and AIDS.

The CCE Programme participants were educated to understand their rights and assert them. Where it was previously difficult and sometimes impossible for women’s voices to be heard, the CCE Programme created a platform for them to raise their concerns and engage men and to mutually propose the needed changes.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- The CCE methodology is potentially very useful for entering into communities, particularly when introducing projects relatively new to the people and continual mobilization of community members around community projects. It was noted that projects mobilized by CCE facilitators performed better than those that were not.
- It is important for CCE facilitators to receive adequate gender training. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and United Nations Country Team should work on a modality for engaging the Regional and Local Councils more in executing gender activities. CCE respondents in the field reported not receiving any or inadequate training in gender. Two gender-training workshops were reported to have been conducted for CCEs. Where the CCEs reported receiving the training, gender issues were also reported as being addressed as key issues in the focus group discussions, whilst where CCEs were not trained these were not highlighted as key issues.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The CCE has been supported by many Regional Councils, and in all the four study regions of Caprivi, Karas, Kunene and Ohangwena the CCE Coordinators have been absorbed into the Regional Council structures. In the Karas Region, CCE has been scaled up throughout the region already, at the expense of the Regional Government. The Karas Region is the first region to scale up CCE to all the local authorities in the region. It has been a very successful CCE region, due to the full engagement

of the Regional Government that supported 80 per cent of the 14 training and field visit activities the CCE were engaged in between 2009-2012. In Ohangwena, CCE is also being scaled up to constituencies and trainings for Chief Clerks to facilitate the expansion of the Programme.

Government partners mentioned that they would like to replicate the Programme to Regional Local Government Authorities. However, the government cannot afford to meet the standards set by UNDP in terms of financial contributions to CCE facilitators and would not manage the current staff structure which is parallel to the government structure. They would like UNDP to integrate the structure to operate within the government system, terms and conditions.

The CCE facilitators have potential to become lasting change agents in the communities, due to the rigorous and empowering methodology used in their training.

7. Main sources

Final MDG-F joint programme narrative report: Setting Things Right – Towards Gender Equality and Equity Programme, February 2013

Final Evaluation of Joint Programme of Thematic Window on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Setting Things Right – Towards Gender Equality and Equity, Chipso Mwetwa, Randolph Mouton, Consultants, August 2012

Mid-Term Evaluation of Joint Programme of Thematic Window on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Hope Kabuchu, Consultant, August 2010

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING AT NATIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS

Joint Programme: From Rhetoric to Reality – Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting

Thematic Window: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Main Participants: UN: UNFPA (lead agency), FAO, PAHO/WHO, UNCDF, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP.
Government agencies: Nicaraguan Women’s Institute (INIM), Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), Ministry of Health (MINSa), Ministry of Labour (MITRAB). Other key stakeholders: Parliament, regional and municipal governments



1. Introduction

The Joint Programme “From Rhetoric to Reality:” Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting (the Programme) fostered significant advances in gender-responsive budgeting and planning in Nicaragua, by developing methods and tools for integrating a gender perspective in the National General Budget (PGR) and the Planning and Budgeting Municipal System (SPPMDH), as well as by promoting the inclusion of projects aimed at women’s empowerment in the local budgets of the 15 municipalities participating in the Programme.

2. Initial Situation

The Nicaraguan government has acknowledged gender equality as a strategic component to further representative and participatory democracy and to construct a more fair and equitable society. It has also recognized that integrating a gender perspective in policy-making implies, among other things, promoting redistribution of public resources, power, positions of authority and recognizing the value of women’s work.

3. Strategy

The strategy adopted by the Programme aimed at integrating a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of municipal results-based development plans and budgets in 15 municipalities in the country. Furthermore, the programme supported the integration of a gender perspective in national policies and budgets, with a focus on key ministries such as the Ministry of Health (MINSa) and the Ministry of Labour (MITRAB). The overall goal was to guarantee the exercise of human rights in these spheres, women’s economic autonomy and the reduction of gender-based violence.

The Programme supported the strengthening of the network of local gender advocates by training them on the methodology for

integrating a gender perspective in municipal planning. This led to an increase in women’s participation in local consultation processes and, as a consequence, the incorporation of a gender analysis in the discussions around the improvement of the Municipal Planning System.

In order to achieve the integration of a gender perspective in the PGR and the Mid-Term Budget, the Programme worked to guarantee the high-level commitment of the participating institutions.

4. Progress and Results

- Approval by the Ministries of Finances and Public Credit, Health and Labour of a methodology to integrate a gender perspective throughout the process of formulation, implementation, monitoring and accountability of the PGR and the Mid-Term Budget.
- Approval of the [Law 786](#) of Reform of the Law of Municipalities, which introduces the principle of parity in the election of local authorities and the integration of a gender perspective in the elaboration of local budgets.
- Creation of gender units in nine national-level institutions and seven local governments. These units are placed at high-level and are equipped with qualified human resources.
- Creation of Municipal Investment Funds for Gender Equality in 15 municipalities, which have co-financed 32 projects aimed at women’s empowerment.
- Women’s participation in the process of elaboration of municipal plans and budgets largely exceeded the expected targets: a total of 113,814 women participated in the 15 municipalities, against the 66,000 expected. This participation took place through community assemblies, and through meetings with technical teams and lobby groups.

5. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- On the Caribbean Coast, the Programme was adapted to the political, cultural and ethnic characteristics of the region. Yet, these elements and their linkages with gender equality need to be further considered.
- The practical and strategic needs identified by women in the municipalities should be included in the National General Budget. This would be possible through the integration of these demands in the annual budgets of institutions providing essential social services such as health and education, by formulating these budgets at the local level.

6. Sustainability and Potential Application

The Programme provided the participating institutions with a wealth of methodologies, tools and capacities to integrate a gender perspective in their structures and services. It also promoted the creation of gender units and commissions charged with the coordination of the different departments. Finally, the Programme introduced significant advances at public policies level, which will modify institutional actions at central and regional level.

Furthermore, the improvements, from a gender perspective, in the Law of Municipalities have made gender analysis mandatory for the approval of municipal projects.

7. Main Sources

Evaluación Final Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, “De la Retórica a la Realidad: Hacia la Equidad de Género y Empoderamiento de las Mujeres a través de la Participación y Practicas de género en los Presupuestos Públicos,” Celso Asensio Flores, Maria Hurtado Cabrera, Ana Maria Sanchez Barquero, Consultores, mayo 2012. (Final Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, “From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting,” Celso Asensio Flores, Maria Hurtado Cabrera, Ana Maria Sanchez Barquero, Consultants, May 2012.)

Evaluación de medio-término Ventana Temática de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer, “De la Retórica a la Realidad: Hacia la Equidad de Género y Empoderamiento de las Mujeres a través de la Participación y Practicas de género en los Presupuestos Públicos,” Françoise Coupal, Consultora, agosto 2010. (Mid-Term Evaluation of the thematic window on gender and the empowerment of women, “From Rhetoric to Reality: Promoting Women’s Participation and Gender-responsive Budgeting,” Françoise Coupal, Consultant, August 2010.)

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Joint Programme: Strengthening Equity in Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation by Empowering Citizens and Excluded Indigenous Groups in Rural Areas

Thematic Window: Democratic Economic Governance

Main Participants: WHO/PAHO, UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, Ministry of Health

Fernando Bocanegra/UN Women



“The joint Programme highlighted the role of women within the community; women have more relation to water than men. The participation of women is more representative; this has led to the empowerment of women. Women have been given great opportunities, and I will keep joining together to strengthen and promote them.”

DR. DEBORA GODDARD/GENERAL PRACTITIONER AND DIRECTOR OF THE BISIRA HEALTH CENTER

1. Introduction

The Joint Programme on Strengthening Equity in Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation by Empowering Citizens and Excluded Indigenous Groups in Rural Areas (the Programme) provided access to safe water and sanitation systems, giving men, women and children the opportunity to improve their living standards and conditions. Despite the fact that gender equality was not a specific objective of the Programme, women's empowerment and participation turned out to be crucial for the successful results of the project.

2. Initial Situation

Indigenous peoples have the lowest standards of living in Panama with 96 per cent of the population living in poverty, and 41.8 per cent of these living in extreme poverty. The Ngäbe Bugle represent 78.4 per cent of the indigenous population of the country and live in rural areas. In the areas of Bisira and Kankintu, where the project has been carried out, living conditions are precarious and difficult. Gender analysis indicates that there is a high level of discrimination towards women. That, coupled with lack of income and access to basic health services, safe water, sanitation and especially to education, are elements that make women an extremely vulnerable group.

3. Objective

Ensure the access and the provision of efficient water services and sanitation to the most excluded populations in the Ngäbe Bugle region.

4. Strategy

A two-fold strategy was adopted:

- Intercultural approach that focused on the empowerment of citizens through trainings and capacity-buildings; and
- Improvement of sanitation infrastructure and health services.

Gender analysis identified more specific areas of intervention than were initially considered by the Programme. Prevailing traditional cultural patterns, the gender divisions of labour, decision-making patterns, the access to and control of economic resources, and their benefits marked the “roadmap” to promote gender equity and the empowerment of women during the development of the Programme.

It was necessary to strengthen and develop some basic social skills that heavily conditioned women's participation and roles within the community (Bisira and Kankintu) and to break the paradigm “that such things were for men and such things were for women,” thus promoting the joint work of both the “brade” (“men” in the Ngäbe language) and the “meri” (“women” in the Ngäbe language).

The Programme adopted a set of guiding principles in relation to promoting gender equality:

- Promote gender equality in management to the highest level.
- Treat all men and women equally in the workplace - respect and defend human rights and promote non-discrimination.

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all workers.
- Promote education, training and career development for women.
- Carry out gender-equitable and inclusive business development practices, supply chain and marketing.
- Promote equality through community initiatives and lobbying.
- Evaluate and disseminate the progress made toward gender equality.

5. Progress and Results

Women's empowerment driven within the framework of the Programme fostered processes of change for women, increasing their participation in the community. From this perspective, empowerment for women meant:

- Self-confidence and internalizing the fact that women have the same rights as men.
- Autonomy to make decisions about their own lives.
- Identification of their interests, priorities and transformation of their relationships, structures and institutions that had limited them.

The Programme provided community education and specific trainings in different areas such as: women's and children rights, environment awareness, promotion of entrepreneurship, water management

and health practices that resulted in some significant social changes:

- Women increasingly share with their partners and problems are resolved together, they are respected by the community and participate actively;
- Partnerships are strengthened and responsibilities and the caring for children are shared among the family members; and
- Women have started their own economic activities such as restaurants, hostels, arts and crafts shops.

Women are participating actively in local organizations and in Infrastructure construction and development such as the water, sanitation and health system. Now:

- 99 per cent have no more problems of access to clean water and sanitation;
- The number of cases of diarrhea and skin problems in infants under 5 has decreased significantly, also due to the health trainings that improved the knowledge on health issues of indigenous people;
- Water system sustainability has been improved through the strengthening of the Rural Aqueduct Administration Boards (JAAR) and the increased participation of community organizations; and
- Women have been elected as JAAR and neighborhood presidents.

“The Ngäbe society is a sexist society that has been changing in modern times. Being a woman is to be discriminated against. Today, they see me as the doctor without regarding my gender. The Joint Programme highlighted the role of women within the community; women have more relation to water than men. The participation of women is more representative; this has led to the empowerment of women. Women have been given great opportunities, and I will keep joining together to strengthen and promote them.”

DR. DEBORA GODDARD/GENERAL PRACTITIONER AND DIRECTOR OF THE BISIRA HEALTH CENTER

“The Programme allowed me to socialize within the community. Through the Rural Aqueduct Administration Boards, we are the ones that are taking care of the systems being offered. The majority of women are the principal water users, and we are the ones that guarantee the aqueduct’s sustainability. We are nobody without water. We no longer want to drink water from the river.”

MRS. MITZY ELENA CASTILLO/ JAAR PRESIDENT IN BISIRA

6. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- It is important to incorporate an explicit gender equality strategy (as opposed to mainstreaming) in local development programmes in indigenous areas, as well as to involve women and men community members from the early stages of programme planning.
- The integration of men taking part in housework as support to their partners facilitated the incorporation of women in all the Programme activities.
- Due to the construction of infrastructure in the Kankintu and Bisira communities, economic potential that generated income was identified, giving women the opportunity to benefit in equal measure as men.
- Women, as well as men, have been actively involved in the implementation of infrastructure projects both in the rural aqueduct system and the healthcare system this allowed them to gain respect from the rest of the community.
- The remote location of these communities means that there are few professionals who are willing to take the risks necessary to share with and train these groups. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to strengthen local capacities to carry out these activities.

“At the beginning of the Programme, there were limitations to integrate women, but each UN agency took a piece of the work. UNICEF achieved the goal of integrating them into the Programme activities, and the Programme strengthened the leadership of the women, especially those engaged in small businesses, in decision-making and their work or activities. Men and women have equal rights and equal duties. ILO formed women entrepreneurs and PAHO/WHO recognized and identified the leaders.”

MR. CARLOS BECKER, BISIRA AND KANKINTU COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

7. Sustainability and Potential Application

Knowledge and capacities have been improved in the local community and this will support sustainable results. Moreover local institutions have committed to monitor the implementation of activities initiated during the Programme, although budget increase will be needed in the future.

Women’s participation in the Administrative Boards of Rural Aqueducts is a key to sustainability. This is based on the fact that women migrate less and hence maintain greater permanence in the community and therefore their membership and leadership contribute strongly to the continuity of efforts.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Joint Programme: Occupied Palestinian
Territory: Culture and Development

Thematic Window: Culture and Development

Main Participants: UNESCO, UN Women, UNDP and FAO are working jointly with governmental institutions, local authorities, community-based organizations and civil society at large

UN Photo/Milton Grant



1. Introduction

Within the framework of the Joint Programme on Culture and Development (the Programme), the gender equality dimension was mainstreamed in the Ministry of Culture. While relevant development strategies existed, they were gender blind, as were the institutions charged with implementation. A turn-around has been achieved through an innovative strategy, based on strategic partnerships, policy formulation and analysis, needs assessment and capacity-building at all levels. Enhanced cultural capabilities are now contributing to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) while focusing on women's empowerment in related cultural fields.

2. Initial Situation

The incorporation of Palestinian women's perspectives and contributions into Palestinian culture in the form of policies and activities had remained stagnant. Although women are contributing to Palestinian culture in the context of production, i.e. literature, crafts, agricultural production, cinema, arts and more, these contributions are limited in scope due to the social oppression generated by a patriarchal society, occupation restrictions, as well as the absence of family or community support. To enhance and sustain Palestinian women's contributions to a coherent and creative culture, their perspectives, contributions and needs must be acknowledged and supported at different levels.

Prior to the Joint Programme on Culture and Development, Palestinian cultural heritage was not assessed from a gender perspective and women's contributions and roles in the culture were not institutionalized with national policies and capacity development strategies.

The Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP 2011-2013) stressed the importance of the strategy for culture as a pioneering platform for development, yet there was a need to analyse it from a gender perspective, to assess gender gaps in the institutionalization and capacity development plans related to women's roles within

Palestinian Ministries or as culture producers in general. Finally, observations by the Programme gender experts indicated limited resources provided for addressing gender inequality in culture national plans and policies.

3. Key actors

- UN Agencies: UNESCO (lead), UN Women, UNDP, FAO
- Ministries: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
- Local Authorities and NGOs

4. Strategy

The Programme adopted an innovative and interdisciplinary strategy seeking to reach an integrated and holistic approach for the promotion of cultural diversity as a venue for development. This strategy was built along a circular feeding back process system structured along the following interlinked components: capacity building, policy-making and partnerships establishment.

The implementation of this strategy followed a bottom up approach by: (i) including all actors involved in the protection and promotion of Palestinian cultural diversity (local communities, private sector, civil society at large and government officials both at central and local level); (ii) piloting on site activities (on-the-job training) and using the lessons learned at the grassroots level to feed the national policy development and vice versa.

5. Progress and Results

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND RAISING AWARENESS

Activities were conducted to consolidate partnership within the framework of the Programme. A number of meetings were held with representatives of the different administrative levels of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Women Affairs. Also, personal and collective meetings were organized

and workshops were carried out with gender-related supporters and academic institutions. Based on that, several activities (steering meetings, meetings with high level staff from the Ministries, UNDP and UNESCO) were held to develop and prepare the implementation of the participatory approach.

SUPPORT IN POLICY FORMULATION

In March 2011, the Ministry of Culture approved the first gender-responsive Palestinian Culture Sector Strategy. This achievement was preceded by different phases.

Phase 1: Capacity-building

A workshop was organized on gender mainstreaming in the National Plan for Palestinian Culture (NPPC) addressed to a focus group of 40 experts in cultural and gender issues. The Minister of Culture and the Minister of Women's Affairs participated. The following were the objectives of the workshop:

- Develop the ability to read and analyse developmental projects and design activities promoting social equality and fairness based on gender.
- Provide training on analysing projects from a gender perspective.
- Discuss some of the practices and cultural elements of the Palestinian society with the use of the gender concept (i.e. the relation between culture and gender).
- Review the cultural strategy including analysing the realities/cases, strategies and interventions from a gender point of view.
- Modify the NPPC from a gender point of view, including the analysis of realities/cases and objectives while focusing on policies and interventions.

Phase 2: Identifying gaps in the NPPC from the gender perspective

The main gaps from a gender perspective were identified inside the NPPC by evaluating the phases through which plans were formulated, as follows:

- **Preparatory phase:** A gender gap was identified in that the representatives of the active parties were mostly men. Also, despite the representation of the Ministry of Women Affairs, the other participating institutions lacked the professional and/or academic experience in the field of gender equality. Additionally, none of the experts in gender issues had participated in any of the phases of the plan formulation.
- **Second phase:** Lack of knowledge and expertise in gender. The research topics and subjects were not viewed through a gender lens. They did not rely on the case/reality analysis of women and men from a gender perspective within the Palestinian context.
- **Methodology:** It did not show any sensitivity to the special needs of both women and men. Gender dimensions were not highlighted in the preliminary information as a background for intervention. Moreover, the justification did not have any analysis related to gender equality. Nor did the strategic goals and interventions reflect the different needs of women and men. Furthermore, the interventions were specifically targeted to men and did not include any corrective measures that could promote gender equality.

Phase 3: Assessing the needs of the Ministry of Culture's functional staff

In 2011, a study was conducted to assess the needs of the Ministry of Culture's functional staff through a consultative process including representatives from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Ministry of Culture.

This unveiled three levels of needs related to knowledge and skills: the first level related to the staff's knowledge capabilities which were directly related to the identified gender gaps. The second level, indirectly related to gender mainstreaming, focused on issues not only related to gender but including wider cultural and legal issues pertaining to human rights, children's rights and other issues that deepen the comprehensive understanding of culture. As for the third level of needs, it focused on the technical skills required to develop

the functional capacity of staff in general—and the gender unit in particular—in order to advance towards the attainment of the overall vision and goals of the cultural sector.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE NPPC ACTION PLAN

Gender was mainstreamed in the Action Plan in a manner similar to the process through which gender mainstreaming was done in the NPPC, including the results and activities. This was done by relying on a participatory approach and collective efforts on the basis of full partnership between two main Ministries interested in developing the strategy, the MOWA (Ministry of Women's Affairs) and Ministry of Culture. As a central partner, the MOWA contributed to the process on two main levels by managing the planning process and the Gender Unit. As for the Ministry of Culture—as a leader of the PA institutions working in the Cultural Sector (from a technical perspective)—all its employees from the various higher and middle-level administrative levels were involved directly in the process. Also, there was a review of the Action Plan for Culture, including the results and mechanisms, by carrying out personal interviews, collective workdays and focus groups.

CREATION AND TRAINING OF PIVOTAL TEAM TO CARRY OUT DUTIES FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

A training plan has been designed by the National Expert on Gender aiming to enhance and strengthen the skills of a pivotal team. This team is composed by 25-30 (male and female) employees from the various administrative levels of the Ministry of Culture who serve as focal points on gender mainstreaming at the Ministry and its offices in the governorates.

Within this framework, three training workshops have been conducted addressing the following subjects: 1) concept of gender mainstreaming and its relation to culture and related issues; 2) gender mainstreaming dimensions in action plans, follow-up indicators, evaluations and policies; 3) analysis of developmental projects from a social justice perspective; and finally 4) "On-the-job Learning."

The creation of a pivotal team comprised of various general administrations from the Ministry of Culture and various Palestinian governorates and formulating a tightly knit training plan covering gender and culture strengthened the effectiveness and continuity of developmental programs. This will be reflected in the process of change in relation to knowledge, skills and the delegation of authority among the functional staff, hence attaining social justice.

6. Lessons Learned and Challenges

- Building strong partnership relations between the stakeholders from international bodies, official institutions, NGOs, national and academic institutions on the basis of dialogue for the sake of attaining gender quality and equality is considered the primary key for success. Key success factors also included the development of a common vision to reach agreements and consensus to support the gender equality-related goals within a country's strategy or developmental activity.
- The presence of the Minister of Culture and Minister of Women's Affairs was crucial for the purpose of showing commitment, support and advocacy and to give legitimacy to the issues related to the development of gender-sensitive policies in the cultural sector.
- Addressing gender inequality issues at the Ministry of Culture through research, international analysis and needs assessment based on gender is considered one of the elements of success.
- The mobilization emanating from the gender needs assessment of the Ministry of Culture's functional staff is an integral step for the planning process based on the gender perspective.
- The involvement of all Ministry of Culture employees directly in the process of creating the Action Plan was crucial since the success of any mission largely relies on the functional staff's understanding of the duties expected from them. Gender equality cannot be achieved by a small group of individuals working separately and single-handedly. It can only be attained

when there is strong leadership with commitment to promoting gender equality and clear responsibilities laid out for functional staff from the various administrative and executive levels.

7. Sustainability and Potential Application

In order to guarantee the sustainability of the achievements, the various activities have been framed within the capacity-building methodology. Additionally, some practical methodologies have been adopted, such as the “Learning by Implementing” method which was the main method applied in executing all gender-related activities. Some recommendations on how to guarantee sustainability at different levels follow.

POLITICAL WILL

1. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding between the highest Ministry levels and UN Women in order to continue to develop women’s contributions in the Cultural Sector.
2. Work on institutionalizing a thorough partnership between the Ministry of Culture and the various official ministries whose work intersects/cross-cuts that of the Ministry such as: the Ministry of Education, MOWA, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Ministry of Local Governance, in order to support the Ministry of Culture in adopting the nationally-proposed cultural vision which is gender sensitive.

CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

1. Generalize the concept of gender equality among the Ministry of Culture’s functional staff in a prioritized manner, through the use of tools and methods that suit the thought patterns of employees.
2. Target decision-makers inside the Ministry of Culture and intensify the training on Gender Mainstreaming concepts on the premise that if decision-makers have a comprehensive vision concerning working in the cultural field with a

gender perspective, it will have positive effects that guarantee the transfer of that same vision to the overall functional staff. It would also ensure that gender-sensitive implementation mechanisms are applied in all programmes and activities related to culture.

3. Accelerate formulation of a pivotal team inside the Ministry of Culture made up of various cultural directorates in the governorates, which would need specific procedures and conditions to organize the work between the team and the various administrations inside the Ministry of Culture. It would also govern the relations between the Ministry of Culture and various partners.
4. Review the follow-up and assessment system from a gender perspective in order to develop follow-up mechanisms that would be designed in a way that monitors progress and affects men, women and other societal segments.
5. Come up with assessment indicators that are sensitized to gender in the Cultural Sector in order to measure the degree of progress in attaining the goals of policies, programmes and projects aimed at men and women. Through these indicators it is also possible to ensure that the same policies, programmes and projects do not support any gender disparities through the conducted interventions, but that they actually achieve progress in reaching gender equality.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GENDER UNIT

1. Empower the Gender Unit based on concepts related to gender as well as the international charters and agreements related to women.
2. The adoption of a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Unit relying on the National Strategic Plan for the Cultural Sector.
3. Support the Unit as much as possible by funding projects that could be introduced based on the strategic National Plan for Palestinian Culture (NPPC).

The main methodical steps have been formulated by the Programme for gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve gender equality in the cultural

sector. However, it is important to guarantee continuity by exerting efforts and overcoming impediments and challenges which were previously indicated for the purpose of achieving the gender mainstreaming process in a comprehensive and clear manner.

Under the same Programme, similar efforts are currently being exerted at the Ministry of Agriculture. This methodology could actually be multiplied and easily used by other ministries. The gender capacity-building activities are within the framework of a comprehensive practical means, most notably establishing the existence of a National Expert in Gender and Cultural issues as an original part of the Ministry of Culture. Also, there is the utilization of the participatory work method and the trial to work on institutionalizing partnerships with stakeholders from United Nations institutions, ministries and civil society organizations. Another strategy would be to build a communication bridge between Gender Units inside of the ministries to disseminate lessons learned and work on deepening experiences and knowledge in gender mainstreaming.

MDG Achievement Fund Secretariat

220 East 42nd Street, 20th floor, New York, NY 10017, USA
www.mdgfund.org

UN Women

220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, USA
www.unwomen.org