



## WGCD Learning Agenda: Emerging Evidence

JULY 2018

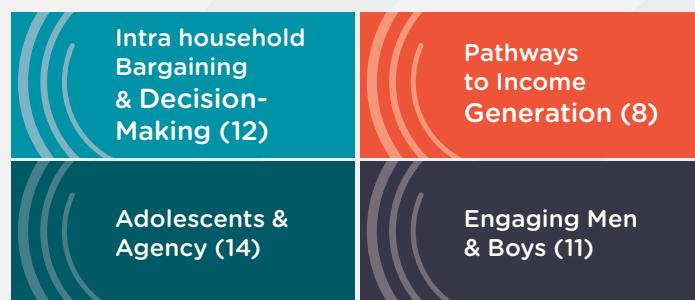
**Women and Girls at the Center of Development (WGCD)** was initially launched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2015 as a Grand Challenge that funded 22 projects, then grew into a partnership of 38 foundation investments<sup>1</sup> working to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The **WGCD Learning Agenda**, designed and facilitated by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), supports mutual learning among the WGCD partners and joint dissemination to build the evidence base on **intentional, effective gender equality programming**.

The Learning Agenda consists of **four learning clusters** – subsets of partners with complementary programs and research grouped to address gaps in the gender equality literature.

Photo Credit: Lionel Healing (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)



**Figure 1. WGCD Learning Clusters and Number of Partners in Each**



ICRW brings cluster members together to synthesize their research and program data and jointly disseminate learnings for greater impact. **Each cluster has a set of learning questions** crafted to fill gender data gaps in the development field. Many partners bring evidence to bear in multiple learning clusters. See [Appendix 1](#) for a list of partners by cluster.

## Portfolio Overview

The WGCD partnership includes investments in research, program implementation and evaluation, empowerment measurement and social and behavior change communications. The core 22 Grand Challenge grantees are intervening on **women and girls' agency** as part of multi-faceted interventions to improve economic and/or health outcomes.

### WGCD Community Snapshot

**\$22 million in Grand Challenge awards**  
**38 total investments across 10 PSTs**  
**25 projects collecting new data in 15 countries**

Partners have varying implementation and data collection timelines and release new findings on a rolling basis. By June 2018, **the 25 partners collecting new data have all completed baseline research. By the end of 2018, ten studies are projected to have endline data.** See [Appendix 2](#) for a Gantt chart showing data collection timelines for all implementation and non-implementation grants.

The following sections summarize the latest evidence from WGCD partners by cluster, noting trends across partner findings.

**Agency** is at the heart of the foundation's model of women and girls' empowerment. It refers to the capacity of women and girls to take purposeful action and pursue goals, free from the threat of violence or retribution. The three core expressions of agency are **decision-making, leadership and collective action.**

## Intrahousehold Bargaining & Decision-Making

### Learning Questions

- ▶ How does enhancing women's agency and access to resources together influence women's intrahousehold bargaining and decision-making?
- ▶ What are the strengths and limitations of different methodologies to measure women and girls' involvement in bargaining at the household level?

Twelve (12) WGCD projects are using innovative strategies to promote **gender-equitable household decision-making** and improve outcomes for women and households ranging from nutrition to market access to contraceptive use. Partners research the norms and behaviors that affect household decision-making and elucidate the links between shifting norms and women's and girls' decision-making power. Findings from nine (9) projects are synthesized below.

### What Are We Learning?

- ▶ Household decision-making is a complex process. Exerting power over this process and influencing outcomes varies by context and gender. Women may have decision-making power over the acquisition and use of certain household resources (such as food, health services and own earned income), but may be excluded from or have limited influence over decisions about the use of their households' productive resources and assets (CARE Burundi, WaterSHED, The BOMA Project)
- ▶ Access to financial resources along with knowledge about financial services and products have the potential to increase women's labor force participation, and their ability to negotiate and secure resources for their businesses and livelihoods (Harvard University, The BOMA Project)
- ▶ Women's greater decision-making power is associated with better indicators of household and individual wellbeing and health, including children's nutrition or education and positive contraceptive behaviors (The BOMA Project, CINI, University of Ibadan, UCSD and Pathfinder au Niger)
- ▶ Increases in women's household decision-making power coincide with the growth of women's business networks, business value and savings (WaterSHED, The BOMA Project)
- ▶ Women's decision-making power appears to be correlated with measures of their self-efficacy (WaterSHED, CARE Burundi, CARE Uganda)

<sup>1</sup>In March 2018, the WGCD grant to the Federal University of Birnin Kebbi was suspended, reducing the number of WGCD partners from 39 to 38

## Decision-Making and Women's Economic Empowerment

Harvard University. Smart Payment Schemes as a Gateway to Women's Financial Inclusion and Socioeconomic Empowerment

### Partners contributing data:

CARE Burundi, WaterSHED, The BOMA Project, Harvard University, CARE Uganda, Child in Need Institute, University of Ibadan, UCSD and Pathfinder au Niger

**Intervention.** Harvard University conducted a randomized controlled trial to examine the impact of depositing women's wages in personal bank accounts instead of a male household member's account. The program targeted India's workfare program (MGNREGS) for rural households. A sample of 199 villages with women enrolled in the jobs program were randomized into 66 control villages, 68 villages where women received bank accounts, and 65 villages where half the women received bank accounts with direct deposit of workfare wages and the other half received those components plus an information session on using the account. A total of 2,864 women received bank accounts.

### Research findings:

- ▶ Women receiving a bank account, information, and wage direct deposit were 34% more likely to be on the MGNREGS roll after 15 months than women in the treatment arm with accounts only
- ▶ Treatment effects were concentrated among two groups of women: those who had not previously worked for the program, and those whose husbands disapproved of women working
- ▶ The research team posited that women's increased financial control from direct access to wages and support for using the bank account increased female bargaining power in the household, and allowed those in the most gender inequitable homes to push back against norms
- ▶ Results suggested that providing wages via direct deposit and the information sessions in tandem improved women's engagement with the financial system and gave them increased control at home

**“Giving a woman a safe place to keep her wages is not enough; resources need to be explicitly directed to that savings account, and women need to be given the basic tools to use it in order to precipitate behavior change.”** Field et al, JPAL Working Paper, 2016

The BOMA Project. Measuring Change in the Decision-Making Role of Pastoral Women at the Household Level as a Result of their Financial and Social Empowerment

**Intervention.** BOMA enrolled 750 ultra-poor women from the drylands of Northern Kenya in their Rural Entrepreneur Access Program (REAP). REAP is a gender focused, two-year poverty graduation model that provides seed capital, training, mentoring and savings group membership, all to support women to connect, start small businesses and establish sustainable income and savings.

**Research findings:** Several factors were measured around household income, expenditures, assets, household-decision making, healthcare use and food security.

- ▶ At baseline, one-third of participants reported any savings and a less than one-quarter had a loan. Women's decision-making power was highest related to purchasing food and other household items, and lowest related to buying livestock
- ▶ At midline, all participants reported savings (up from one-third at baseline) and an increase in decision-making power around children's education, medical expenses, and purchasing and selling livestock. Almost all new business ventures were still operating, with values up to 125% of the initial grant.
- ▶ Women reported that having their own income increased their bargaining power in their relationships and changed the way their husbands perceived them

WaterSHED Cambodia. Empowering women and increasing sanitation: making the rural WASH market work

**Intervention.** WaterSHED's created the WEwork Collective, combining skills training with peer mentorship for women entrepreneurs. The aim was to better engage women via 1) mentorship and training to enter the WASH value chain, 2) making the WASH market more favorable for women marketers and customers, and 3) generating learning about women's participation in rural WASH markets.

### Research findings:

- ▶ At midline with a sample of 280 women in the program, the mean number of people in women's networks increased from 2 to nearly 6 and diversified from just household members to people outside the household
- ▶ The average number of people involved in decision-making around farming, finances and assets, children's school attendance, family healthcare and family planning went from 1.5 to over 2 persons per household. At midline, WEwork members reported being involved in almost 100 percent of those decisions
- ▶ Involvement in final household decisions was associated with higher self-efficacy, especially for decisions around major household items, and selling of assets (livestock)

## CARE Burundi. A Win-Win for Gender, Agriculture and Nutrition: Testing a Gender-Transformative Approach from Asia in Africa

**Intervention.** CARE Burundi is replicating a gender transformative approach to food security that was successful in Bangladesh. The approach targets education, empowerment and social change to improve gender equality, economic wellbeing and food security. CARE is implementing the project in parallel with a standard gender mainstreamed agricultural project to assess the potential impact of a gender-transformative approach.

**Research findings:** CARE collected baseline data with 1,296 women in the three study arms using the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), modules on productivity and income and semi-structured interviews:

- ▶ Men and women performed different agricultural tasks: women did most of the fieldwork and men did wage labor
- ▶ Women participated more in decisions about routine purchases of food and other household needs, and less on purchases of land, bicycles, livestock and transport items. Women reported less autonomy to take decisions on farm activities, and women's self-efficacy score was much lower than men's
- ▶ Even if a man was not directly involved in agricultural work, he decided the types of seeds to plant, how to use the land, and what to sell in the market
- ▶ Most women said they had no control over sources of income. Women were usually denied access to or use of their husbands' property
- ▶ Widows reported more concerns and constraints about nutrition, financial means and access to assets than married men and women

## Hellen Keller International. Women-centered homestead food production to improve food security

**Intervention.** HKI's model improves the nutrition and food security of vulnerable households by empowering women to exert more influence over household food production (crop selection, harvest timing), household income and household adoption of nutrition and hygiene behaviors.

**Gender analysis.** The gender analysis 206 participants revealed that men were more likely to participate in the labor market than women, and women's mobility was limited by security issues and social norms. In households, men had priority over women for eating meals and controlling household assets. Domestic violence was prevalent and widely condoned.

**Research findings.** The baseline survey collected data from 1,517 women on homestead food production, household food security, maternal and child nutrition, items from the pro-WEAI, knowledge and attitudes and WASH.

- ▶ Over two-thirds of households were categorized as either mildly or moderately food insecure
- ▶ According to the pro-WEAI, half of participants believed that they could achieve most goals they set for themselves. Two-thirds to half of women reported making decisions around farming and harvests

## Decision-Making and Contraceptive Use

Three WGCD projects within the cluster are generating evidence on couples, decision-making power and contraceptive use, method choice and self-efficacy to fulfill reproductive goals.

Researchers at UCSD collected data from married adolescent girls and their husbands (1076 dyads) involved in **Pathfinder's Reaching Married Adolescents** project in Niger's Dosso region – an area with high rates of child marriage and adolescent fertility, and low rates of family planning use. Looking at spouses' perceptions of relative influence over family planning, when married girls said that they had equal or greater influence compared to their husbands, they were more likely to use contraception.

In another study with couples, the **University of Ibadan** in Nigeria found that wives were more likely to report contraceptive use if the couple practiced joint decision-making (400 dyads).

In Jharkhand, India, young couples (2,799 dyads) working with the **Child in Need Institute** (CINI) on gender equitable relationships had weak inter-spousal communication and low family planning use. But wives who claimed moderate to high decision-making power at home were four to six times more likely to report ever having used contraception than wives with low decision-making power. Still, family planning decisions were largely made by husbands, and women faced pressure – even violence – if they did not bear children soon after marriage. And service provider bias towards women of lower caste and preference for sterilization presented additional barriers to women's contraceptive access, knowledge and use. **CINI's Couple Power project** is training young couples to lead gender norms change, with the goal of increasing women's role in sexual and reproductive health decisions.

Eight (8) WGCD projects aim to increase women's and girls' **access to financial services and/or employment opportunities** by integrating gender and empowerment education within approaches ranging from vocational training to digital financial inclusion. Research findings from four (4) partners are reviewed below.

# Pathways to Income Generation

## Learning Questions

- ▶ How does enhancing women's agency and access to resources together influence women's pathways to income generation?

## What Are We Learning?

- ▶ Interventions that provide women a combination of direct access to funds and information about managing those funds can help women maintain employment and savings (Harvard University, The BOMA Project)
- ▶ Preliminary data suggest that women newly engaging with financial services need intensive training for meaningful financial inclusion; however, there is still a lack of evidence on the efficacy of training components (length, content and delivery mechanism) (Harvard University, The BOMA Project, REPOA, CARE Uganda)

## Partners contributing data:

**Harvard University, The BOMA Project, REPOA, CARE Uganda**

[Harvard University. Smart Payment Schemes as a Gateway to Women's Financial Inclusion and Socioeconomic Empowerment](#)

Harvard's work with MGNREGS participants in Madhya Pradesh showed a jump in women's labor force participation across treatment groups 15 months after women got their own bank accounts. But giving women their own bank account with wage direct deposit and training them how to use the account led to 34% greater involvement in MGNREGS than a bank account alone, as well as greater private sector employment and earnings. The effects were concentrated among first time workers and women whose husbands disapproved of them working – households with the greatest barriers to women's labor force participation.

[The BOMA Project. Measuring Change in the Decision-Making Role of Pastoral Women at the Household Level as a Result of their Financial and Social Empowerment](#)

The BOMA Project enrolled 750 ultra-poor women from the drylands of Northern Kenya in their [Rural Entrepreneur Access Program](#) (REAP). At midline, the REAP study reported:

- ▶ Business sustainability and growth: Virtually all set up businesses were still in operation, and their business values had increased to 125% of the initial grant

- ▶ More savings for more women: All participants reported having savings at midline, compared to only one-third at baseline, with an increase of 768% in total savings from baseline

[REPOA. Improving Women's Access and Usage of Digital Financial Services](#)

REPOA conducted a randomized control trial with 392 female smallholder farmers in the Pwani and Lindi regions of Tanzania to assess supports for women's access to and use of mobile money. The study had 2 arms and a control: in one arm, 148 women received a basic mobile phone and a training class on how to use it, along with start-up credit, a SIM card and a mobile money account; arm two had 95 women who received a cash grant equal to the phone package; and 149 women were in the control.

After five months, researchers looked at the uptake and use of mobile money. At endline, 76% of the treatment group reported having a mobile money account compared to 48% in the cash group and 13% in the control group. Almost 20% in the phone group reported using mobile money as a financial savings instrument compared to 13% in the cash group and 5% in the control group.

[CARE Uganda. Digital Sub-Wallets for Increased Financial Empowerment of Women](#)

CARE Uganda's project has two components, 1) providing women with mobile money "sub-wallets" with labels such as 'planting' or 'emergencies' for directed savings, supported by female mobile money agents, and 2) guided household discussions with the goal of empowering women in household decision-making.

The pilot in two districts of Western Uganda reached 586 people. Women were less likely to own mobile phones or have bank accounts than men, and were more likely to have mobility restrictions and low technology literacy, making the digital sub-wallet an intimidating concept. The study team concluded that women would need significant training to build confidence with mobile tools for savings.

CARE also reported that many aspects of the pilot undermined women's empowerment, and must be addressed in the full project: the sub-wallet product was offered in a mixed gender setting and not tailored to women's needs or savings preferences; there was gender bias in dialogue facilitation; and the lack of a gender-based violence referral system was cited as a problem.

# Adolescents & Agency

## Learning Questions

- ▶ How can programs foster agency in adolescent girls?
  - ▶ What components of girl-focused programming contribute to increased agency?
  - ▶ What are the effects of deliberately addressing gender norms in programs?
  - ▶ How do contextual factors in the enabling environment influence interventions to increase adolescent girls' agency?

Fourteen (14) WGCD projects are working to **increase girls' agency as a pathway to empowerment**. Some are seeking to increase resources or shift institutional structures to support girls' ability to express agency, while others are intervening directly on girls' leadership, collective action and/or decision-making. Some partners are using both approaches.

**The cluster is notable for detailed formative research** across sites that reveals the complexity of attitudes, practices and norms that shape adolescents' lives. Findings from the eleven (11) WGCD projects with available formative, baseline and/or midline research are reviewed below.

## Partners contributing data:

CARE Malawi, CARE Ethiopia, 4-H Ghana, Wits RHI, Room to Read India, Public Health Institute, ZanaAfrica, icddr,b, Population Foundation of India, Population Services International

## What Are We Learning?

- ▶ Projects report a complex mix of gender equitable attitudes and inequitable practices
  - ▶ CARE Malawi and 4-H Ghana reported gender equitable attitudes among male and female study participants (adults and adolescents), but at the same time, they also noted practices that kept women in domestic roles, maintained women's dependence upon men, and undermined female educational attainment and leadership
  - ▶ Male and female participants across interventions stated acceptance of instances of intimate partner violence (Population Foundation of India, Wits RHI, ZanaAfrica)
  - ▶ Adolescent girls' aspirations, perceived decision-making power and relevant social norms can vary in subtle but important ways across contexts (A360, CARE Ethiopia, ZanaAfrica)

- ▶ Parents' concerns about morality, family honor and girls' life chances may push girls into illicit relationships and/or early marriage (A360, CARE Ethiopia)
- ▶ Hostile environments: Across contexts, girls are limited in their movement and in behavior related to sexual health and reproduction, often by their families. Restrictions increase during girls' menstruation, and girls may be shamed at home and in school about their menses (CARE Ethiopia, ZanaAfrica, icddr,b, Wits RHI)
- ▶ Menstrual health undermined: In Kenyan and Bangladeshi communities, menstrual health challenges included both resource constraints (inadequate toilets, lack of pads), and stigma and shaming by peers and family (ZanaAfrica, icddr,b)

## CARE Malawi. Umodzi – Men, Women, Boys and Girls in Alliance to Achieve Gender Equality

**Intervention.** In the Kasungu district, CARE tested the effectiveness and scalability of a gender synchronized, transformational approach combining two interventions - the Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative (PCTFI) and Pathways. PCTFI focused on adolescent girls' empowerment and sexual health by working with girls, boys, teachers, and female mentors. The Pathways program addressed gender inequality with facilitated gender dialogues between women and men and a curriculum to support Male Champions as gender change agents.

**Research findings.** In baseline research with 1,417 students (894 girls, 523 boys):

- ▶ Participants expressed gender conscious attitudes and beliefs, believing girls had a right to education, the ability to lead, and the right to choose whom and when to marry. Most male respondents said they wanted to support girls to stay in school
- ▶ But at the household level, the gender division of labor showed boys doing income-generating work and girls doing domestic work with no compensation. Societal expectations drove girls away from school and towards domestic roles
- ▶ Because of differential labor patterns, girls were socialized to be dependent on boys and men. The team suggested that this drove high rates of intergenerational sex observed in both study arms

## 4-H Ghana. The Fifth H: Her – Empowering Girls through 4-H's Methodology of “Learning by Doing”

**Intervention.** The Fifth H integrates a gender conscious curriculum into new and existing 4-H clubs across Ghana. Teachers and community members guide the clubs to help youth ages 8 - 25 develop skills in multiple sectors (e.g., agriculture, entrepreneurship), incorporating gender conscious teaching approaches that support girls' participation, including a leadership quota where certain club positions must be held by girls.

**Research findings.** The team surveyed 720 students (360 girls and 360 boys) in junior high school:

- ▶ At baseline, 80% of respondents did not feel they had the ability to plan or manage a self-started business. 75% of respondents did not feel they had skills to hold leadership roles in schools or communities
- ▶ Over 85% of respondents said girls and boys should not hold the same leadership positions or professions, while 4 out of 5 respondents believed boys were more important than girls
- ▶ In the qualitative midline with 180 students in 4-H clubs, 93% of respondents felt they could hold leadership roles
- ▶ Female respondents cited adult mentors and gender equality sessions as inspirations in taking up leadership roles
- ▶ In exercises responding to pictures of boys and girls in stereotypical and non-stereotypical gender roles, respondents exhibited gender equitable attitudes
- ▶ Nevertheless, several gender inequitable attitudes remained among respondents, including the majority's belief that wives should obey husbands and citing care as mother's work

#### Wits RHI. Girls Achieve Power (GAP) Year Program

**Intervention.** The GAP year intervention combines an asset building after-school program (separate for girls and boys), a school safety curriculum, linkages to health care facilities and parent dialogues and SMS outreach. The study is a cluster randomized control trial with 26 schools (half intervention, half control) across Khayelitsha, Soweto and Tembisa townships in South Africa.

**Research findings.** Focus groups were conducted with 40 students, and a baseline survey with 1,398 students (859 girls, 508 boys):

- ▶ Girls did not feel safe in the community, or at school. Girls felt peer pressure and reported low self-esteem, and had concerns about being perceived as an adult by older men
- ▶ Boys felt school was safer for them than the community, and wanted more positive male role models
- ▶ At baseline, boys had less knowledge about sexual and reproductive health than girls. Both boys and girls needed more knowledge about health and available health services
- ▶ While most boys thought violence against girls was unacceptable, some believed it was socially acceptable to beat girlfriends: 20% of boys reported striking a partner they felt did something wrong, and 33% reported forcing themselves on a partner

#### CARE Ethiopia – Improving Adolescent Reproductive Health and Nutrition in Ethiopia through Structural Solutions (Abdiboru)

**Intervention.** CARE targets adolescent girls ages 10-14 in four districts in West Hararghe, Ethiopia with interventions to increase their agency and improve health and development outcomes. The project explores the relationships between improved individual agency, government accountability and sectoral outcomes like increased school attendance, improved nutrition and SRH outcomes. The evaluation has three study arms: a control, the second working on the government level to provide life skills to girls in schools using existing girls' groups and the third combining the government level work with community social norm change interventions.

**Research findings.** In the quantitative baseline with 3,186 adolescent girls, 3,203 females from referent groups and 3,196 male referents, the research team found that:

- ▶ Adolescent girls on average spent double the time doing housework as they spent on leisure or study
- ▶ 60.8% of adolescent respondents thought they would have a choice of whom to marry
- ▶ More than half of married adolescents reported joint decision-making with husbands regarding household finances, and 60% of adolescents who had income said they had control over it
- ▶ Around 3/4 of girls thought that others didn't think it was normal for girls to be outside of the home and move around by themselves
- ▶ Nearly 80% agreed that most other adolescent girls would be served food after male siblings or husbands

In the qualitative baseline (20 focus groups and 32 interviews), the team found that:

- ▶ Most people were aware that Ethiopian law prohibits marriage before age 18, but early marriage was seen as a positive, and girls were expected to be married around age 15
- ▶ Most adolescent boys and girls felt that their peers expected girls to accept a marriage proposal, even if it meant dropping out of school. If a girl delayed marriage beyond the ideal age, she was called "too old, unmarriageable, and unlovable." Girls who refused marriage were shamed by their friends, as were their mothers
- ▶ If a girl was strong academically, she could avoid being sanctioned for failing to marry. But overall, parents did not favor girls' education

#### Population Services International. Adolescents 360

**Intervention.** A360 is working to break down barriers to contraceptive access and use among adolescent girls ages 15–19 in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania. The nucleus of A360 is in developing and testing a user-centered project design that puts adolescents at the center of the development process.

**Research findings.** In Ethiopia, the team conducted 80 interviews and 47 focus groups with girls, boys, parents and community members. Unmarried girls were excited about educational opportunities and starting a family. Parents and elders became anxious as girls had more interactions with boys, and adolescents would form relationships in secret to avoid scrutiny. Families valued education, but were more comfortable with marriage as a pathway to girls' success. After marriage, there was a norm to prove fertility and therefore low demand for contraception.

In Nigeria, work with 365 people showed that girls' aspirations varied by community. In the North, girls dreamed of finishing secondary school, getting married, having a family, then continuing their education. But early marriage and child bearing were common, often due to parental concerns over morality. Many girls had abortions to protect family honor. In the South, girls dreamed of finishing school, learning a trade, gaining financial independence and then getting married and having a family. However, a dearth of jobs and high poverty limited girls' opportunities after graduation, often leading to unplanned pregnancies. Abortions were frequent.

In 42 interviews in Tanzania, poverty prevented girls from continuing education after marriage. Couples were expected to have a child immediately before or after marriage. Although children were recognized as a financial burden, contraception was not seen as a remedy.

#### ZanaAfrica. ListenUp: Amplifying girls' voices through sanitary pads and health information

**Intervention.** The intervention has two components that will be rolled out in four arms: one arm receiving one treatment, one arm receiving the other treatment, one arm receiving both, and one serving as a control. The components are 1) provision of one packet of 10 disposable sanitary pads each month for the project duration, plus two pairs of underwear at the start and end of each term, and 2) 25 facilitated health education sessions through weekly girls' health clubs and a health magazine (delivered once a term).

**Research findings.** A baseline survey with 3,489 girls in class 7 found that:

- ▶ Participant girls had high educational aspirations and parental support for education, but low scores on both self-efficacy and decision-making scales, indicating a gap between aspirations and the social and personal competencies needed to reach them
- ▶ Girls felt shame and discomfort around menstruation
- ▶ Gender norms were inequitable. There was a high justification of intimate-partner violence
- ▶ One in ten respondents were sexually experienced, and around half reported their first sex was unwanted. Sexually active respondents reported inconsistent use of contraception

#### icddr,b. Piloting a menstrual hygiene management intervention in urban and rural schools in Bangladesh

**Intervention.** Icddr,b combined the provision of menstrual health management (MHM) products and education with behavior change communication activities with families and community members; sensitization of teachers to MHM issues; and forming gender clubs in schools.

**Research findings.** Formative research included spot checks of facilities and qualitative research with students and stakeholders:

- ▶ Bathroom facilities for girls were inadequate, with an average of 723 girls per toilet at the urban schools and 194 girls per toilet in the rural schools
- ▶ Both male and female students had limited knowledge about puberty and menstruation, leading to fear and shame among girls and shaming behavior from boys and parents
- ▶ Girls' behavior was restricted during menstruation. Families did not let them eat certain foods or talk to boys. Many skipped school during their periods because of inadequate MHM facilities and products

#### Public Health Institute. Enabling Girls to Advance Gender Equity (ENGAGE)

**Intervention.** ENGAGE is testing three approaches to combat child marriage in Malawi: 1) an intervention that trains girls to run girls' clubs for collective action against child marriage; 2) a training program for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to create an enabling environment to reduce child marriage; and 3) an SMS/radio strategy that delivers messages against child marriage. The evaluation is a four-arm study looking at the effect of the girls' intervention alone, the CSO intervention alone, and both interventions together against a comparison arm. All four arms receive the SMS/Radio strategy.

**Research findings.** The baseline survey with 1,492 adult decision makers for adolescent girls showed that:

- ▶ There was no strong evidence of normative expectations that adults should marry girls young, or of sanctions for failing to do so. Communities seem to already be undergoing normative shifts away from support for child marriage
- ▶ Adult decision makers for girls broadly supported girls' education
- ▶ Yet decision makers had low knowledge of marriage laws in Malawi, particularly female decision-makers. However, most expressed strong opposition to child marriage, even when girls could not afford school fees, or became pregnant

## Room to Read. First Girls' Education Life Skills Evaluation in a Developing Country Context

**Intervention.** Room to Read in India is implementing and evaluating a program that teaches life skills, provides mentoring and fosters community support to ensure that girls complete secondary school education. Community mobilizers facilitate sessions and work with families to keep girls engaged. The program will be tested in a randomized control trial with over 100 schools in Rajasthan, where there is a high incidence of child labor and relatively few girls enroll in school.

**Research findings.** Mixed methods baseline included a survey with 2,459 girls and focus groups with girls and parents:

- ▶ At baseline, secondary school enrolment was 51% for girls and 66% for boys
- ▶ 17% of participant girls were married and 82% worked for pay (67% outside of a family-based setting)
- ▶ Girls had considerable house and/or farm work, but did not regard this as disruptive to studying. If anything, they viewed as important training for their futures
- ▶ In the qualitative study, punitive discipline and bad teaching were barriers to girls' learning in school. Just over half of the sample either did not have, or did not feel comfortable stating short term goals
- ▶ At midline in focus groups, many girls reported becoming engaged or married, but had not gone to live with their new families and were continuing school. Most of their parents did not intend to send them to the other family until they had completed school.
- ▶ Girls reported negative perceptions of boys, and had an increased awareness of gender inequalities
- ▶ About half the girls reported learning life skills through the R2R life skills program, particularly working in groups. Content on physical changes and menstruation was popular

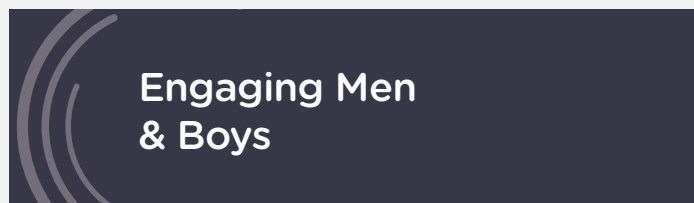
## Population Foundation of India. Combating Gender-Based Violence among Youth in India through a Celebrity-Centered Digital Media Edutainment Intervention

**Intervention.** The intervention included 6 short films on women's empowerment with anti-GBV messages; a film contest for youth on the theme of ending violence against women and girls; and a celebrity concert and campaign anthem.

**Research findings.** The evaluation was a convenience sample survey (N=530) conducted over social media. At baseline, the team found:

- ▶ Younger participants were less likely to identify insulting a woman, aborting a girl fetus, physically injuring a woman, or forcing a woman to perform a sexual act as violence against women and girls than older participants

- ▶ Less than half of participants viewed constraining a woman's ability to access money as violence against women and girls
- ▶ Although about 75% of respondents believed beating a woman was not a justifiable act, just under 50% believed women should be totally obedient to their partners
- ▶ 56% of respondents (including 63.6% of women) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "it is only rape if a woman fights back." Younger respondents were less likely to agree with this statement

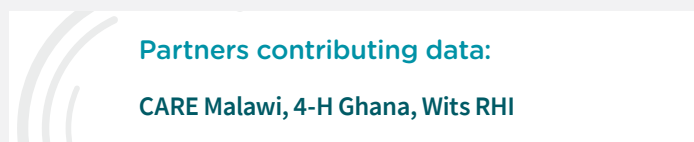


## Engaging Men & Boys

### Learning Questions

- ▶ What are the perceptions and preferences that men and boys have regarding different program approaches?
- ▶ What are promising ways of engaging them [in girls' empowerment work]?

It is now widely accepted that empowering women and girls requires the involvement of men and boys. What remains elusive is the level of involvement and how best to integrate men and boys' engagement strategies into empowerment interventions for women and girls. Eight (8) WGCD partners have programs that can contribute program and research data on effective male engagement. Three (3) partners' findings are reviewed below.



### Partners contributing data:

CARE Malawi, 4-H Ghana, Wits RHI

## What Are We Learning?

Partners report a complex mix of gender equitable attitudes and inequitable practices across sites. These contextual data are important to consider when designing male engagement intervention components:

- ▶ CARE Malawi and 4-H Ghana reported gender equitable attitudes among male and female study participants (adults and adolescents), but at the same time, they also noted practices that kept women in domestic roles, maintained women's dependence upon men, and undermined female educational attainment and leadership
- ▶ Male and female participants across interventions stated acceptance of instances of intimate partner violence (Population Foundation of India, Wits RHI, ZanaAfrica)

## 4-H Ghana. The Fifth H: Her – Empowering Girls through 4-H’s Methodology of “Learning by Doing”

The Fifth H intervention is described in the Adolescents and Agency cluster discussion. Baseline and midline findings with male and female participants elucidate knowledge and attitudes that program implementers need to understand to then shape male engagement activities.

At baseline, the research team found:

- ▶ Over 85% of respondents felt that girls and boys should not hold the same leadership positions or professions, while 4 out of 5 respondents believed boys were more important than girls
- ▶ Respondents had limited knowledge of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health

At midline, the research team found:

- ▶ Some male respondents noted that household chores should be equally shared, not just to be fair to girls, but because chores build important life skills for boys
- ▶ In exercises responding to pictures of boys and girls in stereotypical and non-stereotypical gender roles, respondents exhibited gender equitable attitudes
- ▶ Nevertheless, several gender inequitable attitudes remained among respondents, including the majority’s belief that wives should obey husbands and citing care as mother’s work

## CARE Malawi. Umodzi – Men, Women, Boys and Girls in Alliance to Achieve Gender Equality

The Umodzi project is described in the [Adolescents and Agency](#) cluster section. Key findings at baseline that inform engaging boys and men in the project locations include:

- ▶ At the household level, the gender division of labor showed boys doing income-generating work and girls doing domestic work with no associated economic rewards

- ▶ Most male respondents stated that they wanted to actively support girls to stay in school
- ▶ In general, participants expressed gender conscious attitudes and beliefs, believing girls had a right to education, the ability to lead, and the right to choose who and when to marry

## Wits RHI. Girls Achieve Power (GAP) Year Program

The GAP year intervention is described in the Adolescents and Agency cluster section. Formative research with boys found that:

- ▶ Boys felt more freedom of movement, but also felt peer pressure to join gangs. They found school safer than the community
- ▶ Boys wanted more positive male role models
- ▶ While most boys thought violence against girls was unacceptable, some believed it was socially acceptable to beat girlfriends

Baseline research showed that boys had less knowledge about sexual and reproductive health than girls. Both boys and girls needed more knowledge about both health and available health services. One-fifth (20%) of boys reported striking a partner they felt did something wrong, and one-third (33%) reported forcing themselves on a partner. Respondents had limited knowledge of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health.



Photo Credit: Prashant Panjiar (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)

## Appendix 1: List of WGCD Partners by Learning Clusters

### Intra-household Bargaining & Decision-Making

- ▶ The BOMA Project
- ▶ CARE Burundi
- ▶ CARE Uganda
- ▶ Child in Need Institute
- ▶ Helen Keller International
- ▶ The Panzi Foundation
- ▶ Harvard University
- ▶ REPOA Policy Research and Development
- ▶ University of Ibadan
- ▶ WaterSHED Cambodia
- ▶ UCSD & Pathfinder au Niger
- ▶ PSI Room to Grow

### Pathways to Income Generation

- ▶ The BOMA Project
- ▶ CARE Uganda
- ▶ Harvard University
- ▶ ICRW Plan-It Girls
- ▶ REPOA Policy Research and Development
- ▶ The Panzi Foundation
- ▶ WaterSHED Cambodia
- ▶ 4-H Ghana

### Adolescents & Agency

- ▶ ICRW Plan-It Girls
- ▶ 4-H Ghana
- ▶ CARE Malawi
- ▶ SWAGAA
- ▶ Wits RHI
- ▶ PSI Adolescents 360
- ▶ Population Foundation of India
- ▶ Child in Need Institute
- ▶ icddr,b
- ▶ Public Health Institute/Rise Up
- ▶ ZanaAfrica
- ▶ Room to Read
- ▶ CARE Ethiopia
- ▶ UCSD & Pathfinder au Niger

### Engaging Men & Boys

- ▶ ICRW Plan-It Girls
- ▶ 4-H Ghana
- ▶ CARE Malawi
- ▶ SWAGAA
- ▶ Wits RHI
- ▶ PSI Adolescents 360
- ▶ Population Foundation of India
- ▶ Child in Need Institute
- ▶ UCSD & Pathfinder au Niger
- ▶ University of Ibadan
- ▶ PSI Room to Grow

