

Advancing Gender Equality

Case Studies from Across
the Commonwealth

Commonwealth Secretariat



The Commonwealth

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Commonwealth Secretariat

Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House
Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX
United Kingdom

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Published by the Commonwealth Secretariat
Edited by Editors4Change and Joan Ross Frankson
Typeset by Nova Techset Private Limited, Bengaluru & Chennai, India
Printed by Hobbs the Printers, Totton, Hampshire

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Cover photo credit: Nimrod Zollo
Copies of this publication may be obtained from

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Email: publications@commonwealth.int
Web: www.thecommonwealth.org/publications

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN (paperback): 978-1-84929-151-4
ISBN (e-book): 978-1-84859-945-1

Foreword

The Commonwealth Secretariat has been a pioneer in promoting women's rights and gender equality since the 1976–85 UN Decade for Women, and of gender mainstreaming since the UN Fourth World Conference on Women — to which our 1995 Plan of Action on Gender and Development was a Commonwealth contribution.

This publication brings together case studies prepared in connection with the end-of-term review of the 2005–15 Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality. The case studies are based on submissions and interviews with government representatives, gender specialists and other stakeholders, including civil society organisations, from 20 countries representing all regions of the Commonwealth.

The examples were selected to demonstrate a range of strategies that can be employed to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Together they help to show what perpetuates gender inequality and approaches that can be adopted to help end unjust discrimination.

The Commonwealth Secretariat continues to assist the governments of our member countries with the implementation of measures to mainstream gender equality through parliamentary and local government systems, human rights and legislative frameworks, economic and social protection programmes, and in the delivery of public services such as health, education and youth provision.

This publication comes at an opportune time as we embark on programmes towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It shares for a wider audience successful interventions and lessons learned on how to end gender inequalities, and offers ideas and insights that can help accelerate positive and beneficial change.

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC
Commonwealth Secretary-General

Acknowledgements

The Commonwealth Secretariat would like to acknowledge the following for their valuable contribution to this case studies series:

National Women's Machineries consisting of Gender Ministries, Bureaux and Civil Society Organisations of the countries represented for providing the initial case studies; Carol Miller and Sudarsana Kundu from Gender at Work who developed and compiled the case studies with the support of research assistance from Deepika Singh, Erin Aylward, Kailee Jordan, Malika Basu, Nikita Patodia and Priya Kvam; Sarah Kitakule, Kathy Daniel and Chantelle Cummings from the Gender Section, Commonwealth Secretariat who provided valuable insights and detailed comments during their production; Maureen Hollingsworth, Joan Ross Frankson, Jane Lanigan and Francesca White for editing and proofreading each case study; and Sherry Dixon and Tim Inman from the Publications Section, Commonwealth Secretariat for bringing this publication to fruition in its current form.

Preface

This compilation of case studies shows optimism and challenges in advancing gender equality across Commonwealth countries during the last ten years. The case studies attest to the commitment, energy and creativity of the wide array of forces involved: governments; non-governmental organisations, women's networks and men's groups; community and business leaders; and donors among others. They bring into sharp focus instances of genuine progress – sometimes significant, sometimes incremental – balanced against existing (if ever shakier) sociocultural and institutional barriers.

The case studies document good practices and lessons learned as Commonwealth countries have worked to implement the 2005–15 Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality (PoA).¹ As the PoA came to an end, the Commonwealth Secretariat embarked on a review to assess where things stand regarding gender equality and women's empowerment in the Commonwealth. The assessment was conducted around the four critical areas of the PoA: Gender democracy, peace and conflict; Gender, human rights and law; Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment; and Gender and HIV/AIDS. The case studies were developed to make a substantial qualitative contribution to the review.

This publication is timely. United Nations member countries, building on the 2000–15 millennium development goals (MDGs), adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty and combat inequality by 2030. This ambitious agenda features 17 goals and 169 targets and it reflects the widely held view that women have a critical role to play in achieving them. Goal 5 is specific to gender equality and women's empowerment² and many of the targets recognise this goal as both the objective and part of the solution.

The case studies document the strategies employed by Commonwealth member countries to change social institutions and discriminatory norms preventing progress on gender equality. They are practical interventions that governments, policy-makers, civil society and the private sector in Commonwealth countries and beyond can modify to fit their own settings. The compilation will stimulate reflection and dialogue on actions and results and it will be a useful resource in global efforts to achieve the SDGs.

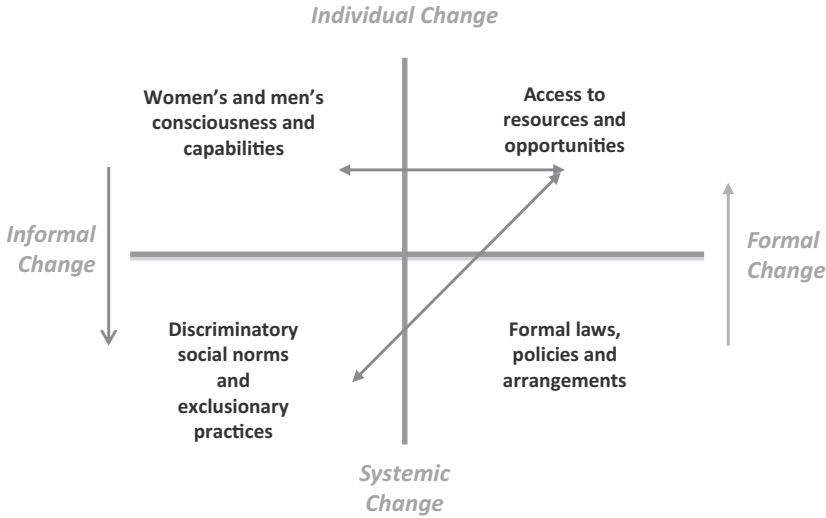
Developing the case studies

Analytical framework

Each of the case studies has been put together using the framework for case study analysis developed by Gender at Work, a transnational network of individuals and groups working for gender equality and women's empowerment. The framework

ensures that the analysis of achievements and impacts covers all bases – individual and institutional perspectives as well as formal (policy and regulation) and informal (cultural norms) spheres. In doing so it highlights areas of movement towards gender equality that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Gender at Work analytical framework



Gender at Work developed the framework in 2002. Its starting point is that sustainable progress toward gender equality requires change in multiple areas: formal policies and laws; resource distribution; individual and collective consciousness; and social norms. Transforming gender relations requires building the individual capabilities and resources of women and men while transforming the institutional context, or the ‘deep structure’ of organisations, within which they live and work. The analytical framework makes clear how change in gender relations is dependent upon change in all the quadrants. It illustrates the links between various domains of change and the deep structural and discriminatory social norms held in place by power dynamics. Change in the bottom left quadrant of the framework is a key ingredient for supporting changes across the other quadrants and towards sustainable change in gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Collection and selection

The process of collecting information took place over two years and garnered some 150 submissions. The case studies were developed from a variety of sources including country reports submitted by national women’s machineries to the Commonwealth Secretariat, interviews with representatives of national women’s machineries and civil society organisations, and research reports and other published documentation.

The objective was to show the range of strategies employed by governments, and civil society and other social investing organisations to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. The selection process deliberately favoured positive cases with high impact to derive lessons about what worked and in what circumstances.

Not all Commonwealth member countries are represented. The 20 case studies selected illustrate innovations across the four PoA thematic areas and across countries and regions (Table 1). Some of the case studies adopted a multisectoral approach and therefore addressed more than one thematic area. This is particularly true of the critical area ‘Gender and HIV/AIDS’, which was typically addressed through integrated strategies for eliminating gender-based violence.

Case studies by country, region, issue/programme and PoA thematic area(s)

No.	Country	Region	Issue/Programme	PoA Thematic Area
1.	Australia	Pacific	Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012	Gender, human rights and law; Gender, democracy, peace and conflict; Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
2.	Bangladesh	Asia	One Stop Crisis Centre, violence against women and girls	Gender, human rights and law
3.	Botswana	Africa	Integrated approach to combatting gender based violence	Gender, human rights and law; Gender and HIV/AIDS
4.	Cameroon	Africa	Mass product consumer regulatory authority and the empowerment of women	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
5.	Canada	Caribbean and Americas	National action plan to combat human trafficking	Gender, human rights and law
6.	Grenada	Caribbean and Americas	Advancing the legislative and policy framework to combat gender based violence	Gender, human rights and law
7.	India	Asia	The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
8.	Kenya	Africa	Women Enterprise Fund	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
9.	Malaysia	Asia	1AZAM programme for women’s economic development	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
10.	Malta	Europe	The Equality Mark initiative for employers	Gender, democracy, peace and conflict; Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment

(Continued)

Case studies by country, region, issue/programme and PoA thematic area(s) (continued)

No.	Country	Region	Issue/Programme	PoA Thematic Area
11.	Mauritius	Africa	Fostering entrepreneurship in the SME sector, National Women's Enterprise Council initiative	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
12.	Namibia	Africa	Women and Child Protection Unit – gender-based violence	Gender, human rights and law
13.	New Zealand	Pacific	Women in leadership programme – women on private sector boards and supporting state sector boards	Gender, democracy, peace and conflict; Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
14.	Nigeria	Africa	Nigerian Women's Trust Fund to strengthen women's political participation	Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
15.	Pacific-CSO	Pacific	Pacific Women's Network male advocacy programme	Gender, human rights and law
16.	Pakistan	Asia	Women's parliamentary caucus	Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
17.	Trinidad and Tobago	Caribbean and Americas	Central registry on domestic violence	Gender, human rights and law
18.	Uganda	Africa	Income-generating activity programme	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
19.	United Kingdom	Europe	Women's Business Council	Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
20.	United Republic of Tanzania	Africa	Channelling men's positive involvement in the national response to HIV/AIDS (CHAMPION)	Gender and HIV/AIDS

A rundown of the strategies

The collection of case studies demonstrates the broad range of initiatives undertaken in Commonwealth countries to advance women's leadership (in both the public and private sectors), the diversity of stakeholders involved, and the partnerships formed. With a view to inform evidence-based policy and programming in support of women's rights and gender equality, each case study presents a brief description of the intervention, theory of change, key institutional actors involved and the main

findings, including outcomes achieved and lessons learned. The case studies are organised into five sections as follows:

Section One: Women’s Political Participation – In Pakistan, the Women’s Political Caucus (WPC), a national cross-party platform, has amplified the voices of women parliamentarians. Since its formation in 2008, WPC has successfully lobbied parliament to pass a number of laws that advance women’s rights, initiated multiple programmes to tackle gender inequality and helped to raise awareness and funding to address violence against women. The Nigerian Women’s Trust Fund (NWTF), launched in 2011, provides women candidates with electoral financing and capacity-building support. Since its inception, the NWTF has assisted 154 of the 220 eligible candidates, across political parties and in various electoral districts. NWTF is a multi-stakeholder initiative backed by government and a coalition of civil society, private sector and international development agency partners.

Section Two: Women’s Corporate Leadership and Gender Equality in the Workplace – National women’s machineries in Australia, Malta, New Zealand and United Kingdom have developed tools and strategies for employers to increase women’s labour force participation and raise public awareness of workplace equality issues. Australia’s Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012) aims to overcome implementation gaps in existing legislation on gender equality at the workplace. Malta’s Equality Mark certification is awarded to employers who have in place positive equality policies and measures to implement them. In New Zealand, the Women in Leadership Programme works to get more women on private sector boards while the Women’s Business Council in United Kingdom has adopted a strategy of raising awareness and building partnerships to increase women’s labour force participation.

Section Three: Women’s Enterprise and Economic Empowerment – Cameroon’s Mass Product Consumer Regulatory Authority provides economic empowerment opportunities for women and responds to their need for food security. India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act offers rural women new opportunities for paid employment and enhanced women’s autonomy in making household decisions. The establishment of government-supported entities to foster women’s entrepreneurship has been a prominent strategy in Kenya, Mauritius and Uganda. Women entrepreneurs have benefited from increased access to credit, markets and support services, and in the process are developing their business acumen and entrepreneurial skill sets.

Section Four: Combatting Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence – Bangladesh provides violence survivors with multiple services under one roof and facilitates their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Canada’s anti-trafficking programme has improved prevention and detection, increased services, and strengthened national and international partnerships. Grenada’s multidisciplinary approach involves new gender-based violence (GBV) laws and policies, establishment of response mechanisms, putting in place training responders and sensitising the public. In Namibia, special police units to tackle GBV have been added to women and child protection units, and Trinidad and Tobago is piloting a central registry on domestic violence.

Section Five: Working with Men for Gender Equality – Botswana mobilised men around gender-based violence in collaboration with Men Sector, a government initiated HIV/AIDS intervention organisation, partnered prominent men in the promotion of gender equality and elimination of GBV, and created discussion platforms on issues affecting women and men. The Pacific Women’s Network against Violence against Women engaged men as potential agents of change while the Tanzania’s CHAMPION involved men in preventing the spread of HIV and AIDS. The project promoted dialogue on HIV, reproductive health and gender equality; engaged community members and leaders in GBV sensitisation; and developed behaviour change communication tools and messages at various levels.

A final section, **Key Factors for Success**, brings together the main lessons that run through the case studies.

Notes

- 1 Gender equality is one of the fundamental principles of the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) Harare Declaration of 1991. Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women’s/Gender Affairs took the lead in developing the Plan of Action, with strong contributions and support from the heads of Commonwealth national women’s machineries and members of the Commonwealth Gender Reference Group. The Ministers agreed the final PoA at their 7th meeting in Fiji Islands, June 2004.
- 2 Sustainable Development Goal 5: ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.’

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List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIM	<i>Amanah Ikhtiar</i> Malaysia
APC	All Progressives Congress
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
1AZAM	<i>Akhiri Zaman Miskin</i> / 'to eradicate poverty' (Malaysia)
CAPA	Crime and Problem Analysis (Unit)
CAT	Change action team
CAVAWs	Committees against violence against women
CCCs	Community change clubs (Tanzania)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGA	Country gender assessment
CHAMPION	Channeling men's positive involvement in the national response to HIV/AIDS (Tanzania)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
C-WES	Constituency Women Enterprise Scheme
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DFCU	Development Finance Company of Uganda
DVA	Domestic Violence Act
DVU	Domestic Violence Unit
DWCs	District Women's Councils
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECP	Electoral Commission of Pakistan
ESIs	Economic and social indicators
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-based organisation
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
GAD	Gender Affairs Division
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEM	Gender Equitable Men (scale)
GESP	Growth and Employment Strategy Paper
GFPs	Gender Focal Points
ICAN	International Civil Society Action Network
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IGA	Income generating activity
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union

IPV	Intimate partner violence (Tanzania)
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
LIH NKRA	Raising the Living Standards of Low-Income Households National Key Result Areas
MAP	Male Advocacy Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MET	MenEngage Tanzania
MGECW	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (India)
MIRAP	Mass Product Consumer Regulatory Authority
MPs	Members of parliament
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprises
MSPVAW	Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence against Women
MWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MWASD	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NAP	National Action Plan
NCPE	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
NCSW	National Commission on the Status of Women
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NKRA	National Key Result Areas
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NREGS	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NUSAFII	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
NWC	National Women's Council
NWEC	National Women Entrepreneur Council
NWM	National women's machinery
NWTF	Nigerian Women's Trust Fund
NZX	New Zealand Stock Exchange
OCC	One-Stop Crisis Centre
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
PARFAR	Program for the Improvement of Rural Family Income
PEPFAR	United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PoA	Plan of Action
PREPAFEN	Poverty Reduction Project and Actions in Favour of Women in the Far North Region
PRIs	<i>Panchayati Raj</i> Institutions
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SACCOs	Co-operative savings and credit societies
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALISES	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SES	Senior Executive Service
SHGs	Self-help groups
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises

STEM	Science, technology, education and mathematics
SWC	Status of Women Canada
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now UN Women)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against Women
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WBC	Women's Business Council
WCPUs	Women and Child Protection Units
WEF	The Women Enterprise Fund
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency
WHO	World Health Organization
WPC	Women's Parliamentary Caucus

Section One

Women's Political Participation

The lack of gender balance in decision-making positions persists. Global statistics, as of April 2016, reveal that just 22.7 per cent of all national parliamentarians were women – slow progress from 11.3 per cent in 1995 when governments agreed the target of 30 per cent in the Platform for Action coming out of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China.

Among Commonwealth member countries Rwanda is the stand out performer, topping the Inter-Parliamentary Union's World Classification of Women in National Parliaments at 63.8 per cent. Only 11 other Commonwealth countries hit the 30 per cent target in April 2016: Cameroon (31.1%); Grenada (33.3%); Guyana (30.4%); Mozambique (39.6%); Namibia (41.3%); New Zealand (31.4%); Seychelles (43.8%); South Africa (42.4%); Trinidad and Tobago (31%); Uganda (35%); and United Republic of Tanzania (36.6%). Attaining the highest positions in government is even more elusive; in April 2016, the Commonwealth had just three women governors general, two women prime ministers and two women presidents.

The case studies in this section demonstrate the importance of increasing women's presence in political parties and parliaments, but also show that this is not enough. Women who aspire to political office need practical support like funds and training, and once they are in position they need their own platforms for networking, lobbying and advocacy.

Chapter 1

Women's Parliamentary Caucus, Pakistan

1.1 Context

In the new millennium, Pakistan has increasingly recognised the historical exclusion of women from political structures and actively committed to address gender imbalance in politics (Bari 2005). It has adopted international policies for gender equality and women's empowerment,¹ and vowed to increase the political participation of women, both by encouraging women to contest elections and hold office, as well as fighting sociocultural barriers that confine women to domestic life (UNDP 2005). Aligning with international conventions, the National Plan of Action for Women (1998)² and National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002), led by the Ministry of Women Development, have driven the economic, social and political inclusion of women and minorities onto the nation's developmental agenda. The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) was established as a statutory body through an ordinance in July 2000 to combat discrimination against women. In 2012, the Pakistan Senate unanimously approved the National Commission on the Status of Women Bill 2012, which replaced the NCSW Ordinance from 2000 and strengthened the commission by giving it financial and administrative autonomy through an independent secretariat (the Gazette of Pakistan 2012).

As a result of active efforts, the gender gap in women's political participation has narrowed at an accelerated pace in the last decade. In 2008, for the first time in the history of independent Pakistan, there were more than 22 per cent women in parliament in general and reserved seats. During the 2013 general elections, there was a 130 per cent increase in the number of women contesting general seats, notably with a growing participation from under-represented and minority groups (UAF 2013). However, the mere increase of women in provincial and central political parties is not enough. Evidence shows a need for active efforts to transform potentially hostile political spaces (Rai 2000). A majority of women entering politics in the last decade have been first-time entrants, with no background or training in governance. With no prior affiliation with political parties, women's groups or civil society organisations, many members have found their voices and opinions being ignored. They have also been side lined within their own parties (Bari 2005).

1.2 Key institutional actors

A comprehensive initiative to promote the role of women in parliament was the introduction of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in 2008.³ The caucus is a national cross-party platform for female politicians to network, advocate and lobby for governmental compliance with international gender equality indicators, as well as to address contextual roadblocks to equality. WPC has successfully united

women parliamentarians across political parties and strengthened their collective power and influence. Although an informal body, WPC has grown rapidly and soon assumed a defined structure, including a General Body and Working Council. The former, a larger forum of 93 members, includes 76 female members of the National Assembly and 17 female senators; whereas the Working Council comprises ten members, including two office-bearers (secretary and treasurer), one member each from seven major political parties, and one member from the independents. WPC has collaborated with other organisations like the National Commission on the Status of Women to create safe spaces to push for legislative reforms, stand up against active and passive discriminatory practices in the allocation of development funds, and have a voice within political parties.

1.3 Theory of change

WPC challenges male privilege and domination in political structures and within political parties, which are often hostile towards women and hinder their political participation (IPU 2011). It was felt that the formation of a cross-party caucus was the most effective strategy to push a women's agenda and to protect their interests in the parliament (Bari 2010). WPC recognises that the growing participation and organisation of women in the political sphere, despite severe obstacles – such as cultural resistance, discrimination, patriarchy, religious extremism and misconceptions, and unequal social power structures (Pakistan Today 2013) – can trigger positive changes in the larger society. WPC's theory of change is:

- That capacity building for female parliamentarians – including organising, providing support and training – creates competent members and strong leaders (IPU 2008). Strengthening leadership skills will increase the voice of female parliamentarians in political decision-making.
- The influence of female members of parliament (MPs) on policy-making will increase through an enabling environment of solidarity and belonging, bridging the gaps of political ideologies and party differences.
- By creating a cross-party platform to bring female MPs of all parties together, strong advocacy groups can be fostered through which women's and minority issues can be rapidly and effectively mainstreamed into public policy.

1.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Women's and men's consciousness: There is a discrepancy in power sharing and decision-making between women and men within households and communities. While women are given a large share of the responsibility for caring for the household, children and subsistence production systems, they are not given equal control over productive resources. In many villages it was collectively determined whether or not women should vote in the general elections. WPC, in collaboration with other women's machineries such as NCSW and provincial Women's Development Departments, have spearheaded initiatives whereby extremely poor and marginalised women have contested seats and won.

Women's access to resources and opportunities: Apart from having difficulty getting funding to run political campaigns, fewer political seats are made available to women (Rai 2000). Within parties, there is male domination over resources and opportunities. WPC has provided access to resources and opportunities to women parliamentarians in many ways – through mentoring, capacity building, networking and information sharing. The capabilities of women parliamentarians have been strengthened through training programmes, study tours and conferences. WPC has also pressed for increased female representation in special committees dealing with constitutional amendments, electoral reform, and peace and security, including space in the peace jirga and other national structures (ICAN 2014).

Formal laws and policies: The last decade has been the most progressive in terms of introducing new laws aimed at preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). Several older laws have also been amended to make them more comprehensive. Since the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality began in 2005, more than seven legal and constitutional amendments have been made. These legal provisions aim directly at increasing women's political participation as voters and contestants, as well as indirectly by addressing economic and social barriers that exclude women from decision-making.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: With political inclusion, many cultural notions and traditional misconceptions around women's role outside the home, especially doubts around their competence as political leaders, have been challenged. During the 2008 and 2013 general elections, women in several of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) voted for the first time. This trend has continued to grow. Currently, there are ongoing debates about penalising those using informal ways of discouraging women to vote (e.g. threats, loud speaker announcements) (NCSW 2012a). The presence of an active women's network within parliament reflects a transformation in the broader political culture, although there is still a lot to be accomplished. For instance, WPC Secretary Syed Shamoona said: 'the caucus is a watershed. This is the first of its kind in Pakistan's political history ... a mechanism that has enabled quantitative and qualitative input for women in the proceedings of the House' (International Crisis Group 2015).

There are ripple effects of changes in 'formal' and 'informal' institutions/norms. For instance, WPC-led bills on prevention of workplace harassment and domestic abuse have enabled a shift in the public-private divide, and have positively influenced women's 'informal' experiences of violence and abuse. There have also been debates and discussions on the role of sociocultural practices in keeping the gender divide intact.

1.5 Strategies

Decades of political exclusion have made many newly elected female parliamentarians determined to open more doors for women through the WPC, both by engaging with formal legislative institutions, as well as enabling a broader environment for breaking sociocultural barriers that keep women confined to domesticity. WPC's objectives include:

- Attaining a broad-based consensus among all female MPs on an agreed agenda for women's development, empowerment and emancipation.
- Enhancing the role of female parliamentarians in proposing gender-sensitive legislation, and reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and policies.
- Ensuring effective parliamentary oversight of implementation of international and regional gender equality commitments, national policies and programmes.
- Facilitating exchange of views and information sharing on critical areas of concern, particularly social discriminatory practices, both nationally and internationally.
- Liaising and building working relationships with key state and civil society institutions and organisations in order to contribute towards national and international efforts to promote women's rights, empowerment and gender equality.
- Reviewing rules and procedures in order to ensure women's continued access to and participation in the National Assembly.
- Working jointly for the achievement of social indicators so that the MDGs are within reach (Bari 2005).

All female parliamentarians in the National Assembly and Senate are eligible to become part of WPC.⁴ Members take up individual as well as collective issues faced by local women. Through regular knowledge exchange with international organisations and monitoring effective implementation of inclusive policies, WPC serves as a kind of a 'watchdog' in parliament, ensuring compliance with institutional measures for women's inclusion. With the aim to institutionalise an agreed-upon agenda for women's empowerment, WPC has rapidly become a vital platform for female parliamentarians to collectively contribute to making parliament gender sensitive, and increase its influence and interaction with organisations working both nationally and internationally (Legislative Watch 2009).

Pakistan now has four provincial WPCs in addition to a federal one – the first initiative of its kind in South Asia. At the time of writing, 85 women parliamentarians and around 130 women members of provincial assemblies from more than 20 political parties are working together to advance gender equality and women's rights by enacting new laws and promoting effective implementation of laws and policies (UNDP 2014). There has been a gradual shift from the centre to the provinces in terms of advocating and lobbying for women's rights. With provincial caucuses, the process of identifying and addressing context-specific gender issues should be easier and more efficient.

1.6 Outcomes to date

Since its inception in 2008, WPC has been striving to promote women's empowerment and to build consensus in parliament on issues affecting women and children. Successes include:

Initiating new members and strengthening their voices: WPC offers a trusted platform, especially to women serving their first political mandate (Agora 2015),

for finding support and connecting with other MPs. WPC has strengthened the capabilities of members, both formally in terms of networking with other members and sharing party experiences, as well as informally in terms of gaining confidence, particularly for first-time contestants. It has also ensured effective oversight of national and international commitments on gender equality, working closely with NCSW and other allies.

Addressing formal and informal aspects of political exclusion: WPC and its collaborators recognised that many women did not have a computerised national identity card (CNIC) and/or were not registered as voters, leading to political exclusion. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and Electoral Commission of Pakistan (ECP) responded to advocacy campaigns led by WPC by setting up registration camps before the 2013 general elections. The camps issued identity and assisted in making ration cards and other proofs of identity. NADRA also recognised that there were gaps in accurate representation of the electorate and initiated computerisation of census data and electoral rolls.

At the community level, there were many incidents where women were barred from voting for cultural reasons (conservative attitudes towards women being involved in political decision-making). In the last two general elections, conscious attempts have been made to fight these biases. In Peshawar during the 2013 general elections, the Peshawar High Court Chief Justice ordered ECP to stop the results of two constituencies where women were not allowed to vote; ECP organised re-polling in these constituencies (Saleem 2013). The NCSW is currently in the process of framing a bill calling for civil and criminal repercussions for invoking disenfranchisement, with punishments ranging from suspension of political candidates to prosecution. Once framed, the bill will be launched via WPC.

Towards gender-sensitive legislation: A significant impact of WPC lobbying efforts has been to make 'the woman question' indispensable to public policy. The caucus has led discussions in support of legislation and played an instrumental role in garnering political and civil consent. The following are the laws and frameworks comprehensively addressing VAWG (NCSW 2012b): Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010; Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2010; Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act 2011; Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2011 (prevention of acid crimes incidents); Women in Distress and Detention Fund 2011; National Commission on Status of Women Act 2012; and Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2012.

VAWG and police reforms: In order to strengthen the process of seeking legal aid, WPC has simultaneously engaged with women police stations in Islamabad. In 2008, a report brought out by WPC highlighted issues and concerns that kept police stations from being safe for all women, and also highlighted the plight of women police stations, which are staffed only by women police officers. WPC members have played an active role in lobbying for an increased role of and support to women police officers, with the following results: increased salaries; officers are now motivated to be proactive in offering legal aid to women and children; and the safety of officers is ensured when travelling in conflict areas.

WPC has been paying particular attention to the situation of victims of acid burning, which has resulted in reforms in police procedures and in intensified state efforts to bring perpetrators to justice. Acid violence is the deliberate use of a corrosive substance/fluid to inflict injury. The victims of acid violence are overwhelmingly women and children, and attackers often target the head and face in order to maim, disfigure and blind. Acid attacks occur across the globe, but are more prevalent in South Asia. Reports indicate that acid attacks are on the rise in Pakistan (Ilahi 2014). In 2014 alone, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan found that 232 women in Pakistan suffered acid attacks or were burned, the majority by someone they knew (International Crisis Group 2015). Eight female parliamentarians have dedicated the development funds allocated to them to establish burn units in their respective district hospitals.

National and regional engagement with peacekeeping: WPC has also initiated discussions on the gendered impacts of conflict and state-sanctioned violence. For example, in 2010 WPC convened the first Convention of Women Parliamentarians on ‘The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Peace, Security & Reconciliation’, which included women legislators from federal and provincial assemblies. In another example, in 2011–12 WPC held two meetings with female parliamentarians from Afghanistan to discuss the role of women in peace and security, progressive legislation for women, areas for increased collaboration to support women parliamentarians, women’s full inclusion in security decisions, and women’s roles in promoting a culture of peace (ICAN 2014).

Knowledge exchange among women parliamentarians across countries: WPC has facilitated knowledge exchange among parliamentarians from various countries by organising conferences and seminars, hosting women parliamentarians from other countries and organising multi-country study tours. WPC has also initiated solidarity action within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), undertaking a number of regional programmes. For example, WPC was instrumental in organising the ‘South Asia Regional Exchange Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, National Women Machineries and Commissions, and Election Management Bodies’, which was held in Nepal in 2014 for representatives from South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Similarly, an Afghan women’s parliamentary delegation visited Pakistan in June 2011 and there was a follow-up visit of Pakistan’s WPC delegation to Kabul in 2012.

1.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

Throughout its seven years of existence, WPC has influenced other nations across the globe to adopt parliamentary caucuses. The following are some lessons learned:

- Encourage local and state/regional governments to build their own respective caucuses.
- Invest resources in identifying, evaluating and monitoring formal and informal structures responsible for low voter turnout.

- Strengthen legislation to account for all acts of violence and abuse on all people, especially women and girls, and introduce criminal prosecution for acts of violence.
- Simplify bureaucratic procedures with the aim of easing access to electoral procedures. For instance, the government is currently working towards merging CNICs and voter registration procedures, which would reduce the additional step of getting oneself registered to be able to vote.
- In the case of very low representation of women in parliament, introduction of quotas per political party may be employed. Further, imposing quotas on directly elected candidates is known to be more effective.
- Accelerate attempts to ensure that all people vote, especially women, by recognising and responding to issues keeping women from voting (e.g. setting up women-only polling booths in certain rural communities) (NCSW 2010).
- Invest in building a computerised electoral database if one is not already in place.
- There is a need for an improved and effective relationship between provincial and federal governments, including fairer redistribution and exchange of funds, resources and support.
- Continue capacity-building training in existing areas, while also expanding the scope of training on other relevant issues, like gender-sensitivity training.

There must be proactive changes in other areas where the gender gap plainly persists, namely: economic participation and opportunity (e.g. in salaries and access to highly skilled employment); educational attainment (i.e. access to basic and higher levels of education); and health (e.g. life expectancy and sex ratio).⁵ The following recommendations aim to guide the future course of action at the national and international levels to achieve a more integrated approach to gender equality, which also translates into further engendering access to traditionally closed public spaces for women:

- Systems of incentives for provinces and nations should be developed, motivating them to close the gender gap in an integrated manner – including indicators of education, health and employment.
- Incentives for governments need to be created, to break the glass ceiling within government organisations and ensure more women assume positions of power.
- The collaboration of political caucuses internationally should be continued, with increased focus on implementation of existing gender mainstreaming policies to remove hurdles to women's participation in the public sphere.
- Sex-disaggregated data should be acquired, along with strengthening national and provincial electoral databases to ensure effective analysis of actual political participation, thus enabling better informed policy-making.
- There needs to be a revival of the 33 per cent representation of women at all tiers of local government, with repercussions introduced for less than 33 per cent women in National Assemblies.

- There should be continuing research, documentation and dissemination of successful experiences within the Commonwealth, to promote women's participation in politics and development.

Notes

- 1 Pakistan has signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as of 12 March 1996 and is a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNDP Report 2005).
- 2 The National Plan of Action for Women, with a 15-year perspective, was launched August 1998 as a follow-up to commitments made at the Beijing Conference. Covering the 12 Critical Areas of Concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, it was finalised after a long consultative process involving government and outside experts. The Pakistan NPA has an additional chapter on women and girls with disabilities.
- 3 The establishment of WPC was a long-standing demand of women's rights groups, which picked up momentum soon after the entry of more than 74 women parliamentarians in the 12th National Assembly (2002–07) in reserved and general seats. In 2008, the number of women contesting elections and running for office further increased. Dr Fehmida Mirza became the first female Speaker of the National Assembly in Pakistan's democratic history, and initiated the network to harness their collective ability and start a dialogue on women's rights and empowerment.
- 4 The majority of the women in the National Assembly are from reserved seats mandated by law – i.e. 60 of the 66 women elected in 2013.
- 5 Sex ratio is used to describe the number of females per 1000 of males.

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Chapter 2

Nigerian Women's Trust Fund to Strengthen Women's Political Participation, Nigeria

2.1 Context

Since the cessation of military rule in Nigeria in 1999, the state has made a steady and remarkable transition to democracy. However, the participation of women in this democratisation process has been far from equal with that of men. There are major and continuing constraints against women's participation in political processes at all levels, stemming from resource limitations, traditional gender roles and associated cultural norms. Nonetheless, in recent years there has been a small, but significant, increase in the number of appointments of women to leadership positions at the national and local levels. Whereas in 1999 women represented only 1.2 per cent of the officials occupying seats in local government councils, in 2007, women accounted for 9.4 per cent of local councils and held 4.6 per cent of the positions of council chairperson (Government of Nigeria 2015). There has been a surge in women's participation, for example, in the design and implementation of environmental policies and programmes; currently, a woman occupies the position of Chair of the Senate Committee on Environment. Previously, women also held the positions of Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Environment and Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of the Environment (Government of Nigeria 2015).

This case study focuses on one specific initiative, the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund (NWTF), launched in 2011 to expand women's political participation.

2.2 Key institutional actors

NWTF is a multi-stakeholder initiative backed by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and a coalition of civil society, private sector and international development agency partners, including UN Women (Government of Nigeria 2013b). A small core management team of chief executive officer, finance officer and programme officer work with the support of a 10-member board of directors and a 14-member advisory board representing a cross-section of mainly women from government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), plus academics, activists and other public figures. NWTF builds on and is supported by a range of other initiatives by the Government of Nigeria, in partnership with local civil society organisations and international organisations. It works across the country to expand women's political participation in the National Assembly and state legislatures, supporting women to step up and represent a population that is 49 per cent female.

2.3 Theory of change

In an effort to carve out space for women in politics – including a greater number of elected seats, and leadership and involvement at all levels – the government has launched a host of legislative and policy-based interventions. These are rooted in the following theory of change: if gender equality and good governance are to be achieved in Nigeria, then both men and women must enjoy unrestricted access to spaces of power, where they can realise their leadership potential and contribute to the democratising efforts of the nation. With regard to NWTF, if women who aspire to political office are supported with funds and skills training in their efforts to develop political platforms, launch successful campaigns and exercise effective leadership once elected, then a shift will occur in the Nigerian political landscape. More women will be inspired to enter politics and more will succeed in that arena. In other words, critical barriers to women's participation in politics – their inexperience, lack of confidence, lack of funds and insufficient support networks – will be reduced.

2.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

The national women's machinery (NWM) in Nigeria and its partners recognise that specific social institutions and discriminatory norms must be challenged for programmes such as NWTF to be successful and for women's political empowerment to be achieved. As such, NWTF fits within a multipronged strategy, elements of which are described below, to address barriers to women's political participation and empowerment:

Formal laws, policies and accountability: The National Gender Policy, which promotes women's political empowerment and stipulates that 35 per cent of political offices at all levels be held by women, '...seeks to ensure that there is a gender perspective in all sectors of development, making gender analysis an integral part of all policy articulation, implementation and evaluation' (Government of Nigeria 2013b). In 2012, three memoranda from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MWASD), the National Council for Women's Societies, and Gender and Constitution Reforms in Nigeria, respectively, urged the National Assembly to enact amendments to the constitution in order to enable the election of more women to public office. Implementation of constitutional reforms has been supported by local as well as external stakeholders, including representatives from UN Women and the Democratic Governance for Development project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Access to resources and opportunities: Few women are registered members of political parties and fewer still enjoy the support of a multitude of party members – necessary if they are to stake a claim to executive leadership and exert influence. The Nigerian delegation to the March 2013 Consultation of Commonwealth National Women's Machineries highlighted inhibiting factors to women's participation, linked to financial and human resources and associated opportunities. Besides low membership in political parties, women struggle with limited avenues for their

political advancement, due to restricted opportunities to cultivate relationships with political mentors, insufficient networks to galvanise public support and limited funds to finance campaigns. In an effort to address these gaps, in 2006 MWASD, in partnership with local women's NGOs, established a series of regional offices to serve as resource centres for women aspiring to enter the political arena. These zonal women political empowerment offices have facilitated the accelerated political participation of women in states like Osun, Imo, Gombe, Rivers, Zamfara and Nasarawa (Government of Nigeria 2013b).

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Constraints to women's participation in political processes stem from traditional gender roles and associated cultural norms, as well as an aggressive, male-dominated political culture that has taken root in the country, characterised by outbreaks of violence, and incidents of corruption and other malpractice. Moreover, there are deep-seated cultural norms and religious beliefs, which dictate that women should not assert themselves as outspoken leaders in their communities (Government of Nigeria 2013a). In addition, the overwhelming burden of care work – in other words, women's considerable investment of time and other resources into childrearing and homemaking – often precludes political involvement (Government of Nigeria 2013a). In recent years, the government has mobilised public support for women's political participation through: high-profile action like the 2010 National Summit for Women's Participation and Representation in Decision-making, organised by MWASD in the lead up to the 2011 elections; advocacy initiatives like the Women for Change Initiative of Nigeria's First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan; lobbying groups like the 100 Women Lobby Group, which aims to significantly increase the appointment of women to public office; and issue-based coalitions led by women's NGOs and faith-based organisations such as the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria.

Women's and men's consciousness: In Nigeria, there is a pervasive view that women's place is not in politics, but in the community and the home. By opening up a space for women in politics, NWTF seeks to: a) alter perceptions of the appropriateness of women as politicians; and b) generate confidence in their capacity to exercise leadership within political parties and in local and federal governing bodies.

2.5 Strategies

Despite positive changes wrought by the initiatives highlighted above, there remain considerable obstacles to women's participation in politics – one of which is a lack of funds to finance campaigns. In an effort to address this challenge, the NWTF for female politicians was launched in Abuja on 24 March 2011. A multi-stakeholder initiative, its main objectives are to:

- Provide aspiring female politicians with financial and other resources to support their campaigns, through transparent processes irrespective of their political inclinations.
- Enhance the leadership capacity of aspiring female politicians and women in appointed positions.

- Sustainably raise funds, invest and manage resources for women's political participation, in fulfilment of Nigeria's affirmative action quota, designating at least 35 per cent of seats in political bodies to women.
- Facilitate networking opportunities for female politicians, with support from relevant organisations.
- Promote and carry out research and advocacy that raises awareness about the current situation of women in politics, and that generates support for women who currently hold or are seeking high elective or appointed positions in government.

Although managed by a small team, NWTF has achieved considerable visibility and planted the seeds of future change. Since 2011, it has grown into a robust political network-building and knowledge-sharing platform, with an active web presence. Its two flagship projects, 'Create Her Space' and 'She Should Contest', seek to carve out a greater space for women politicians to participate in political activities and debates, and to inspire a national dialogue on the urgency of addressing gender imbalance in elective and appointed offices in Nigeria (NWTF 2015b).

2.6 Outcomes to date

During its first grant cycle, in the run-up to the 2011 elections, NWTF disbursed support to 154 women out of a total of 220 eligible candidates, representing a range of political parties and electoral districts across the country (NWTF 2015b). Since then, NWTF has created a diverse set of initiatives to promote women's political participation. One such initiative is the 'She Should Contest' campaign, which aims to incite change – not only in formal institutions, but also in informal attitudes and practices. By starting an online conversation about getting more women into the political sphere, and enabling ordinary citizens to participate in processes of candidate nomination and election through a simple 'type-and-click' forum, NWTF has opened up new avenues for democratic decision-making. Most importantly, it has removed a critical barrier to women's participation in politics – lack of information and access to resources – and challenged a common perception that women's exclusion from political office is acceptable and culturally appropriate. It sends a clear message that women deserve to play an active role in shaping their nation's democracy, growth and development.

Like its partner campaign, 'Create Her Space' aims to induce changes in the political status quo. Its primary achievement has been to reach new audiences by way of social media. A short film, *A New Dawn*, represents an innovative tool through which NWTF has sensitised the Nigerian public to the dearth of women in political office, and the need to take active steps to reverse an emerging trend in which women are securing fewer seats in national political assemblies (seen most recently in the 2007 and 2011 elections). It is the compelling story of a female schoolteacher who, frustrated by corrupt officials obstructing the equitable division of resources in her community, challenges social norms by running for village chief. The film has drawn viewers of all ages and presented an appealing alternative to the top-down, patriarchal model

of political power. It features an array of voices of current and former advocates of women's increased representation in political office.¹

Box 2.1 Fostering participation

The bold slogan at the top of the 'She Should Contest' campaign webpage states: 'Nominate a Woman Today' (NWTF 2015a). It encourages visitors to the website to nominate themselves or other women from their communities to run for elected office, a process facilitated by an easy-to-complete online form. Once nominated, any woman who meets eligibility criteria for campaign-resource support (in the form of paid-for publicity and other campaign necessities) can choose to apply. In so doing, she becomes a member of a robust and celebrated group of feminist change-makers – 'one of 100,000+ women thinking about running for office'.

Source: NWTF (2015a).

Since its debut at a high-profile screening in Abuja, sponsored by the World Bank, *A New Dawn* has been watched and distributed widely. It is accessible to anyone in Nigeria with access to the internet; to date, it has scored record numbers of YouTube views. The film has become a key advocacy tool, featuring in leadership training and awareness-raising workshops facilitated by the NWTF, and by its UK partners at the Department for International Development (DFID) and British Council. NWTF staff point to the potency of its message and the appeal that it carries in a society that is saturated with visual media, but which craves stories of substance and social change beyond entertaining films produced by the 'Nollywood' industry. At each screening, audiences have the opportunity to respond to the film, and are supported to identify and learn from its central themes. *A New Dawn* has enabled NWTF to reach international audiences, and has laid the groundwork for innovative partnerships and grassroots and high-level interventions in support of women's political empowerment, not only in Nigeria but throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

Since its inception, the national, international and project portfolio of NWTF has expanded considerably (personal communication with Anthony Abu, Research and Media Outreach Coordinator, NWTF, 16 June 2015). In addition, it has an active presence on social media – publicising events and campaigns through posts on Facebook and Twitter, and through text message notifications sent via WhatsApp and Blackberry Messenger. In 2015, NWTF held a 'Twitter Quiz' to encourage young women to register to vote, in which prizes were offered and participants had the opportunity to submit photos documenting their efforts at peer education and community mobilisation (personal communication with Anthony Abu, Research and Media Outreach Coordinator, NWTF, 16 June 2015). NWTF has launched several initiatives directed at young women, educating them on the 'dangers of staying aloof from politics' and the value that they – as intelligent, competent and active members

of their communities – contribute in the political arena. The response to these efforts has been overwhelmingly positive. As noted by Anthony Abu, Research and Media Outreach Co-ordinator at NWTF, there is a tangible excitement in the room when young women are made aware of their political agency: ‘They get excited, because we make them understand ... that they have what it takes. They are intelligent. It’s not about sex. A man can do it; a boy can do it; a girl can do it’.

Box 2.2 On the importance of male allies

‘We emphasise the fact that women cannot do it alone. They need the support of men. That’s why we are engaging the male political leaders to see how they can help to create better, inclusive policies within their parties... We know that this is a big task, because of the kind of society in which we find ourselves, where traditional, religious beliefs tend to say otherwise. But we intend to go ahead to do as much as we can. To see our parties create more policies to enable women to participate more effectively.’

–Anthony Abu, NWTF

In addition to building alliances among women, NWTF has achieved considerable success in its efforts to cultivate support from men. NWTF has convened several meetings of male as well as female legislators, in which it has championed the cause of women’s political empowerment. At one such meeting, the Male Political Leaders Summit held in September 2014, 50 assembled men adopted a resolution expressing their support for women seeking to hold political office and exercise political leadership, and their commitment to creating an enabling environment for women in politics. Though there is continued resistance to the idea of women being at the helm of affairs within political parties, many more men are supportive of the idea that women should hold political office, and that committed and highly competent women within party structures should hold management positions with relatively high internal and external visibility.

There have already been promising signs of change. Binta Masi Garba’s election to Chairperson of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Adamawa State (in the more conservative northern region of Nigeria) – the first time a woman has been elected Chair of a national political party – heralded a sea change in Nigerian politics. Prior to her election, a former Vice President spoke openly of his admiration for her stellar political record and unflinching loyalty to the party. Although not a direct recipient of NWTF support, Ms Garba’s election set an example for women across Nigeria and she was subsequently elected to the Senate during the March 2015 general election.

Another rising political star, Mulikat Akande-Adeola, epitomises the potential that can be unleashed when a woman is supported to win an election campaign. In 2011, Ms Akande-Adeola received a NWTF grant and went on to be elected Majority Leader of the House of Representatives. She also lobbied for a gender quota

to be introduced in the Nigerian Constitution, and convened a national political conference for women. Before this, Akande-Adeola had worked for two decades in Lagos and its surrounding areas as a community mobiliser and champion of women's and children's welfare. Her passion, dedication and clear vision of change rendered her an ideal candidate for NWTF support, which in turn helped her to realise her political ambition and become a national symbol of women's strength and skill in the political arena.

2.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

NWTF provides other Commonwealth countries with examples of innovative approaches to increase women's political participation and leadership. The multiple strategies being used to address constraints to women's participation – including social norms about women's leadership, practical issues such as lack of resources to run for office, and practical leadership skills building – are beginning to show positive results. Even so, NWTF has identified some challenges that its staff are working to address and which are offered as lessons for others embarking on similar initiatives.

Despite the many successful initiatives, NWTF remains constrained in terms of human resources and is currently working to build its staffing levels. NWTF's headquarters are in Abuja, and unfortunately it does not have the capacity to extend programmes to rural areas outside Abuja and Lagos, where there is arguably greater need due to the entrenchment of patriarchal gender norms and low rates of education among women. While NWTF enjoys robust support from donors,² and staff perceive NWTF's ongoing and planned projects to be sustainable over the long term, it cannot reach all women who have political aspirations. Women throughout Nigeria are considerably disadvantaged economically and continue to face challenges generating resources to fund their campaigns.

An important lesson learned has been the necessity of closely monitoring the distribution and use of NWTF's resources and being very selective about whom to support – i.e. ensuring that resources are allocated to deserving candidates, who will use them effectively in support of their own campaigns and once elected in support of legitimate causes, including the creation of an enabling environment for women in politics. Instead of directly supporting political candidates with cash grants, in the 2015 election cycle NWTF supported grantees by paying for their publicity materials (print and online) and by subsidising all other campaign related costs. The reorientation of NWTF's mission has meant that while women continue to receive support, this is channelled directly into campaigns and disbursed at the discretion of NWTF.

NWTF is also launching several initiatives to continue encouraging women's engagement in the political process. One such initiative, still in the final stages of development, is the **Young Women Leadership Project**, a political mentorship programme in which adolescent girls and young women will undergo intensive training in political leadership and advocacy, observe sessions of the National Assembly, and lobby their legislators to address a pressing issue in their communities.

The programme designers anticipate that there will be a ripple effect of learning and change, as the initial cohort of 20 girls will each train 20 more – and a network of politically engaged women with access to representatives at the highest level of government will grow.

Similar efforts at political awareness-raising, political party recruitment and party leadership cultivation have targeted an audience of older women. In collaboration with DFID, NWTF launched **Voices of Change**, a nationwide initiative that mobilises women to register to vote and join political parties, and supports women within party structures to participate fully – that is, to play an active role in collective decision-making, and to seek and exercise leadership effectively. The primary agents of change are female political party members, who recruit others in their communities. A handbook, to be published shortly (at time of writing), will support further skills building and leadership training for women who aspire to, or currently hold, political office (personal communication with Anthony Abu, 16 June 2015). This project, like the ones that target young women, places women's competence as political representatives and leaders at the forefront of its message. It also encourages compassion and generosity – not competition – among women in politics, so as to fully support women interested in entering this field.³

Notes

- 1 Including Rep Otive Ugbuzor of the Centre-LSD party, Rep Funke Baruwa of the OSSAP-MDGs party and Chidi Odinkalu, Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, NWTF; See: <http://createherspace.nigerianwomentrustfund.org/index.php/a-new-dawn> (accessed on 27 May 2015).
- 2 Including the UK Department for International Development (DFID), National Endowment for Democracy and the British Council.
- 3 Trust Fund staff noted that sometimes well-established female politicians behave in such a way as to discourage other women from entering that space (personal communication with Anthony Abu, NWTF, 16 June 2015).

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Section Two

Women's Corporate Leadership and Gender Equality in the Workplace

More women than men are enrolling at university in 97 countries but they are the majority of skilled workers in only 68 countries (World Economic Forum 2015). Women still earn less than men, remain unrepresented across organisations (especially at senior levels), and find it more difficult than men to advance their careers.

Advocates for gender equality in the workplace strive to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men including equal pay for work of equal or comparable value and access to all occupations and industries, including in leadership roles. Removing barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce and elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender are also important issues.

The four case studies in this section demonstrate the wide range of initiatives Commonwealth countries are undertaking to advance women's leadership in both the private and the public sector. Strategies to increase women's participation in the private sector include legal and policy reforms, and setting gender equality standards. National women's machineries have developed tools to enable employers to increase women's labour force participation, as well as raise public awareness of workplace equality issues.

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Chapter 3

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, Australia

3.1 Context¹

Australia, like many other countries worldwide, has seen significant progress in eliminating gender-based discrimination in recent decades. As of June 2014, there were 105,700 more females than males residing in Australia, with 11.7 million males and 11.8 million females. The sex ratio (the number of males per 100 females) was 99.1 (ABS 2014). Despite the World Economic Forum ranking Australia first for female educational attainment, it slipped to 52nd place in female labour force participation (2014 data) (WGEA 2014d). Women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to see their careers advance as far as men, and are more likely to spend their final years living in poverty. Specifically, gender-based discrimination in the workplace manifests itself in the following ways:

- The gender pay gap: women continue to receive 17.5 per cent less in average weekly earnings (WGEA 2012).
- The under-representation of women in leadership positions in both public and private sector workplaces. The 2012 Australian Census of Women in Leadership shows found that the percentage of women on the boards of companies on the ASX 200² is only 12.3 per cent (Australian Government 2012). Furthermore, the number of women holding senior manager positions within ASX 200 companies is only 9.7 per cent (Australian Government 2012). Women are better represented within the public sector and as of 2014 constitute 57.9 per cent of that workforce. Nonetheless, even within this sector the number of women decreases with higher seniority levels – only 33.2 per cent of women are in Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 3 positions compared to 41.6 per cent in SES Band 1 positions (DPMC [no date]).
- The low workforce participation rates for women, and the large proportion of women working part time, which is double the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average. As of 2015, the workforce participation rate³ for women is 59 per cent, and for men it is 71.1 per cent (WGEA 2015b). According to a survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), nearly 28 per cent of women gave caring for children as a reason for not working compared to just 3 per cent of men (Jericho 2015).
- Women are likely to have increased presence in a few occupational categories. In 2015, women comprised more than 60 per cent of the workforce in three occupations: clerical and administration, community and personal services, and sales (WGEA 2015a).

- The gender gap in retirement incomes and savings, which occurs largely as a result of the unpaid care women provide for their family or household members, including caring for children, people with a disability, people with a chronic illness or the elderly.
- Violence against women, particularly sexual harassment, though domestic and family violence also impact women's labour force participation (Broderick 2013).

At the same time, some men also experience gender-based discrimination, for instance those who find it more difficult than women to access family-friendly policies or flexible working arrangements (Broderick 2013). This reinforces stereotypes about women's and men's roles, which prevents the equal sharing of family responsibilities and in turn influences women's and men's workplace participation.

This case study focuses on the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 ('the Act'), which replaced the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999. The new, strengthened legislation is applicable to all non-public sector employers with 100 or more members of staff. It aims to improve and promote equality for both women and men in the workplace and includes innovative measures to ensure effective implementation that are likely to be of interest to other Commonwealth governments.

3.2 Key institutional actors

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is the Australian Government's statutory agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. WGEA administers the Act. The Act outlines WGEA's functions, including: to advise and assist employers in promoting and improving gender equality in the workplace; to develop, in consultation with relevant employers and employee organisations, benchmarks in relation to gender equality indicators; to review compliance with the Act by relevant employers, review public reports lodged by relevant employers and deal with those reports in accordance with the Act; to collect and analyse information provided by relevant employers under the Act; and to promote and contribute to understanding, acceptance and public discussion of gender equality in the workplace (WGEA 2014a).

WGEA is part of the Department of Employment's portfolio. It seeks to work collaboratively with employers, offering advice and assistance to promote and improve gender equality in their workplaces. WGEA also consults with a range of stakeholders to support the implementation of its activities. Feedback is sought formally through the establishment of dedicated working groups, and informally through direct engagement or roundtables. Advisory groups include, for example, the pay equity consultation group, the data consultation group (providing advice on the most effective use of WGEA's reporting data) and the implementation consultation group (to facilitate a smooth transition to the new Act) (WGEA 2016c). These groups comprise a diverse range of employers, employee groups, professional associations and researchers.

3.3 Theory of change

WGEA makes a strong case that achieving gender equality is important for workplaces because it is 'fair', 'the right thing to do' and vitally important for economic

productivity for businesses and the nation. In other words, gender equality in the workplace is conceived both as a human rights issue and a business imperative. The Act provides the legal and policy framework, while the approach and strategies of WGEA are designed to ensure its effective implementation.

According to WGEA, the aim of promoting gender equality in the workplace is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, although not exactly the same outcome for all individuals.

To achieve this requires:

- Workplaces to provide equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal or comparable value.
- Removal of barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce.
- Full and genuine access to all occupations and industries, including to leadership roles for women and men.
- Elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender, particularly in relation to family and care-giving responsibilities for both women and men (WGEA 2016a).

3.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

WGEA's approach is based on a clear understanding that sustained and multifaceted interventions are required to address the structural and cultural barriers that prevent women and men from equally participating at all levels of an organisation. The approach and strategies of WGEA are also based on an analysis that women and men must work together to transform social norms that entrench existing gender inequalities (WGEA 2014e).

Formal policies: The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 provides the formal legislative and policy framework for efforts to promote workplace equality in private sector institutions. It represents a strategic and targeted approach adopted by the government to address barriers to gender equality where previous policy efforts have produced disappointing results. The Act is only one of many formal legislative and policy efforts to address gender discrimination, and there are other strategies currently being used to promote gender equality in public sector institutions (e.g. the Ministerial Statement of Intent and Board Target Gender Balance Plan to increase gender balance on government boards) (Office for Women 2013).

Access to resources and opportunities: Equality of outcomes for women and men in Australian society requires equal access to resources and opportunities in the workplace. WGEA has clearly identified barriers to such access and is working with stakeholders to overcome them. A priority area has been the gender pay gap. In 2014, for example, WGEA led an innovative project to tackle pay inequity that included two components: a range of self-service tools and resources to help employers understand the gender pay gap and its causes, conduct gender pay gap analyses, and develop pay equity strategies and initiatives; and a high-profile, employer-based direct marketing and public awareness campaign aimed at compelling senior business decision-makers

to invest time and resources to address pay gaps (WGEA 2016b). Another example is the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation, awarded by WGEA to employers who have met designated criteria aligned with the principles underpinning the Act and representing current best practice. The award acknowledges achievements and provides incentives for other employers to improve their practice.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: It is clear that underlying workplace gender inequalities are myths and harmful gender stereotypes that need to be challenged and transformed. For example, the notion of the ‘ideal worker’ in many workplaces still tends to be that of a man who is available for work 24/7 and unencumbered by any care responsibilities. This limits opportunities for many women to participate equally in the workplace. Likewise, gender norms related to sexual power and sexualised behaviour manifest themselves in workplaces in the form of sexual harassment.

One initiative to challenge workplace social norms is the documentary series, *Equilibrium Man Challenge* (=mc), which follows the journey of six ‘E-Men’ as they negotiate and move to formal flexible working arrangements. =mc aims to accelerate the uptake of flexible work by showcasing how demanding professional roles can be performed flexibly with the right support from the employer. Working flexibly is still largely seen as the province of working mothers, and comes with career and pay penalties. According to WGEA, the project is designed to fast track change in workplace norms so that flexible work becomes mainstream for everyone – having men signal a positive change will help start others questioning current work practices (Womanthology 2015).

Women’s and men’s consciousness: Attitudes and beliefs including what work is ‘valued’, notions about ‘appropriate’ work for women and men, and women’s capacity for leadership roles continue to serve as barriers to full participation in paid work and to career progression and leadership opportunities. Male Champions of Change is a group of male chief executives, chairpersons and government leaders from some of Australia’s most influential public and private sector organisations, who are using their collective influence to challenge such attitudes and to advocate for gender equality at both the organisational and national levels. One of the areas the group is working on is the ‘50/50: If Not, Why Not?’ initiative through which leaders confront notions about women’s leadership in their organisation. They ask ‘why not?’ instead of ‘why?’ in an effort to uncover the underlying reasons. These can then either be debunked as myths or directly addressed as significant barriers to women’s progression (Broderick 2013).

3.5 Strategies

The Workplace Gender Equality Act focuses on the removal of barriers to women’s full and equal participation at all levels of the workforce, requiring non-public organisations with 100 or more employees to provide standardised data relating to a set of gender equality indicators. The explicit recognition of equal remuneration in the Act strengthens capacity to close the gender pay gap. It also targets support for family and caring responsibilities as central to improving workforce participation

of women. Other important elements in the legislation include: the development of gender equality indicators and related industry-based benchmarks; a new reporting framework requiring relevant employers to report annually against gender equality indicators; improvements to the transparency associated with compliance and the consequences of non-compliance; and an extension of WGEA's advice and education function to all employers (AHRC 2012).

Box 3.1 Gender equality indicators

1. Gender composition of the workforce
2. Gender composition of governing bodies of relevant employer
3. Equal remuneration between women and men
4. Availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
5. Consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace
6. Sex-based harassment and discrimination

Source: WGEA (2014a).

Under the **reporting framework**, non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees report in a standardised format against six gender-equality indicators by completing a workplace profile (spreadsheet) and a separate questionnaire. The first year of full reporting under the Act was 2013–14. In the run up, WGEA was involved in the development of an extensive and innovative range of educational resources and a communication programme to support employers. WGEA provided reporting organisations with a confidential, customised benchmark report that can be used as a business intelligence tool, enabling them to compare their gender performance to that of their peers, identify areas for improvement and track the effectiveness of their gender equality strategies over time (WGEA 2014d).

Public reports for each company are also published on WGEA's website. This is backed up by a wealth of resources available to employers, including workplace gender equality strategy toolkits, e-learning modules that cover the legislation, reporting and compliance, and other self-service tools. E-learning modules provide innovative strategies like how to start conversations on workplace gender equality, and how to use practical tools such as the pay-gap calculator. WGEA also publishes evidence-based 'perspective papers', synthesising academic literature to provide insight into contemporary issues contributing to gender inequality in Australian workplaces.⁴

In addition to the benchmark reports, non-confidential data reported to WGEA is available in aggregated form on www.data.gov.au and through an innovative data

visualisation presentation on WGEA's website called WGEA Data Explorer, which enables stakeholders to view and interact with the data (WGEA 2014a). Non-compliant employers are also named on the website and the consequences of this include being ineligible to tender for contracts or grants under the Commonwealth and some state procurement frameworks. The new evidence-based data on gender equality in the workplace collected through the annual reporting process has been described as a 'game changer'.

Box 3.2 Gender equality beyond pay

TAL, a life-insurance company, made a commitment to achieve gender pay equity across the organisation. In 2013, the ratio of female-to-male pay was 82 per cent, which was reflective of the national average. In July 2014, TAL announced it had successfully closed the gender pay gap following an extensive internal gender remuneration analysis and comparison to the market median in relation to leadership level, employment status and tenure.

Going forward, TAL is committed to maintaining gender pay equity, promoting gender equality and building a culture of inclusion through a range of formal policies, programmes and commitments. These include:

- Female representation on the shortlist for every job and opportunity for promotion.
- A flexible work policy that requires all jobs at TAL be offered on a flexible, part-time or job-share basis.
- Dedicated female coaching and mentoring programmes.
- An active diversity and inclusion council focussed on driving measurable improvements in gender equality and other key diversity priorities.
- Expanding support and information services for working parents.
- An unconscious bias training programme for all employees, which executive and general management must attend.
- A business led gender initiative called 'Enable, Inspire and Connect', which helps women increase their profile, skills and networks.

TAL was awarded Employer of the Year in the 2014 Money Management Women in Financial Services Awards in recognition of its commitment to gender equality.

Source: WGEA (2014c).

3.6 Outcomes to date

In November 2014, WGEA released inaugural findings from the first annual gender reports provided by approximately 11,000 employers and representing nearly four million employees (about one-third of Australia's workforce) (WGEA 2014b).

The data provides clear evidence that women face structural and cultural barriers in the workplace that make it harder for them to advance.

- One-third (33.5 per cent) of employers have no key management personnel⁵ who are women, and 31.3 per cent of organisations have no other executives/general managers who are women.
- Only 8.8 per cent of organisations have set a target to increase the number of women around the boardroom table, despite only 23.7 per cent of directorships and 12 per cent of chairs being held by women.
- Only 13.6 per cent of employers have a strategy for flexible working and only 13.2 per cent of employers have a strategy to support employees with family or caring responsibilities.
- Less than one in four employers has carried out a gender remuneration gap analysis to check for potential pay equity issues.
- 53.6 per cent of employers report having a gender equality policy in place (31.6 per cent contained in another policy and 22 per cent as a stand-alone policy).
- Less than one in five employers has an overall gender equality strategy; 11.2 per cent have one contained within another strategy and only 7.1 per cent have a stand-alone strategy.
- While the majority of employers (96.1 per cent) have a policy or strategy on prevention of sex-based harassment or discrimination, only 7 per cent have a strategy in place to tackle this issue.
- Less than one in five employers (18.5 per cent) has a policy to support employees experiencing domestic violence, and only 15.3 per cent have a strategy in this area (WGEA 2014b).

When viewed as a whole, the dataset indicates that employers are not taking a strategic approach to gender equality. WGEA has developed and launched a groundbreaking methodology to build a gender strategy that measurably supports an organisation's corporate strategy, so that gender equality is appropriately and inextricably integrated into core business practices. In addition, as mentioned above, it provides a wide range of self-service tools, e-training and direct advisory support to employers and other stakeholders. The mix of reporting, compliance and capacity-building support provides a strong framework for implementing the Act. It also creates a positive dynamic for further change. As WGEA emphasises, job seekers, investors and procurement officers who are committed to working for, investing in and buying from organisations with best practice on gender equality are likely to use the WGEA list. Box 3.2 provides an illustration of an Australian company that is responding to the need for a more strategic approach to workplace gender equality, using a comprehensive range of interventions.

In keeping with the importance attached to measurement and accountability, WGEA reports annually on its own key performance indicators against stated outcomes with respect to promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces

(WGEA 2014a). The performance indicators are aligned with the 2012 Act and track performance trends over time. WGEA's performance in 2013–14 was measured against four of them:

- Percentage of women in leadership, including governing board members, key management personnel and other managers.
- Percentage of relevant employers conducting gender remuneration gap analyses.
- Percentage of relevant employers with a strategy or policy to support employees with family and caring responsibilities.
- Number of visits to the WGEA website.

While 2013–14 focussed on establishing baseline data, the key performance indicators and annual assessment process will be an important tool for monitoring WGEA's progress towards its stated outcomes and the implementation of the Act more broadly.

3.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 and its measurement, reporting and compliance framework, administered by WGEA, provide a compelling example for other Commonwealth governments of a strategy to overcome well-known implementation gaps of workplace related gender equality legislation. The case study illustrates the tremendous power and potential of gender data to drive gender equality change in workplaces. Importantly, in addition to collecting and making reporting data public, WGEA has developed a comprehensive set of tools and strategies to consult and support employers and other key stakeholders, as well as raise public awareness of workplace equality issues. The lessons learned are as follows:

- **The importance of consultation:** By engaging with stakeholders, including employers, employer and employee representatives, and professional associations, WGEA has been able to develop business methodologies to improve gender equality that are commercially focussed, relevant and highly practical (WGEA 2016c).
- **Effective use of resources:** WGEA has very limited resources to deliver a large statutory mandate. This means that it must work hard to collaborate with like-minded organisations and individuals to achieve its mandate and extend its reach. To this end, it has developed an active, wide-ranging partnership programme involving both financial and in-kind support (WGEA 2014a).
- **Challenging conceptions about reporting:** WGEA has worked hard to challenge the notion that gender reporting is just more 'red tape'. To do this, it has invested significantly to ensure that employers receive a return on their reporting that is commensurate with the effort. This means achieving an appropriate balance in the matters to be reported and providing valuable data in return (e.g. through the benchmark reports) (WGEA 2014d).
- **Shifting social norms requires new strategies:** The level of investment in working directly with men as the traditional custodians of workplace culture is striking

in the work of WGEA. Many organisations are realising that they need to stop treating gender equality as if it is ‘just a women’s issue’. Gender equality also requires the proactive engagement and personal commitment of men, particularly those who dominate the leadership ranks in governments, corporations and communities (Broderick 2013; WGEA 2014d).

Notes

- 1 This case study is primarily based on informational material available on the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) website.
- 2 ASX 200 lists the top 200 companies listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX).
- 3 The ‘participation rate’ is the sum of the employed and unemployed, divided by total population from age 15 onwards.
- 4 The topics covered include, among others: engaging men in flexible work arrangements; targets and quotas; women and negotiation: how it works (or does not work) for women and why it matters; women’s economic security in retirement; mentoring or sponsorship; and parenting, work and the gender pay gap.
- 5 Refers to persons with authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of that entity, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards Board AASB124.

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Chapter 4

The Equality Mark for Employers, Malta

4.1 Context

The total population of Malta is 413,965 (July 2015) with a ratio of 0.99 male/female (CIA 2015). Women's economic participation in Malta has been the focus of several initiatives by the government in recent years. In 2013, the gap between male and female employment rates in Malta was around 32 per cent, the highest in the European Union (EU). Estimates place the female employment rate at 46.8 per cent, with even lower rates for women aged 55–64 (approximately 30 per cent) (EC 2015; Times of Malta 2013). In addition to women's low rate of employment there is significant labour market gender segregation, with a high percentage of women employed in low wage sectors (NCPE 2014a). Maltese women are also more likely to interrupt their careers for childbearing, which generally leads them to drop out of the workforce. The situation has left Malta lagging behind when it comes to women pursuing lifelong careers (Mizzi 2013). The government views women's workforce participation as an important pillar of economic growth and sustainability and is therefore creating an environment to increase it.

This case study focuses on one government initiative, the 'Equality Mark' certification, which recognises employers who model good internal practice in gender equality. The initiative seeks to challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices that are barriers to gender equality in the workplace and to promote a more gender-balanced workforce.

4.2 Key institutional actors

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) monitors the implementation of the Equality for Men and Women Act (2003) in order to safeguard and promote gender equality in employment, training and vocational guidance in Malta. NCPE carries out various initiatives to raise awareness and disseminate information on rights and responsibilities related to equal treatment; monitors the implementation of national policies with respect to safeguarding and promoting gender equality through gender mainstreaming; and assists persons who are discriminated against in this regard. NCPE has spearheaded several projects to improve women's labour force participation and economic position, including the Equality Mark initiative.

4.3 Theory of change

The Equality Mark initiative is based on the following theory of change put forward by the NCPE: through the implementation of gender equality policies and measures, employers benefit from the retention of trained and experienced staff, reduction in staff recruitment costs and increased access to the full talent pool in the labour

market. Employers also have the potential to increase profitability by ensuring that the different skills and experiences of a diverse workforce are translated into enhanced products and services, and attract investors and business opportunities that increasingly take gender diversity into consideration. At the same time, ‘employees... benefit from a workplace free of harassment, family-friendly measures such as telework, flexible hours and reduced hours, equal opportunities for training and promotions, translating these into a work–life balance. Thus gender equality policies at the place of work can benefit both employers as well as employees’ (Malta Today 2015). Through the Equality Mark initiative, employers become more aware of the barriers to women’s economic participation and ensure that gender equality policies and measures are in place to attract and retain women.

4.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Recent research exploring factors that contribute to women’s low employment rates have highlighted the influence of key social institutions and discriminatory norms. According to NCPE research, ‘Attitudes and perceptions towards gendered roles and expectations on what a woman is expected to do are changing very slowly’ (NCPE 2012). There is an awareness of ‘the barriers engrained in the cultural context of females as main homemakers and carers’ and the need to ‘mitigate these through institutional changes’. This requires, for example, rethinking the ‘gendered welfare systems’ and ‘strong culturally constructed ideologies’ that serve as constraints to women’s full economic participation, in addition to creating positive, supportive working environments (Azzopardi and Bezzina 2014). Factors that inhibit women from actively pursuing paid employment include low wages, family responsibilities and a dependency on social security contributions/benefits that reinforce gender stereotypes (Azzopardi and Bezzina 2014).

Formal laws, policies and accountability: The laws and policies in Malta, including social welfare programmes, have traditionally reinforced gender social norms that delineate a clear division between the public and private spheres, and very specific gender roles for women and men. Legislation such as the Equality for Men and Women Act (2003) and other formal laws to promote gender equality have created a legal framework for gender equality in the workplace, but it is clear that more needs to be done to ensure full implementation. For example, formal measures to foster the right working environment as a means of overcoming gender imbalances in labour force participation – more supportive and flexible work structures available for working mothers, equal opportunities for women in the workplace, and employment and training opportunities (particularly for women over 40 with limited skills and work experience) (Azzopardi and Bezzina 2014). Several steps have been taken to formalise policies that level the playing field for women, particularly in relation to the availability of childcare, including subsidised childcare places.¹

Access to resources and opportunities: Research on women’s economic participation, including NCPE-led studies, has created a stronger evidence base on the kinds of resources and opportunities that will support gender equality in employment. As noted in an NCPE study, ‘Assumptions and false impressions regarding women’s

abilities, commitment and career intentions limits women's potential at work. The societal and organisational culture that fosters the "old boys' network" and keeps men in positions of power is a strong indicator of the Glass Ceiling.² The research also makes clear the link between low female participation rates in the labour market and the availability of affordable, quality childcare facilities. Strategic investments are now being made to strengthen existing childcare facilities, and the setting up of new ones is considered an important mechanism to support the government's policy on work-family life balance and female participation in the workforce.³

Informal norms and exclusionary practices: Social norms related to clearly delineated gender roles for women and men need to be overcome for gender equality in the workplace to be achieved. In addition to their work in the home, women, particularly above the age of 40, are 'providing social welfare services for others that are free of charge' – caring for children, older people and the disabled – and are likely to be more involved in voluntary work (NCPE cited in Azzopardi and Bezzina 2014). One interesting manifestation of the lack of public or private childcare services in Malta is the role that grandparents play in childcare provision, which affects workforce participation by women aged over 40. According to NCPE research (2012) 'Women predominate in certain occupations... that attract the lower levels of skill, pay and responsibility which then gives rise to the pay gap phenomenon. This also reflects the value given by society to women's skills and work and operate as subtle barriers limiting women's career development [sic]'

Women's and men's consciousness: Research supported by NCPE (2012) exploring women's experiences in paid employment highlights the complex interaction between women's attitudes about work and discriminatory attitudes and practices within workplaces. Interestingly, this research highlighted that significant numbers of women reported being subject to discriminatory (and indeed illegal) lines of questioning in job interviews (e.g. about their plans and commitments related to their personal lives and whether they had children or planned to have children). The research also pointed to employers reinforcing stereotypes about the kinds of jobs appropriate for women and men, and perceptions of women's ability to play leadership roles in the workplace. In relation to the low level of women's economic activity, the NCPE study cited the main reasons women give for inactivity in the labour market: caring for children; family as their main priority; not motivated to work; and too old to look for a job. The study also suggests that major barriers to paid employment include women's fear of losing social security benefits, enjoyment from staying at home and losing their current freedom and flexibility (Azzopardi and Bezzina 2014).

There is still significant work to be done to shift attitudes, including women's attitudes about paid employment as a fulfilling career option. Attitude change can be supported by alterations in the workplace environment to make it more inviting for women. The availability of high quality childcare services will also help to shift women's attitudes about working outside the home. Similarly, work to shift attitudes about sharing family responsibilities is crucial. As noted in the NCPE report, 'Policies targeted towards the involvement of fathers in taking on their fair share of parenthood would not only give more time to women to focus more on their career paths but would also reap benefits for the well-being of the family'. To this end, the government has launched

an awareness campaign, '*Nistá* – Sharing Work-Life Responsibilities', which is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of its National Reform Programme (Malta Independent 2013).

4.5 Strategies

NCPE awards the Equality Mark certification to employers following an assessment of their organisational equality policies and the measures in place to ensure implementation. The initiative was initially launched in July 2010 as part of an EU co-funded project, 'Unlocking Female Potential'. Following its successful uptake by companies NCPE continued working on this initiative even after the termination of the project in December 2012 (COE 2014).

Areas assessed as part of the certification process include:

- Policies and initiatives on equality and sexual harassment.
- Equal opportunities in recruitment and employment, including equal pay for work of equal value to employees irrespective of their gender.
- Equality in career advancement and personal development.
- Availability of family-friendly measures for men and women with caring responsibilities.
- Employee equality representatives.
- Gender equality in access to and supply of goods and services.

Companies and entities enter into the process voluntarily. The process of applying for the Equality Mark begins with a formal application to NCPE. When applicant organisations complete and submit all necessary documentation, an audit is held at the applicant's premises to ascertain whether the employer is really committed to gender equality. An NCPE audit check involves, for example, recruitment files, templates of interview questions and score sheets, procedures for the circulation of internal communication, vacancy adverts, training records and contracts or pay slips (NCPE 2014a). Throughout the process NCPE develops a file on the organisation. The file is presented to the Equality Mark committee, whose members make the decision on whether to award certification. For unsuccessful organisations, feedback is provided on what actions are still needed to meet the certification criteria.

The Equality Mark Certification is valid for a period of two years, following which companies can be recertified. The recertification process includes a training session delivered by NCPE to a number of employees, and both employers and employees are required to complete tailored questionnaires. This enables NCPE to ensure that the equality policies and measures are adhered to, and that there is an ongoing commitment to retain these good practices in the years to come (Malta Today 2015).

Certified organisations are able to use the Equality Mark logo on all outgoing correspondence, including recruitment advertising and press releases, which helps distinguish certified 'equal opportunity' employers. Through publicising the initiative

in this way, employers raise public awareness of the value placed on gender equality in the workplace. NCPE also undertakes further training and awareness raising with employers and employees on matters related to workplace gender equality, including gender equality in relation to pay. NCPE raises broader public awareness of the initiative and the value of gender equality in the workplace through its website, social media and other means of communication, such as promotional material. NCPE reports that more organisations are expressing their interest in this initiative and are applying for Equality Mark certification.

4.6 Outcomes to date

The Equality Mark initiative entered its sixth year in 2015. According to NCPE, by the end of 2014 there was a total of 60 certified companies and government departments or entities, with more than 15,800 employees working in places of employment with equality certifications. NCPE sees this as evidence that ‘employers are recognising equality certification is an important management tool’ (Malta Today 2015).

Several positive outcomes of the process have been reported by NCPE. For example, certification has introduced new standards of equality at the workplace and helped employers formalise their gender policies or align their policies to further safeguard gender equality. Employers have been encouraged to make necessary adjustments to their practices and develop new policies that promote equality. In particular, the Equality Mark process allows employers to formalise their practices through the development of official policies and to introduce new policies, for instance on sexual harassment at the workplace (Malta Today 2015). In addition, employers and employees have a fuller understanding of their rights and responsibilities related to gender equality in employment. Throughout the application process, employers and employees are made aware of issues related to equal treatment, including equality in recruitment, family-friendly measures and sexual harassment.

Overall the Equality Mark certification acknowledges companies with good gender equality policies and builds public awareness that these companies endorse a culture that promotes equality of treatment. However, it is too soon to assess the impact of the Equality Mark certification and other measures of the Government of Malta on improving gender imbalances in overall labour market participation.

4.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

NCPE carried out an evaluation of the Equality Mark initiative to analyse its impact and make recommendations to enhance its potential. As a result, important lessons from this initiative were highlighted that may be of relevance to other Commonwealth governments considering similar initiatives (NCPE 2014b).

The promotion of gender equality at the workplace can happen in ways that make economic sense and are appealing to employers: The provision of targeted assistance tailored to the needs of each company provides employers with important business intelligence and strategies to improve their performance. Through the Equality Mark, employers were further sensitised on the benefits of endorsing a culture that fosters

gender equality. In particular, employers worked to enhance gender equality and were thus better able to access the full talent pool of employees and to increase staff retention through further awareness of family-friendly measures and other flexible working arrangements.

Public initiatives such as the Equality Mark have positive knock-on effects: Recognising and ‘certifying’ the efforts of employers in the sphere of gender equality may encourage other employers to reach similar goals. Additionally, employers with certification also become ‘employers of choice’ whereby they are able to attract and retain highly qualified workers. Through the Equality Mark logo and other promotional material, including advertisements and articles in the media, NCPE raised further awareness with the general public and other stakeholders.

The ability to reach a wider pool of employers to promote gender equality in the workplace: Certification enabled NCPE to reach and keep in contact with a broader group of employers and employees, and to sensitise them on rights and responsibilities related to gender equality in the workplace. This also raised awareness on the roles and responsibilities of NCPE. Additionally, through the recertification of the Equality Mark (after two years of certification), NCPE provides further training to these companies, and ensures that changes and updates within work policies and practices continue to foster gender equality.

Notes

- 1 These measures are delineated in the *Budget Document 2014*, Ministry for Finance, 2013, available at: http://mfinc.gov.mt/en/The-Budget/Documents/The_Budget_2014/Budget2014_Document.pdf (accessed 15 June 2015).
- 2 This 2012 study was carried out as part of comprehensive research on the participation of women in the labour market as part of the EU co-funded project, *Unlocking Female Potential*, ESF 3.47. The research report is available on NCPE’s website at: http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Pages/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Unlocking_the_Female_Potential.aspx.
- 3 This also contributes towards reaching the EU’s 2020 targets of providing child placements for at least 33 per cent of children aged between 0–3 years in Malta. (Malta Independent 2013)

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Chapter 5

Women in Leadership Programme, New Zealand

5.1 Context

The Government of New Zealand has a long and vibrant history of promoting gender equality. As the first country where women won the right to vote, it has since championed the participation of women across all levels of society and has been rated one of the best places to work as a woman.¹ In spite of key advances in the workforce, women continue to be under-represented in management and leadership roles. As of 2012, women held 14.75 per cent of private sector directorships. According to Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner, Dr Judy McGregor: ‘A total of 45 companies in the top 100 are still without female representation, which is simply poor business and unacceptable...’ (NEON 2012). Although women’s representation in public sector leadership is stronger, growth has slowed.²

Based on current trends, the New Zealand Census of Women’s Participation estimates another 35 years before boardroom equality is reached (McAteer 2013). A recent study commissioned by New Zealand’s Ministry of Women’s Affairs has substantiated these claims, demonstrating that at the current rate of change, it will take 21 years to reach the 30 per cent representation mark (McAteer 2013). At every level of the workforce, women drop out or stall below top leadership positions, creating a ‘leaking pipeline’ of talent for New Zealand’s management sector.

5.2 Key institutional actors

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MWA) is the primary actor responsible for advising the government on how to create a better New Zealand for women. As the national women’s machinery, it is responsible for providing policy advice on how to improve the situation of women across the country, as well as suitable women nominees for state sector boards and committees. MWA works closely with other agencies, departments, NGOs and the private sector, particularly in relation to increasing women’s leadership potential across the public and private sectors (see *Facilitating strategic partnerships and alliances* section 5.5 Strategies). Additionally, the ministry provides support and policy advice to the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, an independent advisory body that monitors women’s employment.

5.3 Theory of change

The MWA has championed efforts to increase women’s management and leadership positions, focussing on addressing ‘pipeline’ challenges in two main areas, women on

private sector boards and supporting the government target of 45 per cent of women on state sector boards. For MWA, stronger gender balance is not just a goal unto itself, but has long-lasting and countrywide impacts for organisational performance and productivity. Basing its theory of change on the growing body of international evidence demonstrating the economic value of increasing gender diversity, MWA asserts that more women in leadership will bring diverse views to the decision-making table. This correlates to better decision-making and organisational performance, as well as stronger connections to clients, stakeholders and investors.

MWA has leveraged several arguments in order to make this case: more women in leadership leads to a wider variety of perspectives to generate innovative business solutions; increasing women in leadership positions will strengthen governance performance across both public and private sector entities; it is necessary to leverage the untapped human capital of women, since women outnumber men in educational achievement; and broader social concerns, such as interests of the family or the household are more likely to be taken into account when women are represented. By drawing on this interrelated set of arguments and evidence, MWA presents a business case for why gender diversity and increasing women's leadership must be a priority.³ Through this evidence-based and business framework, MWA aims to increase the percentage of women in leadership roles and their representation in management.

5.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

MWA recognises that there is an urgent need to address the 'leaking pipeline' that leads to women stalling or dropping out of their careers before reaching the senior management level, including the lack of flexible working arrangements, support networks and mentoring, and negative attitudes about women as leaders in the workplace. The ministry also recognises that measuring success in terms of increasing women's leadership does not just depend on increasing women on boards, but through a variety of decision-making and leadership positions across society. The realisation of these goals is still hindered by social institutions and discriminatory norms, which deter women from reaching their leadership potential. MWA and its women in leadership programme aim to tackle these issues from several different standpoints:

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: The primary focus of MWA's women in leadership programme is to address the informal norms and discriminatory practices that act as impediments to women's progression along the career pipeline. These manifest in demand and supply side constraints, where women are either perceived as unqualified or have faced barriers to enhancing the skills needed for leadership roles. For example, the 'mummy track' gender stereotype around women as primary caretakers persists with women often having to take extended career breaks to respond to family duties. Additionally, qualities associated with being a 'good leader' are often correlated to traits thought to be inherent to men – self-confidence, individualism or control – which leads to the phenomenon of 'think leader, think male'. As such, these types of cultural norms become diffused throughout organisational cultures, creating an environment where men's leadership

is privileged. Such social beliefs impact the ability of women to progress in their careers as they face widespread stereotypes, influencing wider societal viewpoints on women's capabilities and position in the labour force. As part of the women in leadership programme, MWA champions evidence and research to demonstrate the downsides of these norms.

Women's and men's consciousness: Another major barrier for women's leadership is the unconscious bias of individuals and key decision-makers. As stated by MWA, unconscious bias in the way that we see and evaluate women creates invisible barriers to women's leadership (MWA 2013). Related to the social norms described previously, unconscious bias often manifests in the behaviour of senior leaders and decision-makers, whose negative attitudes may hinder the progression of women into senior roles. MWA's programme works to address these underlying perceptions of gender. Through research and evidence-based advocacy, MWA raises awareness on unconscious bias at the individual level: for example, by disseminating resources such as agendas or checklists in order to assist decision-makers in addressing their unconscious biases (2013).

Access to resources and opportunities: One of the greatest resources that is lacking in the effort to increase women in governance and management roles is a formal channel for accessing qualified, female candidates. As part of the women in leadership programme, MWA provides a platform for realising this goal. Working across a range of ministries, MWA's database facilitates the appointment of women to state sector boards and committees, nominating qualified women to these positions. Additionally, the programme provides access to different career resources in order to strengthen female capacity to participate in senior positions.

Formal policies: The Government of New Zealand has a number of policies and institutional mechanisms in place regarding women's employment. These include: paid parental leave for both male and female parents; and the Employee Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act, which came into force in 2008, offering flexibility to employees with the aim to assist careers that balance work and family life (MWA 2010). Over the timeframe of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality, several new policies have been implemented in the private sector as well (see *Facilitating strategic partnerships and alliances* in section 5.5 Strategies). These institutional mechanisms aim to increase the monitoring of women in leadership positions and produce results that MWA can then use to advocate for increased gender diversity.

5.5 Strategies

The MWA has launched several strategies to promote and increase women's leadership across New Zealand, including the design and implementation of a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy to increase women's leadership, focussing on 'pipeline' challenges for women's career progression in New Zealand. Efforts centre on two areas of concern: women on private sector boards and supporting state sector boards. More broadly, MWA works across three priority areas in order to implement the women in leadership agenda:

- **Thought leadership** is provided on how to improve participation rates of women, particularly in governance and board positions. For example, MWA launched several publications on the state of women's leadership roles in New Zealand, commissioning comprehensive studies to provide additional data and analysis. It also assisted private sector actors (both international and domestic), providing information, networks and strategies to increase their ability to address women in leadership issues.
- To support government policies for women in leadership, MWA maintains a **database of women available for appointment to state sector boards**. In 2013, MWA responded to over 190 requests for candidates and provided advice to decision-makers on suitable women candidates for sector boards and committees (MWA 2014).
- To serve as a reliable source of technical expertise and information on women and leadership. In addition to commissioned research and publications, MWA undertakes the **annual gender stocktake of women's representation on state sector boards**, and the results are used to advocate for and encourage progress on appointing women to leadership positions.

Across these priority areas, there are several key strategies that have proved to be particularly effective. For example, much of MWA's success has been built on generating research and facilitating strategic partnerships and alliances. To date, MWA has commissioned three major research reports: *Realizing the Opportunity: Addressing New Zealand's Leadership Pipeline* (2013); *Transforming Cultures to Grow Women Leaders* (2012); and *Women on Boards: Why Women on Company Boards are Good for Business* (2009). These publications have allowed MWA to base its strategies on a strong foundation of evidence-based research and advocacy.

Facilitating strategic partnerships and alliances has also been a particularly effective tactic. MWA has worked with leaders across the private and public sector, regulators, and professional organisations and entities, such as the New Zealand Stock Exchange (NZX). For example, in partnership with MWA, NZX has introduced the NZX Diversity Listing Rule, which requires listed companies to report on the gender composition of their board of directors and senior managers. The ministry has also worked with a group of private sector champions called the 25 Percent Group. Comprising 11 board chairs and chief executive officers (CEOs) from a selection of private and multinational companies, it promotes the goal of 25 per cent women on private sector boards. MWA has worked in partnership with this group to establish the Voluntary Code of Practice for Board Recruitment, to support gender-diverse recruitment strategies. Finally, MWA has worked with NGOs, such as Global Women or Diversity New Zealand, to increase leadership and governance capacity across a range of different industries in New Zealand.

By working with this broad range of actors, MWA creates an environment in which women's leadership is nourished. Instead of only addressing the deficiencies of women candidates, MWA focuses on broader societal and organisational change to foster encouraging environments for women to be able to realise these leadership goals.

5.6 Outcomes to date

To evaluate the women in leadership programme, MWA undertakes annual monitoring on the state of women in both the public and private sectors. Mechanisms such as the New Zealand Census of Women's Participation or MWA's annual Gender Stocktake are used to collect statistical data. New initiatives, such as the NZX Diversity Listing Rule, will be used to monitor private sector progress. Finally, commissioned research and additional publications (including from NGOs and other sources) are used to bolster the evidence base on women's leadership.

In the public sector, the proportion of women in the workforce has been steadily increasing over the last decade. Yet, even with these initiatives, the goal of 45 per cent women in senior leadership positions has not been met. As documented in the 2013 Human Resource Capability Survey of the Public Service Department, women's leadership positions were at 41.5 per cent, while the Gender Stocktake indicated that women comprised 40.5 per cent of state sector board appointees in 2012. Although reaching more than 40 per cent of women in public sector leadership positions should be recognised as a success, stagnant growth continues to hinder the ability to reach the government's targets.

Gains for women have also been seen in the private sector, but to a lesser extent than in the public sector. From 2010 to 2012, the position of women in leadership positions increased from 9.32 per cent to 14.75 per cent and is projected to reach 22 per cent by 2016. While increasing numbers are a positive factor, this example illustrates the very marginal gains women are making in leadership positions, particularly in private sector management.

The programme on women's leadership has inspired larger, constituency-wide impacts. For example, due to heightened awareness and attention brought by MWA, the State Services Commission, in partnership with public service chief executives, has developed a centrally co-ordinated talent identification initiative for senior public servants. Spill over effects have also been seen across sectors outside the current government or private sector board focus. For example, MWA assisted the New Zealand Defence Force to evaluate its pipeline of women in military service, and New Zealand Customs to establish a diversity council and career pipeline for women working in customs.

At the organisational level, MWA's initiatives have demonstrated success in increasing the visibility of gender in both the private and public sectors. One of the main goals of MWA's programmes has been to change organisational cultures in order to foster environments that encourage women's leadership roles. Shifts in organisational culture can be seen in the key decision-makers that have been engaged with and partnerships established. NZX's establishing diversity targets and the formation of the 25 Percent Group demonstrate the ever-increasing importance of gender diversity to companies, executives and high-level decision-makers. By highlighting the importance of gender diversity in boardrooms and company settings – either through evidence-based research or wider leadership initiatives – MWA continues to make these issues visible and to promote gender-friendly shifts in organisational cultures.

5.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The benefits of recruiting and retaining talented women in leadership roles are clear across the Commonwealth. Through its multipronged approach to address ‘pipeline’ challenges to women’s advancement, the women in leadership programme offers some lessons for other countries on effective strategies for tackling social norms and other barriers to women’s career progression. This case study highlights mechanisms for identifying ‘board ready’ women and tracking appointment to boards, strengthening private and public sector partnerships, and developing an evidence base to demonstrate the importance of women in leadership for both organisational productivity and the wider society.

MWA has identified other specific actions that organisations can take to realise the benefits of attracting and retaining talented women leaders, which are likely to resonate across Commonwealth countries:⁴

- **Raising awareness and developing actions to address unconscious bias, which creates invisible barriers to women in leadership** within organisations and companies. Awareness-raising challenges stereotypes and myths around women’s lack of skills or the association of leadership qualities to specific gendered characteristics, and helps to overcome invisible barriers to women’s participation.
- **Supporting talented women to return to work or re-enter the workforce in jobs that fully utilise their leadership skills** and value what they can bring to an organisation. This requires shifting employer attitudes to breaks in employment, to support women to maintain an upward career trajectory. Informal social norms attribute women’s role to be as primary caregivers; these need to be challenged or at least matched by flexible arrangements enabling women to meet family or child-rearing responsibilities. Unless these barriers are addressed, pipeline challenges will continue for women, including at the height of their careers.
- **Aligning policies, workplace practices and organisational culture to support effective flexible working arrangements for all employees**, which may include non-traditional hours, part-time work and career breaks. This requires addressing the informal and formal penalties often experienced by those taking up flexible options.
- **Proactively planning and managing of women’s leadership careers** in a way that supports their career and life choices. Employers need to explore ways that their organisation’s career paths and talent management plans can better accommodate career breaks and flexible work, along with rethinking notions of ‘experience’ and a traditional upward career path.

Driving these actions is what MWA defines as an executive led strategic approach to transformational organisational change, which shifts existing mind-sets and behaviours in support of gender balance in leadership. The Government of New Zealand recognises that more women in governance and leadership is a shared social goal, one that will take a long-term commitment and the combined efforts of the private, public and community sectors to create cultures of equality. Despite the

complexity of the issue and challenges to be overcome, MWA remains committed to creating a work environment in which women's leadership can flourish. Building on current efforts, MWA expects to see more women across New Zealand involved in decision-making and governance roles.

Notes

- 1 The country is ranked 7 out of 136 countries on the 2013 *Global Gender Gap* report and first on *The Economist* glass-ceiling-index (2013); its labour force participation rate is 63.7 per cent. Currently, New Zealand has the lowest (9.9 per cent) gender pay gap for the entire Asia-Pacific region. See: Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) (2014).
- 2 For example, the 2013 annual Human Resources Capability Survey of Public Service Departments showed a small decrease from 2012 to 2013: women held 42.1 per cent of senior leadership positions in 2012 and 41.5 per cent in 2013. See: Commonwealth Secretariat (2014), Annual Consultation of Commonwealth NWMs 2014, Women's Leadership for Democracy and Development in the Commonwealth.
- 3 For example, MWA uses recent research, such as Borkin (2011), to demonstrate this importance, citing how closing the gap between male and female employment would boost New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) by 10 per cent.
- 4 This section draws on actions identified in the Annual Consultation of Commonwealth NWMs 2014, Women's Leadership for Democracy and Development in the Commonwealth and MWA (2013).

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Chapter 6

Women's Business Council, United Kingdom

6.1 Context

Over the last several decades, the United Kingdom (UK) has seen steady progress on the situation of women in economic activities. Women hold key positions as both workers and consumers, and there are currently more women in the workforce than ever before having increased by 771,000 to a high of 14.4 million since 2010 (HM Treasury 2014). Although a gender pay gap still exists, it is almost zero for those under 40 working full time (WBC 2014). This progress has been seen across all levels of the UK's employment sector, including in high skilled, technical and management roles (HM Treasury 2014).

Nevertheless, the UK still faces barriers to women's involvement in business and employment. Despite decades of progress, women are more likely to be in low paying jobs, with their hourly earnings 19.7 per cent less than those of men (WBC 2013a). Women face constraints progressing along the leadership pipeline, with significantly fewer women in positions of senior management. As another indicator of the gender gap, only 67 per cent of working age women are employed compared to 76 per cent of men (WBC 2013a). Disparities in regards to entrepreneurship also persist, with only 19 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) run by women (WBC 2013a). Throughout all sectors of the UK economy, women's economic activity remains hindered and their potential untapped.

To counter some of these disparities, the UK government has recognised the need to capitalise on the country's talent pool of women. Evidence demonstrates that the economy would greatly benefit by increasing gender equality throughout the workplace. Equalising labour markets is not just beneficial to women; it also leads to greater growth for businesses and the economy as a whole. For example, recent studies demonstrate that gender parity could increase economic growth by 0.5 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) each year, accumulating to 10 per cent by 2030. Currently, there are approximately 2.4 million women in the UK who are not working but want to work; tapping into this pool presents a key opportunity for increasing the labour force and realising women's right to work. Recent research has demonstrated that increasing female entrepreneurship could add up to 70 billion pounds sterling to the economy, and that if women were involved in SMEs to the same extent as men, more than one million more female entrepreneurs would be created. As such, facilitating greater participation of women in economic activities not only has individual benefits, but leads to greater benefits to society as a whole.

6.2 Key institutional actors

Established by the UK government in 2012, the Women's Business Council (WBC) is an independent working group that was developed to catalyse action between the business community and the government, in order to maximise women's contributions to economic growth. WBC is composed of professionals from diverse business backgrounds, tasked with advising the government on how to reach this goal. The initiative, which was originally set up to operate for one year, built on existing government activities to increase gender equality in the workplace such as the flagship 'Think, Act, Report' programme, a framework for companies to examine gender equality in their work spaces.

Originally WBC comprised eight members (two men and six women), plus a Chair, Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE. Members came from a range of business community leaders, including from the advertising, recruitment, enterprise, retail, legal, financial and pharmaceutical sectors. Six additional members (two men and four women) were added when WBC's mandate was extended in 2013, to inject some fresh thinking into the work, increase sectorial representation and extend its reach into all areas of the business community. Secretarial support was provided by the Government Equalities Office and independent research commissioned where needed. Reporting and progress reports were made to the Minister for Women and Equalities, and the overall report and recommendations of the WBC were delivered to the government and disseminated across UK ministries.

6.3 Theory of change

WBC operates from the belief that while 'women need to work, work also needs women' (2013a). The WBC approach is built on the idea that improving gender diversity will lead to greater creativity, problem solving and flexibility, all much-needed skillsets for the UK to adapt to the changing economic environment. WBC based this premise on recent evidence and research (2013), demonstrating that better diversity in senior management is positively correlated with high-performance cultures. WBC's theory of change centres on two interrelated ideas: first, by providing better career advice, experience and skills to women, the talent pool in the UK labour market would improve (2013a) and second, by changing workplace culture, providing help with resources such as childcare costs and strengthening the pipeline of women managers, the cost of losing women's talent to the economy could be minimised (2013a). Aiming to both increase resources and change organisational culture, WBC took a long-term view, ensuring that longevity and continuity be applied to all suggested strategies.

6.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

The establishment of WBC demonstrates the government's commitment to overcoming current barriers to women's economic participation. The Government of the United Kingdom and WBC have addressed women's economic participation through a multi-layered approach to systemic and structural causes that need to be taken into account to increase gender equity in the workforce.

Formal laws, accountability and policies: For women to progress in the workplace, proper policies and institutional mechanisms need to be in place to encourage their success. The lack of flexible working arrangements, inadequate childcare provision and barriers to career breaks (for parental leave or other reasons) hinder the advancement of women along the leadership pipeline, all of which contribute to discriminatory practice and bias. WBC has advocated for formal policies and mechanisms to break down some of these barriers. For example, new legislation on shared parental leave and flexible working hours aim to institutionalise resources for employees to be able to accommodate career and family responsibilities (WBC 2013a). Institutional mechanisms such as the government's 'Think, Act, Report' initiative also address some of the formal barriers to women's participation by creating frameworks for companies to report on their gender distribution as an accountability tool.

Access to resources and opportunities: Complementing the need for institutional mechanisms is the ability of women to access the resources that formal policies put in place. For example, a critical resource for many women is access to childcare. This is often a barrier to women in the UK, as the average cost of nursery placements has gone up by 23 per cent, whereas wages have only increased by 2.5 per cent (WBC 2013a). WBC has also increased the resources that are accessible to businesses, through their online platform of tools, case studies and guidelines, for gender-friendly work environments. These tools provide best practice resources to businesses, so they can address the needs of their female employees.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Much of WBC's work focuses on challenging norms and discriminatory practices that act as societal impediments to women's participation in the economy. As noted above, women are concentrated in the lowest paying jobs, employed less than men and participate in fewer entrepreneurship activities. Even though girls are outperforming boys in educational achievement, this is not translating into the same career aspirations or progress. Stereotypes over female versus male jobs often create unconscious bias around the roles women should be performing. This is demonstrated in the science, technology, education and mathematics (STEM) industries, where women make up only 13 per cent of engineering and 18 per cent of technology placements at universities, yet hold 89 per cent of nursing and 85 per cent of education positions (WBC 2013a).

Box 6.1 Changing mind-sets, breaking down barriers

'A change in mind-set, particularly that of senior business figures, is critical if we are to break down the barriers that many women face in forging a successful career.'

–Women's Business Council

The same biases can be seen in women's involvement at the senior management level, with women's participation dropping drastically when it comes to high-level leadership roles (WBC 2013a). In its advisory capacity, the WBC brings visibility

to some of these entrenched social norms in an effort to eradicate the barriers. The WBC has also created tools and resources to counteract some of these discriminatory practices. For example, the WBC website provides different interventions that have been used in order to support young girls in broadening their career goals and challenging gender biases that keep them from STEM activities. The WBC also provides examples of different role models and successful women, in order to increase the representation of women in business as mentors for young girls.

Women's and men's consciousness: Unconscious bias by leaders and decision-makers, particularly men in senior management roles, continues to hinder women's participation in economic activities. To address these concerns, the WBC raises awareness on the challenges women face in order to build management capacity on how to help remove some of these barriers. The WBC particularly focuses on male business leaders, in order to raise their consciousness on how to create more equitable business environments (WBC 2014). Additionally, these activities build women's capacity and ownership of their career progression, increasing their confidence and ability to engage in positive employment and entrepreneurship.

6.5 Strategies

The objectives of WBC have been to advise the government on how to maximise women's contribution to future economic growth by identifying barriers and challenges that prevent women from achieving their economic potential; identifying the means of overcoming current obstacles; generating proposals for government and business to maximise women's contribution to economic growth; and acting as a sounding board on the impact of proposed policy announcements for women in business (UK Government 2012). Through these, WBC has aimed to facilitate knowledge transfer, collect best practice and act as a platform for the government to increase its engagement on women's participation in economic activities. In order to meet the stated objectives, the WBC utilised **three different sets of strategies**:

WBC began its examination by **commissioning evidence papers** and research around women's economic participation across all life stages, using member expertise to explore this evidence base in depth. The main three areas investigated were:

- A 'Starting Out' phase examining the choices girls and young women make about education and employment.
- A 'Getting On' phase examining the middle stage of a women's life and career progression, how businesses can attract and keep talent, and how pipeline progression can work effectively.
- A 'Staying On' phase examining the experiences of older women, stereotypes around age and gender, and preparing for retirement.

Additional research focussed on women's participation in enterprise.

Following the preliminary research phase, the second set of strategies WBC utilised was **publishing and raising awareness on the findings**, which was conducted in partnership with the government. To conclude investigations and present

recommendations, WBC released a comprehensive report in June 2013 detailing both the findings and concrete ways for business and government to improve women's economic participation (WBC 2013a). This was followed by an additional set of publically available reports, including the government's response to WBC outlining how the recommendations would be taken forward; a 'six months on' report by WBC (2013b) that included case studies and guidelines for employers to implement suggested reforms; and a 'one year on' report with further advice to business and an update on progress made by the government (2014).

The final strategy used by WBC has been the **development of a website** to house information, case studies and tools on women's participation in economic activities. The online platform disseminates WBC's knowledge and advice to a wider audience, both domestically and internationally. Online resources include evidence on the challenges facing women in business in the UK, tools to support businesses to increase diversity, a matrix of indicators to enable the government to track progress, and examples of case studies to showcase innovation and best practice. Utilising online communication tools has facilitated the wide reach of WBC's material, as well as increased its engagement with the business community.

Box 6.2 Development and contribution

'We need to ensure that at every stage of a woman's career there is opportunity to learn skills, develop and contribute in a dynamic business environment.'

–Women's Business Council

Due to the success of these activities and the strong partnership that was established between the government and WBC, the council's mandate was extended beyond its one-year timeframe. This extension, announced on WBC's one-year anniversary, was used as an opportunity to increase its scope by bringing in new members and increasing the diversity of actors involved, including representatives from banking and financial services, supermarkets and telecommunications.

6.6 Outcomes to date

WBC has facilitated a bond between government and the business community. This successful partnership has created a strong platform from which discussion and action on women's economic participation has been launched. WBC has disseminated its research and recommendations, increasing awareness of these issues across the UK and building up strategies to engage more women in economic activities. The effects of the council have manifested across several areas.

At the individual level, WBC has undertaken over 500 activities to promote its recommendations, reaching more than 138,000 people through engagement opportunities. **At the government level**, actions taken in response to WBC's recommendations include developing a web-based portal to advise women who want to set up their own enterprises, and training more than 15,000 mentors to support

persons growing a business, with a specific focus on women entrepreneurs. The government has also allocated financial resources to ensure women have access to adequate economic opportunities, including £1.6 million to support rural women's enterprise and £600,000 towards the 'Get Mentoring' initiative. **Within the wider community**, the partnership between WBC, government and the business community has led to an environment where women are able to take advantage of additional economic activities. At the time of the 'One Year On' report, female employment had increased 1 per cent over the previous year, and there were 166,000 more self-employed women and more than 4,000 new women graduates in STEM (WBC 2014). As such, these initiatives have contributed to reducing women's unemployment and the gender gap, and promoted female entrepreneurship across the UK.

Box 6.3 Outcomes from the WBC: returning to work

'The government has achieved a lot in the last year, including extending the right to request flexible working to all employees, introducing a system of shared parental leave, and announcing our support for parents of nearly two million children with the Tax Free Childcare scheme. This will make a huge difference to women, giving them the support they need to get back to work.'

–Nicky Morgan, Minister for Women and Equalities

The impact of the WBC's work can also be seen in challenging some of the institutional and discriminatory norms mentioned previously. For example, the government has begun to promote policies and mechanisms to strengthen gender diversity, such as the introduction of shared parental leave or working with businesses to increase the number of women on boards (WBC 2014). In addition, responding to a WBC recommendation, the government created a stereotype-free toolkit to help parents guide their daughters, aged 12 to 16, to make decisions on their subject and career choices. WBC's work has also greatly contributed to challenging unconscious bias surrounding women's roles in the workplace. Through its awareness raising activities, it has generated greater visibility of the barriers women face in economic participation. Taken together, these activities demonstrate institutional- and systemic-level change. Due to the partnerships created and activities undertaken by WBC, greater gender diversity has been encouraged and organisations are contributing to a pattern of wider cultural change (WBC 2015).¹

6.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

WBC's activities have demonstrated several key lessons for those working on women's economic participation. In particular, the partnership approach between a specifically created, independent council and government has been a significant success. Governments have lauded this unique collaboration internationally and the UK has discussed the work of WBC at several international events, including the United

Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Many of WBC's observations and methods can be tailored and applied to different national contexts. For example, facilitating discussions among business leaders and governments, sharing best practice, monitoring implementation and gender diversity are all activities that can be utilised across many different regions and countries in the Commonwealth.

Box 6.4 Outcomes from the WBC: employment and boards

'We are hugely encouraged by the progress that has been made over the last year. More women than ever are in employment ... and there are more women sitting on boards than at any time.'

– WBC Chair, Ruby McGregor Smith

Nevertheless, there are still entrenched challenges that act as barriers to increasing women's employment, entrepreneurship and economic activity. In its 'One Year On' report, WBC identified several of these challenges. For example, 74 per cent of women believe that sexism is present in the workplace (WBC 2015). Harassment and sexist practices decrease the possibility for women to work in fair, equitable and safe environments. Unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion systems continues to limit the progression of women into leadership roles, and while there has been some progress on new institutional mechanisms to address women's employment concerns, formal policies on flexible work, childcare or strategies to address caregiver roles still do not adequately respond to the wide scope of women's work needs. It is necessary to work across all four quadrants of the Gender at Work change framework, to ensure that employers are both providing resources to women and ensuring that they utilise this untapped potential.

Finally, while WBC's analysis and advocacy is a much-needed first step, understanding the complex needs of different groups of women in the working world is also crucial. Women in leadership positions need different strategies to those working in low-paid or vulnerable employment sectors, with factors such as age, race, class, ethnicity and gender identity influencing a woman's lived experience. In order to address some of these challenges and building on the platform already created by WBC, the government has identified several emerging themes that will need to be addressed in the coming years if progress on women's economic activity is to continue. These include:

- Providing advice to young girls to help them fulfil their potential.
- Establishing talent management and the adoption of flexible working arrangements.
- Enabling older women to re-skill.
- Supporting return to work policies after having children.
- Taking into account the role of women as caregivers.
- Establishing positive female role models for employment and entrepreneurship.

Note

- 1 WBC continues to carry out its mandate and to meet every six months to monitor progress in implementation of the recommendations emerging from its research.

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Section Three

Women's Enterprise and Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment of women is critical to both realising women's rights and achieving broader development goals of economic growth, poverty reduction, and increased access to resources, opportunities and welfare for all citizens. With this in mind Commonwealth countries have implemented a number of interventions to improve women's economic empowerment. Most have employed two prime strategies: increased access to paid employment and fostering women's entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs have benefited from increased access to credit and markets. Furthermore, women beneficiaries of these programmes have developed capacity in business and entrepreneurship skill sets.

Case studies covered in this section demonstrate a variety of strategies ranging from capacity building, providing networking opportunities and enhancing women's access to the much needed finance.

Chapter 7

Mass Product Consumer Regulatory Authority, Cameroon

7.1 Context

Women in Cameroon¹ make up 75 per cent of the agricultural workforce and produce 80 per cent of the country's food (MINPROFF 2010). The agricultural sector is largely non-wage or subsistence, with women concentrated in informal agricultural activities and men accessing the majority of agro-business and cash crop activities. Due to restrictions within customary law, women face difficulties in terms of rights to land ownership, which results in increased difficulty accessing credit. For example, in 2007 women's access to production credit was 0.5 per cent (Doffonsou and Simrique Singh 2014). Barriers to economic participation are seen in non-agricultural settings as well. As of 2010 only 26.5 per cent of non-agricultural workers were women (Doffonsou and Simrique Singh 2014). For women who work in the non-agricultural wage employment sector, the majority of these positions continue to be held informally, with 84.1 per cent of women in non-agricultural work being self-employed or family workers (Doffonsou and Simrique Singh 2014).

The Government of Cameroon is implementing the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper of 2010–20 (GESP), which guides the development goals of the country. GESP acknowledges the need to foster conducive conditions for women's empowerment and socioeconomic development, setting out goals such as facilitating women's access to credit, supporting the development of women's entrepreneurship, and promoting girls' inclusion in science and technology education. Additionally, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family² launched Cameroon's National Gender Policy in January 2015.

Despite these institutional mechanisms, the Government of Cameroon has acknowledged on-going challenges, associated with food insecurity and market opportunities for its citizens, including women. In the wake of the 2008 global fuel, food and financial crises, Cameroon saw widespread riots due to spiking commodity prices (Oneke 2012). High food prices have continued in Cameroon.³ The government is aware that these challenges particularly affect women, who are both agricultural workers and primary care agents for their families. This case study focuses on the Mass Product Consumer Regulatory Authority (MIRAP), a public entity in charge of the purchase, storage and dissemination of high-consumption domestic products that provides economic empowerment opportunities for women and responds to their need for food security.

7.2 Key institutional actors

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating measures related to women's rights, and has the broader goal of eliminating discrimination against women across Cameroon. Working alongside several development partners, the ministry has established a number of programmes to reduce poverty and increase women's economic standing including MIRAP, which it is implementing in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce. Other MIRAP related initiatives include the Program for the Improvement of Rural Family Income (PARFAR), which has enabled the construction of several women empowerment centres across the country, and the Poverty Reduction Project and Actions in Favour of Women in the Far North Region (PREPAFEN), which grants small, direct income loans to rural women (MINPROFF 2010). As of 2014–15, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family also became responsible for implementing the recently developed National Gender Plan.

7.3 Theory of change

Due to the uneven distribution of food production, post-harvest losses and limited transactions between rural and urban settings, accessing food supplies poses difficulty for many Cameroonians. Women are particularly affected by lack of transportation, harassment by middlemen and the remoteness of production zones, which increases the challenges women face when trying to access markets. To address these problems, MIRAP acts as a facilitator to increase the availability of cheaper consumer goods. The aim of the programme is to reach consumers with basic commodities at affordable prices, in order to reduce the cost of food at the household level. The theory of change for MIRAP centres on the idea that if market opportunities were provided and facilitated between local consumers and producers, domestic markets would be improved and households would have access to affordable and accessible products. MIRAP allows women, who are both the primary caregivers for their families and active in small-scale agricultural trade, increased access to market opportunities, as well as the ability to purchase more food for their families.

7.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Women's economic empowerment is constrained by a wide range of social and discriminatory norms. Gender bias in agricultural markets impacts women's access to technical resources and tools for value-addition to agricultural production, as well as access to information on financial opportunities and to wider markets. Weak organisational capacity in women's agricultural networks also limits their ability to increase productivity and gain a fair price at markets. Programmes such as MIRAP and other initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family address the issue of women's economic empowerment using multiple strategies, as follows:

Formal laws, policies and accountability: Cameroon has a number of different formal policies in place to address women's economic participation. For example, the need

to increase women's economic standing has been recognised in the 2010–20 national development plan. The most recent institutional mechanisms put in place can be seen in the development and official launch of the National Gender Policy, which outlines a multi-sectoral strategy for the realisation of women's social, economic and political rights.

Access to resources and opportunities: Even though they make up the majority of small-scale vendors and food producers, women face constraints accessing market opportunities and expanding their production value. Limited access to economic resources, such as land, credit, and business training, acts as a barrier for Cameroonian women looking to move past the subsistence, micro and informal levels of these economic activities. Rising food prices also hinders the ability of women to purchase commodities, increasing their income poverty and taking away the ability to afford social goods such as healthcare or education for themselves and their children.

To address these concerns, the government has implemented a number of projects to increase women's access to resources and opportunities. MIRAP gives women preferential access to markets for their products, creating new opportunities to sustain their livelihoods through the sale of agricultural and consumer goods. Additionally, programmes such as PREPAFEN (for women in the Far North Region), or PARFAR (for improving the income of rural families) create opportunities for women to access financial resources through income grants and loan programmes (MINPROFF 2010). The Ministry has also worked closely with its development partners, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to implement initiatives such as the Global Program for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, which provides micro-loans and equipment to support women's income projects in the North and West regions (MINPROFF 2010).

Informal norms and exclusionary practices: Although women represent 75 per cent of the agricultural workforce, they do not benefit to the same extent as men in terms of income from agricultural production. Men run the majority of agro-businesses and cash crop enterprises, while women are concentrated primarily in the informal sector. Programmes such as MIRAP challenge this, allowing women to grow beyond subsistence agriculture and to increase their wages by selling products in specialised markets. Sociocultural barriers, including the role of women as primary caregivers in the home, further obstruct women's participation in economic activity, hindering access to markets and other forms of trade. By providing opportunities for women to access preferential trading zones, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family aims to increase their participation throughout Cameroon's domestic markets.

Women's and men's consciousness: Attitudes to women's position in the home mean that often men retain control over economic decision-making. Through access to markets and subsidised products, the MIRAP programme allows women to build up their economic resources. Although there is no concrete evidence yet to show widespread change in consciousness, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that MIRAP might have influenced ideas around women's ability to participate in the economic sphere. Also, by lowering prices for high-consumption goods and thereby easing pressures on household income, MIRAP may increase women's own economic

decision-making, as they are able to shift spending to other areas such as education or health.

7.5 Strategies

Implemented with the Ministry of Commerce, the MIRAP initiative began in February 2011 with the main objective to supply high-consumption commodities for cheaper prices across Cameroon. As an initial step MIRAP staff set up consultations with producers, distributors, transporters, bankers, commercial experts and other key actors in Cameroon's economic sphere. Using this expert testimony, test trials were undertaken throughout May of 2011, with MIRAP caravans and 'roving markets' setting up throughout the capital to facilitate domestic goods markets at cheaper prices. By November 2011, MIRAP was holding these periodic and roving markets in several different locales across Cameroon. As a regulatory authority, it is responsible for securing products, regulating the supply and price of basic food items, and organising markets for consumers. Once a date is fixed for a market to take place, it sets up vendors who are able to sell their commodities at cheaper prices. Commodities range from fruit and vegetables, to meat products, to consumer goods such as soap or cement.

There are several strategies MIRAP uses to help ensure success.

- First, it emphasises partnership across a wide range of community actors, including municipal governments, wholesalers and retailers.
- Second, it focuses on improving community infrastructure in order to strengthen facilities for the storage, packing and selling of consumer goods.
- Third, MIRAP uses communication methods such as radio and public sensitisation campaigns to increase its reach across Cameroon.

MIRAP itself is not a gender-specific project, as it aims to address volatile food prices that affect Cameroonian citizens broadly, both male and female. However, as women make up the majority of agricultural producers, there are several MIRAP strategies that have gendered effects. For example, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family has facilitated women's associations and networks of associations at all levels of MIRAP, ensuring that women's voices have been captured in design and implementation. Additionally, MIRAP enables stronger regional integration between rural and urban women, playing on each other's strengths. For example, rural women often have more access to their own agricultural products. Urban women may not have access to their own food resources, but have greater disposable income and access to consumer goods such as construction materials. By facilitating markets, MIRAP allows these populations to trade with and benefit from each other, bringing together rural and urban women to increase the flow of their economic resources.

7.6 Outcomes to date

During the first 13 months of the programme, over 220 periodic markets were organised, culminating in the sale of 10,823 tons of high-consumption products across

eight of the ten regions of Cameroon (Consultation of Commonwealth NWMs 2014). Staff from the Ministry of Trade observed an average 17 per cent drop in prices for MIRAP markets compared to traditional markets (Consultation of Commonwealth NWMs 2014). MIRAP has in this way been successful in reducing the cost of food and other high-consumption products for Cameroonians. Since women bear the primary responsibility for feeding and taking care of their families, they can use any income saved for other priority areas.

At a community level, MIRAP has strengthened the ability to deliver food products to markets in good condition, increasing national production as well as guaranteeing revenue for food producers. As women make up the majority of agricultural workers, their ability to make a living within the agricultural sector has become less volatile. Access to these markets and savings from cheaper products has led to higher revenues, allowing women to purchase greater amounts of protein rich food (Consultation of Commonwealth NWMs 2014). This has enabled women to increase the nutritional health of their families.

Box 7.1 MIRAP in action

An example of this programme in action can be seen in the city of Buea in the South West region of Cameroon. This monthly market sees a continued inflow of buyers, most of whom are women. Products such as plantains, eggs, yams, pears, beef, pork and fish are put on sale, along with other household items such as soap. Due to low prices, most women buy products in bulk. Beneficiaries of the programme explained that they usually saved between 20 and 50 per cent shopping at the MIRAP markets. Even though products were sold directly to consumers, they were sold at wholesale prices, enabling women to buy more for less.

Source: Cameroon Tribune (2012).

The MIRAP programme has also challenged some of the larger societal and institutional constraints faced by women, particularly in relation to accessing markets, engaging in wage-earning and fully contributing to economic development programmes. Not only are more women able to access resources such as markets and places of trade through MIRAP, but it has also strengthened their participation in public spaces and decision-making. For example, women and women's associations have increased their participation in MIRAP partner organisations. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family has also confirmed a shift in attitudes and behaviour, as women demonstrate increased confidence and fulfilment due to their participation in these economic activities. The Ministry reports that due to extra income, women are no longer economically dependent on their husbands and are beginning to actively take part in household decision-making.

7.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

MIRAP has seen considerable success in providing cheap consumer goods to the population of Cameroon, as well as facilitating access to specialised domestic markets. Not only have women been able to access markets in order to sell their agricultural products, they have also been able to access cheaper food for their families, increasing their household income as spikes on commodity prices have decreased. Because the programme has been well received throughout the country, parliamentarians have requested an extension of MIRAP to other towns and regions, including expanding the initiative by engaging in partnership with new local councils.

Although it is a positive step that MIRAP will be expanding, several challenges remain. While MIRAP markets have demonstrated successes, this is a small initiative, with traditional markets still having high prices and feeding into the cycle of poverty and food insecurity. Since the programme is not run by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family but spearheaded by the Ministry of Commerce, there are opportunities to further ensure that gender is being streamlined throughout MIRAP, and to deepen understanding of how the programme is having differential impacts on men and women. This requires investment to improve data collection and monitoring mechanisms for the programme, in order to build up an evidence base on the impacts of MIRAP specifically for women and girls. More broadly, there is a need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for all of the Ministry's economic empowerment programmes to attain an adequate picture of improvements that occur over time.

Entrenched structural barriers to women's participation in economic activities continue to pose difficulties for the realisation of women's economic rights. Increased income in the hands of women is important. MIRAP needs to be considered in the context of wider strategies to address other factors, such as limited access to capital, weak land rights and a lack of education opportunities in business and entrepreneurship training, which limit the ability of women to move out of the informal or micro-enterprise stage. It will be important to ensure integration of gender planning and programming into national budgets and that this is backed up by resource allocations for gender mainstreaming to be fully implemented across all government sectors and development initiatives.

Notes

- 1 Cameroon is a least developed country (LCD) and ranks 0.495 on the human development index, with a poverty rate of 39.9 per cent. UNDP Cameroon (2015), 'Sustainable Development', available at: www.cm.undp.org/content/cameroon/fr/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/overview.html (accessed on 14 May 2015).
- 2 In French, Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme et de la Famille.
- 3 In the 2011 Comprehensive Food Security Analysis survey, the Food and Agricultural Organization classified Cameroon as a country with insufficient food supply, with approximately 30 per cent of Cameroonian households experiencing food vulnerability. [Sneyd, A (2014), 'Cameroon: Perspectives on Food Security and the Emerging Power Footprint,' *Sustainability* Vol. 6 No. 4: 1868–95.]

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Chapter 8

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, India

8.1 Context

In the mid-1980s and 1990s, an era of liberalisation and market reforms, India's GDP growth rate was consistently above 5 per cent (Nagaraj 2012). This was matched by a corresponding reduction in the share of income poor, though the measured extent of this reduction varies (Alkire and Seth 2015). The reduction, however, has not been uniform across different population subgroups. Although, the rate of rural poverty has decreased faster than that of urban poverty (Förster 2010), poverty in India still continues to be predominantly rural; 70 per cent of India's poor live in rural areas (World Bank 2012). Furthermore, women face specific gendered risks and vulnerabilities: they receive up to 30 per cent lower wages than men in casual labour, and 20 per cent lower for the same task (World Bank 2009). Women constitute two-thirds of the agricultural workforce, but own less than one-tenth of agricultural lands (National Alliance of Women 2008).

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), launched in February 2006 and renamed the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA (MGNREGA) in October 2009, is a development policy response of the Government of India to a situation of poverty and inequality that focuses on inclusive growth.¹ The Act was operationalised through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS, renamed MGNREGS). The scheme was rolled out in three phases: in financial year 2005–06, it was launched in 200 districts; an additional 130 districts were covered in 2007–08; and the scheme went on to cover all districts in 2008–09, making it the largest employment programme in the world.

8.2 Key institutional actors

The Ministry of Rural Development is responsible for implementing the MGNREGA and both central and state governments are accountable: the central government for presentation of an annual report on the outcomes of MGNREGA to parliament and likewise the state government to the legislature (MoRD 2013b). There is an emphasis on strengthening the process of decentralisation through giving a significant role to local governance institutions or *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs) (The PRS Blog 2013); the village council (gram panchayat) is the pivotal body for planning and implementation (MoRD 2013c). The operational guidelines also outline an important role for grassroots civil society organisations and self-help groups in spreading awareness regarding the scheme, and capacity building of PRIs and state governments in the planning, implementation and social audit of MGNREGA (MoRD 2013c).

8.3 Theory of change

Besides recognition of the need for social security to mitigate unexpected and seasonal shocks in agriculture, the MGNREGA sought to provide resources to generate employment opportunities in rural areas. In this regard, the Act goes beyond providing a social safety net and towards guaranteeing the right to employment, which has a dual implication: work that helps earn wages and work that creates durable productive assets. Its primary objective is to augment wage employment for the poorest; it also aims to strengthen natural resource management through works that address the causes of chronic poverty, like drought, and thus encourage sustainable development (MoRD 2012). MGNREGA is unprecedented in the manner in which it takes a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach in the design and implementation of a public works programme. Employment under the Act is particularly important for women, who often have fewer opportunities for non-agricultural work.

8.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal laws, policies and accountability: MGNREGA takes a rights-based approach and legally guarantees employment for 100 days a year to any adult in rural areas who is willing to do casual manual/unskilled labour. The Act mandates that women make up at least one-third of the beneficiaries, and it also encourages prioritisation of employment for single women and disabled women. Furthermore, it has a legal provision for claiming unemployment allowance if a household does not receive employment within 15 days of applying for a job. The Act also mandates the creation of necessary institutions to carry out systemic monitoring and assessment at different levels. This is buttressed by social audits that are expected to bring transparency and accountability to implementation. Information is collated in the form of an annual report to the people by the Ministry of Rural Development and detailed village level information is also available on a special programme website. Information and communication technology has been used for data management, to increase efficiency and for citizen feedback to increase transparency in all stages (Sharma 2010).

Consciousness of women and men: The emergence of rural women in non-agricultural paid work was expected to have had significant empowerment effects, such as a greater decision-making role in the family, discretion to spend and control the use of earnings, and increased self-confidence. Research suggests that access to paid employment opportunities outside the household increases the bargaining capacity of a woman, by giving her a better fall-back position (Agarwal 1994).

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: It is expected that the increased wage employment of women under the MGNREGA may bring with it longer-term changes, in terms of greater social acceptance of women's role in the economy, and may allow their entry into domains of employment that have been traditionally considered male. The introduction of the female supervisor (or 'mate') system has allowed women to challenge the prevailing gender bias that only men can take on leadership roles. For male workers, working under a female mate is a new experience. This is likely to have a definite impact on gender relations in the long run.

Access to resources and opportunities: Although MGNREGA does not exclusively target women it has sought to increase paid work among rural women. In the context of rural India, which is marked by stark inequalities between men and women and between individuals from different castes, access to opportunities for paid employment for poor women, particularly those belonging to the Dalit and Muslim communities, are limited. For the first time, a scheme has provided opportunities for paid employment for rural women, as well as equivalent wage rates between men and women. More importantly, it includes several provisions that specifically target constraints faced by women in accessing and retaining paid employment in rural India. For example, one of the provisions under the operational guidelines is the direct payment of wages into a bank account. This not only increases the chances for greater control over earnings, but also leads to a habit of saving and women withdrawing money as per their needs. Women have also been seen to invest in fixed-deposit schemes in banks (Pankaj and Tankha 2010).

8.5 Strategies

MGNREGA incorporates a number of features that explicitly tackle some of the challenges women face in the rural economy and, to some extent, women's differential experiences of poverty and vulnerability. Its gender responsive aspects are as follows (MoRD 2013a):

- Promoting women's participation in the workforce through a one-third quota in each state.
- Stipulating that wages will be equal for men and women under the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976.
- The nature of work targeted under the scheme is primarily unskilled work, which makes it easier for women, who are often illiterate and untrained, to be considered employable.
- Mandatory provision of work locally (within 5 kilometres of one's residence), which facilitates women's access to paid employment as they do not have to travel too far.
- The availability of childcare facilities (if more than five children younger than age six are present at a worksite).
- Suggesting that banks or the panchayat (local government) should consider both individual and joint accounts (where household members are co-signatories), to avoid crediting household earnings solely to the male household head; it also mandates that wages are directly credited to a woman's own account for the number of days worked.
- Identifying widowed, deserted and destitute women, who qualify as a household under the Act, so as to ensure that they are provided with 100 days of work.
- Stipulating that at least 50 per cent of the worksite supervisors (mates) on all worksites are women.

- Giving pregnant women and lactating mothers (at least up to eight months before delivery and ten months after delivery) work which requires less effort and is close to their homes.
- Providing women- and child-friendly worksite facilities such as crèches, drinking water and shade, through convergence with schemes like Integrated Child Development Services.
- Encouraging participation of women's groups, including self-help groups, in awareness generation, securing demand, planning, implementation, monitoring and maintenance of works.
- Recommending that women be present in village assemblies (*gram sabhas*).
- Conducting time and motion studies to formulate wage rates (Schedule of Rates) that are sensitive to gender, age, level of disability, terrain and climate, so as to ensure accurate capturing of work done by women at worksites.

8.6 Outcomes to date

Despite a number of now identified loopholes, a large body of research shows that MGNREGA has wide-ranging social benefits, including the creation of productive assets. On average, 50 million households have been provided with employment every year since 2008. Furthermore, evidence suggests that from the perspective of women, MGNREGA has made a significant difference. Qualitative studies have suggested that Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women – groups that have traditionally been excluded – have benefited disproportionately from the scheme (Drèze and Khera 2011). Moreover, a majority of MGNREGA workers are women, and close to half are Dalits or Adivasis (or tribal people). In fact, women's workforce participation under the scheme has surpassed the statutory minimum requirement of 33 per cent. At the national level, it increased significantly from 46.41 per cent in 2010–11 to 53.01 per cent in 2012–13. This share is very high for a country in which a minority of women participate in the paid labour force; for example, it is about twice women's share of other (non-public works) casual waged work (Dutta, Murgai, Ravallion and van de Walle 2014).

The implementation of MGNREGA has expanded choices for rural women in two ways: it has opened up an entirely new avenue for paid employment and it has enhanced their ability to exercise choices regarding a range of household decisions (Pankaj and Tankha 2010). An important fact is that a large number of women have decided independently to work under the MGNREGA. Drawing from various studies, including government reports, the various impacts of MGNREGA, particularly on women, can be broadly summarised as follows:

Increased income generation: MGNREGA has increased the participation of women in household income generation. It has been a critical source of income for female-headed households, providing as much as 15 per cent of the household income in some states (The Hindu 2015). In a survey conducted among women participants, half said that had they not worked on MGNREGA worksites, they would have

worked at home or remained unemployed (Khera and Nayak 2009). This suggests that MGNREGA has given a large number of women their first opportunity to earn cash income (Desai, Vashishtha and Omkar Joshisai 2015), which has created a greater degree of economic independence among women and has increased their purchasing power.

Consumption smoothing: According to the Ministry of Rural Development (2012), women's earnings through MGNREGA, besides increasing their contribution to household income, has also contributed to ensuring greater food security, monthly per capita expenditure, savings, etc.

Enhancing community-level participation: After joining MGNREGA, women's participation in gram sabhas (village assemblies, consisting of all adults in the village) or village-level meetings has gone up (Pankaj and Tankha 2010). There are also studies that suggest women speak in these gram sabhas about the availability of jobs, wage payment and other related issues of personal interest, but not on community interests like the selection of work, social monitoring, etc. In addition, more women MGNREGA workers now meet and interact with government officials and representatives of PRIs institutions.

Change in intra-household status: MGNREGA has resulted in a substantial increase in women's control over resources including cash in hand and the likelihood of having a bank account. A survey found that the proportion of women who had bank accounts had increased to 49 per cent in 2011–12 from 9 per cent in 2004–05 (when compared across the same group). This reflects a tremendous increase in women's financial inclusion (Desai *et al.* 2015). As wages are paid through formal institutions, the intra-household status of women increases with regard to cash resources (because they alone can make withdrawals). Improvements have included women's ability to make independent decisions about their health: in 2011–12, women from MGNREGA-participating households were the most likely to feel free to visit a health centre alone (Desai *et al.* 2015). Similarly, women are able to visit their relatives as per their wish; previously, their visits were controlled both by the need for permission and the money required for the visit (Pankaj and Tankha 2010). Women are also able to use their earnings for household food and consumption needs, and the healthcare and education of children (Kelkar 2010).

Increased self-confidence: With some cash in their hands, women 'feel empowered' as earning members of the family (Jandu 2008). Underlining the significance of paid work and its effects on self-perception, women reported a feeling of self-worth and importance when they handed over either part or all of their earnings to the head of the households or any other male family member (Pankaj and Tankha 2010).

Lower indebtedness: Although the amount earned through MGNREGA is not sufficient to repay debts, nevertheless it helps to reduce the burden of debt for women to some extent, including helping women to keep away from local moneylenders.

Enriching literacy: Another outcome of MGNREGA implementation has been improved education and literacy levels in some areas. One study found that a significant percentage of women workers (almost 34 per cent) spent MGNREGA

wages on their children's education (Borah and Bordoloi 2014). This corresponded to an increase in female literacy rates of those districts. Another study found that children from MGNREGA households were more likely to attain higher education levels and improve their learning outcomes than children from non-MGNREGA households (PACS 2015).

8.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The MGNREGA is one of the few policy initiatives with unprecedented potential for mass empowerment, particularly of women, and a guarantee of rural employment that is sustainable, leading to a real transformation in rural peoples' lives. The idea of using a government scheme on this scale to support women's empowerment offers some lessons for other governments.

On developing a strong rights-based scheme that provides social protection and livelihood security:

- Enshrining an 'employment guarantee' in the Indian Constitution has ensured MGNREGA's sustainability and demonstrates that strong political commitment is needed.
- Decentralised institutions, such as the village council, can help support mobilising and empowering communities to participate in programme governance structures.
- The design of MGNREGA has important innovative features, including the provision of an 'unemployment allowance', while its demand-driven nature acts as 'insurance' for poor households.
- Incentives help improve implementation, such as a financial penalty at the state level if work is not allocated on time, and institutionalised mechanisms to encourage transparency and accountability (and reduce corruption).
- On-going communication efforts inform communities of their 'right to work'.
- Significant investment in administrative capacity building overcomes challenges in programme delivery in terms of technical expertise to plan and carry out public works, while awareness raising and sensitisation help overcome sociocultural attitudes that perpetuate institutional discrimination (e.g. towards Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women).
- The role of civil society is crucial in ensuring the scheme realises its potential: for example, grassroots activists assisting PRIs in social mobilisation; development NGOs building the capacities of panchayats to implement MGNREGA; academic institutions helping to improve evaluation standards; or eminent citizens acting as ombudsmen. Yet there is a need to mandate civil society action in strengthening the programme. For its part, civil society needs to adopt a strategy of dialogue and support to make MGNREGA a success.²
- Creative use of information technology can greatly strengthen social audit and reduce chances of fraud and leakage.

On increasing women's participation in MGNREGA:

- The direct bank transfer of wage payments encourages the participation of women and allows them greater control over earnings.
- Gender-sensitive wage rates – Schedule of Rates under the MGNREGA – have been introduced in a few states, demonstrating that time and motion studies can be conducted in determining such wage rates under similar employment schemes.
- Working conditions need to be made more conducive for working women in the informal sector, such as provision of crèches.
- Women's organisations, civil society organisations and self help groups can play a key role in increasing awareness, building the capacity of local governance institutions and social mobilisation to increase women's participation in MGNREGA. For instance, in Kerala, the decision to put Kudambashree – a state government initiative for poverty eradication through networking of women's groups – in charge of MGNREGA implementation made a significant difference. Meanwhile in Rajasthan, youth groups and other social movements have been deeply involved and have encouraged women's participation in MGNREGA (PACS 2015).
- Including a provision stipulating the hiring of women as supervisors was a remarkable innovation, helping break deep-rooted discriminatory practices and stereotypes about women and work (PACS 2015). In areas where this was implemented, because of civil society pressure on local governance institutions, it has helped to shift social and cultural norms about women's leadership roles and capabilities, and to build women's confidence and self-esteem.

Notes

- 1 What makes the MGNREGA distinct from previous public employment programmes is that it is a universal and enforceable legal right concurrent with some of the provisions of Article 39 and Article 41 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution, which enshrine the ideals of the Right to Work. Effectively implemented, the employment guaranteed under MGNREGA has the potential to transform the geography of poverty.
- 2 In this regard, the reversal of the amendment to section 13(d) of MGNREGA has been sought so as to again allow civil society organisations to play a prominent role in the social audit process. Easing access to official records is a crucial prerequisite for ensuring meaningful participation of workers. This would make the social audit a more transparent and accountable process.

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Chapter 9

1AZAM Programme for Economic Development, Malaysia

9.1 Context

Malaysian women and girls have enjoyed equal opportunities with men and boys in terms of access to basic social services since the country's independence in 1957, achieving significant progress in socioeconomic areas (UNDP 2007). Malaysia has also achieved gender parity in primary, secondary and post-secondary education, including at the university level (WEF 2012). However, in spite of such progress, at least 500,000, and as many as 2.3 million, Malaysian women are 'absent' from the labour market (defined as the number of women working or looking for work as a share of all working-age women) (World Bank 2012). Women lag behind men in labour participation (46.1 per cent of women were part of the workforce in 2010, compared with 78.7 per cent of men) (UNDP 2012). Poverty in women-headed households persists, with these households being at the very bottom of income distributions. Furthermore, urban women-headed households in 2009 had a higher probability of being poor than urban male-headed households and rural women-headed households. Lack of childcare facilities and support for working mothers adversely impact the participation of women in the social and economic development of the country (KPWKM 2003).

Malaysia's National Vision Policy 2001–10 recognised the need to provide access to employment opportunities to women without any gender bias, thereby promoting equal opportunity between men and women:

Women's economic participation has to be enhanced through the provision of greater access to training and retraining, more extensive use of flexible working hours, the provision of crèches as well as facilities to enable them to work from home. Entrepreneurship among women will be promoted actively by providing greater access to information, financial and technical resources.

(KPWKM 2003)

9.2 Key institutional actors

The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development was set up in February 2001, thereby creating the institutional and administrative framework to support implementation of plans and policies to increase the participation of women in the workforce. The 1AZAM programme, introduced in 2010 by the Malaysian government, was spearheaded by the ministry as an income-generation programme. 1AZAM, for 'Akhiri Zaman Miskin' in Malay, means 'to eradicate poverty' (Dahlan, Jaafar, Hassan, Kamaruzzaman and Iqbal 2014). The Ministry of Women, Family and

Community Development collaborated with two other ministries, Agriculture and Human Resources and Malaysia's largest microcredit organisation, *Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia* (AIM) to implement the programme.¹ AIM provides financial assistance to poor households to enable them to undertake viable economic activities, and hence increase their household income. 1AZAM is a special initiative of the National Key Result Areas (NKRA), aimed at freeing low-income households from poverty.

9.3 Theory of change

1AZAM is a specific economic empowerment programme to support low-income households² by providing them with training and exposure, and enhancing their skills to secure employment, set up micro-enterprises providing services or goods, and increase income from agriculture by engaging in cultivation of short-term cash crops and co-operative farming. 1AZAM was created to support low-income people to be independent and thereby enable them to better move out of poverty. Although the programme does not exclusively focus on women, it was developed based on the realisation that women entrepreneurs face a number of constraints in establishing and growing their businesses. About 80 per cent of the establishments in Malaysia are micro-enterprises, whose financing does not attract the attention of the financial institutions, especially commercial banks (Hassan, Rahman, Bakar, Mohd and Muhammad 2013). Studies of Asian countries indicate that the majority of women-owned enterprises remain micro-businesses; in Malaysia's case, this figure is 88 per cent (UN ESCAP 2013). The Government of Malaysia initiated 1AZAM to specifically address some of these constraints, so that women in Malaysia can play a more active economic role and contribute to faster economic recovery.

9.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal laws, policies and accountability: The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development formulated the second National Policy on Women and the Plan of Action on the Advancement of Women, which were approved by the government in 2009. The Plan of Action identifies women's participation in the economy as one of 13 priority sectors. The objective of the 'Raising the Living Standards of Low-Income Households National Key Result Areas' (LIH NKRA) initiative of the government is to support low-income groups through the delivery of direct assistance, training and financial support. LIH NKRA is delivered primarily through the 1AZAM flagship programme, which is designed to lift low-income households out of poverty via employment, entrepreneurship, agricultural activities and services. Although not an exclusive target, the programme has a strong focus on women from low-income households.

Access to resources and opportunities: 1AZAM is not intended to provide one-off welfare support, but instead strives towards sustainability and economic independence for target groups. It has its roots in the need for Malaysia to reduce poverty by helping poor people access financial services and resources, appropriate training and exposure. The programme specifically targets women, so that they are able to start and build their businesses. It provides financial capital, guidance and

networking platforms for entrepreneurs. The government also undertakes skills-building programmes that help entrepreneurs bring their products to market; this includes advisory services related to packaging, branding and marketing of products.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: As more and more women own enterprises and move from traditional methods of financing their business (i.e. loans from relatives) to more formal ways of procuring finance (from banks), and as women begin to own property and equipment, this is creating a new culture of women's ownership.

Consciousness of women and men: Many of the women on low incomes who are involved in micro-enterprises in Malaysia have poor business sustainability due to low confidence and business skills. Participation by women in 1AZAM has increased their confidence and ability to grow their businesses. It is also likely to change men's perception regarding women's role in the economy.

9.5 Strategies

In 2010, the Government of Malaysia launched 1AZAM as one of its initiatives under the NKRA to raise the living standards of low-income households in efforts to make Malaysia a high-income country by 2020. The programme aims to equip the poor and extreme poor with the means to increase their income, and to create jobs through a mixture of employment and entrepreneurship (social enterprise and productive welfare) (PEMANDU 2010). 1AZAM aims for programme participants to generate monthly revenues between RM760 (US\$176) and RM2,300 (US\$533) (KPWKM 2015). It also addresses the gap between availability of, and access to, financial services by making use of the eKasih database to select the needy.³

1AZAM provides opportunities for poor families to enhance societal well-being through the generation of income by giving them opportunity in four areas:

- i. **Job placements (AZAM Kerja):** It is an initiative that aims to support individuals living in poverty with no work experience or very limited work experience, to secure job placements by providing training in skills that enable them to obtain suitable employment (e.g. as a waitress, fast food restaurant worker or hotel worker).
- ii. **Creating small business enterprises (AZAM Niaga):** It helps in establishing small businesses, such as food and drink, kiosks, retail and handicraft businesses, by providing appropriate training and microcredit financing.
- iii. **Creating small service providers (AZAM Khidmat):** This programme creates employment opportunities by equipping participants with appropriate knowledge, skills and exposure to initiate small service-based businesses, for example, providing spa therapy or reflexology.
- iv. **Agriculture (AZAM Tani):** The Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry was chosen to be a champion for AZAM Tani, and all departments and agencies under the ministry became implementing agencies for this programme. Activities included distributing agriculture project inputs in the form of grants,

training and technical advice to participants in the 'poor' and 'extremely poor' categories. Under this programme, opportunities are created in the agricultural sector by, for example, facilitating co-operative farming schemes, and promoting cash crops and livestock farming.

The programme was implemented nationwide in phases. The pilot programme was initiated in the Iskandar Regional Development Authority, or Iskandar Malaysia, Johor, at the end of January 2010, before being replicated in Sabah and Sarawak (PEMANDU 2010). 1AZAM received support from several other state agencies to help identify participants and for implementation of the programme in Sabah and Sarawak (PEMANDU 2010). The needs analysis carried out for 1AZAM indicated AZAM Tani to be the preferred programme of most of the low-income households, followed by AZAM Niaga, AZAM Kerja and AZAM Khidmat. In Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, certain groups such as estate workers, fishermen and rural farmers were targeted for participation in the programme (PEMANDU 2010).

In October 2010, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development introduced *Elaun Bulanan Sementara*, a temporary cash-assistance programme, to meet its target of reducing the number of very poor households (44,643) to zero by the end of the year. Under the programme, 21,062 extremely poor households were eligible for cash assistance, which was provided under 1AZAM to be redeemed at post offices. The programme was intended to run only into 2011 for selected household heads or members of their family who participated in 1AZAM. Since the intent was to make households self-sustaining from January 2011, *Elaun Bulana* would be discontinued if a participant dropped out of the programme.

9.6 Outcomes to date

As a result of government policies and a more conducive environment, the participation rate of Malaysian women in the labour force increased from 46.8 per cent in 2010 to 49.5 per cent in 2012 and 52.4 per cent in 2013 (UN Women 2015). Furthermore, women's entrepreneurship has offered an important pool of resources to support Malaysia's economic growth and personal prosperity (Siong-Choy 2007).

From January 2011 to December 2014, a total of 173,445 participants were registered with 1AZAM nationwide. Since its inception in 2010 until December 2013, 1AZAM has benefited 140,296 recipients, of which 91,290 (or 65 per cent) were women. The programme has also successfully developed a total of 5,300 new women entrepreneurs, who receive a minimum income of RM3,500 (US\$900) per month (monitored over three consecutive months) (KPWKM 2015).

A simple microcredit scheme enabling women to start entrepreneurial initiatives, the programme provides business capital financing, guidance and support services, as well as a networking platform for entrepreneurs. Further to this, the government provides a platform and necessary assistance for participants to enhance their skills and diversify their products for the commercial market. Continuous monitoring, including giving advice on packaging, branding and marketing of products, is also provided for participants.

Box 9.1 1AZAM in action

‘A participant of the 1AZAM programme, Prema Rajoo, shared that she had been in the spice business since 1962, but after joining the programme she could easily access loan facilities and procure equipment to mix spices at home. Prema was able to expand her business, and export spices to Japan, the United States and England. At 53, Prema was able to improve the quality of her family’s life and could buy her own house and car.’

Source: The Malaysian Times (2012)

1AZAM has impacted the lives of many women entrepreneurs by enhancing existing technical skills, providing equipment for business and entrepreneurship training, and making access to loan facilities easier. It has thereby enabled them to increase their monthly incomes many times over and expand their business to larger areas (The Malaysian Times 2012).

9.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The government recognises that access to financing facilities, training and continuous monitoring of the programme have helped participants of 1AZAM to develop and become successful entrepreneurs. However, lack of clarity of purpose among recipients, and low job opportunities or business opportunities in rural areas, pose challenges in the execution of the programme.

- **Phased implementation of programme to assess and achieve impact:** 1AZAM is divided into three distinct phases. In the first phase, the programme focussed on increasing participation by encouraging low-income individuals to register themselves with the eKasih database.

In the second phase, 1AZAM focussed on delivering income-enhancing initiatives (training, financial support) to participants. The LIH NKRA team continued to monitor 1AZAM participants post-programme, to ensure that the skills and support acquired had boosted their income levels. The benchmark of success was for the participants to raise their income by RM300 (US\$70) in any three months during the year. Monitoring and evaluation was conducted at the grassroots level. To assist in their efforts, LIH NKRA solicited the help of other federal and state agencies, such as the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

The Government of Malaysia introduced a third phase in September 2014 for successful 1AZAM participants. The Beyond 1AZAM Programme aims to equip those participants who have raised their income by RM300 with advanced entrepreneurial and business skills (e.g. marketing, promotion and distribution), to help them further enhance their earning potential (PEMANDU 2014). Beyond 1AZAM’s benchmark of success is for participants to raise their incomes by a further 50 per cent.

A long-term approach, with continuous support beyond training programmes, is required to bring about changes in mind-sets and attitudes.

- **Combine access to financial capital with skills-building programmes:** One of the key success factors of 1AZAM has been the training programmes for women entrepreneurs, which have greatly assisted them in bringing their products to market. The implementation of the first phase of the programme has bolstered the need to offer such courses, and it has now become mandatory for all programme participants to take a financial literacy course.
- **Engagement of civil society and NGOs:** One of the key lessons learned from the first phase of the programme was to increase the involvement of NGOs and community-based organisations in order to make the programme more sustainable and target poverty eradication. The programme has also been fraught with allegations of corruption and improper targeting of recipients. The government aims to enrol the help of civil society organisations to help monitor 1AZAM with greater regularity.
- **Provide a second chance to failed entrepreneurs:** One of the key guidelines of the 1AZAM training programmes has been that participants show a measurable increase in post-training income. However, women often drop out because of circumstances that are beyond their control, such as low employment opportunities in rural or hard-to-reach areas. The plan for the second phase of the programme included identifying all such cases deserving of a second chance, and providing them with additional training opportunities and other assistance to continue their income-generating ventures.
- **Targeting vulnerable communities:** Although the programme has benefited a large number of women entrepreneurs, regional and ethnic disparities remain. Besides targeting women from low-income households, such programmes also need to have a specific focus on communities that are socially excluded and marginalised. In future, 1AZAM is expected to target community groups in remote areas or those belonging to neglected communities, such as the indigenous Penan and Orang Asli communities.
- **Strengthening data-collection and monitoring systems:** The eKasih system used for selection of beneficiaries has come under criticism for not being able to choose the most vulnerable. Furthermore, certain issues, such as selling equipment received by the participants, have also been brought to the fore (Malaysia Digest 2014). Detailed monitoring systems to track the status of outcomes and achievements are required to develop a better understanding of the on-the-ground realities, and also to develop alternatives to address emerging issues (PEMANDU 2010).

Notes

- 1 Developed in 1987, AIM is the biggest replication of the Grameen Bank model outside Bangladesh; it is a poverty-oriented microfinance institution that provides loans only to the poor.

- 2 Poor households have average monthly incomes of less than US\$176.50 (RM760) in Peninsular Malaysia; US\$244 (RM1,050) in Sabah; and US\$211 (RM910) in Sarawak. The ultra-poor are defined as households with average monthly incomes of less than US\$107 (RM460) in Peninsular Malaysia; US\$146 (RM630) in Sabah; and US\$136 (RM590) in Sarawak. See: PEMANDU (2010).
- 3 eKasih is a central database designed to provide a more accurate measurement of poverty headcount in Malaysia. The eKasih database is used to ensure fair distribution of assistance and to avoid overlapping of aid programmes. It identifies, tracks and monitors people who are most in need of help from LIH NKRA; 100 per cent of data of the recipients registered under 1AZAM is updated monthly in the eKasih system.

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Chapter 10

The Women Enterprise Fund, Kenya

10.1 Context

Kenya has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in Africa and is now classified as a middle-income country by the World Bank (2014). Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in the Kenyan economy. It is estimated that the sector employs about 7.5 million Kenyans or 80 per cent of the country's total employees outside of agriculture and is also a key engine for job creation (Wanjohi 2014). Recognising the critical role small businesses play in the Kenyan economy, the government through *Kenya Vision 2030* underscored the need to strengthen MSMEs by improving their productivity and innovation.¹

In this context, women's entrepreneurship in Kenya is particularly important. Women-owned businesses account for nearly half (48 per cent) of all MSMEs, and contribute around 20 per cent to Kenya's gross domestic product (IFC 2007). Of the 462,000 jobs created annually since 2000 in Kenya, 445,000 jobs have come from the informal sector, where 85 per cent of women's businesses are found (IFC 2007). Despite their potential, women-owned businesses in Kenya are smaller, less likely to grow, less profitable, begin with less capital investment than those owned by men, and are twice as likely to operate from their own homes instead of being located in a business centre. In a 2007 report, women-owned MSMEs reported earning only 57 per cent of the income that male business owners earn (IFC 2007). They also typically employ fewer people; the average number of employees in a woman-owned MSME in 1999 was 1.54, compared to 2.1 for a male-owned MSME (IFC 2007).

10.2 Key institutional actors

The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) was established in August 2007 and launched in May 2009 by the Government of Kenya as part of its commitment to the third Millennium Development Goal on 'gender equality and empowerment of women'. It is a flagship project under the social pillar in *Kenya Vision 2030*. The vision of WEF is to socially and economically empower Kenyan women entrepreneurs for economic development through mobilising resources and offering business support services. The core values of the Fund are integrity, teamwork, innovation, courage and respect for diversity (Kiraka, Kobia and Katwalo 2013). WEF is a semi-autonomous government agency located within the Ministry of Devolution and Planning (formerly the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development). The Fund provides accessible and affordable credit to women to start a new business or expand an existing one. WEF loans reach beneficiaries through partner financial intermediaries and directly through the Constituency Women Enterprise Scheme (C-WES), a division of the Fund that acts as a microfinance institution targeting

women's groups within a specific parliamentary constituency. C-WES ensures that all women at the constituency level, especially those living in areas not well served by financial intermediaries, are not disadvantaged in accessing the Fund.

10.3 Theory of change

The WEF aims to reduce gender inequality in entrepreneurship by addressing the issues of opportunities, capabilities and infrastructure. It recognises that women and men have different needs regarding entrepreneurship support and that until women's needs are addressed they are unlikely to be able to start, sustain or grow their enterprises. WEF was established as a vehicle for disbursing micro-credit to poor women, who otherwise would have difficulties in accessing existing microfinance institutions and banks because of various sociocultural-economic reasons.

Female entrepreneurs in Kenya perform poorly in comparison to their male counterparts. The poor track record of women entrepreneurs has been attributed to multiple factors such as lack of credit or savings, lower education levels, inability to access training opportunities, gender bias and lack of social capital. WEF provides funding to disadvantaged Kenyan women who are at least 18 years old, who intend to invest in income-generating activities, and who already belong to appropriately registered groups that must have been in existence for three months.

10.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal law, policies and accountability: The Constitution and the Micro and Small Enterprise Act 2012 together provide an accountability framework through which women's entrepreneurship can be promoted in Kenya. The new Kenya Constitution, which grants women equal rights before and after marriage, was promulgated on 27 August 2010. It also grants equality of inheritance rights. This provision should increase the number of women who have registered property titles, thereby making it easier to access business loans.

Access to resources and opportunity: Lack of access to credit/finance is well recognised as a main problem for female-owned MSMEs in Kenya. A 2008 International Labor Organization report (2008) noted that women made up nearly half of all MSMEs but had less than 10 per cent of the available credit and less than 1 per cent of agricultural credit. Furthermore, because women have lower levels of education and are segregated into lower paying jobs, they have lower savings with which to start a business. WEF makes it easier for the most disadvantaged women to access credit by providing loans that have not been securitised to self-help groups (SHGs).

Even when women do manage to obtain finance for their business, lack of skills and training in handling finances can be an obstacle. Under the WEF each female entrepreneur is offered training before loan disbursement takes place. The pre-loan training offered by volunteers is free of charge, and is normally conducted at venues and times that are convenient to female clients. One WEF volunteer is recruited for each constituency to provide such outreach services. The Fund also provides business support services such as capacity building, marketing, promotion of linkages and

infrastructure support. Additionally, C-WES facilitates investment in commercial infrastructure beneficial to women's enterprise, supports linkages with large enterprises, and facilitates local and external marketing of products made by female-owned MSMEs.

Women's and men's consciousness: It is expected that growth of women's entrepreneurship will encourage women to gain confidence and decision-making experience, and give them a greater sense of control over their lives in social and economic spheres. This should also help change the perceptions of both women and men about the role women can play in the economy, as well as enhancing women's bargaining power within their families. WEF has tried to sensitise communities to the value of women's economic empowerment. Most women entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, are not represented by any association. An association for female entrepreneurs would not only facilitate networking and value added services, but also create a mechanism for a collective 'voice' that articulates the needs of female entrepreneurs in Kenya.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Having access to property rights and land is essential for women entrepreneurs because property is used as collateral for business credit. Even though women provide 70 per cent of labour in the agriculture sector, they hold only about 1 per cent of registered land titles, with another 5–6 per cent held in joint names. This lack of land and property is a significant barrier for Kenyan businesswomen. Although women have equal rights under statutory law, provisions within customary law combined with gender bias among families and the judiciary have denied women their property rights.

Gender bias also contributes to women business owners' lack of access to finance. For example, a report by the International Finance Corporation, a member of the World Bank Group, noted that bank officials in Kenya often discriminated against female business owners, ignoring them in meetings and preferring to speak to their husbands or their male business partners. Female entrepreneurs often feel intimidated by the negative attitudes and harassment of government officials (Ellis 2007), and are afraid to navigate the complex bureaucratic process required for registration of their businesses. As a result, only 15 per cent of women-owned MSMEs are recorded as being in the formal sector in Kenya.

10.5 Strategies

In response to these challenges, the Government of Kenya introduced the WEF so that women are able to access credit easily, grow their business, and create wealth for themselves and the country. WEF allows women to borrow money to engage in businesses and other income-generating activities at reasonable interest rates without the requirements of collateral and having to deal with complex bureaucratic processes. The government envisioned that the growth of women's entrepreneurship would be critical to the growth of MSMEs. WEF has a five-fold mandate:

1. Provision of affordable and accessible credit.
2. Capacity building of female entrepreneurs and their organisations.

3. Facilitating and supporting domestic and international marketing of goods produced by women-owned enterprises.
4. Facilitating and attracting investments in infrastructure, such as professional work spaces and business incubators for women-owned enterprises.
5. Facilitating and supporting linkages between women-owned enterprises and large corporations.

WEF management was extremely conscious of the fact that ‘business as usual’ approaches towards providing microcredit would not benefit poor women, particularly rural women. Access to credit is open to economically active Kenyan women, 18 years and older, who want to start a business or are in growth-oriented enterprises. The Fund supports women in MSMEs from all sectors of the economy, including individual women, registered female SHGs and companies owned by women. Men can also be members of the group, provided that 70 per cent of the members are women and all leadership positions and signatories to the accounts are held by women (WEF 2013). The WEF strategy provided a flexible and innovative response to promotion of women’s entrepreneurship development based on the sociocultural context specific to Kenya.

Programme design: The WEF programme was designed to service women entrepreneurs, particularly those residing in rural areas. Rural women had been financially excluded because the majority of the formal and informal financial service providers were concentrated in densely populated urban areas with more profitable business opportunities. To address this challenge, WEF was designed as a national programme that was devolved to all 290 parliamentary constituencies. This promoted equitable access to financial services across the country. At inception, credit was allocated equally, but later it was modified to take account of good loan repayment and demand. As a revolving fund, a constituency has to achieve a loan repayment rate of over 50 per cent so that women can continue accessing loans.

Process: Low education levels and in particular low financial literacy among women mean that many are unable to understand the complicated documentation required by formal financial institutions. WEF has simplified its processes to address this barrier to women’s access to credit. The loan approval process takes place at the local level with loan committees that have women representatives. Other lenders are invited to the committees for credit information sharing, commonly referred to as localised credit reference bureaus, to weed out serial defaulters.

Furthermore, WEF has recruited local volunteers who speak the local language that female clients understand. The volunteers mobilise local communities to form SHGs and support their registration with a government agency. The volunteers also provide training to women in basic business management skills using a standard curriculum. This pre-loan training is a precondition for a group to get a loan.

Loan repayment is done using mobile phones, using M-PESA or the nearest agent of the largest bank, Kenya Commercial Bank (WEF’s bankers). M-PESA is a mobile phone service for sending and storing money offered by Safaricom, Kenya’s largest

mobile service provider. Safaricom customers can register for M-PESA by visiting one of more than 10,000 merchants who act as ‘agents’ for account opening, handling of deposits and withdrawals through the customer’s virtual ‘wallet’, and customer support. Customers can then use an application on their mobile phone to check their balance, send money to other people, pay bills and purchase mobile phone airtime. Customer funds are held in a special trust account at the Commercial Bank of Africa (Morawczynski and Pickens 2009). The service is affordable and also convenient for female clients, who are known to be ‘time poor’, as it spares them the long journeys – sometimes up to two days – to local branch offices to repay their loans. Loan repayments have improved dramatically since the introduction of these modes of payment.

Product design: Cognisant of the low financial literacy of the majority of the target women, WEF has two products with very basic features that poorly educated women can understand: a group-based loan product and individual-based loans. WEF also provides unsecured loans (non-collateralised lending) to SHGs, which use peer pressure to ensure repayment and reduce the number of defaulters. Men are allowed to join the groups on the condition that at least 70 per cent of group members are women.

Pricing: In order to make sure female entrepreneurs are not overburdened with the high cost of credit, WEF has come up with a pricing structure that is reasonable for rural women. This includes a grace period of one to three months for loans taken by SHGs along with reasonable interest rates (8 per cent). The loans provided through the C-WES mechanism are interest free with only a 5 per cent administrative fee, and are repayable within one year with a grace period of three months before repayment begins (WEF 2013).

10.6 Outcomes to date

WEF has expanded women’s access to financial resources and economic opportunities: The Fund has been successful in providing access to credit to disadvantaged women, particularly those in rural areas. Since its inception, 647,116 female entrepreneurs have received loans from WEF to the tune of KSh3.2bn (US\$38.1m). Loan repayments have also been impressive, standing at 92 per cent for the group loan (through C-WES) and 99.8 per cent for individual loans taken through the financial intermediary partners. A total of 83 financial intermediary partners have been engaged competitively across the country to make the funds more accessible.

Box 10.1 Appraisal for WEF 2009 by the Federation of Women Lawyers

Women beneficiaries reported a surge in business, increased volumes and sales, employment creation and accelerated loan repayment.

WEF has built the entrepreneurship skills of women: By 2013, 274,857 female entrepreneurs had been trained on business skills and record keeping. Furthermore, over 9,000 women had been sensitised on the formation of co-operative savings and credit societies (SACCOs), and a total of 15 female-controlled SACCOs have been registered and operationalised.

WEF has helped women diversify business and access new markets: WEF has helped women entrepreneurs expand their business by adding or changing new products and services. One study found that in a sample of 900 women entrepreneurs supported by WEF, 63.8 per cent had changed or added products to their existing product line, while 44.2 per cent had changed or added services to their core businesses in the post-loan period. Similarly, 40 per cent of the enterprises were able to identify new markets and 42.7 per cent indicated having innovated in their supply chains by identifying new sources of raw materials. The largest innovation concerned banking, with 68.4 per cent using mobile phone-based banking solutions such as M-PESA, Airtel money and M-Keso in their business operations (Kiraka *et al.* 2013).

Promotion of local and international marketing: WEF has partnered Export Promotion Council, a government institution with a mandate to develop and promote export trade, to enhance Kenyan women's access to international markets. Through this partnership, over 310 women entrepreneurs have undergone training in marketing internationally and 132 assessed in export readiness. Furthermore, female entrepreneurs are supported to attend domestic trade fairs and exhibitions, and connect with larger companies in Kenya (WEF 2013).

10.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The success of the WEF in Kenya in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through the provision of inclusive financial services offers interesting lessons to policy-makers and practitioners. WEF has clearly demonstrated that it is possible to significantly increase access to credit for poor and disadvantaged women if the financial inclusion programme is properly designed and implemented.

Clear understanding of barriers to financial inclusion: At the conception stage, effort was made to understand why women are financially excluded in Kenya and to address the specific institutional, cultural and structural factors that act as barriers. Some of these barriers to women's entrepreneurship were addressed by providing interest-free loans, collateral-free lending, use of community volunteers to mobilise and train women, and greater market access to female entrepreneurs by linking them with associations, export councils and other large companies.

Use of SHGs to increase women's access to credit: The formation of SHGs and their use as a mechanism to disburse funds has made it possible for more women to access credit. The SHGs disburse funds based on savings and co-guarantees, bypassing the requirement of complex procedures mandated by formal financial institutions. According to WEF in 2014, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics cites an average of 3,000+ per constituency of registered SHGs formed by women in Kenya. This

suggests that SHGs have been a popular mechanism by which Kenyan women have been accessing funds.²

Importance of partnerships: WEF recognises the value of collaborating with other like-minded public, private and non-state actors in its programmes to leverage skills and other resources. The partnership approach has enabled WEF to remain lean, efficient and more flexible in responding to women's needs. WEF has also leveraged its partnerships with private, public and non-state actors for capacity building, product development, marketing and linkages, incubation, etc. Partner institutions include the Export Promotion Council, UN Women, Undugu Fair Trade Ltd., Jomo Kenyatta University, International Labour Organization, Social Impact Institute, Hand in Hand East Africa, Ministry of Co-operatives and Ministry of Provincial Administration. In partnership with UN Women, Social Impact Institute and Joyful Women Organization, WEF facilitated participation of 100 female poultry farmers from one county to visit the largest poultry farmer in East and Central Africa. The partnership with Export Promotion Council has helped female entrepreneurs access international markets; 132 female entrepreneurs have been trained in international trade and of these 108 have been assessed for export readiness.

Use of mobile phone technology: WEF has deployed the use of mobile phones (M-PESA) for loan repayments and uses 'SMS' (short message service) to interact with clients. Women are able to receive their loan account statements on their phones. This has saved them the transaction costs previously encountered in travelling to a bank to repay loans.

WEF proposes to expand its operations in multiple ways through:

- **Increasing its product offering:** For example, there is a plan to roll out weather-indexed insurance for agriculture related activities. WEF is also planning to include micro-insurance for both the borrower and their assets, and to introduce savings products.
- **Financial literacy training:** This will be modified to include other issues relevant to women and their families' well being (e.g. reproductive health, the environment, family nutrition, sanitation, legal rights to property, etc.).
- **Delivery channels:** To improve access to services, WEF will adopt non-bank entities that will provide financial services.
- **Partnerships:** WEF will continue to seek out and enlist the support of like-minded partners to leverage skills and other resources.
- **Proactive promotion and support for women-owned SACCOs:** Sustainable women's economic empowerment will be guaranteed when women have control of financial institutions. WEF will continue to invest in this area.

Notes

1 *Kenya Vision 2030* is the country's long-term development blueprint covering the period 2008–30, which is being implemented through successive five-year plans. It was launched in June 2008 and has the overall objective of converting Kenya into a middle-income country that provides a high quality

of life for all its citizens. The Vision has been developed through an all-inclusive and participatory stakeholder consultative process involving Kenyans from all parts of the country. Its three main pillars are the economic, the social and the political. See: www.vision2030.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Vision2030_Popular_version_final2.pdf (accessed on 18 July 2015).

- 2 A recent review of WEF in one constituency recommended that the Fund should increase loan sizes and work out ways of providing individual loans though group lending, as well as sensitise men to get more involved. See Ijaza, Mwangi and Ng'etich (2014).

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Chapter 11

Fostering Women's Entrepreneurship, Mauritius

11.1 Context

Mauritius is touted as one of the economic success stories of Africa. It has demonstrated an impressive growth record largely due to trade-led development (Zafar 2011). In 2013, Mauritius overtook South Africa to become the most economically competitive country in southern Africa (Phiri and Kannan 2014).

Although Mauritius has made significant progress in promoting gender equality and women's rights, significant disparities persist. Mauritius is ranked 72 out of 148 countries in the Gender Development Index (GDI) for 2013 (UNDP 2013). In a total population of 1,258,653 in 2013, there were 635,792 women and 622,861 men. Mauritius has attained near gender parity in primary school education and girls dominate slightly in secondary education. The government has also undertaken a number of legal reforms to remove gender-based discrimination in law. Following the amendment to the Local Government Act of 2011, which provides for a 30 per cent female quota, women's representation in local government increased from 13 per cent in 2001 to 37 per cent in 2011 (Government of Mauritius 2012). However, there has been regression in some of the gender equality indicators. Female representation in the national parliament decreased after the December 2014 election, with women constituting only 11.6 per cent of the national parliament (IPU 2015). Similarly, poverty among female-headed households has increased – 17 per cent in 2013 compared with 7.3 per cent in 2012 (Government of Mauritius 2013).

Women have contributed significantly to the economic growth story of Mauritius. The establishment of Export Process Zones in the 1970s provided an impetus for the entry of women into the formal workforce in large numbers. In the period between 1983 and 2001, the number of women in full-time employment increased by 81 per cent (Day-Hookoomsing and Essoo 2003). However, female employment is largely restricted to low-level, low-paid jobs. The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index ranked Mauritius 106 out of 142 countries (Bekhouch, Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi 2014), which is largely explained by low female labour participation rates and low levels of estimated earned income. Female participation in the labour market at 45.1 per cent is significantly below that of men at 75.1 per cent (Government of Mauritius 2013). Women constitute only 38 per cent of total non-agricultural employment (Bekhouch *et al.* 2014). Average income tends to be lower for women than for men – average income for women is approximately three-quarters of that earned by men (Government of Mauritius 2013).

In 2013, the active Mauritian population (aged 16 years and above) stood at 571,200, with 350,400 men and 220,800 women. Active women represented 45.4 per cent of the female population aged 16 years and above, compared to 75.1 per cent for men. From 2004, female unemployment has exceeded male unemployment and the gender gap in the labour market has increased considerably (Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Ayriga 2012). The female unemployment rate in 2012 stood at 12.7 per cent, much higher than the rate of 5.3 per cent for males, and accounts for 60 per cent of total unemployment (Government of Mauritius 2013). The level of women's entrepreneurship is also quite low in Mauritius. In 2013, only 10.8 per cent of women were employers or own-account workers compared to 23.3 per cent of working men (Government of Mauritius 2013). Furthermore, in 2013 only 17 per cent of firms had female participation in ownership (Bekhouch *et al.* 2014).

11.2 Key institutional actors

The National Women Entrepreneur Council (NVEC), which works under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (GECDFW), was set up by an act in 1998 (NVEC 1999). The primary objective of NVEC is to foster a culture of women's entrepreneurship in Mauritius. Membership is open to any association of individual women entrepreneurs. It is the only Mauritian parastatal agency that caters only to female entrepreneurs. NVEC offers a range of support services – counselling, marketing assistance, micro-project development, training, exhibitions and fairs – with a view to enhancing the growth of women-owned enterprises.

The main objectives of the NVEC are to:

- Ensure effective communication between the council and its members.
- Identify actions and projects that will promote entrepreneurial activities of women.
- Evaluate and assess the needs of women entrepreneurs.
- Establish training programmes aimed at improving the skills and management aptitudes of women entrepreneurs.
- Develop working links and affiliation with other bodies, whether in Mauritius or abroad, having the same objectives.
- Examine and evaluate the contribution of women entrepreneurs to the various sectors of development in the light of national needs and priorities.

Other organisations that support women's entrepreneurship in Mauritius include the National Empowerment Fund, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority and Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative. All these institutions undertake specific programmes to facilitate women's access to resources, skills and employment.

11.3 Theory of change

From the year 2000 Mauritius experienced a large number of closures in textile and clothing firms resulting in massive layoffs of women. The unemployment rate in Mauritius at the end of 2010 was at 7.8 per cent. Around 70 per cent of the unemployed were women (Kasseeah 2012). At the same time the government realised that women's entrepreneurship held great potential in Mauritius as the number of self-employed females had increased by 150 per cent between 1990 and 2000 (Day-Hookoomsing and Essoo 2003). The Government of Mauritius promoted a culture of women's entrepreneurship with the twin objectives of reducing female unemployment and promoting gender equality.

The Government of Mauritius recognises that women face specific challenges in establishing and growing their businesses. Mauritius has been encouraging women to set up their small businesses but many of them are involved in low value added activities such as the production and sale of food, handicrafts and souvenirs. They engage in similar activities and compete among themselves, thus making it difficult to create a niche for their products. They are disadvantaged by a lack of skills and education (Kasseeah and Tandrayen-Ragoobur 2014).

The NWECC was therefore established to be both a driver and facilitator for the growth of women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As the Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Mrs Mireille Martin noted: 'It is imperative that we promote a level playing field, beginning with an efficient service delivery network where the contribution of women-led SMEs in the national economy is recognised' (2012). NWECC works closely with other enterprise support institutions, public and private, operating both locally and internationally.

11.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal law, policies and accountability: Enterprise development does not take place in isolation but within the framework of formal laws and policies developed by both public and private sector organisations. While most of these policies and the institutions that govern them appear neutral in their implementation, many discriminate – indirectly and directly – against women. By establishing the NWECC through a formal Act, the Government of Mauritius has tried to promote women's entrepreneurship in a deliberate manner and provide an accountability framework against which progress can be measured. The 2008 National Gender Policy Framework also provides a mechanism under which government policies and programmes can be developed to widen opportunities for women in Mauritius and to facilitate the contribution of women in its economy (Ministry of Women's Rights 2008). Furthermore, the Employment Rights Act was amended in 2013 to ensure that men and women enjoy the same rights as workers and there is no discrimination based on gender.

Access to resources and opportunity: In order to successfully manage both the personal and professional spheres, female entrepreneurs need to be trained in a

range of skills relevant to their sector of operation, including time management and organisational skills. NWEC offers a range of training programmes to support women entrepreneurs in successfully managing their businesses. Many women entrepreneurs are often unaware of these opportunities. NWEC conducts the Women Talk Business Forum and other forms of awareness-raising sessions to reach women entrepreneurs and inform them of services offered.

Women are more likely to be poor in Mauritius, have few if any of their own assets, and have limited means of accessing such resources from others. Lack of financial resources and access to credit becomes a significant barrier for women to starting and scaling up a business. NWEC has recently created a fund that provides small loans to women entrepreneurs. The National Empowerment Foundation provides financial and technical support to women entrepreneurs who want to start their own businesses.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: The nature, form and scale of enterprise development is influenced and shaped by a range of traditionally embedded social, cultural, religious and economic factors. Women entrepreneurs have to deal with patriarchal values prevalent in Mauritian society and are faced with ‘time poverty’ because of having to balance the demands of running a business with multiple social roles. Mauritian female entrepreneurs have described how they have had to cope with societal prejudice in the process of starting a business. NWEC and the National Women’s Council (NWC) have intensified campaigns to sensitise the public at large on gender issues in order to change social norms that preclude women from participating fully in the economy (UN Women 2014).

Women’s and men’s consciousness: Lack of business experience and limited education means that women often perceive themselves as being less capable of owning and leading businesses. Women lack social networks that help them build confidence and acquire business knowledge. The institutional spaces created by NWEC to engage female entrepreneurs have enabled the establishment of solidarity groups. NWEC has also enabled women to examine their own perceptions regarding societal roles and their contribution to the economy.

11.5 Strategies

NWEC uses multiple strategies to promote women’s entrepreneurship in Mauritius:

Business counselling is offered on a continuous basis to both existing and potential female entrepreneurs, which covers setting up a business, permits and licences required, drafting of business plans and financial facilities available for entrepreneurs.

Training programmes are run to help female entrepreneurs enhance their managerial and technical skills. Examples include marketing, customer care, finance and costing, communication skills, serigraphy and advanced garment making, among others. Innovative courses through Social Entrepreneurship Projects have also been conducted since February 2014. Training programmes provided by NWEC support a range of sectors, including food processing, mushroom growing, hairdressing,

handicrafts (jute products), beauty care (soap making), fashion accessories (bag making) and food catering.

NWEC is also focussing on building leadership skills among women entrepreneurs. In 2008, in collaboration with Women in Networking and Soroptimist International, NWEC launched a capacity-building project with the objective of developing 30 women leaders per year to influence decision-making in all spheres, thereby creating a pool of 300 talented and competent women leaders over a period of ten years. As at December 2012, 215 women had graduated from the course (UN Women 2014).

Networking through business fairs: Members of NWEC are given the opportunity to create contacts and market their products through the organisation of occasional fairs around the island. Fairs are also organised in collaboration with private companies that are eager to contribute to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs.

Women Talk Business forums: Started by NWEC in July 2013, the forums consist of an interactive session between potential and existing female entrepreneurs and various institutions involved in the setting up of businesses. The idea is to provide accurate and up-to-date information on the services and facilities being offered. The forums are part of awareness-building campaigns that target potential women entrepreneurs with the aim of eventually increasing the number of women-owned businesses. They are also used to create a database of female entrepreneurs so that the potential and existing entrepreneurs are closely monitored and supported by NWEC.

Access to funds: NWEC has set up new loan schemes of up to MRs400,000 (US\$1,131) for women entrepreneurs who organise themselves into groups for loan purposes. NWEC was provided with additional funds in 2014 to support female entrepreneurship (Virahsawmy, Savripène and Mourade 2010).

Support for expansion to international markets: In most cases female entrepreneurs restrict themselves to domestic markets, which are less profitable, because they do not have the knowledge and networks required to access international markets. NWEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (FEMCOM-COMESA) in 2014 with a view to supporting the exchange of information between female entrepreneurs in the region and to facilitate their access to international markets. In addition, the Memorandum aims to enhance capacity building for women's entrepreneurship development through the availability of technical resources and support to business incubators. Further, it will facilitate intra-COMESA trade and investment for female entrepreneurs and joint advocacy for mobilisation of resources aimed at the implementation of environmentally sustainable projects.

Partnerships with the private sector: NWEC has undertaken partnership with large private sector organisations, such as British American Insurance and Barclays Bank, to provide additional funding for its programmes.

Awards for women entrepreneurs: NWEC Awards have been instituted by the Government of Mauritius with the objective of providing women entrepreneurs with

an opportunity to obtain recognition for their creative and innovative endeavours (Government of Mauritius 2014).

11.6 Outcomes to date

NWEC's attempt to create jobs has been in line with increasing overall economic growth. From 2005 to 2013, the number of women registered by the council increased by 153 per cent from 1,900 to 4,815 (UN Women 2014).

By 2014, some 770 existing and potential female entrepreneurs had been reached through the seven Women Talk Business forums that had taken place. About 250 women attended the different follow-up sessions and 56 new members registered and set up their enterprises with NWEC (Government of Mauritius 2014). Feedback obtained from the participants about these forums has been positive, with women reporting increased awareness about different services and facilities available to them. Participants also noted that they gained knowledge and skills in terms of entrepreneurship development (Government of Mauritius 2014).

11.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

Facilitating and fostering women's entrepreneurship is a long-term process: Overall the number of women-owned SMEs remains low, although there has been a steady growth in the last decade. Women in Mauritius will continue to need support to fully realise the benefits from NWEC and become successful entrepreneurs.

Lack of registration with NWEC: It has been noted that although many women use the knowledge provided by the training programmes offered by the NWEC, most of them do not register with the council and thus do not benefit from the continued support and access to facilities offered. They cannot take advantage, therefore, of training provided by NWEC in key areas such as marketing and information technology. The reasons for low registration levels are not known, but a more concerted effort is needed to ensure that women entrepreneurs register with NWEC.

Capacity-building programmes should focus both on soft and hard skills: The experience of the NWEC suggests that there should be two distinct aspects to women's enterprise training programmes: the development of soft skills (i.e. communication skills, leadership building and networking) and the development of hard skills (i.e. strategy, finance/resource acquisition, sales and marketing, and knowledge of the sector).

Engagement with non-entrepreneurs is required to encourage women to set up their own enterprises: NWEC staff recognise that many women are not aware of the various facilities/services available to set up their own businesses. The Women Talk Business forums model has proven to be a good initiative for sensitising and encouraging women in entrepreneurship development. The forums have also enhanced collaboration among various institutions aiming to assist entrepreneurs.

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Chapter 12

Income-Generating Activity Programme, Uganda

12.1 Context

The Government of Uganda recognises both the significant role that women play in combating poverty and contributing to economic growth. It also understands the systematic barriers they face in terms of access to economic opportunities such as public and private sector employment, and to resources such as land, credit or skills training.¹ Efforts to address such gender inequalities have been integrated into a wide range of Uganda's development initiatives. The current National Development Plan, for example, states that 'gender issues, negative attitudes... cultural practices and perceptions' serve as a major constraint to socioeconomic development (Government of Uganda 2010). The Government of Uganda has put in place several institutional mechanisms, such as the inclusion of gender equality targets across all national development plans, the establishment of gender officers in each ministry office and at the local government level, as well as the creation of several policy and legal frameworks that consistently emphasise the key role that women play in poverty reduction and wealth creation (Government of Uganda [no date]).

12.2 Key institutional actors

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), established in 1989, is the national women's machinery (NWM) responsible for all projects dealing with the social and economic development of women, including women's access to economic opportunities. MGLSD has gender officers in different ministries and local district offices that are responsible for mainstreaming gender equality across development and poverty reduction programmes.

MGLSD works in collaboration with the National Women's Council (NWC), an autonomous body established in 1993 that provides a forum for women to participate in decision-making on the country's development. NWC also operates as a channel to provide social programmes to women.

Together, MGLSD and NWC collaborate with a wide range of civil society organisations and private sector partners to increase the economic resources available to women. For example, organisations such as the Private Sector Foundation and Ugandan Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited deliver capacity-building workshops and training for women entrepreneurs (Government of Uganda [no date]).

12.3 Theory of change

Despite the strong policy and organisational frameworks in place, the government recognised that additional measures needed to be taken to shift women out of the subsistence agricultural sector and into wage employment, specifically through entrepreneurship initiatives. In 2003–04, the government undertook an examination of different policies relating to women and economic development, and decided to focus its attention on improving the role women play in the country's wealth creation. Following this, MGLSD and NWC developed a specific initiative to support women's economic opportunities – the Income-Generating Activity (IGA) programme.

The purpose of the IGA programme is to increase the knowledge and entrepreneurship skills of women, in order to have a positive effect on women's economic opportunities and income levels, especially in rural areas. The theory of change underpinning this initiative is that by providing economic opportunities, entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and resources, women's income will increase, thereby enabling them to meet their basic needs and provide for healthcare and the education of their children.

12.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

MGLSD and NWC recognised that specific social institutions and discriminatory norms must be challenged for programmes such as IGA to be successful and for women's economic empowerment to be achieved. This required addressing gender-related barriers that limit women's economic empowerment opportunities.

Formal laws, policies and accountability: As noted above, the government has adopted a number of formal frameworks in support of women's economic participation and empowerment. Since the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality began in 2005, key policies implemented to address Ugandan women's economic participation include the Uganda National Gender Policy (2007), the National Action Plan on Women (2007) and the Uganda Land Bill (2009), which contains several gender-specific clauses to address spousal consent in the sale of land. Most recently, increasing the economic resources of women was targeted in the National Development Plan of 2010/2011–2014/2015.

Alongside this, disparities in education have traditionally decreased women's ability to participate in vocational or business development training, which in turn impacts their livelihood opportunities. In the education sector, affirmative action programmes are now in place to boost women's educational opportunities, including, for example, incentives for girls to attend tertiary institutions, including technical training institutions.

Women's access to resources and opportunities: Women face constraints accessing resources, including credit, land, financial capital, business development services, training and other technical support. MGLSD and NWC have addressed this by implementing projects aimed at increasing women's access to resources, such as the IGA programme. Other programmes – such as the Community Driven Development programme (which provides financial and technical resources for communities to implement development initiatives) or the National Agricultural Advisory Services

programme (which provides agro-business and capacity training to women in agriculture) – increase women’s access to financial support and business support services (Government of Uganda [no date]). In agricultural sector-wide approaches, budgeting provisions have been made to address gaps identified in sector gender analysis (e.g. funding for technologies that can easily be adopted by women).

Women and men’s consciousness: Ugandan women face challenges at the household level, with men often retaining power over economic decision-making. The IGA and related programmes have built up women’s capacity in financial and business decision-making. There is preliminary evidence demonstrating that this may have had an influence on decision-making by women at the household level. See examples below of how the work of NWC and IGA demonstrate shifting attitudes on the roles and capabilities of women in economic activities.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: MGLSD and NWC have tackled the structural barriers women face in furthering their economic potential. Resources such as grants or technical support help to challenge informal cultural norms on appropriate roles and employment for women, which have contributed to discriminatory practices in terms of their accessing financial services, credit or training. By shifting perceptions about women’s work beyond the household economy, and by building women’s incomes, confidence and capacities, these programmes are contributing to new norms for women’s decision-making roles and power at the household and community levels.

12.5 Strategies

Implemented by NWC, the IGA programme provides technical and financial resources to women in two primary ways:

- Direct income support is provided to women by the NWC Secretariat, which is responsible for dispersing IGA funding to NWCs at the district level. The grant process is then administered through District Women’s Councils (DWCs). These grants, which benefit registered women’s groups, support a range of income generating activities, including poultry and pig farming, goat rearing, handicrafts, tailoring, and fruit growing and processing. In 2012–13, the IGA programme was able to work with 71 DWCs across each sub-region in Uganda.
- In addition to financial resources and tools, the IGA programme also equips beneficiaries with entrepreneurship skills and enterprise management training in order to improve their respective IGA performance throughout the grant process.

Box 12.1 Sukut Women’s Farmers Group

In the Kween District of Uganda, many women face economic hardships, with social barriers preventing them from accessing credit, land and other resources. To increase women’s income generation, Sukut Women’s Farmers Group was awarded a grant of US\$2,500,000 (US\$831) from the NWC. Group members

used this grant money to start a salon business. After buying and installing a solar panel at the house of one of the members, the group now provides salon services to the wider community. A mobile phone-charging service was also introduced at the salon, costing US\$500 per phone. With the money accrued from these services, the group has started a credit fund for members, lending within the group at a 5 per cent interest rate per month. Due to the access they have to funds, members have gone on to pay for education for their children, to meet their family health needs and to buy fertiliser for their crops.

Source: Mangusho (2013).

12.6 Outcomes to date

According to NWC and MGLSD, the IGA programme has demonstrated results at many levels – the individual, community and systemic (policy, institutional) levels. As of 2013, more than 71 District Women’s Councils had received grants – with approximately 213 women’s groups benefitting from IGA (Government of Uganda [no date]). Individual members within these groups have increased their access to financial resources and sources of income. Additionally, women involved in the programme have developed capacity in business and entrepreneurship skill sets (Government of Uganda [no date]). Not only have personal incomes and sources of livelihoods increased, but also this training has developed the self-confidence of women to engage in wider economic activities (Mangusho 2013).

At the community level, many women are experiencing changes within their households. As women’s economic contributions to their families have increased, relationships between married couples have improved and women have reported less dependence on their husbands for support (Mangusho 2013).² Additionally, due to their ability to access funds, women are now able to meet the basic social needs of their families, including healthcare and education for themselves and their children.

Box 12.2 The IGA programme in action

‘I started this business to develop myself... Self-employment was always my dream because I saw others gain from it, gained independence from their husbands and I wanted to be like them.’

–Shillah, woman entrepreneur

Box 12.3 Mon Kok Awara Awara women’s group

Mon Kok Awara Awara is a women’s group in the county of Chua in Kitgum District, with 31 members. After receiving an IGA grant from the NWC, the

group developed a revolving fund. Each member receives a loan of US\$100,000 to be paid back in three months at a 5 per cent interest rate. Because of access to these funds most members of the group have become involved in retail businesses or goat rearing. As a collective, the group has also invested in groundnut and *simsim* (sesame) cultivation. As one of the beneficiaries described to NWC, IGA has improved local lives in several ways. Each woman in the group was able to boost her business due to the grant. The extra income was then invested back into her business or used to start other small businesses. For example, one participant took the money she had made from her fish selling business and went on to start a second business rearing goats. Due to this income, women beneficiaries have also been able to pay school fees for their children.

Source: Muwanga, S and R Mutesi (2013).

Beyond impacts seen at the individual and community levels, the IGA programme has challenged the social and institutional norms that act as barriers to women's inclusion in economic development programmes. Across the country, women face difficulties accessing formal banking structures for credit, or engaging in wage employment beyond subsistence agriculture. The IGA has allowed women to access technical and financial support to overcome some of these obstacles. This has also led to increased engagement by women in political structures. For example, NWC reports that as women become more aware of their economic contributions to their communities, they have gone on to increase participation at various levels of government, particularly through local councils (Government of Uganda [no date]).

12.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The IGA programme has demonstrated that women can meaningfully contribute to and benefit from economic growth, if they are equipped with the skills and resources needed for success. It has also demonstrated that income-generating support can lead to spill-over effects for women's empowerment, such as increasing self-confidence, decision-making power and influence on the wider economic activities of communities.

The IGA programme has generated a number of lessons that may be of relevance to other Commonwealth countries:

- IGA programmes are more likely to be effective if they are combined with capacity building and enterprise management training grants, which build women's skills to implement and sustain income-generating projects.
- In programme design it is important to ensure that income-generating grants reach the poorest populations (Namatovu, Dawa, Katongole and Mulira 2012).³ This end can be supported through rigorous gender-based analysis, which includes attention to the multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. race, religion and ethnicity) that impact women's experience of poverty.

- Even within a country, there are a variety of factors influencing women's ability to respond to and benefit from programmes such as the IGA. In the Ugandan context, for example, the particular socioeconomic context experienced by women in the north (which has been disproportionately affected by conflict spanning two decades, from the mid-1980s) requires linking women's economic empowerment initiatives to the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund programme (NUSAFII).⁴ This programme was established as a tool and funding mechanism to assist the north to catch up with the rest of the country.
- Qualitative data on the programme's outcomes for women provides rich and powerful stories of change. However, there is a need for strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track IGA impacts over time, and to capture the sustainability of income-generating projects after the grant comes to an end.

The case study also demonstrates the importance of integrated strategies working at multiple levels to tackle the structural barriers to women's economic participation and empowerment. Programmes such as IGA need to be supported by strong policy frameworks across government, as described above. Particularly important is the issue of women's access to land and land ownership – well known to be a major barrier to women's economic empowerment worldwide. Currently, women's ownership of land in Uganda is at 16 per cent. Some private sector and civil society organisation (CSO) partners have begun to address this issue with programmes such as the DFCU Women in Business Bank, creating programmes specifically aimed at improving women's access to formal services and credit (Namatovu *et al.* 2012). These new partnerships demonstrate potential areas for further collaboration that should be pursued in future.

Gender bias in agricultural markets also constrains women through:

- Inadequate technological advancement in areas of agricultural production, particularly gender-appropriate innovation.
- Lack of skills and technology for value addition (which further limits women's ability to secure a good return from their productive activities).
- Lack of organised women's marketing groups or associations, to enable women farmers to gain a fair market price.

A focus on facilitating women in the agricultural market value chain should be promoted as a strategy for increasing their economic participation and empowerment.

Similarly, in spite of some progress, other sociocultural norms beyond those related to women's land ownership and agricultural markets continue to hinder women's access to resources. For example: disparities in basic education levels between men and women decrease the ability of women to participate in vocational or business development training, which is needed to support entrepreneurial initiatives; women continue to face challenges at the household level over economic decision-making; and women's household/family responsibilities and high fertility rates continue to serve as a barrier to their full participation in economic empowerment programmes.

Finally, as NWM points out, there are still gaps in the extent to which gender sensitive programmes and plans for poverty reduction and economic empowerment are fully

integrated across all sectors. For example, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is responsible for allocation of funds so NWM is unable to influence resource allocation for sectors, which undermines its ability to monitor gender mainstreaming in those sectors. More departmental collaboration would help effective gender promotion and monitoring of results in programmes that support poverty eradication and economic empowerment.

Notes

- 1 In waged employment, women make up only 39 per cent of the public sector and 29 per cent of private sector workers. The majority of women in non-agricultural work are employed in micro- or small enterprises. Although 30 per cent of Ugandan women open businesses, the majority of these are in the informal economy. For those in the wage economy, men's wages are approximately double those of women. See: UNDP Uganda (2013), Kabarungi (2014), and Coffey International (2014).
- 2 While the data available did not provide evidence of resistance from husbands to women's new found economic empowerment, as is sometimes the experience in similar contexts, it will be important for further IGA programmes to continue to monitor this closely.
- 3 It was found that income support at the district level often went to well connected women and established entrepreneurs.
- 4 For full analysis of the specific factors shaping women's economic empowerment in northern Uganda, see Ahikire, Madanda and Ampaire (2012).

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Section Four

Combatting Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence

A common trend across Commonwealth countries has been the focus on reducing gender-based violence (GBV) as a way of advancing gender, human rights and law. One of the key elements of these initiatives has been the use of an integrated approach to addressing GBV, for example, through: integrating various services within a single facility; removing systemic barriers to accessing services (health, social sector and legal institutions) along with addressing sociocultural norms that contribute to the incidence of HIV and VAWG; and ensuring co-ordination across multiple government departments and agencies through the development of National Action Plans (NAPs).

Chapter 13

One-Stop Crisis Centre, Bangladesh

13.1 Context

Bangladesh, like many other countries, has deep-rooted patriarchal structures that include the manifestation of various forms of VAWG. VAWG is a serious social, cultural and economic problem in Bangladesh, where nearly two out of every three women have experienced violence during their lifetime. Bangladeshi women usually do not perpetrate violence, nor do they seek help against the violent behaviour of men (WHO 2005 cited in Das, Amin, Johnson and Hossain 2008). The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees every woman and man 'equal rights in all spheres of the state and public life'. However many experts, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, noted that the personal status laws treat women and men differently, and perpetuate discrimination against women (UN General Assembly 2014).

Domestic violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women (MDGs Achievement Fund 2014). The Bangladesh VAW Survey 2011 found that 87 per cent of currently married women have experienced physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence by their current husband (Hossen 2014). Further, the survey indicates that 82 per cent of women have experienced psychological violence, 65 per cent have been physically abused (which includes attacks by acid, knife or burning), 53 per cent have faced economic violence (which includes demands for dowry) and 36 per cent have faced sexual violence at some point in their life (Hossen 2014). Occurrences of domestic violence are higher in rural areas (80.98 per cent) than urban areas (19.02 per cent) (Khanom, Saha, Begum, Nur and Tanira 2010). While women are largely unaware of their rights at one level,¹ those who muster the courage to seek help are often left to struggle with an unwilling and unhelpful institution (One-Stop Crisis Centre cited in Islam 2011). To counter this, the government initiated the Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence against Women (MSPVAW).

13.2 Key institutional actors

MSPVAW is a Bangladesh–Danish initiative. It was started as a pilot programme from 2000 to 2003 and in 2011 entered its third phase (2011–16). MSPVAW is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, in collaboration with the ministries of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs; Information; Social Welfare; Home Affairs; Health and Family Welfare; Education; Religious Affairs; Youth and Sports; and Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives. To enable effective co-ordination, a memorandum of understanding for partner ministries agreed in principle to provide and complement support services to women and children who are victims of violence, and to participate in actions to prevent and

combat VAWG. The programme is managed by a policy level steering committee headed by the secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. A project implementation committee, which comprises desk officers of partner ministries, also oversees the programme.

The main components of the MSPVAW are: eight One-Stop Crisis Centres (OCCs) in medical college hospitals; 40 One-Stop Crisis Cells at district general hospitals and 20 at *upazila* (sub-district level) health complexes; a national forensic DNA profiling laboratory in Dhaka and seven divisional DNA screening laboratories at medical college hospitals; a national trauma counselling centre in Dhaka; the National Helpline Centre for Violence against Women and Children (10921); a national database on violence against women and children; and a national centre on gender-based violence in Dhaka.

13.3 Theory of change

The commitment of the Government of Bangladesh to tackle VAWG has provided the impetus for a number of focussed laws and policies, and the creation of the multi-sector programme to help balance the legal framework with practical structures to support victims of violence, and address the social institutions and discriminatory norms that negatively impact females in Bangladesh. One of the key elements of the programme is the creation of OCCs within tertiary-level medical college hospitals. OCCs are meant to make access to support services easier for women and children who have been subjected to physical and sexual violence by integrating various services within a single facility. The idea stemmed from the realisation that VAWG survivors face tremendous physical, emotional and psychological trauma, and are often victimised further while accessing services. By providing medical, police and legal services at one location the centres ensure that females are not re-victimised, but instead find it easy to seek the required protection and rehabilitation services, and to facilitate their recovery and reintegration.

13.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal laws, policies and accountability: Bangladesh has a number of policies and laws in place to address VAWG. They include the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000, Acid Control Act 2002, Birth and Death Registration Act 2004, Human Trafficking Deterrence and Suppression Act 2012, Village Court Act 2006, Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010, Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Rules 2013 and the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2013–25 (NAPPVAW, 2013–25) (CEDAW 2011). The idea behind these regulatory frameworks is to achieve gender equality and empowerment, eliminate discrimination and guarantee socioeconomic and political development of women.

Access to resources and opportunities: The OCC has a special focus on the creation of spaces and institutional mechanisms to provide victims of violence access to resources and opportunities ‘under one roof’. It is meant to provide services to women and children, such as healthcare, police assistance, DNA tests, social services,

legal assistance, psychological counselling and shelter. People can consult and seek advice and other support services by telephone or in person.

Women's and men's consciousness: OCCs also contribute toward changes in women's and men's consciousness through the sensitisation and capacity building of various service providers, including government staff, doctors, paramedics, nurses and police officials. Women accessing OCC services often report the violence; some opt to initiate formal complaint and justice processes, which is an indicator of change in attitudes to violence. From 2006 to 2015, a total of 5,183 cases were filed through the centres (MSPVAW 2015). The fact that victims of violence break their silence by reporting it to the police and then seek justice in the courts indicates a change in individual consciousness. According to an MSPVAW official:

Moreover, the victims realised that they had some shelters including medical, legal and police protection supports to fight out the aftermaths of violence against them. These services had enhanced the courage of women to fight against violence and inform or assist other victims in need of protection, treatment, rehabilitation or need for shelter.

(Government of Bangladesh 2014)

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Through a change in individual consciousness and access to resources, OCCs are able to initiate a change in informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices, as women begin to break their silence and seek support and justice against violence.

13.5 Strategies

The OCC model represents a comprehensive and accessible approach to addressing VAWG on the part of the government's MSPVAW. Of the eight centres run by the programme (seven in division-level medical college hospitals and one in a district-level medical college hospital), two were set up during the pilot phase (2000–03), four were established during phase one (2004–08) and two during phase two (2008–11). Since December 2012, the programme has added 60 One-Stop Crisis Cells: 40 are in district hospitals and 20 have been established in health complexes at the sub-district (*upazila*) level. The primary objective of a crisis cell is to provide information to women and children survivors of violence about various services (i.e. healthcare, police assistance, legal advice and trauma counselling).

Women and children who are victims of violence – physical and/or sexual violence or burn assaults – are referred to the OCC (which is located close to the emergency department of the respective hospital). OCCs are spacious enough to include one special ward of eight to ten beds, one meeting room, a waiting room for visitors and rooms for various professionals. The team at the centre covers legal and medical matters and comprises: four police officers, four doctors, six nurses, a psychosocial counsellor and a social welfare officer. A senior doctor acts as the centre's co-ordinator. A working group, chaired by the director of the medical college hospital in which the centre is located, is responsible for overall management. Other members include

representatives of the concerned medical departments and wards, plus a district women affairs officer and deputy director (magistrate) of the Women Support Programme of the Department of Women Affairs.

Shelter, medical care and treatment, and advice are the three pillars of an OCC. Shelter services are available on an immediate and temporary basis for three to seven days. A VAWG survivor can reach a centre in multiple ways: she can lodge a report with the police, who are required to escort her to a hospital; she can reach the hospital directly; or she can call the OCC hotline. The centres support victims who wish to file a case with the services of a lawyer who works with the police from the OCC to co-ordinate with the local police station and the court. Legal procedures to file the case are completed during the victim's stay at an OCC (Government of Bangladesh 2014).

Besides offering support to victims, the police and judiciary (judges and magistrates) also benefit from the MSPVAW through various sensitisation programmes organised in collaboration with the Judicial Administration Training Institute and Bangladesh police at the national, division, district and sub-district levels. Public awareness campaigns have been undertaken on television on issues such as trauma counselling, sexual harassment, child labour, child sexual assault, acid violence, DNA tests and dowries. A website has also been created to provide information (Government of Bangladesh 2014).

13.6 Outcomes to date

The treatment, health care, police protection, assistance to legal action, DNA tests, psychosocial counselling, shelter and rehabilitation through OCC, the Help-line support and Database information have created tremendous impact for the victims, in spite of the lapses within the project.

(Government of Bangladesh 2014)

Up to August 2014, OCCs provided various services to a total of 20,452 women and children victims of violence, who stayed in OCC wards for a particular period.¹⁵ Furthermore, a total of 2,670 women and children victims received various services from the One-Stop Crisis Cells (CEDAW 2013). In terms of rehabilitation and reintegration of OCC clients into society, from 2006 to November 2014 696 women were trained on income-generating activities, such as sewing, computer skills, nursing, beauty parlours, and managing poultry and cattle. They were also provided with various productive assets, such as sewing machines and cash transfers. As part of an impact evaluation study, 37.48 per cent of former clients surveyed reported that they had become financially independent as a result of the training received in the OCCs (Government of Bangladesh 2014).

As per OCC data, about 25 per cent of women (i.e. 4,608) filed cases and in 15 per cent of these cases (i.e. 708) a judgement was secured. However, a penalty was imposed in only 14 per cent of the cases where a judgement was meted out (Government of Bangladesh 2014). Statistics to February 2015 give the following breakdown of types of violence by client: 16,197 physical assaults, 5,547 sexual assaults and 396 burn victims (MSPVAW 2015).

Substantial training – including orientation on OCC and DNA lab activities, psychosocial counselling, burn victim management training, and staff capacity building to handle victims of violence against women and children – has been provided to the groups of professionals of each OCC. A training module for combating VAWG will be developed for OCC staff, teachers, students, health assistants, family planning officers and other professionals. An operational manual has been developed for the effective functioning of the OCCs, which helps to ensure a similar protocol for all centres. The officials and staff who are working at an OCC are aware of this protocol.

Training for doctors, lawyers and counsellors, police and law enforcement agencies, social welfare officers and nurses has improved the quality of OCC services. Various professionals have been provided with specialised training to enhance their capacity to deal with victims, and to facilitate and co-ordinate a support network that engages actors across sectors – for example, lawyers, police and NGO personnel. Stakeholder involvement is important to the work of the centres. For example, NGOs and CSO oversee the activities of the OCCs, and are invited for consultations and advocacy programme work. The changing mind-set of the professionals and stakeholders will ensure sustainability of efforts to address the issue of VAWG; working together in an OCC has synergised these efforts to date. Overall MSPVAW has conducted 148 training workshops and seminars on capacity development, strengthening VAWG activities, counselling, DNA and gender sensitisation for 11,143 professionals and stakeholders at the national, division, district and sub-district levels (Government of Bangladesh 2014).

All of the OCCs organise monthly ‘former client’ meetings to increase dialogue, obtain feedback on OCC services, and enable clients to express their needs and interests regarding future plans. OCC professionals also share information about anti-VAWG activism, women’s human rights and child marriage issues during the meetings.

A registration form with personal details and facts about incidents is used to collect information on the victims. Basic data includes age, profession, socioeconomic status, nature of injury, history of incidents etc. About 96 per cent of the clients are very poor and often abused by their husband, boyfriend or close relatives. Children and adolescent girls are more vulnerable to sexual assaults. The results obtained from the victim’s registration form, follow-up meetings, medical reports, first information report and charge sheet of the criminal cases, along with media reports, are compiled, analysed and reported on a regular basis. Some of the reports are published in a newsletter. These reports are also used to compare incidence of violence trends and to review the services of OCCs. All VAWG data from OCCs are preserved. Data and other information from OCCs are disseminated to the stakeholders.

Overall, people are more aware about human rights, women’s rights and the various forms of violence against women and children as a result of the MSPVAW initiatives. Inclusion of economic deprivation and psychological violence as major categories under the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 has contributed to an increase of reported incidents of VAWG. Reporting of VAWG cases by the media has also increased.

13.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

This government initiative provides access to a set of services for women that contributes towards addressing the issues of providing immediate relief and initiating the process of rehabilitation and justice for victims of violence. Professionals and other stakeholders largely appreciate OCCs and the quality of their services. Elaborating on the work of the OCCs, Dr Abul Hossain, MSPVAW Project Director, said:

It established a close relationship between women and children victims of violence and service providers. It mobilised all actors and activists towards violence against women and children. All types of co-ordination mechanisms among institutions and organisations had been improved.

(Government of Bangladesh 2014)

Moreover, the programme has successfully incorporated human rights issues into its work with clients. The concept of the OCC is being replicated by:

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) women support and survivors support centres.
- Police Reform Project (PRP) victim support centres, which are supported by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), European Union (EU) and UK Department for International Development (DFID).
- The Women Friendly Hospital Initiative of the Directorate of Health Services.

Furthermore, some South Asian countries have expressed their willingness to establish similar units following the success of the OCC operations in Bangladesh.

Some of the key lessons learned from OCC functioning are:

- When services (legal, police, medical) are co-located and adequately resourced, reporting and demand for those services increase. Female survivors feel more confident to report instances of violence and have more faith in protection and medical services. OCCs have also enhanced awareness among women regarding the services available to them.
- The success of integrated service provision for VAWG survivors requires institutional buy-in of key stakeholders. MSPVAW is a collaborative effort between various ministries that have facilitated co-ordination at the OCC level. Moreover, each OCC has a hospital management committee, which includes representatives from various service providers (medical, legal, police), besides representatives from other government departments.
- The introduction of a skills-building programme into OCC operations has helped some women gain employment and break the 'vicious cycle' of economic dependence that often perpetuates violence by their partners.
- Partnerships with NGOs and CSOs have not only helped increase awareness regarding VAWG in society, but have also helped females access various services available at OCCs and survivors of violence to reintegrate into their communities.

Furthermore, NGOs and CSOs have been key partners in monitoring OCC performance.

- A strong emphasis has been placed on collection of data. This has been instrumental in monitoring the quality of service provision at OCCs and in taking corrective measures as needed.
- It is important to ensure on-going capacity building of service providers. However, this needs to extend beyond training on service protocols to gender sensitisation programmes that help change mind-sets, and ensure everyone is more responsive to the needs of women and female survivors of violence.

Although OCCs provide women and children victims of violence with many services, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) noted that the existing number of OCCs is not sufficient to address VAWG requirements in the country (CEDAW 2011). The second phase evaluation report of MSPVAW also noted space limitations at the centres, posing a challenge in the management of OCCs as it is difficult to accommodate all the professionals needed (doctors, nurses, psychosocial therapists, radiologists, lawyers, counsellors, police, social workers etc.). It further reports the need for proper orientation, wider dissemination of information about OCCs in the mass media and speedier trials of VAWG cases (in the absence of which victims, their parents and relatives lose interest and confidence in the justice process). The report recommended the establishment of OCCs in every district, *upazila* and union, since it is difficult for victims from remote areas to reach divisional cities for medical treatment, shelter, protection and legal action. Furthermore, evidence and proof are usually destroyed if case victims do not reach an OCC in time (Government of Bangladesh 2014). According to one of the victims of violence:

Much of the successes of OCC will be attained if law enforcement forces and lawyers are more dedicated and honest about providing fair justice and support to the victims, otherwise all efforts to provide services from OCC will be fruitless.

(Government of Bangladesh 2014)

Implementation of the plan to improve and consolidate integrated public services related to VAWG, building awareness about VAWG and related public services, and capacity building of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, would further enhance the quality, efficiency and sustainability of OCCs, encourage the use of facilities, and improve and consolidate inter-ministerial co-ordination and action in relation to VAWG (Center for Health Market Innovations 2015). OCCs are an important step towards responding to the various needs of women and children who are victims of violence, by incorporating a range of services in one place and thereby ensuring that these victims receive the necessary assistance as quickly as possible.

Women's empowerment increased as they now themselves visit OCC in cases of violence, knowing their cases will be heard and they can fight back

(Government of Bangladesh 2014)

Notes

- 1 Annual Report of One-Stop Crisis Centre (2009), as mentioned in Islam M Z (2011).
- 2 http://mspva.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=188&Itemid=143&act_id=9&cmp=1 (accessed on 10 October 2015).

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Chapter 14

National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, Canada

14.1 Context

Despite Canada's position as a developed country with ample resources, it still faces challenges in preventing violence, exploitation and abuse for some of its most vulnerable populations, including women and girls. One of the most flagrant forms of this abuse is human trafficking. Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or exercising of control over the movements of a person for exploitation, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour (Government of Canada 2012). In the Canadian context, this manifests in a variety of circumstances and impacts a wide range of victims. Although men, women, girls and boys can all be affected, the majority of trafficking cases in Canada are of women and girls. Human trafficking involves both international and domestic dimensions, the latter related to trafficking across provincial boundaries within Canada (RCMP 2013).

Traffickers control their victims in a number of ways, such as taking away identity documents, isolating individuals, or using threats and intimidation, including physical or sexual abuse. These tactics have widespread physical, psychological and emotional consequences, and should be seen as an extreme form of violence against women and girls. Although victims come from a range of different social and economic circumstances, poverty, violence and gender inequality are key contributing factors to their vulnerability to trafficking. Marginalised and disadvantaged populations tend to be more at risk, including women from indigenous populations, young women, girls, migrants and children in protective services.

Box 14.1 Hamilton forced labour case

'We were treated like dogs on a short leash... To this day I don't go out after dark because of all the threats. I have also received threats against my mother in Hungary.'

–Victim Impact Statement (Hamilton forced labour case)

The extent of human trafficking in Canada is difficult to measure. The hidden nature of the crime, the reluctance of victims and witnesses to come forward, and barriers to reporting due to fear, coercion or mistrust of authorities all challenge Canada's ability to assess the full scope of the problem at a national level. However, a recent survey undertaken by the National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada was able to give a snapshot of the impact of trafficking. Surveying 266

front-line response organisations across Canada, they collectively identified 1,929 trafficked women and 943 trafficked girls (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). They also identified 4,708 girls and 14,457 women who were sexually exploited, or exchanged sex or sexual acts for drugs, food, shelter, protection or other life necessities (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). Within this sample, 51 per cent of trafficked girls had been involved in the child welfare system and 51 per cent of trafficked women were indigenous (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). This underscores the growing awareness of the domestic dimensions of human trafficking. For example, while women, primarily from Asia and Eastern Europe, are trafficked into Canada for purposes of sexual exploitation, a recent study suggested that 90 per cent of Canada's sex trafficking victims come from within Canada (RCMP 2013).

The Canadian government has undertaken a range of initiatives aimed to prevent and respond to the threat of human trafficking. At the policy level, there are institutional mechanisms that work to hold human traffickers accountable. Canada was one of the first signatories to the United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Traffickers in Persons especially Women and Children, 2003. At the national level, legal mechanisms include provisions in the Criminal Code, such as 279.01 (Trafficking in persons), 279.011 (Trafficking of a person under the age of 18 years), 279.02 (Material benefit) and 279.03 (Withholding or destroying documents).

Recognising that human trafficking needs a holistic response and must be addressed before it reaches the level of the court, the government has reinforced its response beyond a legal level. For example, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) conducted Canada's first Human Trafficking Threat Assessment, which reviewed intelligence from 2005 to 2009 in order to determine the extent of this crime. These investigations reaffirmed the linkages between vulnerable and economically challenged populations and trafficking, in addition to bringing up new areas of concern, such as evidence of forced labour for foreign nationals.

14.2 Key institutional actors

Canada's National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Human Trafficking is led by the Human Trafficking Taskforce, which is overseen by Public Safety Canada, created in 2003 to ensure co-ordination across all federal departments and agencies responsible for national security and the safety of Canadians. Public Safety Canada works alongside key departments and agencies, including the RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, other governmental ministries and not-for-profit organisations. Status of Women Canada (SWC) does not take a lead role in NAP, but undertakes anti-trafficking activities as part of its 'Ending violence against women' portfolio.

14.3 Theory of change

Responding to this heightened awareness on human trafficking, the Canadian government has strengthened its efforts through NAP to combat the problem. Launched and spearheaded by Public Safety Canada in 2012, the theory of change behind NAP is to consolidate on-going efforts of the federal government to combat human trafficking, in order to introduce new initiatives for prevention, protection and

prosecution. NAP aims to combat human trafficking by strengthening partnerships between federal, provincial and territorial governments, as well as across sectors such as law enforcement, civil society and justice institutions. NAP builds on Canada's current response to both strengthen existing strategies and build new ones to address human trafficking in all its forms.

14.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Human trafficking is embedded in discriminatory social norms and deeply entrenched patterns of gender inequality. To work towards prevention and eradication, strategies must take a holistic approach that addresses these underlying root causes and social institutions. As such, NAP and other efforts of the Canadian government take a multipronged strategy in order to reach their goals.

Formal laws, policies and accountability: Canada has a number of laws, policies and institutional mechanisms that address the problems of human trafficking. In addition to its recognition of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Canada was also one of the first countries to ratify the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Traffickers in Persons especially Women and Children. At the national level, tools to hold traffickers accountable are enshrined in the Criminal Code of Canada, with indictable offences for trafficking, material benefit or forcible confinement. Additionally, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act contains provisions that prohibit bringing a person into Canada by abduction, coercion or fraud.

Access to resources and opportunities: A key part of reducing the harm of human trafficking has been ensuring that adequate resources are in place to fulfil NAP's goals. This includes response mechanisms, as well as increasing resources at the disposal of victims, or those at risk of becoming victimised. As part of NAP, Public Safety Canada has implemented a Victims Fund that allocates financial resources to improve services for victims. SWC works with Public Safety Canada to implement several of these programmes; for example, it is supporting the development of shelter programmes for refugee victims of violence and human trafficking in Edmonton. Additionally, NAP allocates technical and financial resources to trafficking responders, in order to strengthen these efforts; for example, extra training has been provided to law enforcement agencies, in order to better understand human trafficking crimes, and to adequately respond to survivors.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: As human trafficking is embedded in patterns of gender inequality, a key part of any response is addressing cultural norms that allow for social discrimination and marginalisation to continue. As seen above, factors such as extreme poverty, unemployment, lack of education and inadequate social protection contribute to human trafficking. The Government of Canada has recognised that vulnerable and disadvantaged populations are most at risk, and has targeted its strategies accordingly. For example, Canada has a long history of exclusion and discrimination towards aboriginal populations. As aboriginal women make up a large proportion of trafficking victims, special consideration is

given to these populations through specific outreach and advocacy programmes. Finally, NAP expands on data collection in order to better track and understand trends on human trafficking in Canada.

Women’s and men’s consciousness: A key factor discouraging victims from coming forward is a lack of awareness of their rights. Many victims are afraid they will be detained, or may have limited language skills or deep mistrust of authorities. Foreign victims face specific challenges, as many fear that they will be deported. In order to raise consciousness around issues of human trafficking, a main strategy of NAP has been the implementation of outreach and awareness-raising campaigns.

14.5 Strategies

Implemented by Public Safety Canada, along with a consortium of government, law enforcement and civil society partners, the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking was launched in 2012 in an effort to consolidate efforts to address human trafficking into one comprehensive plan. Following the best practices outlined in the UN Trafficking Protocol, Canada’s NAP focuses on four core areas, or four pillars, to address human trafficking: prevention, protection of victims, prosecution of offenders, and establishing partnerships domestically and internationally. The Human Trafficking Taskforce meets monthly, to support implementation across Canada.

- Under the first pillar, NAP aims to raise awareness and undertake research in order to support a broad based prevention agenda. NAP views the demand for sexual services as a contributing factor to trafficking. It therefore uses prevention strategies as a way to tackle risk factors that lead to exploitation (Government of Canada 2012). For example, NAP has promoted training for front-line service providers, to strengthen the capacity of those who work with populations that may come in contact with trafficking victims. Prevention strategies have also included awareness campaigns, with the support, development and distribution of awareness material both domestically and abroad. For example, the RCMP’s ‘I’m Not for Sale’ campaign was disseminated across Canada, specifically in aboriginal communities, in order to raise awareness on human trafficking (Public Safety Canada 2013). A final strategy within the prevention pillar has been to work with communities to identify at risk individuals.

Box 14.2 *R v Urizar*, Court of Quebec

‘He told her that he had control over her, that she belonged to him and that he could do anything he wanted to her. He became more and more abusive with her, both physically and verbally. He threatened to kill her and told her that, if she reported him to the police, he could easily hire someone to kill her for a couple of rocks of crack. He told her that if she fled, he would end up finding her and that he would stab her.’

–Excerpt [translated] from the decision of the court in *R v Urizar*,
Court of Quebec, Criminal Division

- The second strategy used has been to provide protection and assistance to victims of human trafficking. NAP recognises that every trafficked person will require support measures tailored for their particular needs, and aims to assist their recovery physically, psychologically and socially. For example, as part of NAP, a Victims Fund has been established to increase financial resources to service providers. As part of its 'Ending violence against women and girls' programming, Status of Women Canada has targeted funds toward increasing services for trafficking victims (Public Safety Canada 2013). The government has also worked with immigration officers in order to enable provision of short-term temporary resident permits to foreign nationals who are victims of trafficking.
- The third pillar of NAP focuses on strategies to detect, investigate and prosecute traffickers. In addition to Canada's comprehensive legal framework, NAP has implemented training and education for prosecutors and law enforcement. For example, RCMP's Human Trafficking National Coordination Centre has co-ordinated awareness-raising sessions for over 39,000 officials from law enforcement (Government of Canada 2012). Another strategy implemented under NAP has been to establish an integrated investigative team between the RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency and local police, in order to conduct proactive investigations. These mechanisms have enhanced intelligence collection and co-ordination, in order to increase detection and prosecution of traffickers.
- The final strategy NAP uses to address human trafficking involves partnerships and knowledge. In order to attain a holistic framework, NAP works to strengthen relationships across a range of different stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated approach. At the national level, the government has enhanced engagement, collaboration and knowledge exchange with civil society, including aboriginal organisations. These partnerships have been used to bolster data collection, in an effort to increase knowledge on the extent of human trafficking in Canada. NAP also works to increase partnerships with different international organisations and foreign governments, in order to respond to the international dynamics of human trafficking. Additional strategies have included diplomatic engagement to promote partnerships for anti-trafficking initiatives, providing support to countries to adopt appropriate legislation and law enforcement programmes, and working through specialised anti-trafficking mechanisms such as the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

14.6 Outcomes to date

In order to track the progress and results of Canada's anti-trafficking initiatives, NAP undergoes an annual review process. This allows Public Safety Canada and partner agencies to review progress on implementation, as well as identify new areas and opportunities. As part of the 2012–13 review process, an in-depth consultation process was undertaken with key human trafficking stakeholders (Public Safety Canada 2013). To ensure the continuation of strong monitoring mechanisms, NAP will also go through an extensive evaluation period in 2016–17.

Human trafficking is a complex and multifaceted issue, and this is a recent initiative, so concrete evidence on the impact of NAP is still in the nascent phase. However, several highlights have been demonstrated in the 2012–13 review (Public Safety Canada 2013). At the individual level, there have been 35 convictions of human trafficking (since 2005) involving 126 victims. Sentences for those convicted have ranged from one day to nine years' imprisonment, with one company that brought foreign workers from Poland on student visas to work as welders and machinists fined C\$215,000 (Lowe 2012). Currently, there are approximately 80 cases before the courts for human trafficking specific or related offences.

At the community level, outreach and public awareness have heightened knowledge on human trafficking. This has increased the consciousness of individuals, communities and organisations such as law enforcement, on issues related to human trafficking. For example, in 2013 a partnership was developed with the National Association of Friendship Centres to develop an information campaign targeting aboriginal populations (Lowe 2012). NAP has also led to the development of several tools that will be used to assess the scope and nature of trafficking within particular communities, tailored to local contexts. For example, in 2013, SWC, in consultation with public sector and civil society stakeholders, developed a local safety audit with particular emphasis on aboriginal and youth at-risk populations (Lowe 2012).

At the organisational level, the increased attention NAP has brought to human trafficking has led to renewed focus and investigation on emerging areas of concern. For example, after stakeholders raised awareness of the vulnerability of temporary foreign workers, the Human Trafficking Taskforce began investigating trafficking concerns for foreign workers (Lowe 2012). The RCMP, Canada Border Services Agency, immigration and other institutional stakeholders are now providing information to temporary foreign workers on their rights, and are working to strengthen their efforts in combatting trafficking for foreign nationals.

14.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

This comprehensive, integrated and multipronged approach has allowed Canada to identify current and emerging trends, and address barriers and challenges in combatting human trafficking. The strategy provides lessons for other countries. Although it is early in the implementation of NAP, positive results have been seen in prevention activities, increasing services for victim response, detection of traffickers, and working to strengthen partnerships on both the national and international levels. Throughout these efforts, the government has recognised the importance of working with multiple stakeholders, such as service providers, international experts, law enforcement agencies and other government and non-governmental organisations, to all contribute to the successful design, implementation and monitoring of NAP.

Nevertheless, a number of key challenges remain. First, there are critical gaps in knowledge about the scope and nature of human trafficking in Canada. As victims of trafficking are often from marginalised populations and may have deep distrust of authorities, statistics captured through policing records are inadequate to paint a

clear picture.¹ This hinders the ability to properly assess, respond and monitor efforts to address human trafficking.

Second, even though NAP focuses on the prosecution of traffickers, there are many limitations and barriers to prosecutions and court cases. Victims are often reluctant to come forward, due to fear of reprisal, deportation or issues relating to post-traumatic stress. Police investigations often depend on a complaint to proceed yet many women are unable or unwilling to report (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). Additionally, the Criminal Code's definition of exploitation depends on a victim showing she believed that her safety or the safety of others was threatened, meaning that successful trials often hinge on the victim's testimony. This is often compromised due to post-traumatic stress that can result in mixed testimony, confusion and other emotional results of trauma. Lengthy and intensive court processes are demanding, and at times re-traumatising, for victims. As seen through low convictions, prosecution capacity remains weak and is an area for further engagement.

Despite the comprehensive policy framework in place, there is still scope for NAP to address the wider systemic and structural barriers that underpin cases of human trafficking (i.e. it is not just a criminal or policing issue, but demonstrates the widespread pattern of gender inequality and discrimination against women, girls and vulnerable populations). As the National Task Force stated in its report, 'any reforms must advance the equality of women and men' (especially focussing on marginalised populations such as indigenous, migrant, immigrant or low-income women and girls who are disproportionately affected) (Canadian Women's Foundation 2014). There is a need to strengthen recognition of the importance of a holistic, survivor-centred approach. Although policy and legal mechanisms are a necessary first step, they must also address underlying risk factors that enable the exploitation of women and girls in the first place, or hinder their transition out of trafficking. This means that factors such as economic security, social safety and the empowerment of women and girls are key to any successful human trafficking strategies. In the current framework, there is room to link NAP and human trafficking initiatives to wider gender inequality frameworks, such as on-going violence against women (VAW) programmes in Canada supported by SWC.

Note

- 1 As the Canadian Women's Foundation and National Taskforce on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls have stated in their 2014 report, much of the current information on the impact of human trafficking is anecdotal.

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Chapter 15

Advancing Policy and Legislation to Combat Gender-Based Violence, Grenada

15.1 Context

Domestic violence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment are realities for about 55,000 women and girls living in Grenada. GBV is considered to be a serious social problem, given its persistence and prevalence against mainly women and girls, particularly as it relates to physical assaults and sexual offences. Despite evidence of under-reporting, there were 1,630 reported cases of sexual offence between 2000 and 2010 according to the Royal Grenada Police Force (Ministry of Social Development 2012). In 2011 alone, 388 females reported cases of domestic violence (Government of Grenada 2013a). Sylvester Quarless, former Minister of Social Development, acknowledged in 2009 that GBV was the foremost cause of female death in Grenada (Spice Grenada Newspaper 2009 cited in Kimalee 2011). Even this does not provide a complete picture since, as in other countries, under-reporting of GBV is a huge problem.

Grenada has ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (the Convention of Belem do Para), and recognises the 2011 Declaration of San Salvador on Citizen Security in the Americas. Although it already had legislation and institutions to address GBV, the government realised that this legislative and policy framework was deficient: it was not aligned with the country's international commitments under various treaties, conventions and agreements, while the inadequate response to GBV in Grenada was mainly due to archaic laws, non-existent policies and institutional weakness in enforcement.

15.2 Key institutional actors

The Ministry of Social Development conducted several extensive research studies as precursors to the much anticipated law reforms in Grenada (2012). These included: a Mapping of Existing Social Service Delivery Systems and Identification of Gaps in Current Services (2010); a Review of Policing and Prosecution of Sexual Offences: Country Report for Grenada (2010); and, A Study of the Existing Domestic Violence Act (2001) (cited in Ministry of Social Development and Housing 2014).

The Domestic Violence Unit (DVU) was established in 2003 as a flagship programme of the Division of Gender and Family Affairs, Ministry of Social Development. DVU works in partnership with the Royal Grenada Police Force and other government ministries, as well as with the two main NGOs that address GBV, Grenada National Organisation of Women and the Legal Aid and Counselling Clinic.

Since 2009, the Government of Grenada has initiated four projects to facilitate research, law and policy reform, and implementation of initiatives to enhance

services and facilitate behaviour change (see section 15.5 Strategies). These projects are supported by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

15.3 Theory of change

Grenada recognises that GBV is a violation of human rights and complex in nature owing to its multiple forms, factors, causes and long lasting impacts on victims' lives and families. The government has multiple measures in place to address the issue of GBV, including revising related laws and policies to be more current and responsive to the needs of women victims of violence. This 'Advancing the Legislative and Policy Framework' project is focussed on improving legal frameworks and practices to counter GBV in society more effectively.

15.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal laws, policies and accountability: Grenada has a clear focus on addressing the gaps in laws, policies and institutional mechanisms required for tackling the issue of GBV. Laws that have been put in place to address the issues of GBV include the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 2010, Child Protection and Adoption Act 2010, Criminal Code 1990 and its Amendment 2012, Education (Amendment) Act 2012, and the National Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protocol 2011.

Consciousness of women and men: The Government of Grenada has initiated focussed programmes and activities for sensitisation/conscientisation. These include: capacity building for medical personnel to prepare them to adequately respond to sexual offences; and educational programmes through community initiatives and the use of media programmes and mass public awareness raising, in order to bring about changes in the behaviour of service providers and responders for effective enforcement of law and policy.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Bringing about sociocultural change to address GBV is a top priority of the Ministry of Social Development. Major activities undertaken jointly by the ministry and its partners aim to challenge myths, stereotypes, sociocultural beliefs and traditional practices that legitimise GBV.¹

Access to resources and opportunities: The Government of Grenada offers assistance to victims in finding safe shelter, counselling and participation in empowerment programmes. Temporary safe shelter for women in abusive situations is available at the Cedars Home, which is run by the Ministry of Social Development. The shelter is in northern Grenada, and accommodates approximately 12 abused women and their young children. Boys are accepted into the shelter only if they are very young.

15.5 Strategies

The key function and responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development's flagship DVU programme is to co-ordinate national responses for the prevention and punishment of domestic violence, including providing support for enforcement of policy and legislation, public/mass sensitisation, assistance to victims in finding safe shelter, counselling and participation in empowerment programmes, and educational programmes through community initiatives and the media. Current activities include (Ministry of Social Development 2013):

- **Public awareness:** These activities focus on increasing public awareness throughout the various communities using different strategies. Plans are being developed to produce a series on television and radio, as well as other forms of promotion that will serve to sensitise the public.
- **Education/training:** A number of educational programmes have been undertaken to share information about domestic violence. For example, a series of training workshops has been conducted to address the role of police officers as partners and first responders in the fight against domestic violence.
- **Community outreach:** Outreach efforts include the countrywide distribution of copies of the DVA 2010 booklets, which provide reader-friendly information on domestic violence, and other related pamphlets. These materials are distributed to homes, schools, agencies, social service district offices, community centres and local businesses.
- **Counselling:** Basic counselling assistance is provided to individuals and families impacted by domestic violence. This assistance is designed to help people cope with their trauma, provide strategies for protecting themselves and their families, and make the necessary plans to achieve safety and stability.
- **Relationship building/liaising:** Strategic relationships with individuals and organisations have been developed and maintained to broaden support for DVU's work and ensure that clients' needs are fully met. DVU works closely with a number of inter- and intra-governmental departments, NGOs and community agencies to secure the resources needed by victims of domestic violence.
- **Information/education materials:** DVU has produced printed materials on domestic violence to share with victims and stakeholders.

The research studies undertaken by the Ministry of Social Development identified shortcomings and gaps in law and practice in responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. The minister emphasised the need for collaboration and co-operation at the national, community and individual levels in order to reduce and abate GBV, calling for a holistic approach that went beyond the government to include churches, NGOs, trade unions, the healthcare sector and others. The National Five-Year Strategic Action Plan to Reduce Gender-based Violence in Grenada (2014–18) seeks to improve and develop the capacity, competence and preparedness of all actors in order to: facilitate effective service delivery; provide national sensitisation, awareness

and educational programmes; identify and work with persons at risk of becoming victims or offenders; and prevent offending and re-offending by persons disposed to GBV (Government of Grenada 2013c).

In addition to the specific legislative initiatives to address GBV, the government has also identified gaps in relation to the responses of the law enforcement, social and medical sectors in dealing with GBV. These include (but are not limited to): lack of special DVUs or mechanisms; inadequate psychological support services for abusers; lack of legal aid services and victim support programmes; insufficient shelter, psychological and legal counselling and education support services; lack of sufficient preparation by healthcare providers to collect and present medical/legal evidence; lack of sufficient co-ordination between the medical, law enforcement, social services and justice sectors; and prevalence of stigma, discrimination, victim blaming and gender inequality.

As mentioned earlier, since 2009 Grenada has also initiated projects to facilitate research, law and policy reform, and the implementation of initiatives aimed at institutional strengthening, public sensitisation and changes in the behaviour of service providers and responders for effective enforcement of GBV related law and policy. These have included: Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Family Law and Domestic Violence Reform (OECS [no date]); Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for Ending Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean (UNIFEM 2011); and State Response to End Violence Against Women: Legislative and Policy Reform Implementation Programme (UN Women 2012).

15.6 Outcomes to date

Much has been done to address GBV in Grenada. As mentioned earlier, Grenada has adopted a multidisciplinary approach to bring about change at the individual, community and national levels by ensuring implementation of laws and policies, putting in place response mechanisms, training responders on GBV and sensitising the public on the issue (Government of Grenada 2013b). Although incidents of domestic violence still occur, staff members of response institutions are now better able to deal with victims and perpetrators because of new laws and policies, their participation in training and dialogue, and the range of services that are being further developed.

The main laws that have been enacted to address GBV include:

Domestic Violence Act (DVA) 2010: The act covers physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, emotional abuse, intimidation, stalking, harassment and damage to property between persons in domestic relationships (romantic, blood and by adoption). DVA 2010 details the duties of the police and magistrates, and the rights of victims. It also simplifies procedures for seeking protection against abusers.

Child Protection and Adoption Act 2010: This act includes all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as exposure to domestic violence, neglect and abandonment. It imposes a mandatory duty on professionals responsible for their care.

Criminal Code (1990) and Amendments (2012): These define and punish GBV (sexual and other offences), such as rape, sexual intercourse with a minor, assault,

murder and trading in prostitution. They include intimate partner violence. The 2012 Criminal Code Amendments provide a wider definition of rape and increase the penalties for sexual offences² incorporating a focus on offences against minors, both girls and boys. They also address trafficking in persons and provisions against forced prostitution.

Education (Amendment) Act 2012: The act considers issues related to sexual abuse of students. It gives authority to the Ministry of Education to immediately suspend the service of any teacher who is reported to have committed any act of sexual abuse against a minor who attends the school where he/she is a teacher (OAS 2014).

There have been two key outcomes of the governments' efforts at developing new policies that address GBV.

The first was the development of a **National Strategic Action Plan to Reduce Gender-Based Violence (2014–18)**,³ which was presented to cabinet for approval. The cabinet approved key elements of the plan (OHCHR 2015).

The second was the development of the **National Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Protocol 2011**. The Grenada National Organisation of Women initiated the call for a national protocol, which the Ministry of Social Development supported. Their joint efforts culminated in the development and adoption of the protocol. In demonstrating the significance placed on this protocol, the ministers for each of the sectors, including the Prime Minister as Minister for National Security and Legal Affairs, publicly signed the protocol into force on 16 May 2011 (OAS 2014). The protocol provides a set of guidelines for responders (health, judiciary and police) to guide their interventions, especially for proper management of cases of domestic and sexual violence. The protocol has identified the role of the Ombudsman as key to ensuring accountability of duty bearers. Standard operating procedures, developed for the Ministry of Social Development to further strengthen implementation, detail the manner in which officers will interact with victims of GBV.

The government has also designed a number of **specific activities** with the intent of facilitating change at all levels (national, community and individual) in the area of GBV. These have included:

- Stakeholder consultations.
- Capacity building of the DVU, by adding two GBV officers.
- Enhancement of psychosocial services, by hiring one counsellor to deal specifically with cases of GBV.
- Identification of cultural beliefs, myths and practices that significantly support GBV, in order to inform campaigns on behaviour change.
- Training of 54 police officers, 26 social services providers, 33 service providers and advocates from the NGO community, 44 court clerks and legal secretaries, 95 nurses and 12 doctors on the laws and protocols that relate to GBV.
- The introduction of rape kits for systematic use by doctors.

- Public sensitisation and education through community outreach and use of the media.
- Training magistrates' clerks to use the forms designed for domestic violence cases and related statutory rules, to reduce costs and make access to services easier for vulnerable victims. (However, their working conditions lack client privacy, and instead victims need for legal support at minimal cost is fulfilled by NGOs such as Legal Aid and the Counselling Clinic) (Baksh 2014).

15.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

- Meetings, public forums and other activities in rural areas need to be planned and implemented along with the distribution of information, education and communication materials to ensure appropriate sensitisation of the public.
- Community meetings with women and girls concerning gender equality, its various components and their rights should be planned and carried out on a national basis.
- A number of men are quite willing and should be further engaged to help plan community activities that seek to address GBV.
- It is important to engage with civil society partners in the development and implementation of laws, protocols and awareness of the availability of psychosocial services offered by the Ministry of Social Development and its stakeholders. For example, the Grenada National Organisation of Women was instrumental in the development of the national protocol to address GBV.
- Continuous engagement with the media and composers of calypso, soca music and reggae lyrics is needed to encourage writing and playing of music that does not perpetuate GBV.
- Engagement by parliamentarians and the cabinet is needed on the importance of continuing an aggressive approach to create zero tolerance of GBV.

Grenada has taken steps to end impunity for intimate partner violence, marital rape and sexual violence through legislative and policy reform. Legislation against sexual harassment is not yet in place: a draft bill, developed in 2012 by the Grenada National Organisation of Women in collaboration with government ministries and civil society partners, has been submitted for further consideration by the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

A core indicator of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–15 is the creation of legislative and policy frameworks to address GBV. The outcome anticipated is that laws and customs protecting women's rights will be advanced. Changes in the various provisions of existing laws and formulation of advanced legislative frameworks and policies are important achievements. However, it is the implementation of these laws and policies that will create access to services such as legal aid, counselling services and mechanisms of justice. This in turn will lead to other changes in society with regard to awareness and attitudes of women and men regarding GBV.

Notes

- 1 There are two underlying beliefs to be addressed: GBV, especially intimate partner violence (IPV), is a private matter, so others should not get involved; and women are objects to be used for men's pleasure, owned by men, or treated as property or things. The main myths identified by the government to be addressed are: men should be strong, macho and in charge; perpetrators cannot control their actions; victims cause IPV or sexual assault by their action/conduct/behaviour; and women falsely accuse men of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment all the time.
- 2 The maximum penalty for rape was increased from 15 to 30 years imprisonment. Other sexual offences that now have a maximum of 30 years imprisonment are: sexual intercourse with a person under 13; incest by a male (if the other person is under 13); and sexual intercourse with a stepchild, foster child, ward or dependent (if the other person is under 13). Marital rape carries a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment.
- 3 The ten strategies in the action plan are: 1) Social examination of GBV; 2) Enhancing the capacity of the lead agent – Ministry of Social Development; 3) Development of a multi-agency approach; 4) Sensitisation, training and support for responders in stakeholder entities; 5) Ensuring adequate legal responses, law enforcement and rehabilitation of perpetrators; 6) Improving and providing adequate medical responses; 7) Engaging the education sector for educational programming; 8) Communication for public education and sensitisation; 9) Community mobilisation and outreach; and 10) Providing immediate to long-term support to victims and witnesses, and their families.

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Chapter 16

Women and Child Protection Units, Namibia

16.1 Context

GBV is a pervasive issue in Namibia and one that the government has taken very seriously since gaining its independence from South Africa in 1990. Among other initiatives, Namibia had passed six pieces of legislation related to GBV and created 15 specialised police units across the country dedicated to assisting all victims of rape and domestic violence, regardless of gender, known as Women and Child Protection Units (WCPUs).

In spite of these notable advances, however, the problem of GBV within Namibia has persisted into the twenty-first century, as evidenced by a number of studies conducted, particularly on domestic violence. For example, a study conducted in 2007–08 within eight regions of Namibia found that since 2000, 41 per cent of female respondents and 28 per cent of male respondents had experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner (SIAPAC 2008). What's more, GBV is almost certainly under-reported, not least because of traditional beliefs that sanction violence and stigmatise victims for speaking out.

16.2 Key institutional actors

WCPUs provide a good example of cross-sectoral collaboration. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGE CW), which is the national gender machinery, is responsible for co-ordinating Namibia's gender-related programmes and for providing WCPUs with social workers to assist children with counselling services. This ministry has also recently strengthened support to child witnesses and is the lead agency for the provision of shelters. The Namibian Police, under the Ministry of Safety and Security, is the lead agency in control of WCPUs. The Ministry of Health and Social Services is responsible for providing social workers to the centres, counselling and welfare services for adults, and doctors to do medical examinations and treat survivors of abuse. Several NGOs, especially the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) and Lifeline/Childline, also provide services and support to the WCPUs. UNICEF has provided financial and technical assistance to WCPUs since their inception in 1993.

16.3 Theory of change

GBV can be effectively mitigated or prevented by combining legislative reforms with initiatives that bolster support to survivors and target individuals' consciousness and cultural norms. According to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare '... policies and laws are not sufficient to curb GBV, other programmes need to be introduced to improve the socioeconomic status, especially of women, so that they are not vulnerable due to poverty... Factors that fuel GBV include unemployment, economic hardship,

[and] negative cultural and traditional practices, whereby some of these practices are discriminatory and widen the gap of gender inequality in the country' (MGECW 2014).

The Ministry has also recognised the complexity of addressing GBV, so one of the foundations of its approach has been to build strategies and interventions on a strong evidence base. For example, prior to releasing the country's current National Plan of Action on GBV, a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) study was conducted in 2007–08 to analyse factors and traditional practices that may perpetuate or protect Namibians from GBV and discrimination.

16.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

The Ministry has built on insights gleaned from its activities to further strengthen Namibia's approach to addressing GBV in ways that balance legislative reforms with interventions that also influence individuals' consciousness, societal norms and survivors' access to resources. The work of WPCUs must be understood in the context of these multisectoral interventions.

Access to resources and opportunities: To improve the quality of support provided through WPCUs, which include police officers, social workers and medical personnel, eight of these units have been upgraded to include shelters for GBV survivors, particularly women and children. These shelters were due to go into operation soon after the time of writing (MGECW 2014).

Formal laws, policies and accountability: As noted above, Namibia had already introduced numerous laws to address GBV prior to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2005–15), including the Combating of Rape Act (2000) and the Combating of Domestic Violence Act (2003). The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare has also contributed to the policy landscape on GBV through development and implementation of the National Gender Policy for 2010–20 and through the creation of the National Plan of Action on GBV, 2012–16. More recently, the government introduced legal measures to prohibit rape cases from being withdrawn by victims or relatives, the results of which will be monitored.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Building on recommendations from the 2007 National Conference on GBV, in 2009 the Ministry and stakeholders launched the National Media Campaign on Zero Tolerance of GBV. This campaign included television and newspaper advertisements, a radio drama series, and posters in English and local languages.

Box 16.1 Sending signals, changing attitudes

'Our patriarchal societies teach us that girls are soft and boys are strong, and that there is nothing wrong with being beaten up by your husband or partner. We can start changing that attitude by sending very clear signals that violence against women is not acceptable.'

–SarryXoagus-Eises, Namibia Media Women's Association

Women and men's consciousness: The KAP study conducted in 2007–08 explored root causes of GBV in Namibia, including cultural practices and patriarchal gender norms and attitudes that perpetuate GBV. These norms underpin attitudes and behaviours of frontline social sector and police staff. Currently, all new police recruits receive basic sensitivity training related to GBV (Matthews and von Hase 2013). Further, changes to Namibia's legal and policy framework on GBV, described below, are influencing individual women's consciousness and beliefs regarding their right to live free from violence.

The Namibian people's beliefs and norms surrounding GBV have been conditioned by centuries of colonialism, apartheid and violence, in which GBV was condoned. The challenge facing the Ministry, therefore, is to translate Namibia's progressive policies and laws into transformational norms.

16.5 Strategies

When the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–15 was launched, Namibia had already taken a number of measures to prevent and mitigate GBV with varying degrees of success. As a result, one of the core crosscutting activities in the Ministry's approach to ending GBV has been to reflect, consult and re-strategise. In 2007, it hosted a national conference on GBV with approximately 300 participants, and subsequently launched a KAP study in 2007–08 to provide an evidence base for its reflections and planning. Namibia's National Plan of Action on GBV (2012–16) builds on this commitment by emphasising the importance of data collection and research, as well as collaboration. Two specific strategies are the focus of this case study, one illustrating Namibia's efforts to prevent GBV through popular mobilisation and the other to improve services for survivors of GBV. Both strategies provide important contributions to addressing GBV.

GBV prevention: In 2009, Namibia launched a mass media campaign, 'Zero Tolerance for GBV: Report it to Stop it'. The campaign was designed to raise awareness of GBV; communicate the government's stance of zero tolerance for GBV; and empower service providers and members of the public to prevent, detect and report cases of GBV (MGECW 2014). Also in 2009, the Ministry, in collaboration with the LAC and the University of Namibia's Gender Training and Research Programme, expanded on Namibia's approach to preventing GBV within the government's National Plan of Action on GBV. Strategies included national campaigns, mobilising the grassroots, involving children, youth, faith-based organisations, traditional authorities and media in prevention initiatives, and programmes for abusers. A new zero tolerance media campaign on GBV was launched in July 2015. Another initiative is a special programme to sensitise men on GBV and its effects on society. Meetings are held countrywide for men and by men in order to advocate respect for the rights and dignity of women.¹

Improving responses to GBV: Prevention strategies were complemented by a series of measures designed to improve responses to GBV in Namibia regarding health and other services, information dissemination, family and community support, and legal procedures. WCPUs are a particularly interesting example of support/

service provision for survivors of GBV. The first WCPU was established in 1993 by a steering committee consisting of various ministries and NGOs, and the University of Namibia.

WCPU provide multisectoral support to those who have been subject to sexual or domestic violence by providing a specialised and friendly environment where they can report assaults and get the medical and psychosocial help needed to assist their recovery. The demand for their services is substantial and growing (LAC 2013). WCPUs currently only deal with cases of rape/sexual violence or very serious physical assaults (where the person is hospitalised); all other cases are referred to regular police stations. However, there are efforts taking place to publicise the WCPU mandate and provide clear information to the public on the procedure to follow in cases of GBV. WCPUs receive referrals from schools, hospitals and clinics, psychologists, family and friends of victims, police charge offices, the LAC, the Legal Aid (Ministry of Justice), Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, women's networks, and other community groups and organisations. These units also run outreach programmes to educate the public on GBV, as well as for schools and tertiary educational institutions, church groups and women's groups. As necessary, they advocate for policies and guidelines on GBV and violence against women and children, and also provide training for police officers, social workers and other professionals (LAC 2013).

16.6 Outcomes to date

Constituency/community level: According to the 2007–08 KAP study on GBV, community awareness about Namibia's new laws on GBV is growing; about half of those surveyed could specify a law that might protect against GBV. The majority of respondents could also cite places that women or children could go to for protection. Additionally, a study commissioned by the LAC in 2012 established that when GBV survivors do turn to the court, most complainants successfully attain at least an interim protection order. Further, the majority of Namibians expressed confidence in the effectiveness of police and courts in coping with domestic violence (although a considerable gender gap persists (men 81 per cent; women 57 per cent) (LAC 2012).

However, a number of challenges also remain on the road towards fully supporting victims and effectively preventing GBV. For example, the LAC reports on case outcomes where many GBV victims' interim orders are not converted into final protection orders (i.e. 598 out of 866) (LAC 2012).

National level: Preventing and responding to GBV at a national level and in sustainable ways is evidently a long-term objective. As noted above, a number of challenges remain for service and legal providers in Namibia's efforts to end GBV, which is exacerbated as traditional beliefs about gender roles and violence mix with increasing rates of unemployment, and men's subsequent sense of disempowerment (Britton and Shook 2014). Nevertheless, MGECW has taken on a number of initiatives to prevent/respond to GBV with some success: WCPUs are better equipped and more responsive than they once were; the general public is increasingly aware of legal rights to live free from GBV; and GBV cases are being brought forward through the police

and legal channels, with at least some success. GBV survivors are also finding their voice and providing an example to other women who may be in similar situations.

Box 16.2 A survivor's experience

I went to the Women and Child Protection Unit several times ... [eventually] I was told by a social worker about Friendly Haven [a Namibian NGO that works with victims of GBV], so I went there together with my children. If they had sent me there earlier I would have made my decision to leave him sooner. There I became strong again and could reflect on what was happening in my life. I realised that it is better for my kids to grow up without a violent father... Looking back at my situation, I would advise another woman who has just started to have these sorts of problems with her partner, to not sit and wait for better days. I would tell her to stand up and move on.²

Source: Matthews and von Hase (2013)

Efforts to collect and monitor data on GBV have been spearheaded by the MGECW with varying degrees of success. As the Ministry noted, Namibia's national database on GBV has encountered operational difficulties and, as a consequence, data is collected manually through police offices (MGECW 2014). The KAP survey, conducted in 2007/08 by the Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Committee (SIAPAC), could provide one important benchmark for monitoring changes and developments in the social institutions and discriminatory norms surrounding GBV. Another important area for future research in this area could be regarding the effectiveness of Namibia's mass media campaign on preventing and mitigating GBV.

Civil society organisations such as the LAC and agencies like UNAIDS have also commissioned high calibre research regarding the effectiveness of the state's efforts to advance GBV prevention.

16.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The MGECW has, with a number of public, non-profit and international agencies, taken bold steps towards addressing GBV, an approach that demonstrates the value of collaboration. Progressive legislation has helped to advance change. Public perceptions about the country's commitment to ending GBV are positive, and there is evidence that Namibia's legislation to address issues related to GBV is becoming known and utilised by citizens. Further work is required to better operationalise support services (especially given the demand) and to monitor the ways in which Namibia's mass media campaign has had an influence on how to prevent and respond to this issue.

Specifically, with regard to WCPUs, a number of issues have been identified for action that may be of broader relevance to other contexts where similar cross-sectoral initiatives on GBV occur. The units do not have a dedicated single budget, but are reliant on funding from a variety of ministries, which creates challenges for the

smooth operation of services. Effective functioning of WCPUs also requires strong management committees, involving key stakeholders. Finally, regular, rigorous and standardised collection of data/statistics on WCPU service provision is crucial for monitoring and evaluation of the operation of these units across Namibia, in order to track cases involving GBV, including tracking information about case outcomes and services provided to complainants (LAC 2013).

The Ministry is aware of the remaining challenges, and committed to building on its past work to address GBV. Some of the main activities that it has committed to address include (LAC 2013):

- Carry out a national GBV indicator study.
- Continue collecting and disseminating monthly returns for GBV cases reported to all police stations and mobile police satellites countrywide.
- Intensify legal literacy programmes targeting key service providers (e.g. life skills teachers, traditional leaders, church leaders, police, defence force members) and community members.
- Extend community sensitisation on GBV and male responsibility to the constituency level.
- Incorporate domestic violence indicators into the Demographic Health Survey.
- Revamp the national mass media campaign on GBV.
- Operationalise existing GBV shelters in the regions and improve on the co-ordination mechanism.

Notes

- 1 See more at: UNHCR (2015).
- 2 The impact of GBV for children is a question that the Legal Assistance Centre has underlined as a critical area for future research.

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Chapter 17

Central Registry on Domestic Violence, Trinidad and Tobago

17.1 Context

The World Bank 2012 data categorises Trinidad and Tobago as a high-income developing nation (UNDAF 2013). The status of women in Trinidad and Tobago compares favourably with many middle-income developing nations. The constitution guarantees equal rights for men and women. The country has achieved universal primary education and gender parity in primary and secondary education, and has provision for free pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education for all citizens (OHCHR 2011). The government is committed to the elimination of gender disparity and discrimination, and has been guided in this by several national and international mandates.¹

Although women have made advances in breaking many barriers to employment, there still exists a gender bias that confines women to nurturing and homemaking occupations. Furthermore, domestic violence remains a significant problem, creating an adverse impact on communities, families and children, as well as on the sexual and reproductive health rights of women (UNDAF 2013). In spite of relatively strong legal frameworks and anecdotal evidence indicating the prevalence of GBV more broadly, several challenges persist in addressing this issue, including limited national data on the nature and scope of GBV (UNDAF 2013).

Provisional figures from the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) Unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service indicate that for the period 1 January 2004 to 28 February 2014, 15,312 reports of domestic violence were received. Offences ranged from psychological abuse to murder. ‘Assault by beating’ and ‘threats’ constituted the greatest number of reports, 7,404 and 4,871 respectively (MPSD 2014). On average over the last ten years, there were between 17 and 35 cases a year – depending on the year – in which a woman was killed linked to situations of domestic violence (International Inner Wheel 2012).

The real extent to which domestic violence is perpetrated is unknown due to the fragmented nature of data collection and collation, and the unavailability of sex-segregated data. Despite the overwhelming indicative statistics, Trinidad and Tobago has limited national data on the prevalence and nature of, and responses to, GBV; instead it relies heavily on international studies, sources and police databases (UNDAF 2013).

17.2 Key institutional actors

In Trinidad and Tobago, several groups are responsible for collecting data on GBV (including domestic violence). These include, inter alia, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-SAVE, the police service, the judiciary, national family services and NGOs. To respond appropriately to the issue of domestic violence, sex-disaggregated data

needs to be collected, managed and stored in retrievable formats and further refined to provide descriptions and allow for monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the data ought to provide some basis to evaluate attributes related to situational experiences. The establishment of the Central Registry on Domestic Violence in the country was felt to provide the potential for addressing issues of data collection and assist in initiatives to respond to the scourge of domestic violence:

In the past, attempts to establish a coherent policy framework for programmes for the victims of domestic violence and their families were often frustrated by the fragmented nature of data collection and collation in Trinidad and Tobago.

(McDonald cited in Daily Express 2011)

The Gender Affairs Division (GAD) of the Ministry of Gender Youth and Child Development is the national focal point for gender and development. The division works collaboratively with state agencies, academia and civil society to promote an active and visible policy to mainstream gender perspectives in policies, programmes and projects, and was responsible for pilot testing the Central Registry on Domestic Violence (GAD 2014).

In September 2008, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development (then the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs) contracted the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), St Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies, to conduct a pilot project regarding the establishment of a central registry. An Advisory Committee was constituted in July 2009, with responsibility for guiding and monitoring progress of the registry. The membership of the Advisory Committee comprised representatives from: the GAD; the National Domestic Violence Hotline of the Domestic Violence Unit; the Ministry of Planning and Development – Central Statistical Office; the Office of the Attorney General; the Ministry of Social Development; the Ministry of Health; the Offices of the United Nations System in Trinidad and Tobago – the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and SALISES.

Several government organisations, NGOs and women's shelters came together to pool data for the establishment of a central registry: the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs; the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-SAVE; Trinidad and Tobago Police Service – CAPA; the Rape Crisis Society of Trinidad and Tobago; Coalition against Domestic Violence; Families in Action; Madinah House; and Halfway House.

17.3 Theory of change

The development of a Central Registry on Domestic Violence was considered necessary to address the issue of fragmented data collection and the lack of co-ordinated initiatives around violence against women. The availability of exact data on domestic violence was expected to:

- Identify groups at risk and promote a greater understanding of the extent, causes and consequences of, and the mechanisms necessary to reduce, violence against women.
- Inform policy development, institutional arrangements, programme design and strategies for effective public education and behaviour change.
- Assist in obtaining profiles of victims.
- Monitor the effectiveness of violence prevention and intervention activities.

17.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Women's access to resources and opportunities: The initiative creates an information resource accessible by government and NGOs, and plays a vital role in the formulation of policies to tackle the issue of domestic violence. One of the objectives is to develop interventions and programmes based on the data, which would help create access to certain services and initiatives such as counselling, initiating legal proceedings and offering protection to victims.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: The key objective of the Central Registry is to reduce the incidents of domestic violence (Clarke 2001), thus it aims to bring about a change in the current culture of violence against women.

Women's and men's consciousness: It was noticed during the pilot project that police officers were more proactive in terms of the treatment of domestic violence as a criminal matter.

Formal laws, policies and accountability: As mentioned earlier, Trinidad and Tobago has some strong legal frameworks for addressing the rights of women, including the Sexual Offences Bill and Domestic Violence Act, which were passed in parliament during the 1990s (Clarke 2001), and laws such as the Equal Opportunity (Amendment) Act 2001, which grants women and men equal rights in all spheres of public and private life, inclusive of labour and employment.

17.5 Strategies

A pilot project to establish the Central Registry for Domestic Violence came into being as a result of a policy roundtable held in 1999, which took into account the increase in the number of cases of domestic violence reported to the police and other agencies, balanced against the problem of 'multiple counting', as victims of violence access services provided by different state organisations and NGOs. The project arose out of the need for co-ordination of data collection on domestic violence among all relevant agencies, and in July 1999 a Task Force to Develop a Comprehensive Nation Policy on Domestic Violence came into effect, with cabinet approval.

The key objectives of the pilot project were to:

- Develop a monitoring and surveillance system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of reliable data on domestic violence.
- Determine a minimum core set of items for inclusion in data collection instruments for the proposed central registry.

- Develop data collection protocols for the proposed registry.
- Identify and build a registry of agencies that collect data pertaining to domestic violence, and assign unique identifiers to such agencies.

A Central Registry on Domestic Violence would enable policy-makers and stakeholders to:

- Create a profile of victims and accused persons.
- Understand the frequency and incidences of domestic violence.
- Identify groups/sections of the population who are most at risk.
- Develop interventions programmes.
- Monitor the effectiveness of violence prevention and intervention strategies.

The project was initiated with a desk review of available data on similar projects, existing laws and policies, official crime statistics and existing tools for data collection. In addition, a literature review was carried out to formulate a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence issues.

The Central Registry has provisions for the use of codes that can be assigned to identify various agencies providing services to victims of domestic violence. This feature was expected to assist in quantifying the economic cost of violence against women to the healthcare system, criminal justice system, social sector, employers and families. It would also allow co-ordination between institutions for women/gender and public entities that provide services to victims of violence (Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs 2010).

17.6 Outcomes to date

The pilot project commenced and the final report on this pilot was submitted in 2011. The pilot Central Registry on Domestic Violence was considered to be a success, and it is expected it will be formally established in the near future (CEDAW 2015). The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development is in the process of establishing both a Central Registry on Domestic Violence and a Children's Registry in Trinidad and Tobago.

Some of the key outcomes of the pilot project are as follows:

- Police officers have been increasingly proactive with respect to the treatment of domestic violence as a criminal matter.
- The pilot study established a platform for training and remedial action.
- A simplified and abridged data-capture protocol has been established to permit data collection.

The pilot registry has provided significant insights into the process/mechanism for setting up the system and the possible scale at which it could operate in the initial stages, as well as the data that would help in initiating appropriate interventions

and services for both victims and offenders. It has also provided insights for service providers, such as health care and law enforcement agencies.

As stated by the Attorney General, Brigid Anisette-George, such a registry 'will give teeth to existing legislation', and 'prevention and research are two critical elements to mitigate social problems and this exercise encompasses both facets towards the eradication of the prevalence of domestic violence' (Trinidad Express 2011).

17.7 Lesson learned and the way forward

Given that this was a pilot phase, a number of challenges were identified and lessons learned that would impact full implementation of a Central Registry:

Importance of a pilot project: A Central Registry is possible, but only on a small scale in the initial stages. The pilot project made it possible to test a data collection protocol based on a small number of core data items. A protocol, on its own, will not remedy the data collection crisis. However, it is a vital first step in any effort to ensure that various sectors are collecting the data, which will subsequently have to be fed into a national database for processing and analysis.

Unavailability of data: The availability of data is hampered by the premium placed on the preservation of confidentiality by health authorities and the judicial system. A further problem is that micro-level data is difficult or impossible to obtain.

Threats to data quality: There are challenges due to the recording and classification of data, the capabilities of the persons recording observations, and the training they possess.

Limited human resource capability and importance of training: Agencies responsible for the production of statistical data on domestic violence lack exposure to training in a range of substantive domains, including research methodology, preparation of statistical data for analysis, formal techniques of statistical analysis, use of statistical software, management of statistical data files, and presentation and reporting of findings based on statistical analysis. The pilot study used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) as the principal statistical platform for managing, analysing and storing the statistical data. This is important in so far as it reinforces the significance of training in data collection and data preparation among staff from agencies recording cases of domestic violence.

As mentioned above, it is expected that the Central Registry will be formally set up in the near future to gather, collate and analyse data on domestic violence, and provide the basis for formulation of policy and programmes aimed at addressing this issue (CEDAW 2015). A draft National Gender and Development Policy, which will provide a framework for promoting gender equality, was submitted to the cabinet in 2012 for approval (Freedom House 2013). The Central Registry would complement this policy, providing the tools necessary to properly address gender inequality with respect to violence against women.

Note

- 1 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); CIM Plan of Action; Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Commonwealth Plan of Action; United Nations Millennium Development Goals; Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, 'Convention of Belém do Pará'. See: Organization of American States (2012), *Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), National Report: Trinidad and Tobago*, available at: www.oas.org/es/cim/docs/Trinidad&Tobago2012.doc (accessed on 18 April 2015).

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Section Five

Working with Men for Gender Equality

Gender equality cannot be achieved without the involvement of men and boys because of the gendered nature of social and development problems. Gender equality is not a women's issue and women are not the only ones who will benefit from a more equal society. Rigid gender norms impact the daily lives of both women and men. Men face gender specific issues such as poor health, lower life expectancy and lower education levels. It is therefore important to engage men in working for gender equality since success can only be achieved if women and men participate to make it happen.

Chapter 18

Integrated Approach to Combating Gender-Based Violence, Botswana

18.1 Context

Botswana has the second highest HIV prevalence in the world, at 25.4 per cent of its population aged between 15 and 49 years (2012 data) (PEPFAR 2014). The 2013 BAIS IV AIDS indicator study (Government of Botswana Central Statistics Office 2013) showed a strong gender disparity in HIV prevalence, with women at 21 per cent compared with men at 4 per cent (Botswana US Embassy 2014). According to the 2012 Gender-Based Violence Indicator Study, women in Botswana who experience GBV are 50 per cent more likely to be infected with HIV than women in non-violent relationships. More than two-thirds of females in Botswana have experienced some form of GBV in their lifetime, and 62 per cent reported being victims of intimate partner violence.

In 2001, Botswana adopted an Integrated Approach to Combating Gender-Based Violence as a key strategy espoused by the Commonwealth for its elimination. In the Botswana context, it was important that the Integrated Approach address HIV/AIDS, given the mounting evidence showing that these two epidemics intertwine and intensify each other. This case study explores the strategies, outcomes and lessons learned throughout the implementation of this approach in the context of a specific pilot project in two villages, Kasane and Molepolole.

18.2 Key institutional actors

In 2007, UNIFEM (now UN Women) supported the national gender machinery to design and implement a project to examine the interconnection between GBV and HIV/AIDS. The project was piloted in the villages of Kasane and Molepolole. The project resulted in the establishment and development of district gender committees and the presence of police gender focal points (GFPs) in all police stations. Local GBV and HIV/AIDS service providers were also involved.

The stage for an integrated approach on these issues was set much earlier when the Integrated Approach was first introduced in 2001. Its main focus was to develop a multisectoral and multidimensional response to GBV by creating an environment where all stakeholders would appreciate and understand the critical role they play. Furthermore, stakeholders would identify their respective contribution in the prevention and response to GBV. Specifically, the approach was intended to address the high incidence of GBV and HIV/AIDS; inadequate police response strategies, mainly in handling GBV cases; minimal level of co-ordination and collaboration on GBV services between relevant organisations and departments in Botswana; and the under-reporting of GBV.

18.3 Theory of change

The Integrated Approach draws on good practice for developing integrated and co-ordinated programming that engages multiple sectors across multiple levels. Importantly, it also explores ways of addressing the interrelationship between GBV, particularly VAWG, and HIV/AIDS. The specific pilot project described here sought to remove systemic barriers to access and continuity of treatment for females in the health and social sectors and within legal institutions, along with addressing sociocultural norms that contribute to the incidence of HIV and (Gender Links and Women's Affairs Department 2012) VAWG. The Integrated Approach involves cross-sectoral strategies including legal, healthcare and social services, in addition to economic empowerment. These interventions take place within the context of a strong policy and legislative framework to address GBV and HIV/AIDS, while reinforcing the understanding that policy reforms on their own are not enough to address such issues.

Specifically, the pilot project sought to address formal institutional barriers by establishing referral systems and increasing co-ordination between legal, medical and rehabilitative services for HIV/AIDS and GBV, enabling survivors who access services to be directed to healthcare, police, social services, justice and children's department services without a break in the system. The pilot, in conjunction with wider initiatives, also sought to break down sociocultural barriers through education, awareness and training initiatives, especially among the service providers, to ensure access to services by GBV survivors and, equally importantly, to shift attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate GBV.

18.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

The World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence (2005) indicated that between 24 per cent and 40 per cent of all women experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner, including forced sex (WHO 2005). Associating GBV with increased risk of sexually-transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, the study observed that the risk occurs both through direct infections as a result of rape and coerced sex, and indirectly as a result of females' inability to protect themselves and seek healthcare. Where partner violence and sexual coercion exists, negotiation for condom use or partner's sexual behaviour is difficult, thus further increasing the risk of HIV infection (SVRI 2015).

In such a scenario, creating a deeper understanding of GBV causes and strategies for prevention is as essential as developing health and social sector service responses. Patriarchal notions related to sexuality perpetuate the acceptance of violent partner behaviour when negotiating for safer sex or refusing unwanted intimacy. Men's power over women also influences women's ability to obtain a test for HIV and to seek treatment in case of infection (Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna and Shai 2010). Prevention strategies need to address the unequal power relations between men and women, and challenge gender norms and practices that put women at a higher risk of exposure to HIV. At the same time, social norms impact on how females who experience GBV

are treated by health and social service providers and legal services. The Gender at Work Analytical Framework provides a basis for mapping the multiple strategies undertaken through Botswana's Integrated Approach:

Women's and men's consciousness: Like many other countries in the region, Botswana has invested in mass campaigns against GBV to challenge gender norms that condone or perpetuate violence. At the same time, community level initiatives such as awareness training and intergenerational workshops encourage individuals to reflect on their attitudes about females, violence and sexuality in ways that challenge discriminatory social norms.

Women's access to resources and opportunities: There is a commitment to expanding comprehensive, high quality GBV services to survivors throughout the country. Importantly, the underlying causes of females' vulnerability to GBV and HIV are also being addressed (e.g. through economic empowerment programmes that help to lessen women's economic dependence on men, and therefore men's power over women).

Formal laws and policies: There is a strong policy and legal framework in place that serves as an accountability mechanism for the Integrated Approach. For example, a strong legal basis for gender equality in marriage has been provided by the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act (2008) and the Abolition of the Marital Powers Act in 2004 (Botswana Country Statement 2009). In 2007, after the successful participation of millions of civilians in 'Sixteen Days of Activism on Gender Violence', the 'National Action Plan to End Gender Violence' was drafted to continue civic engagement in discussions on intersections of HIV and GBV. Similar policy frameworks exist for HIV/AIDS, including the first and second 'National Strategic Framework' that provides the basis for co-ordinating the work of all stakeholders.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: Community acceptance of norms of masculine behaviour and men's use of power over women promotes power inequality between the genders, and perpetuates GBV and women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Within the overall Integrated Approach there are efforts to increase the awareness of the harmful effects of GBV by supporting development and implementation of community action plans to prevent GBV and mitigate impact. The Women's Affairs Department has also worked in close association with faith-based organisations (FBOs) since 2011, under the theme 'End It Now', to combat acceptance of GBV. By making FBOs stakeholders in the process of developing resolutions and strategies to combat GBV, many traditional notions about gender stereotypes have been challenged.

18.5 Strategies

In 2007 the national gender machinery, supported by UNIFEM (now UN Women) designed a project to look at the interconnection between GBV and HIV/AIDS, and this was piloted in the villages of Kasane and Molepolole. The objectives of the project were to investigate the response to GBV and assess HIV/AIDS related services as a

means of better understanding the factors through which GBV intersected with the spread of HIV. Key objectives of the project included:

- Research to investigate the police response to GBV and establish a channel for networking and collaboration between GBV and HIV/AIDS service providers.
- Community dialogue on GBV services.
- Public education on GBV.
- Training and awareness raising on gender, GBV and women's economic empowerment programmes, as well as policies and laws that promote gender equality for GBV and HIV/AIDS service providers, community leaders and gender committees.

The results supported the government in designing more strategic and comprehensive cross-sectoral interventions as well as efforts to create strategic partnerships across all of society:

- Gender committees were established at district and community levels, in all police stations and crime prevention units – a structure responsible for community mobilisation on gender-related issues, particularly GBV.
- The Department of Social Services, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education engaged community leaders (chiefs, councillors etc.) to raise sensitivity on gender and GBV issues, and to collaborate on community outreach activities.
- The government continued to support rehabilitative organisations, providing psychosocial support and places of safety for survivors of GBV.
- Strategic partnerships were formed with religious structures to campaign against GBV, particularly to reach the church-going community.
- Mobilising men on issues of GBV continued through collaboration with structures such as the HIV and AIDS Men Sector.

18.6 Outcomes to date

Among the many outcomes to which the Integrated Approach has contributed, four are emphasised below.

Police reforms and capacity building: In response to the pilot project, district gender committees and police GFPs were established in all police stations. Another significant result was the mainstreaming of gender into police work, with a strong component on response to GBV. Key outcomes of the mainstreaming exercise included incorporation of gender within the police training curriculum for both in-service and pre-service training, leading to systematic GBV training for police officers, and the development of tools that facilitate capture of gender-disaggregated data.

Importantly, in 2008 the Domestic Violence Act No. 10 was passed providing survivors of domestic violence with access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and

support services. Police response and ability to refer survivors to appropriate services is paramount.

From 2008 to 2011, about 195 police officers received gender sensitivity training through GFPs. Furthermore, the Police College training module now includes GBV. The Police Department also undertook development and utilisation of a GBV data collection tool to facilitate capturing of sex-disaggregated data. The Police Department started documentation of female sex workers' experiences, in order to be able to provide adequate multi-pointer services. Development of a Police Gender Strategy is ongoing.

Public awareness, education and training: Public education and awareness-raising campaigns on GBV were intensified, resulting in the initiation of *Dipitso* (national consultations) on GBV. The results of the feasibility study on the institutional response to and justification for the GBV Referral System were shared and discussed at these consultations, which resulted in national stakeholders endorsing the establishment of such a system. Momentum generated from this process resulted in the resuscitation of civil society action, including the media, towards awareness raising on GBV and related factors. The national consultations also endorsed the establishment of a GBV Referral System through a pilot exercise to establish GBV referral mechanisms, including guidelines, institutional protocols and a national database on GBV.

In 2012, training of *Dikgosi* (community leaders) began in mainstreaming of gender into the customary justice system. Some 112 *Dikgosi* developed a gender-mainstreaming curriculum, with a module on GBV and human rights resolutions, for addressing GBV and gender inequality.

Integrated research and database: One key strategy used to address the lack of information on GBV was the regularisation of research on different GBV issues to establish or strengthen baseline information. As an initiative to support the operationalisation of the Domestic Violence Act 2008, research was conducted to identify gaps and challenges that hinder effective implementation of this Act by different service providers. This resulted in the development of regulations to standardise and provide further guidance on its implementation.

The first ever, national study (GBV Indicators Study) to establish the prevalence of VAWG was conducted in 2011–12. This gave rise to a greater demonstration of commitment to addressing GBV and more engagement of stakeholders in government, parastatal and private sector organisations, institutions of learning, non-governmental and community-based organisations, as well as FBOs. This study also served as a springboard for addressing other forms of violation of women's rights, such as unequal rights to inheritance. Together, these initiatives will support monitoring systems to track the incidence of GBV, improve inter-agency management and multisectoral reporting, and monitor achievements of programmes related to GBV.

Responding to the multiple causes of women's vulnerability to GBV: Different studies point to the economic dependence of women on men as a factor strongly associated to GBV. The GBV indicator study revealed that economic dependency on

men contributes to women's under-reporting of incidents of violence and withdrawal of reported cases. The dependence of women on men for economic reasons was also identified in the national HIV/AIDS response as a factor that increases the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection (Government of Botswana 2008). One of the strategies adopted by the government to address the rising prevalence of such violence due to this factor is increased provision of support for women's income-generating activities for economic independence.

In addition, the government (through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development) provides a safety net, including food baskets and facilitation of foster care services, to curb GBV and the HIV/AIDS vulnerability of children from child-headed households. In 2012 and 2013, two National AIDS Council Sectors (Women Sector and Men Sector) developed national HIV/AIDS strategies to address the respective vulnerabilities of women and men to HIV/AIDS and GBV. Additional activities included enrolling men as partners for the promotion of gender equality and elimination of GBV, as well as enrolling prominent males as advocates and creating exclusive platforms for discussing female and male related issues.

18.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

Through its various strategies, Botswana has contributed to knowledge building on integrated approaches to dealing with GBV and HIV/AIDS. The reflections of the national gender machinery provide important practical lessons on both the challenges and ways forward in attempting to put into practice the aspiration of working in an integrated and co-ordinated way to address these issues:

- National women's machineries (NWMs) have important knowledge and skill sets that are crucial to integrated approaches to GBV, but they rarely have the resources to direct these processes as effectively as they would wish. Implementing integrated approaches requires NWMs to engage other stakeholders with relevant skills and experience to build capacity or support the process.
- Creating think tanks and multidisciplinary teams, though costly, can help to remedy the absence of models that are specific to the context and realities of each country situation. This also enables the broadest sectoral engagement possible to support fully integrated approaches.
- Complex issues require multidimensional, well-designed and well-funded development programmes. This requires nimble programme management and monitoring with an ongoing assessment of progress, being prepared to adjust programmes when necessary, and a willingness to address significant issues as they emerge.
- As new, unanticipated issues emerge, these need to be prioritised by key stakeholders, keeping in mind the overall scope of the original plan.
- Changes in GBV and HIV, and the gender-related social norms that underpin their prevalence, are not achievable within the timeframe of a typical programme framework. Short-term outcomes like those described in this case study may be

intermediate steps along the way and can contribute to an understanding of how change happens in social norms and behaviours related to GBV.

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Chapter 19

Pacific Women's Network Male Advocacy Programme, Pacific Islands

19.1 Context

The Pacific region is made up of Pacific Island Countries (PICs), which are widely dispersed over the South Pacific Ocean and vary in size, geographical conditions, resources, populations and cultures. Gender inequalities have remained deep and persistent in the region. Women make up just 4 per cent of parliamentarians in the Pacific (the lowest rate in the world), compared to the global average of around 20 per cent. Across the region, there is a large gap between male and female participation in economic activity. Men outnumber women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector by approximately two to one (Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development [no date]). The Economist Intelligence Unit's Women's Economic Opportunity Index (EIU 2012) ranks two Pacific countries – Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (PNG) – in the bottom five of those reviewed globally, just above Yemen, Chad and Sudan.

VAWG is being increasingly recognised as a concern by governments in the Pacific. According to the World Bank's 2012 World Development Report on *Gender Equality and Development*, between 60 and 70 per cent of women in Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu experienced some form of domestic violence. In another study conducted in Fiji Islands, 80 per cent of all women reportedly experienced violence within their home sometime in their life. In 95 per cent of these cases, victims were female and perpetrators were male; 41.6 per cent of women who experienced violence also reported being hit while pregnant (FWCC 2001). In PNG, two-thirds of wives have been hit by their husbands and nearly 97 per cent of those have to seek medical treatment (Bradley 2001). In Samoa, 46 per cent of women interviewed had experienced some form of partner abuse – of which 38 per cent was physical abuse, 19 per cent emotional abuse and 20 per cent sexual abuse (United Nations Population Fund and Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2006). In the majority of cases, violence experienced by women and girls was perpetrated by men they knew within the expected 'safe haven' of home and family.

Responding to this high prevalence, the last decade saw the issues of domestic violence gain great visibility and currency in the region. Many Pacific leaders called for legal and non-legal measures to respond to the socioculturally embedded issue of violence and abuse, which disproportionately hampers the holistic participation of women in the public sphere (Lievore and Fairbairn-Dunlop 2007). At the 40th Pacific Islands Forum (2009), the leaders 'acknowledged the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in the Pacific and the risk it poses to human security' and collectively committed to the 'eradication of gender-based violence (GBV)' (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2009).

19.2 Key institutional actors

The Pacific Women's Network against Violence against Women (the Network) has played an indispensable role in bringing issues of VAWG from the periphery to the centre of the public policy agenda, by working in collaboration with several country and regional women's organisations like the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) and Pacific Regional Rights Team.

The Network was born as a result of the Pacific Regional Meeting on Violence against Women and Girls in 1992, which has taken place every four years since then, in collaboration with FWCC (SPC [no date]). Many women's organisations realised that some of the issues relating to gender equality could be effectively addressed through regional approaches, whereby pooled resources and a common approach to this region-wide problem could achieve greater impact (Government of Australia 2014). In the last decade, the Network has pioneered advocacy, activism, campaigning and lobbying for public provision of care and support to survivors of VAWG across the Pacific. It has become the focal point for End Violence against Women and Girls initiatives in the Pacific region, where it continues to identify new and emerging issues and strategize ways for moving forward while addressing issues of VAWG.

The Network comprises more than 28 regional organisations from 13 Pacific Island Countries that share a common goal of eliminating VAWG in their communities.¹ The Network now runs approximately 37 programmes from four regional centres, with a focus on training and capacity building of men and women within formal government institutions to effectively deal with cases of VAWG. FWCC acts as the Secretariat of the Network, and as its clearinghouse for information.

19.3 Theory of change

Women's groups in the Pacific region have linked unequal gender relations to cycles of violence that maintain the low status and high levels of victimisation of girls and women. The engagement of men is globally recognised to be a key VAWG prevention strategy, and is increasingly finding popularity as an effective approach within the Pacific. The objective of the Male Advocacy Programme (MAP), established by the FWCC in 2002, is to prevent violence through raising awareness (Mukasa, McCleary-Sills, Heilman, Namy, Brady and Stich 2014). After its success in Fiji, the programme was extended through the Network to the Cook Islands, PNG, Tonga and Vanuatu. MAP addresses two key factors that contribute to VAWG: lack of knowledge of and belief in human rights, and unequal power relations. MAP seeks to increase the knowledge of participants on human rights and women's rights. It also seeks to address unequal power relations, by engaging with men and prompting them to think about privileges and entitlements accrued by inequalities between men and women.

19.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Formal law, policies and accountability: Unless governments in the Pacific region enact laws and enforce stronger accountability measures, VAWG will continue

unabated in the region. Over the last two decades, the Pacific Women's Network against Violence against Women has engaged in research to identify gaps in constitutional laws, some of which dated back to colonial times (Griffen 2006). With support from the Network, there have been positive developments in the legal framework in the Pacific region. Palau, Samoa, Tonga and Kiribati have all enacted domestic violence legislation. Domestic violence is now treated as a criminal offence in PNG, following the passing of the Family Protection Act (2014). However, government institutions are not immune to gender biases and it is important to work with male advocates within these formal institutions so that they can challenge their own institutional structures and develop policies and programmes to address VAWG.

Access to resources and opportunity: Women and girls who experience violence face multiple barriers in accessing protection (i.e. from the judiciary, police) and other support services (UNIFEM 2009). Even if there are strong laws, entrenched gender-based discrimination within these service delivery institutions means that women victims of violence are unable to access the services they need. Amnesty International found that there were severe deficiencies in police responses to violence against women in the Pacific region, including failing to inform women about their rights, failure to consider privacy and safety of victims, and failing to refer women to other support services (Amnesty International 2006). Network organisations have worked hard to train police officers, judges, magistrates and prosecutors on responding to violence against women.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices: In many countries around the world, including in the Pacific region, GBV is part of the systematic control of women by their partners and family members. Many officers in the justice system – police, lawyers, magistrates, judges and court staff – share the values and views of their communities, including acceptance of VAWG (Ellsberg, Bradley, Egan and Haddad 2008). Police and community members encourage women to reconcile cases of domestic violence, rather than pursue a formal complaint, to avoid social disruption to the family and community. In the absence of strong legal systems, customary law plays an important role in addressing VAWG; perpetrators often go unpunished in the region because of such practices at the community level. Members of the Network envisaged that by harnessing the support of male advocates within formal and informal institutions – such as the police, *TuraganiKoro* (village headman), youth groups and faith-based organisations – attitudes towards discussing the issue of VAWG in public could be changed. This would effectively challenge existing cultural norms that consider men to be dominant, and address other exclusionary practices that dissuade women from reporting and seeking help.

Women's and men's consciousness: The values and attitudes of men and women are identified as significant barriers to gender equality in the Pacific region. Women's lack of agency – or their belief in their own self-worth and ability – limits both what they choose to do and what they expect of others (Government of Australia 2014). It was anticipated that by engaging more men in dialogue on issues of violence and abuse, change could be brought to the mind-sets of people and constructive attitudes shaped; this in turn would help eliminate violence and the threat of violence.

19.5 Strategies

MAP was started by FWCC in 2002 and developed over the years, using case studies of best practice from around the world and adapting these to the Pacific context. MAP encourages men to become 'agents for change' and positive non-violent role models in their communities by teaching other men about gender roles, gender equality and masculinity, and advocating for non-violent behaviour.

Box 19.1 Founding MAP

'The intention was to set up core groups of men who could then influence other men in whatever sphere of work or social setting they were involved...'

–Shamima Ali, FWCC Co-ordinator, 2012 (Pacific Women's Network against Violence Against Women 2012)

MAP has the following key strategies:

Selection of male advocates based on their ability to influence formal and informal norms: Staff members from FWCC identify potential male advocates through their regional training programmes and other activities. Advocates are selected based on their potential to influence key constituencies or mechanisms. In addition to male advocates, who tend to be local leaders such as police and traditional leaders, the programme is also training community men and boys. Different strategies are used for reaching out to youth and other men. As one expert from FWCC noted: 'We've had some new strategies for outreach among males – we've had young people in sporting teams come in. They ask for sponsorship for their uniforms. We train them and then they raise awareness of violence against women at their tournaments' (Ellsberg *et al.* 2008).

Training programme that focuses on men's role in perpetuating gender-based discrimination: The male advocates typically participate in a four-stage training programme, with several weeks of training overall. The first stage is run by Network members, such as FWCC, whereas the final training is conducted by a 'masculinity' expert. The training programme focuses on concepts of GBV, women's human rights and the role male privilege plays in excluding women from exercising their rights. VAWG is positioned as an outcome of men trying to control women to retain the privileges afforded to them through the virtue of being male. As Shamima Ali, the Co-ordinator of FWCC, points out: 'This work is about involving men in efforts to eliminate violence against women from a rights-based approach, and one of the key elements is these men firstly challenging their own behaviour before calling themselves advocates on women's human rights or trying to influence other men' (Ali 2014).

Accountability to women's organisations: Male advocates are monitored by the women's rights movement and are accountable to the Network's organisations. Women's organisations have the ultimate say on whether a male advocate is ready to

start work in his community, and several have been dismissed from the programme due to lack of progress or, in some instances, use of violence against women.

Male advocates apply their learning to real life contexts: After completion of their training, male advocates apply their learning to influence other men and institutions, with a view to preventing VAWG and improving responses to women survivors. Activities undertaken by male advocates include: providing support to women living with violence; actively supporting the work of women's groups such as FWCC and Vanuatu Women's Centre, including organising and participating in community awareness programmes; advocating for women victims of violence with police officers and village heads, and monitoring and reporting inappropriate responses by other service providers and community leaders; and incorporating a human rights perspective into their own work.

As an example of the last point, police personnel across the Pacific region have also been trained under MAP. Trained male police advocates have then used their position to influence the security sector, to improve the access of victims/survivors to the police. They have also influenced their own systems by changing attitudes and behaviour when dealing with cases of VAWG.

19.6 Outcomes to date

Beginning in Fiji, the programme has slowly expanded to the rest of the Pacific region, with workshops in Cook Islands, Kiribati, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. Men targeted over the years have been village chiefs, police officers, youth workers, teachers, pastors, priests, policy-makers and other men strategically placed within their communities (Ali 2014). In the period between July 2009 and June 2012, FWCC trained 392 male advocates. Similarly, between July 2007 and June 2012, Vanuatu Women's Centre trained 282 male advocates. Reports indicate that demand for additional training continues to grow. In response to these growing demands, FWCC and the Network produced a handbook for training male advocates in 2011 (Fisher 2014).

According to a 2011 study conducted by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) to examine the contribution of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) towards addressing VAWG in the region since 2008, work with men and boys is the prevention strategy area that has seen the most progress (Ellsberg et al. 2011). The study notes that MAP has been the driving force behind the growth of this strategy in the Pacific region.

Similarly, another ICRW review undertaken in 2014 found that MAP has been effective in bringing about individual and intra-personal changes among participating men across the region. Men who participated in the survey noted that after undergoing the training programme, they shared household tasks more equitably with their partners and also stood up for women's rights in conversations with friends. The review noted that: 'While the review could not definitively conclude what community and institutional level changes are emerging from the program, it did uncover evidence that the program activities are contributing to changes in attitudes and behaviours at the individual level' (Mukasa *et al.* 2014).

Box 19.2 A male advocate's experience

'We are trained male advocates on communicating women's human rights and gender equality in our own respective countries; this we have made personal commitments to through our association with the Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women and Girls and the crisis centres we work with on the ground. This [commitment] can never be taken away from us but to know that the government is also committing to the same thing and supporting gender equality through various agreements and documents – it makes our job that much easier.'

–Male advocate, Tonga

19.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The experience of the Network in implementing MAP offers many interesting lessons for other countries:

Engaging men increases the likelihood of success: The success of the programme has shown that rather than engaging men only as potential perpetrators of violence, programmes to address VAWG are more successful when they are able to leverage men's influence as critical decision-makers and potential agents of change, while at the same time recognising that the gender biases men hold make them more susceptible to inflicting violence on women.

Synchronise efforts by women and men to promote gender equality: The programme has also demonstrated that synchronising efforts by women and men to promote gender equality is more effective than conducting efforts in isolation from one another. The programmes are always rolled out in a locality or region after training for women activists has taken place. This ensures that the work of male advocates can be monitored and they remain accountable to the women's organisations.

The partnership between male advocates and Committees against Violence against Women (CAVAWs) in Vanuatu is another example where women's rights activists have worked well with male advocates. In addition to police officers and other local authorities, many traditional chiefs have undergone male advocacy training, which has facilitated dialogue between women activists and local councils of chiefs. It was found that the chiefs involved in MAP trusted their village's CAVAW members deeply and often accompanied them on visits to neighbouring villages for community awareness sessions (Mukasa *et al.* 2014). This has allowed male advocates to participate in a broader effort by playing a leading role in violence prevention in their communities (Ellsberg *et al.* 2008).

Using a gender-transformative approach in training methods and messages for men: The male advocacy training curriculum is built upon a gender-transformative approach, which has been found to be particularly instrumental in helping male advocates understand the power relations that exist between men and women. For many male advocates, the training programme is a journey of self-discovery,

by which they are encouraged to reflect on ways that they use male privilege and use it to control women or deny women the opportunity to exercise their human rights (Vlais 2014).

Regional approach to addressing VAWG can be particularly effective: The programme has shown that when countries within a particular region face similar challenges on VAWG, it is particularly effective to take a regional approach – where learning from one country can be replicated elsewhere. However, this has to be combined with support to build local coalitions. The Network acknowledges that working through local coalitions is important to support ownership, tap into local understanding, facilitate development of local solutions and build the capacity of local development partners to implement those solutions. It extends the number of partners and resources available to address VAWG.

Note

- 1 Includes organisations from Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu (Ali 2014).

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Chapter 20

Channelling Men's Positive Involvement into the National Response to HIV/AIDS, United Republic of Tanzania

20.1 Context

The importance of developing integrated strategies to address HIV and gender-based violence (GBV) are well known. This case study focuses on a recent multi-stakeholder effort, supported by the Government of Tanzania, to put this knowledge into practice: Channelling Men's Positive Involvement in the National Response to HIV/AIDS (CHAMPION). CHAMPION demonstrates an innovative approach to addressing GBV prevention strategies within broader HIV/AIDS programming, working with a diverse range of stakeholders from the international to local levels.

Power imbalances in sexual relationships leave women particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. More than half of the 1.4 million people living with HIV in Tanzania are women. To lessen the impact of HIV on women, and to improve the health of both women and men, it is essential that the gender-related social norms, roles and behaviours perpetuating their vulnerability to GBV be addressed (EngenderHealth 2014).

Tanzania is a regional leader in addressing GBV through national policy measures; the country was one of the first in Eastern Africa to develop a National Plan of Action for Prevention of Violence against Women and Children (2001–15).¹ Further, Tanzania became one of the first countries in the world to include violence against women as an indicator of poverty in the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Despite a strong legal and policy framework, GBV remains a pervasive problem in Tanzania. The 2010 Tanzania Demographic Health Survey (TDHS) reported that one-third of Tanzanian women aged 15–49 had experienced physical violence within the past 12 months. Furthermore, the majority of this form of GBV takes place within women's and girls' own homes.² Tanzania's high rates of GBV become even more alarming when considered alongside the country's HIV/AIDS epidemic, since GBV acts as a major risk factor for HIV acquisition.

20.2 Key institutional actors

Working with the Government of Tanzania, CHAMPION was funded through the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It was launched in 2008 and operated until 2014 in 42 districts in 15 regions across Tanzania, under the leadership and management of the global women's NGO, EngenderHealth (2013). Specifically, CHAMPION's GBV-related work included partnerships

with 14 stakeholders to network and build local capacity, ensuring the scale-up and sustainability of programmes at the community and institutional levels.³ National-level initiatives, such as mass media campaigns and policy reforms, were co-ordinated in collaboration with the Government of Tanzania, particularly the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children. The project also relied on technical assistance and methodological guidance from Raising Voices, a Uganda-based organisation with expertise in fostering a critical reflection on gender and power through community interventions under its SASA! methodology (2013). The involvement of local civil society organisations in service provision, awareness raising and advocacy on GBV is clearly a priority for the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children.

20.3 Theory of change

The project's theory of change focuses on involving individual men and women as facilitators to lead dialogue and reflections about male involvement in HIV prevention, and in the transformation of gender norms that perpetuate GBV and HIV transmission. CHAMPION is based on the hypothesis that a unique set of interventions applied at different levels (e.g. the individual, community, broader societal levels) will have a positive effect on gender equitable attitudes and behaviours, and consequently on HIV, GBV and reproductive health outcomes (USAID 2013). It uses an ecological model, which draws attention to the context surrounding HIV and GBV, to promote positive change in gender norms and behaviours. In other words, to change individual behaviour, programme interventions must target individuals as well as the community and social environment in which they live.⁴

Addressing social norms at multiple levels has been reported to be an effective strategy to not only prevent GBV, but to also remove one of the barriers that GBV survivors face in accessing services. As the Ministry points out: 'Community based educational activities can increase children's and women's knowledge of legal and social rights and empower them to seek help for abuse. They can also challenge the underlying beliefs that justify women's subordination and the use of violence for settling conflicts. Promoting non-violent and equitable relationships between men and women is the key to preventing future violence' (MCDGC 2014).

20.4 Social institutions and discriminatory norms

Gender norms – societal expectations of the behaviours of women and men – are among the strongest factors fuelling HIV transmission worldwide. The CHAMPION project squarely addresses the inequitable gender norms that underpin the construct of masculinity and exacerbate GBV. CHAMPION challenges the conventional rhetoric in which women are victims and men are perpetrator, by instead emphasising the vital role men have to play in preventing and responding to GBV. In this case study, the Gender at Work Analytical Framework is used to

map the ‘strategies’ used by the CHAMPION project to address social institutions and discriminatory norms:

Formal laws, policies and accountability:

- Policy scan of government documents and policies related to men’s involvement in ending GBV supported by CHAMPION programme technical staff.
- Formal national level steering committee of members of the MenEngage Tanzania (MET) network to co-ordinate project efforts.⁵
- Development of GBV tribunals⁶ at the community level to provide counselling and support to survivors of violence, while offering informed advice on appropriate courses of action.
- Access to resources and opportunities.
- Training and technical assistance provided to MCDGC staff to support internal advocacy efforts.
- Providing technical assistance to NGOs and government ministries about gender transformation, male engagement, and sexual and reproductive health.

Women’s and men’s consciousness:

- Enhancing women’s and men’s skills and knowledge on how to increase gender equity through group education interventions via the CoupleConnect and EngenderHealth Men as Partners® (MAP) programme.
- EngenderHealth’s MAP programme, designed to provide space for men and women to examine harmful gender norms and practice.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices:

- *Kuwa Mfano wa Kuigwa* (‘Be A Role Model’) is a GBV mass media campaign using radio, TV, brochures, posters, football tournaments and activities in bars to reduce social acceptance of GBV.
- At a community level, forming change action teams (CATs)⁷ and community change clubs (CCCs) comprising men and women aged 25 to 49 who were interested in leading community change around gender norms, to engage CHAMPION participants as change agents, and to expand outreach on CHAMPION’s messaging through behaviour change communication strategies.⁸
- *Vunka Ukimya* (‘Break the Silence’) Activation Tour in 2010, bringing together musicians, actors and CHAMPION facilitators to conduct outreach activities in 15 districts.

20.5 Strategies

The CHAMPION project was an innovative six-year initiative (2008–14) to increase men’s positive involvement in preventing the spread of HIV in Tanzania, using a holistic approach. The project worked to reduce men’s high-risk behaviour by: promoting

dialogue about men's roles in HIV, reproductive health and gender equality; engaging community members and leaders in GBV sensitisation; and developing behaviour change communication tools and messages at various levels. CHAMPION was implemented in collaboration with local NGOs and workplace partners to sensitise stakeholders at an individual level (group education programmes, CoupleConnect and MAP); at a community level (creation of CATs and workplace action teams); and at a national level (mass media campaigns) (Champion 2014).

Box 20.1 Challenging beliefs, preventing violence

'Community-based educational activities can...challenge the underlying beliefs that justify women's subordination and the use of violence for settling conflicts. Promoting nonviolent and equitable relationships between men and women is the key to preventing future violence.'

Source: MCDGC (2014)

At the individual level, for example, over the course of 30 workshops implemented during a three-month period, the MAP programme provided skills on promoting equity and space to examine harmful gender norms to more than 4,200 men and women (USAID 2013). At the community level, with the help of nine lead NGOs, CHAMPION developed CATs in 14 districts as a mechanism to foster participatory outreach and community engagement. Using behaviour change communication tools, digital stories, and information, education and communication (IEC) materials, the teams reached more than 420,000 people in small group and one-on-one interventions. Activities ranged from community dialogues to film showings to sports events. The CATs were also pivotal in rolling out CHAMPION's first mass media campaign, 'Break the Silence', which combined community fairs with television and radio public service announcements.

In addition to community-based events, CHAMPION engaged in a range of media/outreach strategies designed to promote transformation in social norms. At the heart of these strategies lay the 'Be a Role Model' mass media and community awareness campaign, which aimed at reducing the social acceptance of intimate partner violence (IPV), and was co-branded with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children. Using print and electronic media (e.g. posters, brochures, radio and TV), the campaign focussed on motivational GBV messages that called on men to be role models in their communities. During its launch, the campaign was endorsed by Tanzania's First Lady, the United States Ambassador to Tanzania and the Deputy Minister for Community Development, Gender and Children. It received coverage by 12 newspapers, six radio stations and six TV stations (Champion 2012).

This campaign was founded on a belief that shifting norms on IPV would only be possible following intermediate steps, including building community knowledge about IPV as a societal problem, promoting public dialogue and encouraging men to openly oppose it. In an effort to support community members to take these steps, the campaign developed

five communication objectives, to enhance men's willingness to: help survivors of IPV; talk with others about its negative consequences; recognise that forced sex is a form of IPV; reject the notion that IPV is ever justifiable; and believe that an IPV-free home is a happier home (Champion 2012). The campaign was designed to send positive messages, avoid stereotypical constructions of masculinity and stimulate dialogue.

The campaign's messages reached more than 4.5 million people through its advertisements in eight newspapers, two television stations and three radio stations over six months. This media engagement was complemented with community organising, in which the leaders of CCCs and CATs developed outreach activities that built on the campaign's messages. The 'Break the Silence' campaign, for example, marked the launch of CHAMPION's radio and television presence. These messages were expanded and strengthened further through outreach during the World Cup in 2010 within targeted communities. Following MAP a training, CATs also helped establish CCCs to provide those who had completed the MAP curriculum with an opportunity to meet and discuss gender transformation.

20.6 Outcomes to date

Government officials, USAID Tanzania staff and community organisers have commended the CHAMPION project's effectiveness in starting a dialogue and sparking change on a seemingly intractable and pervasive issue such as IPV. CHAMPION powerfully demonstrates the benefits and potential of empowering men to become agents of change in ending GBV. Programme outcomes and impacts were evaluated using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.⁹ For MAP, these included questionnaires to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices of gender norms based on the PEPFAR Gender Equitable Men's (GEM) Scale (Compendium of Gender Scales [no date]). Interviews were also conducted with female partners of MAP participants in a number of districts (Ezekiel 2014).

Community based sensitisation projects through MAP and the CATs contributed to shifting social norms and altering some behaviours. Exposure to campaign messaging has been associated with positive changes in the belief that forced sex is an act of IPV and in reported willingness to act against violence. CAT participants referenced

Box 20.2 A CAT member's experience

'I got the CHAMPION campaign message on improving relationships through couple communication. I decided to follow the advice, and up to now I am living with my partner calmly... peacefully... and we continue understanding each other. I also decided to advise my friend on the importance of good couple communication, setting myself as an example. Furthermore, I advised him on the importance of couple communication as a means for protecting ourselves against HIV, and also the importance of being tolerant to each other's weaknesses for the sake of protecting the family.'

–CAT member, Lindi Town

Source: USAID (2013)

stories from their communities of couples using non-violent behaviour and more open communication as evidence of the changes that had been taking place. In some contexts, trainings had influenced religious leaders and other community authorities, which helped advance dialogue on the effects of GBV.

Qualitative interviews with female partners of MAP participants also revealed some substantive changes. For example, one interviewee noted how her partner's behaviour and expectations have shifted: '... he tells me that, if I don't feel like having sex then I have to say because it is my right, and when I am sick he always helps me with activities like cooking and fetching water... things which are all new... I haven't seen this before' (Ezekiel 2014). Other participants reported similar changes in intra-household relationships, including better, non-violent communication between husbands and wives, and between fathers and their children. These findings were corroborated, for example, through the administration of pre- and post-tests for a series of MAP group education workshops in Kinondoni district, between July and September 2012. At the post-test, participants reporting 'high' support for gender equity increased by 15 per cent.¹⁰

CAT and CCC members also observed that the growth in public dialogue and greater visibility of male allies had increased women's comfort to report cases of GBV within certain contexts. Through the creation of GBV tribunals and sustained community engagement, some CATs reported that women felt more supported and empowered in speaking out against IPV.

Box 20.3 Outcomes from CHAMPION

'Previously, before CHAMPION, local leaders would receive GBV complaints from women, and what they did was keep the complaints to themselves and do nothing... sometimes they would collude and go and talk to the male perpetrators and then the reported complaint would not be addressed through appropriate channels. This has changed now, because we have established a tribunal to deal with GBV, village leaders will not keep these complaints to themselves.'

–CAT Member

Source: USAID (2013)

In campaign target districts, men were more than 3.5 times more likely than men nationwide to hold the view that 'forcing a partner to have sex is violence' (CHAMPION 2014). Men in target districts – where additional CHAMPION programming had taken place – were 4.5 times more likely to report a willingness to help a woman facing IPV than were men nationwide (CHAMPION 2014). These findings suggest that CHAMPION's strategy of combining national media awareness with local community sensitisation was effective. Both nationwide and in target districts, those exposed to and aware of the campaign reported a greater likelihood of initiating a conversation about GBV. The campaign had much more impact in the target districts where CHAMPION engaged community members in outreach events. Most impact measures, except for starting a conversation about GBV, were significantly higher in target districts. Finally, the notion that people should 'stand

up' to violence resonated well with target audiences – impact measures related to this showed the greatest change (USAID 2013).

20.7 Lessons learned and the way forward

The CHAMPION project provides many useful lessons for developing effective programme partnerships and designing innovative programming on social norm change. By adopting an ecological approach in which programming focussed on individual, community, workplace and national level interventions, the project laid an important foundation of enabling conditions for advocacy work and normative shifts on IPV at multiple levels. The initiative has enhanced the capacity of local partners, fostered a national dialogue on GBV, and galvanised important personal and relational changes in a number of targeted communities. Overall, CHAMPION's innovative and integrated approach to engaging men in preventing GBV has demonstrated significant success.

The project has also uncovered a number of important lessons that will be integrated into future programming on GBV and HIV/AIDS prevention in Tanzania. For example, CHAMPION evaluations have highlighted the value of expanding the target population to include more rural areas, children and youth, and religious/community leaders. The project also highlighted the importance of combining norm change transformation with co-ordination between the health, judicial, law enforcement and social work sectors.

CHAMPION made substantive progress in advancing normative shifts, in which men were encouraged to step up and women encouraged to speak out. However, co-ordination across sectors is critical, since those who have been encouraged to report or stand up to GBV may be put at risk if the necessary support services are not accessible (USAID 2013). The Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children has also recognised that services to survivors, such as psychosocial counselling, safety/security measures, legal/justice provisions and health services need to be expanded and rendered more accessible (MCDGC 2014).

In spite of these challenges, it is evident that CHAMPION has made an important contribution in capacity building, awareness raising, consciousness building and norm shifting on gender relations and IPV. Through initiatives like the 'Be A Role Model' GBV mass media campaign and the EngenderHealth MAP® group education programme, the project has contributed to challenging harmful norms around masculinity and violence, by emphasising the benefits and desirability of norms that reframe masculinity and gender relations in more equitable and less rigid ways. At the same time, CAT and CCC members were careful to note that change is gradual, observing that not all community members readily accepted the notion that men had a valuable role to play in building healthy, non-violent relationships.

Notes

- 1 A National Action Plan on the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation (2001–15) was also developed during this time. See: Genderlinks, 'Tanzania National Action Plan', available at: www.genderlinks.org.za/article/tanzania-national-action-plan-2009-06-16 (accessed on 19 September 2015).

- 2 More than four-fifths of women who have experienced physical violence reported that the perpetrator of the violence was a current or former intimate partner, and 44 per cent of ever-partnered women reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by their current or most recent partner. See: MCD CG (2014).
- 3 The 14 stakeholders were: the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children; the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; the police Gender and Children Desks; Mkuki GBV Coalition; Health Policy Initiative/Futures Group; Deloitte Building Organisational Capacity for Results/ Rapid Funding Envelope; Africare; Iringa Development of Disabled Youth and Children; Tanzania Rural Women and Children Development Foundation; Tanzania Home Economics Association; the Family Planning Association of Tanzania (UMATI); Kiota Women Health and Development Organization; Pact Tanzania; and Walter Reed Program Tanzania.
- 4 Different aspects of society influence the relationships individuals have with their environment, among them the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the individual; interpersonal and community factors (family, friends and social networks); organisational factors (social institutions and health facilities); the workplace; and public policy (especially national laws and policies). See: USAID (2013).
- 5 CHAMPION brought together and led the MenEngage Tanzania (MET) network, which consists of organisations working together to encourage men's involvement in promoting gender equality, and particularly in providing health services. The Tanzanian network is a member of the larger multinational MET network.
- 6 Some of the CATs [see note 12] initiated GBV tribunals as a community based mechanism for members of CATs to address GBV. These tribunals discuss GBV cases, provide counselling/support to survivors, and offer advice about an appropriate course of action. See: USAID (2013).
- 7 A cadre of 280 CAT members and more than 2,000 peer health educators – all volunteers – were trained and mobilised to spread CHAMPION's messages and inspire behaviour change within their communities. See: CHAMPION (2014), 'Channelling Men's positive involvement in the National HIV/AIDS Response in Tanzania: An Overview of the CHAMPION Project', CHAMPION Brief No. 1, available at: www.engenderhealth.org/files/pubs/project/champion/CHAMPION-Brief-1-Overview_lowres.pdf (accessed on 19 September 2015).
- 8 For more information on the community level champions, see: CHAMPION, 'Community Matters: Fostering Community Level Champions in Addressing HIV and Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania', CHAMPION Brief No. 5, available at: www.engenderhealth.org/files/pubs/project/champion/CHAMPION-Brief-5-Comm_Matters_lowres.pdf (accessed on 19 September 2015).
- 9 The project's independent, final evaluation involved a quasi-experimental design with three study arms: a comprehensive intervention arm (MAP group education + community outreach); a modified intervention arm (MAP group education only); and a control arm with no intervention. Data was collected at the baseline (pre-test) for each study arm and at the end of the project (post-test).
- 10 These scores were calculated using a Tanzanian adaptation of the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale. For more information, see: USAID (2013).

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Section Six

Key Factors for Success

Chapter 21

Conclusion

21.1 Key factors for success

The case studies featured reflect a decade of commitment, energy and innovation on the part of Commonwealth countries in advancing the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2005–15). There is a strong demonstration of positive results from governmental and civil society interventions to find innovative ways to address the structural and cultural barriers that prevent women from participating equally in society.

The significance of this collection of case studies is the light they shine on ways of changing the perceptions of both women and men about the role women can play in political, economic and social development. There are several common elements appearing throughout the case studies that can be highlighted as key factors for designing successful interventions to advancing gender equality and empowering women. These are as follows:

21.1.1 The importance of multi-stakeholder engagement

When many different actors combine their individual strengths they can achieve significant collective results. Working with leaders across the public and private sectors, regulators, professional organisations and entities – such as stock exchanges and chambers of commerce – helps to create working environments in which women’s corporate leadership is nourished. Engaging with a range of stakeholders in the private sector including employers, business associations and employee representatives, informs the creation of business-focused tools and methodologies that promote gender equality at the workplace in a way that makes economic sense and is appealing to employers.

Most of the case studies attest to the important and varied support of national women’s machineries – from building a cross-party platform for women parliamentarians to strengthen their collective power (Pakistan), to providing policy advice to increasing leadership and governance capacity across a range of different industries in New Zealand. Similarly, partnerships with NGOs and CSOs, community leaders and non-traditional partners, such as popular local artistes, have been important in raising public awareness on VAWG, helping women to access available services and supporting survivors of violence to reintegrate into their communities. NGOs and CSOs often contribute to monitoring performance, research, the development and implementation of laws and protocols, and outreach.

21.1.2 Shifting social norms through engagement with men

Gender equality is not a solely a ‘women’s issue’ and women are not the only ones who will benefit from a more equal society. Rigid gender norms impact the daily lives

of both women and men. Men face gender-specific issues such as poor health, lower life expectancy and lower education levels. Men should also be included in changes towards eliminating discrimination against women and girls. The case studies demonstrate the extent to which women advocates are engaging men as champions of gender equality.

Successful interventions for addressing GBV, HIV/AIDS and gender equality in the workplace have proactively engaged with men to get their personal commitment to be champions of change in their own communities, at work and in government. This has been exemplified through the Workplace Gender Equality Act in Australia and the Pacific Women's Network to engage men through selection and training to be advocates for VAWG prevention in addition to others. Synchronising activities by women and men appears to be the most effective approach and monitoring the work of male advocates helps to ensure accountability to the lead women's organisation.

21.1.3 An integrated approach to addressing GBV

This trend can be seen across several countries featured in the case studies. GBV survivors often face physical, emotional and psychological trauma. This requires access to a variety of services simultaneously to address their multiple needs and can result in further discrimination and victimisation while accessing services. The success of GBV integrated service provision depends on co-ordinated programming that engages the different sectors across multiple levels with institutional buy-in of key stakeholders. Collaboration between the various service providers (medical, legal, police) is essential and services that are adequately resourced and located under one roof can be more readily accessed, leading to increased report and service demand as more people are able to benefit. The last decade has been the most progressive in terms of introducing new laws aimed at preventing VAWG.

21.1.4 Availability of specific funds, resources and opportunities for women

The case studies illustrate that positive, significant and measurable results are achieved when dedicated resources and specific opportunities are made available for programmes on women's rights and gender equality. Whether it is specialised police units to tackle GBV (Botswana); provisions to guarantee women's employment under government programmes (India); introducing gender equality legislation in the workplace (Australia); providing access to credit, mentoring and skills-building programmes; or supporting entry into markets that foster entrepreneurship; when adequate resources are available considerable progress is made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

Women's organisations still have limited resources to deliver their mandates so out of necessity they closely monitor distribution and seek to ensure effective allocation. Organisations that collaborate widely with like-minded groups and individuals can develop a partnership programme involving both financial and in-kind support to offset limited resources.

21.1.5 A comprehensive approach to building women's leadership and raising consciousness of women and men

The case studies show that while access to resources is key to advancing gender equality it is insufficient on its own to transform the deeply ingrained structures that discriminate at the individual, community and institutional levels. For such transformative changes to take place, interventions must adopt approaches that aim to shift the consciousness of men and women, particularly in positions of leadership, and build the agency of women to exercise individual choice and collective action for positive change. A comprehensive approach that considers all the various actors and coordinates across sectors for collective action and change is required. This is exemplified in the New Zealand Women in Leadership Programme that focused on challenging unconscious bias of individuals, including the women themselves as the programme supported women to re-enter the workforce, while at the same time creating shifts in organisational policies such as planning for better work-life balance and talent management for women to develop careers into leadership.

21.1.6 Strong advocacy and media awareness-raising campaigns

Strong advocacy and media awareness campaigns help to create an enabling environment for successful interventions. The case studies report on an impressive range of media and advocacy tools – from short films and documentaries to gender equality workplace toolkits to e-learning modules that provide innovative strategies like how to start conversations on workplace gender equality, and how to use practical tools such as the pay-gap calculator.

In Tanzania, CHAMPION's strategy of combining national media awareness alongside local community outreach and sensitisation was particularly effective, allowing messages at the community level to resonate and be reinforced by the wider national campaign. The 'Be a Role Model' national campaign, which aimed to reduce social acceptance of intimate partner violence, followed months of workshops and one-to-one dialogues at individual, community and regional levels. The campaign's messages reached more than 4.5 million people in six months using ads in eight newspapers, two television stations and three radio stations, posters and brochures, and community outreach.

Nigeria's 'She Should Contest' campaign has opened up new avenues for democratic decision-making. This online conversation about getting more women into the political sphere enables ordinary citizens to participate in candidate nomination and election through a simple 'type-and-click' forum. Most importantly, it has removed a critical barrier to women's participation in politics – lack of information and access to resources – and challenged a common perception that women's exclusion from political office is acceptable and culturally appropriate.

21.1.7 Robust data collection and co-ordination

The case studies view sex-disaggregated data as essential, whatever the intervention, and as a necessary pre-requisite to applying successful and better targeted interventions.

The Women's Parliamentary Caucus initiative in Pakistan advocates for data to be acquired and monitored. Strengthened and computerised national and provincial electoral databases are also required to ensure effective analysis of actual political participation and to enable better-informed policy-making.

In Bangladesh the One-Stop Crisis Centre emphasises data collection, which has been instrumental in monitoring the quality of service provision so that corrective measures can be put in place as needed. Monitoring and evaluation is also behind the regular, rigorous and standardised collection of data on women and children protection units in Namibia. The data is utilised to track cases involving GBV, including information about outcomes and services provided to complainants.

The Central Registry on Domestic Violence, piloted in Trinidad and Tobago, demonstrates how a more coordinated approach to data collection across agencies can contribute to improving the reliability of data sources and can support more effective interventions to address violence against women. This case study outlines the importance of the Registry but also reports a number of challenges including unavailability of data, threats to data quality, limited human resource capability and the need for software training, which should be considered for more effective implementation.

21.2 Moving forward

There is a need to carry forward the lessons learned and the successful strategies utilised and featured in these case studies. There are an increasing number of actors involved in promoting gender equality but not all of them are using an integrated holistic approach, which has been proven to be the most powerful tool for achieving results. Although much was achieved over the life of the PoA, there is still more to be done. It is hoped that policy makers, civil society actors, private sector stakeholders and the donor community will always consider policies from a gender and pro-poor perspective to ensure that women and men, boys and girls are able to contribute to, and benefit from, development opportunities. Gender equality will be severely constrained if policies and programmes of the type described in the case studies are not more widely developed, resourced and implemented.