EMPOWERED WOMEN, EMPOWERED CHILDREN

A Critical Dialogue on advancing the need for Women’s Empowerment and Gender-Transformative Interventions
This meeting is being recorded

The recording and slides will be available on WVI website and shared with all attendees

All audience members are being muted

Please type your questions in the chatbox, panel members will answer them in Q&A session
EMPOWERED WOMEN, EMPOWERED CHILDREN

PANEL

Michelle Higelin, Executive Director of ActionAid Australia

Eleanor Monbiot, OBE, Middle East and Eastern Europe Regional Leader at World Vision International

Sabah Barigou, MENA Regional Head of School Based/School Feeding programme, HIV and Nutrition at World Food Programme

Hiba Tibi, MENA Regional Economic Empowerment Hub Manager at CARE International
Women were not naturally inferior to men, just appeared that way, because they weren't allowed an education.
MAJOR FINDINGS

NONE of the surveyed women were found to be EMPOWERED on a personal, relational or environmental level across the region.

Displacement, living with an extended family and being married at a young age SIGNIFICANTLY LIMITS women’s empowerment.

Women’s lack of household decision-making and exposure to GBV DIRECTLY AFFECTS their children’s exposure to violence.

Women’s ACCESS to legal aid, civic rights and freedom of movement outside the house are associated with better educational, nutritional and protection outcomes in children.

EDUCATION is a CRITICAL FACTOR for women’s empowerment, especially at a personal level.

Women’s education and participation in a labour force SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES well-being in children, especially their health and education outcomes.

Discriminatory attitudes, acceptance of GBV and time poverty in women ARE LINKED to poorer educational, protection and psychosocial outcomes in children.
‘There is no equality at all in my community, men have all the privileges and rights like inheritance and access to employment. Women are supposed to stay at home and do domestic work.’ – Nahida, 40, Government of Syria
PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

- Self-esteem
- Attitudes on gender equality
- Mental, emotional, spiritual well-being
- Acceptance of GBV
Women’s relational empowerment factors

- Mothers with no HH decision-making power:
  - Children unexposed to violence: 37%
  - Children exposed to violence: 50%
  - Children with low functional literacy: 36%
  - Children with good functional literacy: 18%
  - P value: 0.007*

- Mothers with HH decision-making power:
  - Children unexposed to violence: 63%
  - Children exposed to violence: 50%
  - Children with low functional literacy: 64%
  - Children with good functional literacy: 82%
  - P value: 0.04*

Mother’s decision-making power and children’s exposure to violence in Albania

Mother’s decision-making power and children’s functional literacy in BiH
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women’s relational empowerment factors</th>
<th>Children’s physical, psychosocial and mental well-being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers without GBV experience</td>
<td>- Children with low mental well-being: 50% (P value: 0.04*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children with high mental well-being: 80% (P value: 0.01*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers with GBV experience</td>
<td>- Children with low self-esteem: 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children with high self-esteem: 79%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Children with neutral/negative learning attitude: 67% (P value: 0.008*)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Children with positive learning attitude: 88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Children’s mental health and mother’s GBV experience in Iraq
- Mother’s GBV experience and children’s self-esteem in Lebanon
- Children’s attitude towards learning and mother’s GBV experience in Jordan
Women’s personal empowerment factors

- **Children’s unwillingness to learn**
  - Mothers with poor mental well-being: 83%
  - Mothers with good mental well-being: 17%
  - P value: 0.006*

- **Children’s willingness to learn**
  - Mothers with poor mental well-being: 92%
  - Mothers with good mental well-being: 8%

Children’s physical, psychosocial and mental well-being

- **Children unexposed to violence**
  - Mothers with poor mental well-being: 0%
  - Mothers with good mental well-being: 12%
  - P value: 0.02*

- **Children exposed to violence**
  - Mothers with poor mental well-being: 74%
  - Mothers with good mental well-being: 90%
  - P value: 0.01*

Mothers’ mental well-being and children’s attitudes to learning in Albania.

Mothers’ mental well-being and children’s exposure to violence in Romania.

Mothers’ mental well-being and children’s mental health in Romania.
‘Gender equality can be achieved when the government itself provides legal assistance and support to women, but also fights to enforce the law of equal rights. There should be policies even for abused women, they should be supported to find ways to get out of their situation.’ – Enkelejda, 38, Albania.
MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

ELEVATE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND EQUALITY
Elevate women’s empowerment and equality, as well as using this as a driver across all our sectorial programmes such as education, economic development and child protection.

CHANGE HARMFUL GENDER NORMS
Prevent and refer gender-based violence cases in our projects and change harmful gender norms in communities through faith partners and leaders.

UPHOLD WOMEN'S RIGHTS
We need to strategically engage formal and informal power holders, men and boys in a dialogue to change social norms and uphold women’s rights.

PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN
Provide targeted mental health and psychosocial support for mothers and their children.

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS
Strengthen our partnerships across UN, CSOs and organisations focusing on women’s rights and empowerment to scale up and leverage our work.
For the world to take child well-being seriously, it is imperative that women’s empowerment is taken just as seriously.
hiba tibi

MENA Regional Economic Empowerment Hub Manager at CARE International
Empowered Women Empowered Children

CARE Women Economic Justice Work
Setting the Stage
Gender Equality Framework at CARE

Women, girls, and people of all genders—at all their life stages—will realize their rights and will live in gender equality.

**Gender Harmful**
- Program approaches reinforce inequitable gender stereotypes or disempower certain groups
- To be assessed and adjusted

**Gender Neutral**
- Program approaches do not actively address gender stereotypes and discrimination less than effective
- Not effective

**Gender Sensitive**
- Program approaches recognize and respond to needs and constraints, but they do little to change contextual issues
- Not sufficient

**Gender Responsive**
- Program approaches help women and men examine gender expectations along with their impact on the roles, expectations, and relations

**Gender Transformative**
- Program approaches actively seek to build equitable social norms, structures, and agency as well as individual gender-equitable behavior

This was also applied to programs implemented to empower women economically.

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Women Economic Justice Theory of Action
From Theory to Practice – WEJ Programming on Ground
Translating WEJ Theory to Practice

Analysis

Based on the Gender Marker tool, CARE has assessed our WEE work over the last 7 years

Across five regions,

With different impact groups (workers, women in VCs, women entrepreneurs)

At any age (girls, young women, and women)

Understanding

All projects should aim at being gender-transformative level.

Should base all interventions on clear gender analysis that are relevant to:

• Context (humanitarian, development, mixed),
• Factors related to the value chain and the market,
• And at three levels: agency relations and Structures
The Secret is: Systemic Thinking

Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Market and Business Feasibility
The Secret is: Systemic Thinking

Market and Business Feasibility

Feasible sustainable business models that are financially viable: that create equitable opportunities/access to resources (including financial) access to jobs — all to increase women’s income and enhance their families’ livelihood. But also, a system that is responsive to gender diversity and open to women playing nontraditional roles, etc.
The Secret is: Systemic Thinking

Gender Equality
Building women and men’s aspirations and skills to change relations and transform structures and enabling environment promoting gender equality at HH, community, and market levels (agency and relations) looking at indicators that include impact at workload, decision making, mobility, choice of work, voice and representation, family livelihood (including children)

Market and Business Feasibility
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Summary of the Learning

Women’s economic empowerment program can lead to broader women empowerment at HH, community (leadership), and at market level. They are directly connected to enhanced family and children’s livelihood.

However, the poor design might be harmful to women at various levels. Favoring business modeling over gender equality might increase workload, cause a backlash at conservative communities, and increase domestic violence. Favoring gender equality and neglecting the feasibility of the business model might enforcement of negative perceptions i.e. women’s ability to play economic roles.

Lack of preparation with the private sector might increase abuse at the workplace/ or monopoly by traders.
Summary of the Learning – in figures

**Economic Opportunities**
- 23% vs. 65% reported satisfaction of equal access to existing Economic opportunities

**Perceptions**
- 42% vs. 88% believe women can play additional roles in VC
- 35% vs. 65% community members believe women can play additional roles in VC

**Decision Making**
- 13% vs. 86% reported they contribute to HH decision making
- 15% vs. 50% reported they contribute to VC decision making

**Impact at Family livelihood**
- 85% of surveyed women reported that they used the increase in income for kids’ education, house renovation

**Change in Social Norms**
- 40% vs 93% reported they have diversified option (selling milk vs. processing dairy)
- 21% vs. 96% reported reduction in workload due to family support

**GBV and Backlash**
- 28% vs. 52% reported change in community attitudes including backlash and GBV

**Change in Economic & Political Structures**
- 38% vs 76% of PS improved their perception and packages related to women work
- Change in **extension policy** by MoA
- 18% vs 65% will elect women if they run to local elections.
From Theory to Practice – WEJ Programming on Ground
Summary of the Learning

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

- **NONE** of the surveyed women were found to be **EMPOWERED** on a personal, relational or environmental level across the region.
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- Women’s **ACCESS** to legal aid, civic rights and freedom of movement outside the house are associated with better educational, nutritional and protection outcomes in children.

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- Discriminatory attitudes, acceptance of GBV and time poverty in women **ARE LINKED** to poorer educational, protection and psychosocial outcomes in children.

Women and children in the Middle East and Eastern Europe should not have to wait until the year 2157 for fair treatment and good indicators of well-being.

It is imperative that the international community and all of humanity speed up progress from its glacial pace.
Recommendations

Program Design

• Always keep in mind WEE projects theory of change its broad definition and purpose as an entry point to attain broader GE.

• Listen to women’s definition of livelihood (physical and psychological well-being)

Capturing Transformative Change

• while WEE Programs’ core impact group is women, we need to target many others to attain aspired socio-economic-political change. And capturing change should be on all these levels.

• Integrate impact at children in more deliberate way is one example on needed expansion
SABAH BARIGOU

MENA Regional Head of School Based/School Feeding programme, HIV and Nutrition at World Food Programme
Pathways to women and children empowerment

2 March 2022
5 Strategic Opportunities in MENA region

• Deliver Emergencies

• Effective National Social Protection Systems

• Youth Engagement

• Self-reliance for Refugees

• Climate Change and Water Scarcity
National Policies and Plans to End All Forms of Malnutrition

Stunting → Wasting → MNDs → Overweight/Obesity

Adequate and healthy diets that meet nutrient needs

Supporting strengthening of agriculture and food systems in partnership

Supporting strengthening of health systems / WASH in partnership

Multi-sectoral coordination and delivery platforms

Donors
- USAID
- DFID
- Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada

UN
- WFP
- IFAD
- UNICEF

NGOs / CSOs
- Save the Children
- World Health Organization

Private sector
- DSM
- Indofood
- Unilever
- Selectos

Academia
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Harvard School of Public Health
WFP Gender Policy

**GOAL**
Gender Equality is enhanced, and women are empowered

**OBJECTIVES**
- Achieve equitable access to and control over food security and nutrition
- Address the root causes of gender inequalities that affect food security and nutrition
- Advance the economic empowerment of women and girls in food security and nutrition

**PRIORITIES**
- Enhanced and equitable participation
- Strengthened leadership and decision making
- Enhanced protection to ensure safety, dignity and meaningful access
- Transformative action on social norms and structural barriers
Systems approach is required for nutrition and healthy diet

Adapted from: FMG 2019, UNICEF 2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PATHWAY</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>PRIMARY POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food systems</td>
<td>Sustainable, equitable, safe and healthy diets are produced</td>
<td>All people but a particular focus on the food insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection system</td>
<td>Access to healthy diets for vulnerable people in all contexts is improved</td>
<td>Poor, vulnerable, nutritionally vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health system</td>
<td>Healthy diets are a key component of policies and programmes designed to prevent stunting, wasting and obesity</td>
<td>Women of reproductive age, 1000 days, malnourished women and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education system</td>
<td>Healthy diets are provided in schools and longer term healthy dietary patterns are established among children</td>
<td>School-age children including primary, adolescents and ECD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!