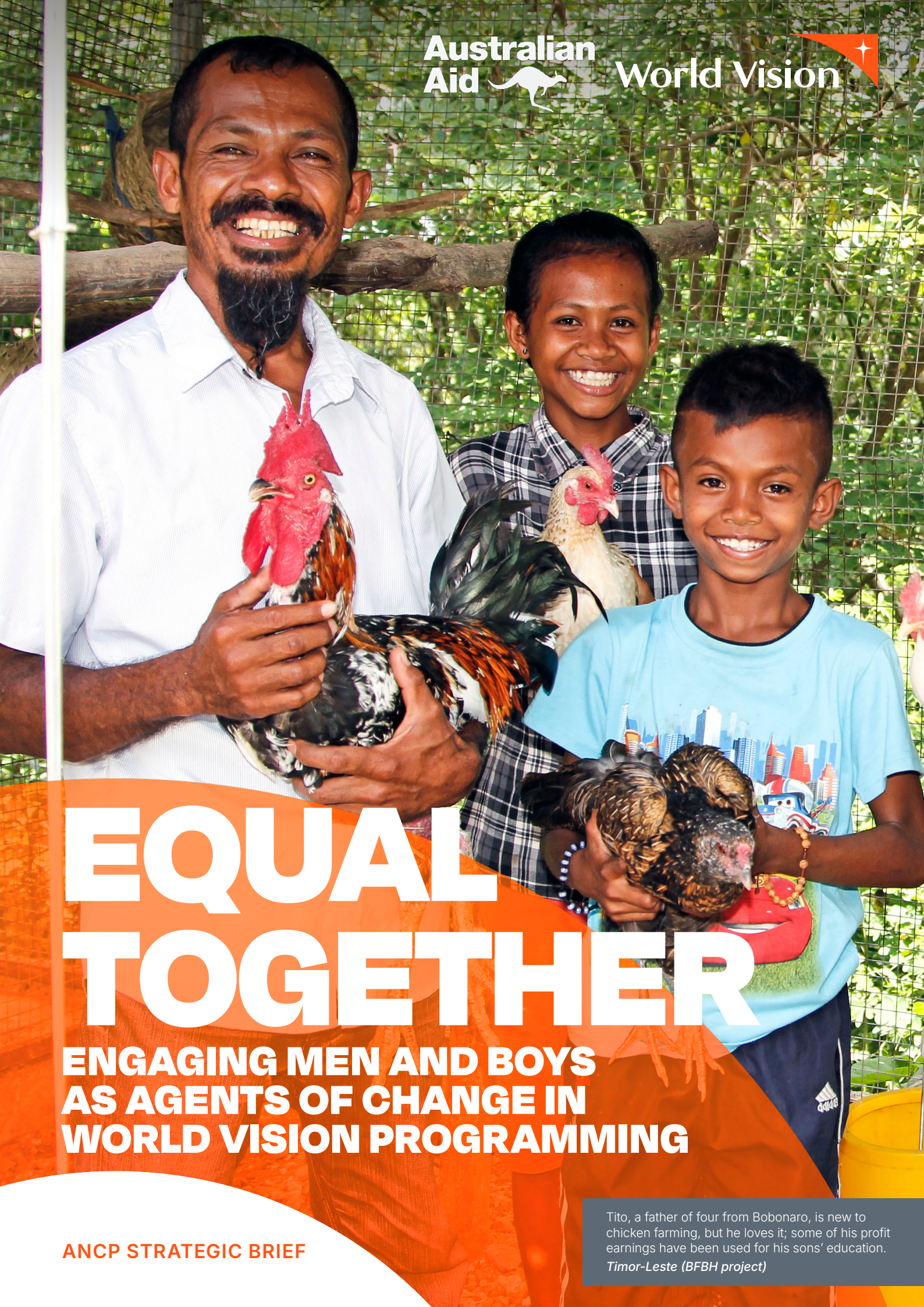




EQUAL TOGETHER

**ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS
AS AGENTS OF CHANGE IN
WORLD VISION PROGRAMMING**

ANCP STRATEGIC BRIEF

Tito, a father of four from Bobonaro, is new to chicken farming, but he loves it; some of his profit earnings have been used for his sons' education.
Timor-Leste (BFBH project)



Titus and his wife, Dorcas, share in household duties by harvesting honey from their beehives together.
Kenya (CRIFSUP project)

About This Brief

This brief summarises a review of approaches and project models used by *ANCP-funded projects that work with men and boys as change agents for gender equality and inclusion. It showcases the results produced across five World Vision's GEDSI domains of change: Access, Decision-making, Participation, Systems and Well-being.¹ This review was commissioned by World Vision Australia and practices across thirteen projects from seven countries: **Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu.** The brief was prepared by an external consultant with guidance from a Steering Committee including World Vision International Global Centre, World Vision South Asia and the Pacific Regional Office and World Vision Australia.

* Australian NGO Cooperation Program

¹ World Vision Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Approach and Theory of Change, 2023 (2nd Edition)

Alarico (centre back), a community health volunteer, identified baby Azelia as malnourished and supported her mother Mariana (left) to improve her daughter's health.

Timor-Leste (BFBH project)



Why Engage Men and Boys?

Engaging men, as an approach, is showing promising results across World Vision (WV) programs. This work addresses difficult and deeply rooted cultural norms and practices that harm women and girls such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination across private and public domains. We know that targeted gender equality initiatives, like Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) or MenCare, have strong benefits on their own. We also know that they can be even more effective when men and boys are intentionally engaged.

Male engagement also empowers men and boys to become allies, champions and agents of change through the promotion of positive masculinities, shared decision-making, equitable division of labour in caregiving or unpaid tasks, healthy and gender equitable relationships, non-violence and elimination of harmful practices. We want to invest into meaningful engagement **that creates transformational and sustainable behavioural and attitudinal change across all generations, which challenges harmful norms and practices, and that fosters gender equality, inclusion and social justice.**

This review looked at thirteen ANCP-funded projects across seven countries: Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and Vanuatu. They represented examples of WV work in different sectors, including agriculture, nutrition, education, gender equality, child protection, economic empowerment and climate resilience. The analysis identified a unique opportunity for WV to leverage its broad development portfolio to promote positive behaviour change among men. By doing so, WV could position itself as a leader in engaging men as allies for gender equality and inclusion, even within strongly patriarchal contexts that were resistant to women's and girls' rights. This work could build on WV's global reputation as a faith-based organisation committed to child rights and wellbeing, its strong evidence base of successful programming, and its established community partnerships.

Reviewed Projects

Bangladesh	1. NSVC-1 (Nutrition Sensitive Value Chains for Smallholder Farmers – Phase 1)
DRC	2. Kalehe (Access to quality education in Kalehe)
Kenya	3. & 4. CRISUP-1 & 2 (Central Rift Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration Scale-Up Project – Phase 1 & 2)
South Sudan	5. GREAN (Greater Resilience Through Enhanced Agriculture and Nutrition)
Sri Lanka	6. iLIVE (Sri Lanka Gender and Disability Inclusive Economic Development)
Timor-Leste	7. & 8. BFBH-1 & 2 (Better Food, Better Health – Phase 1 & 2) 9. CR4ALL (Climate Resilience for All) 10. & 11. TFFV-1 & 2 (Towards a Future Free From Violence – Phase 1 & 2)
Vanuatu	12. REACH-1 (Relationship Education About Choices and Healing – Phase 1) 13. CHILD-2 (CHILD Project – Phase 2)

World Vision's Approaches Overview: Engaging Men and Boys

Close to twenty project models and approaches that engage men and boys were identified in the reviewed projects. In some project models and approaches this engagement is implicit as men, young men and boys are a part of a project target group (e.g. farmers, students, community members, parents, government officials). In other project models and approaches, the engagement is targeted at changing men and boys' norms, attitudes and behaviours for greater gender equality and social inclusion.

World Vision's project models and approaches used in the reviewed projects include:

Focused on engaging men, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) messaging, community mobilisation: MenCare (Changemaker Families and Caring for My Family modules); Community Change (C-Change); Journeys of Transformation (JoT);

Celebrating Family; gender and disability mainstreaming, Channels of Hope - Gender (CoH-G)/ Channels of Hope - Restore (CoH-R); IMPACT+; Citizen Voice and Action (CVA); Empowered World View (EWV); Children – “Gudfala Laef” (“A Good Life”); Youth – the “Healthy Relationships: Respect Yourself, Respect Others; Community Members – the Reducing Family Violence workshops (specific to Vanuatu).

Other project models and approaches focused on broader themes (e.g., economic empowerment, climate resilience, nutrition, education, or agriculture): Gender-Inclusive Financial Literacy Training (GIFT); Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE); Health and Nutrition / Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (NSA); Early Childhood Education (Social Emotional Learning module); Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR); Savings for Transformation (S4T); Local Value Chain Development (LVCD); Inclusive Market Systems Development (IMSD); and Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA).

WV’s male engagement programming is significantly informed by the [‘MenCare’ campaign and resources](#). Originally designed in collaboration with an international non-government organisation [Equimundo](#) (formerly Promundo-US) and [Sonke Gender Justice](#), the MenCare approach brings fathers and couples together to critically reflect on societal norms and beliefs that perpetuate unequal gender and power dynamics in their families. **It promotes men’s involvement as equitable, engaged, non-violent fathers, partners and allies for the eradication of GBV, the achievement of gender equality and the promotion of family health and well-being.**

The MenCare model has been formally and informally adapted by various WV Field Offices and Support Offices over the past decade to address gender inequality through education, nutrition, economic empowerment, WASH and health programs. In some countries, the approach has been formally adapted in partnership with Equimundo, for example in Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka and Kenya. In other contexts, the manual has been adapted by Field Office staff to local programs and contexts, such as in Vanuatu and Timor-Leste.



World Vision facilitator, Joyce, teaches boys and girls about healthy gender relationships through songs, stories and interactive play.
Vanuatu



Through taking part in MenCare sessions, Solaiman and Rabeya's marriage has grown in unity and respect. "My husband changed tremendously. His attitude towards old ideas of masculinity have shifted and he now shares household chores," Rabeya shared.
Bangladesh (NSVC project)

Key Highlights: World Vision's Practice of Engaging Men and Boys as Change Agents

- GEDSI Impact is greatest when engaging men is integrated into other areas of work through coherent programming and twin track approach (e.g., where women's economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming initiatives are combined with targeted interventions focused on working with men and boys).
- Identification of root GEDSI issues specific to the local context is key to successful programming (including consultation with local communities/ organisations and developing localised solutions that address those root issues).
- Measuring the impact of male engagement for gender equality and inclusion and the tools to do so is crucial for success (reflected in monitoring, evaluation and learning indicators/ approach, Theory of Change and across all outputs, outcomes and goals).

Impacts across World Vision GEDSI Domains of Change: Access

There is strong evidence from the reviewed projects that coherent and twin track approach to programming created positive change at individual and household levels, such as improved access to income generation activities, increased financial capacity of households to earn income, make savings, and have funds to support their children's education and health needs. Moreover, WV projects increased access to tools, resources, and opportunities for women, men and people with disabilities to attend professional training, parenting groups, and savings groups. Working with and engaging men to support women and share household and caring responsibilities, created greater opportunities for women to engage in income generating activities and skills building opportunities.

Access to Income Generation and Saving

Evaluations showed that more equitable systems were established through: the impact of MenCare groups and a mainstreamed gender and disability approach in Bangladesh (NSVC-1); through mainstreaming cross-cutting themes, including gender, disability, environment, disaster risk reduction and working with youth in South Sudan (GREAN); and through Community-Change and Journeys of Transformation models in Sri Lanka (iLIVE).

Access: Evidence from evaluations

Bangladesh (NSVC-1)

- Emerging progress regarding improved balance in women's workload and well-being: women's satisfaction improved from 18% at baseline to 89% at the endline.
- More women (67%) reported having their own regular income (increasing from 27% at mid-project).
- More women (67%) reported saving money (increasing from 33% at mid-project).

South Sudan (GREAN)

- There were significant increases in yields of groundnuts (by 122%) and sorghum (by 275%) for people with disabilities. Monthly income of households with people with disabilities increased by 232%.
- Young people with disabilities reported more confidence in continuing their livelihood work and building their skills (increasing to 92% from the baseline of 54%).
- An increase of 137% in median monthly household incomes and 424% increase in groundnuts yield for women involved in the project.

Access to Education

In DRC, Kalehe project created positive change for girls and boys to have access to education that was reflected in increased enrolment and retention of girls at 30 schools supported by the project. The evaluation found that the households in the project areas have taken up the knowledge about inclusive education where almost all households believed children should have the same chance of going to school regardless of their gender or disability.

In Bangladesh (NSVC-1), increase in household income also benefited children as their parents/carers had enough funds to educate both boys and girls and ensure that there were enough funds for their health care. The evaluation found that 93% of households could pay for their children's education (increasing from 63% at baseline). MenCare messaging contributed to valuing education opportunities and importance of healthcare for both girls and boys, challenging traditional norms whereby boys were prioritised over girls in accessing education and healthcare.

Access to infrastructure

In DRC, working with parents and schools led to improved gender- and disability-inclusive inclusive learning conditions and investment in infrastructure, including access to sanitation facilities, in targeted schools. For example, all schools developed inclusive environment plans; eleven gender and disability-inclusive latrines and handwashing stations were constructed; hygiene school clubs were formed and supported; and 1,965 girls benefitted from menstrual hygiene management kits and education. Parent Teacher Associations and School Management Committees played a key role in developing gender-responsive school improvement plans.

Impacts across World Vision GEDSI Domains of Change: Decision-Making

Some progress was reported in the women's decision-making power at household and community levels. Qualitative findings showed that because of WV work, women felt more appreciated and valued by their households and communities for their contribution to household income generating activities. Women also reported that they had a stronger say in decision-making about household income and to some extent on expenditure, mainly around decisions about children's education and healthcare, and how to spend their income on domestic gardening purposes. For instance, evaluations highlighted some examples of increased women's agency, including: 71% of women operating income-generating activities reported equitable household decision-making as husbands started to consult on major expenditure for the first time (Sri Lanka, iLIVE); and 95% of respondents believed that women's decision-making in income and household management had increased; 97% respondents stated that they observed women taking part in community/neighbourhood meetings; and 79% agreed that women influenced political process and community decisions (Kenya, CRISUP-1). However, all projects noted slow progress in this domain.



Kipkemoi helps his younger sister, Chematian, collect firewood.
Kenya (CRISUP project)

Impacts across World Vision GEDSI Domains of Change: Participation

Examples of increased participation were recorded across a majority of the reviewed projects. Women and people with disabilities are taking up leadership roles in community structures, Producer Groups, or parent/ teacher committees, albeit recognising that these spaces are still heavily male-dominated.. Some qualitative evidence suggested that after participation in MenCare, Journeys of Transformation, Community-Change, Channels of Hope - Gender, and other programs, men in targeted communities took on increased domestic responsibilities and caring duties. This, in turn, created space for women and people with disabilities to participate in income-generating activities and community life, which then brought positive changes in community attitudes towards women and people with disabilities, showcased role models, and supported them to take on leadership roles. Such cases challenged rigid gender and ableist stereotypes about traditional gender roles and expectations across various sectors.

Participation: Evidence from evaluations

Democratic Republic of Congo (Kalehe)

- 63 women (13% of all workers) were employed as labourers for the rehabilitation work (classrooms, and latrines) and there was the first example of a female civil engineer employed by WV to supervise the rehabilitation works.

Sri Lanka (iLIVE)

- An average 40% increase in men sharing housework and childcare was reported, while women reported an 11% decrease in number of hours per day spent on housework/childcare, increasing time available for income generation and other activities.
- Women reported increased self-confidence and greater respect from household and community members for their services, skills and experience, resulting in increased visibility of married, widowed, divorced and separated women, and women with disabilities in the community.
- Women were not only selling publicly in local markets or running their own businesses but also taking more active community roles; women held 88% of the 1,521 leadership positions across the 267 project structures, 17% of these by women heads of households and 13% by women with disabilities.

Impacts across World Vision GEDSI Domains of Change: Systems

Qualitative evidence from annual reports, case studies, focus group discussions and interviews showed that the projects contributed to shifts in community attitudes towards greater gender equality and disability inclusion by working with faith and community leaders (mainly men) and by engaging with existing and/or newly introduced community structures such as child protection networks, Women Entrepreneurs or Community Sales Agents. This evidence highlighted that community and faith leaders continued to use the knowledge they gained from WV's projects and training in their messaging and teachings. Engagement with partners and government agencies also created opportunities for sustainable and transformative change. However, every project acknowledged that harmful community attitudes and practices still existed, and the desired change was happening slowly and required more time to be fully achieved.

Systems: Evidence from evaluations

- The South Sudan GREAN project established ten 'male champion groups' comprised of 150 men who received technical training on maternal, infant and child nutrition and health issues to educate their communities. To have a broader awareness reach, WV partnered with a local radio station that broadcasted educational programs twice a week (South Sudan, GREAN).
- In Kenya, while land ownership was traditionally dominated by men, greater acceptance emerged in CRIFSUP project areas for women to buy or inherit land. At the same time, saving by women and young people, using income from waged employment or small business, for land acquisition became more common (Kenya, CRIFSUP-1).
- Male and female faith and customary leaders engaged in the REACH project in Vanuatu were shown to be driving gender equitable practices, prioritising safety, and managing incidents of violence through appropriate systems. For example, the project evaluation found that 83% of faith and community leaders referenced gender equality principles in their interviews, unprompted by interviewers (Vanuatu, REACH-1).

Impacts across World Vision GEDSI Domains of Change: Well-Being

Well-being and improved nutrition

The most notable positive impact reported by some projects was the improved nutrition and improved access to health services for children and women. Both the production pathway and women's empowerment pathway (together with parenting education and gender mainstreaming) had significant impact on nutrition outcomes. Increased production of vegetables in homestead gardens or larger fields was a source of diversified food for all family members. Women's empowerment pathway helped to improve the nutritional status of both women and children. For example, in Bangladesh (NSVC-1), the evaluation found that 80% of households at endline (an increase from 45% at baseline) can pay for their children's health costs; that there was a reduction in the proportion of wasted children (under 5) from 22% to 8% and of wasted women of reproductive age from 8% to almost zero percent.

Well-being and GBV prevention

Qualitative evidence collected through focus group discussions, interviews, case studies and observations showed that many projects that employed a twin track approach were successful in changing men's attitudes towards GBV. Community feedback indicated a perceived reduction in GBV instances, greater harmony within communities, and stronger collective capacity to work together on issues that matter to them. Such harmonious community relationships were identified as important for creating supportive environment for addressing and preventing GBV and promoting GEDSI.

There is clear recognition that GBV still exists in communities and that the relatively short period of time of program implementation is not possible to eradicate GBV practices. However, there are some promising results:

- In Kenya (CRISUP-1), 81% of the evaluation respondents (women and men) reported having harmonious community relations compared to 20% at baseline.
- In Timor Leste, the TFFV-1 final evaluation found that there was a notable shift to non-violent parenting practices and a reduced acceptance of violence against children as a result of the parents' participation in the project training and community events on positive parenting.
- In Vanuatu (REACH-1), 80% of community members interviewed during the evaluation reported a decrease in violence in their communities. For social norms change to be effective, institutions must also reflect changing attitudes and behaviours; 85% of WV staff consistently chose positive gender equality actions, and all staff knew to how to act if they encountered violence against women in the community.

Together, a father and mother help their daughter learn to wash her hands with soap.
Bangladesh (NSVC project)



Lessons: Engaging Men and Boys

- **Coherence and twin track approach:** The reviewed projects showed that their success can be tracked to coherence between project activities, outputs, outcomes and goals together with mainstreaming of cross-cutting themes of gender and disability inclusion that were reflected in all specific project outputs.
- **Adaption of successful approaches:** Adaptation of existing successful models of engaging with men and boys to local context is crucial. There is a great benefit in involving technical and subject matter experts in the design, GEDSI assessments, development of curricula and resources for staff and communities, as well as in regular and ongoing capacity building of staff, community facilitators and male champions.
- **Partnerships:** Partnerships are important in securing broader support across communities for GEDSI priorities. It is important to partner with local organisations who deliver women's economic empowerment or income-generating activity initiatives as well as to build their capacity to support GEDSI transformation. It is best practice to engage local women's rights organisations (WROs) and Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) in developing resources, curricula, capacity building and training of communities and staff or other project initiatives to ensure that they bring their expertise to WV work and become local champions of change beyond the project implementation period.
- **Staff training and capacity building:** Training and capacity building for WV staff is vital for quality GEDSI work. This training should go beyond project staff and cover all portfolios across the organisation.

- **Awareness campaigns and addressing backlash:** All reviewed projects highlighted that harmful community attitudes and practices are slow to change, especially regarding GBV, women's decision-making, freedom of movement and women's leadership across many aspects of community and economic life where men dominate in leadership structures and roles. Thus, it is vital to have a project pillar that focuses on male and broader community engagement through campaigns, awareness raising, creative arts, community dialogues on gender and disability inclusion, alongside engaging with local, district and national government structures. To reduce community backlash and resistance, it is important to engage men and boys in GEDSI activities by integrating MenCare messaging and training into other project initiatives such as Savings for Transformation (S4T), Gender-Inclusive Financial Training (GIFT), inclusive Market Systems Development (iMSD) and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE).
- **Working with existing community structures:** WV is uniquely and strongly positioned to work with faith and community leaders using its resources and approaches such as Channels of Hope - Gender (CoH-G), Community-Change and Journeys of Transformation. Working with existing community structures is important as it ensures local ownership over programming outcomes and contributes to sustainability of investments.
- **Program design, monitoring, evaluation and learning:** In complex programs and projects, it may be challenging to attribute a change in community attitudes and practices to one approach or initiative. Thus, developing specific indicators for monitoring and measuring the impact of the MenCare - Changemaker Families, Journeys of Transformation, Community-Change, and other approaches may strengthen already robust WV's monitoring and evaluation practices.

Recommendations

- Implement coherent and twin track approaches.
- Invest in regular and ongoing capacity building of community champions, local partner organisations and WV staff.
- Review resources and curricula to keep them up to date and with best practice GEDSI approaches.
- Foster partnerships for greater gender equality, disability and social inclusion.
- Focus on challenging harmful community attitudes and practices.



GEDSI mainstreaming across all projects and sectors is vital for creating change and pushing the boundaries of rigid harmful traditional norms, attitudes, and behaviours. Stronger outcomes can be achieved when engaging men and boys is factored from the start of an initiative. This work should be targeted and use well-evidenced approaches to engaging men and boys.

WV's GEDSI domains of change should be front and centre of our work as we engage men and boys to challenge harmful traditional norms, attitudes, and behaviours that undermine wellbeing, development and rights of women and girls, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.