



Channels of Hope for Gender

World Vision

Affirming the Worth and Dignity of Women and Men

Introduction

Faith leaders are often amongst the most influential members of the communities in which World Vision Solomon Islands works. Their personal beliefs and values can inspire an entire community to care for one another and to take responsibility and collective action over issues that concern them. However ill-conceived theologies can contribute to negative gender messaging resulting in stigmatization and discrimination based on one's gender or HIV status. Such messages contradict the calling of faith leaders to provide loving care and safe spaces to all members of society without prejudice. The Channels of Hope model equips faith and community leaders to individually and collectively respond to core issues that compromise the well-being of children, their families and communities, whether these be health or gender injustices. These partnerships with faith leaders are a step towards positive social transformation.

What is the 'Channels of Hope' approach?

The Channels of Hope approach is more than just training or education, it is the transformation of ideas and subsequently of behaviour. Training is designed to engage with participants in a manner that challenges their attitudes and knowledge, inspires a change of heart and behaviour, and motivates a sustained and effective response to issues that threaten the wellbeing of communities.

People trained in the Channels of Hope approach are given tools so they can return to their communities to mobilise their faith congregations and other groups to make a positive change. They instigate the formation of volunteer groups that begin to sensitize communities to gender injustice or HIV and AIDS. The same groups also form networks that support the most vulnerable in their communities.

How did Channels of Hope for Gender emerge?

Channels of Hope for Gender emerged from World Vision's work with church and community leaders in HIV & AIDS prevention, care and advocacy. Statistics and realities from the field depicted a higher infection rate of women in comparison to men. Studies attributed this disparity to a number of factors, including gender injustice. Unfortunately, religion and culture were identified as factors that tend to subtly discriminate against women and girls rendering them

"If our business is to fight poverty, then we must act in mending broken relationships. Relationships break largely because of gender relations gone wrong.... There is no organization that is as well placed to deal with this than we are" – Robert Kisyula, WVDRC National Director.

"CoH for Gender is biblical, simple and interactive. The management team and I are convinced that this tool is appropriate for community gender mobilization"- Tenagne Lemma, WV Ethiopia National Director

"I had six daughters before I had a son. At birth, I named him "Consolation," because in my culture girls are not valued as much as boys. I attended a CoH for Gender workshop and my view changed, making me recognise that all children are a gift from God. I changed my son's name to affirm that I value all my children equally. All of them are a 'consolation' to us," -Pastor Israel Mwanabute (DRC).

"Having attended this workshop, I am fully convinced that the churches and communities in Ethiopia need to take time to review the place and function of women in the family and society. This tool is life-changing"- Pastor Getu WVE Board Member and leader of the Evangelical Churches' Fellowship of Hawassa, Ethiopia.



CoH Workshop held in Honiara on the 8th August 2012 © WVSI

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Key Partners and Stakeholders

World Vision Solomon Islands partners with a variety of government agencies, NGOs, community groups and churches.

- ◆ Churches and Pastors in Honiara
- ◆ Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA)
- ◆ Chiefs and Community Leaders
- ◆ Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs (MWYCA)
- ◆ Legal Agents: Public Solicitors Office, SI Bar Association and Director of Public Prosecution
- ◆ Service Providers: Health Care, Social Welfare and Police

In *Channels of Hope for Gender* (adapted from Elaine Pountney's book entitled *"Reclaiming the Wonder of Sexuality – a Biblical Understanding of Male and Female"*), World Vision has developed an innovative tool that helps explore gender biblically while maintaining sensitivity to pertaining cultures. This methodology is participatory, inviting participants into the kind of dialogues that identifies and affirms positive aspects of culture and pertaining biblical presuppositions while challenging negative attitudes and practices on gender. This tool has been piloted with culturally and theologically diverse church and community leaders in Ethiopia, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The approach has become a preferred community mobilisation tool not only for gender issues but also for Child Protection and Advocacy and Justice for Children in the Southern African Region. *Channels of Hope for Gender* has now been integrated into an action-learning framework for Gender Based Violence response in the

Our Gender- Based Projects

This project provides church leaders with improved capabilities for working with their church groups to address and reduce Gender Base Violence in their communities.

Honiara Community Vision for Change

The Honiara Community Vision for Change project is aimed at reducing gender-based violence in five communities in Honiara by 2015. The five targeted communities in Honiara are, Sun Valley Community, Burns Creek Community, Fulisango Community, Lord Howe Community and White River Community. The project will run for three years, it began in May 2011 and will end in September 2014.

The Honiara Community Vision for Change Project is funded by World Vision Australia and the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Nancy and her 4 year old daughter sit under their house in Sun valley community, Honiara © WVSI