

# Engaging Men on Gender Equality in Concern Tanzania's Women's empowerment programme

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## Introduction

Many livelihood and economic empowerment initiatives in the Global South have focused on women, and with good reason; research from numerous settings confirms that men on aggregate contribute a lower percentage of their income to the household and to children than do women (Bruce, Lloyd & Leonard, 1995; Wyss, 1995). However, increasingly authors have argued that the focus on women or the “feminization” of anti-poverty programmes has had limited results for alleviating women's gendered obligations and burdens in coping with poverty, and has in some cases further economically marginalized them (Chant, 2007). This is particularly pertinent by the fact that many women's economic empowerment interventions find that household decision-making continues to be dominated by men and that such efforts may inadvertently reinforce norms that women are caregivers and invested in their families while men are assumed negligent. Increasing not just access but control over material resources can lead to women having an enhanced ability to act and choose (Kabeer 2009).

As a result, some development experts now argue that poverty alleviation efforts should be re-examined for ways in which men and women can be engaged in such programmes recognizing the gender-specific needs and realities of each (Barker & Schulte, 2010).

An increasing body of research and programming is affirming that boys and men experience pressure to live up social norms of what “real men” should be and do. This often means having multiple sexual partners, being providers or breadwinners (and stress if they are not able to live up to this role), engaging in violence and excessive drinking and other risk-taking behaviours. Numerous studies have found that the degree to which men believe in rigid norms about what it means to be men is directly related to their unsafe sexual behaviour, use of violence, alcohol abuse and limited participation in child care (Barker & Pawlak, 2011).

A growing body of evidence has affirmed both the importance of engaging men in gender equality as well as impact of programmes that target men in gender-specific and gender-transformative ways (Barker 2012). A number of programme experiences with men and boys worldwide have confirmed that well-designed group education, counselling and health promotion activities carried out by community-based NGOs, in health clinics, in the school setting and via community outreach and mass media can influence men's attitudes and behaviours in gender-equitable ways. The range of evidence-based programme experiences with men and boys worldwide have confirmed that men's attitudes and behaviours can and do change in gender-equitable ways when such programmes are well-designed (WHO, 2007).

**The importance of building on men's potential** by identifying positive behaviours that men already engage in and finding men in their settings who already show the desired behaviours (e.g. men already doing care work). Such approaches also work with men to demonstrate

how men themselves benefit from gender equality and accepting non-violent and more equitable version of what it means to be men.

Specifically, this evidence base shows that men and boys can and do change attitudes and behaviour related to sexual and reproductive behaviour, maternal, new born and child health; their interaction with their children; their use of violence against women; questioning violence with other men; and their health-seeking behaviour as a result of well-designed programme interventions (WHO, 2007).

## **Concern Tanzania's focus on Livelihoods**

The Tanzania Women's Social and Economic Rights programme, offered Concern an opportunity to develop approaches to engage men as allies in women's empowerment.

The Women's Social and Economic Rights (WSER) Programme is a three-year intervention (running from January 2013 to December 2015) funded by the European Union and implemented by Concern Worldwide Tanzania and their partners Kimas, Caritas and the Kasulu Consortium, in two regions; Mtwara (Masasi District) and Kigoma (Kigoma Rural and Kasulu Districts)<sup>1</sup>.

The Overall Objective of the WSER Programme is to *contribute to the attainment of women's economic and social empowerment and rights in Tanzania*. With the specific objectives identified as

- To advance women's involvement in and control over decision-making and economic resources at the household, community, and district level.
- To improve women's status and household incomes through improved knowledge and opportunities.

The programme is implemented in 40 villages over the three Districts (10 in Masasi, 10 in Kasulu and 20 in Kigoma). In each of the districts Concern Worldwide works with one local Civil Society Organisation (CSO) partner: KIMAS in Masasi, Caritas in Kigoma Rural and Kasulu Consortium in Kasulu. A baseline study was conducted in March/April 2013, which set the benchmark to measure changes in the programme area against the programme indicators. Implementation of programme activities started in July 2013. A comparative midline study was conducted during the period of August and September 2014.

The WSER programme takes a gender and development, equality, and empowerment lens to working with communities<sup>2</sup>. It is based on Concern's understanding of extreme poverty<sup>3</sup> and the belief that inequality is a major cause of poverty in Tanzania. The programme focuses on enhancing individual and collective capabilities of women and men, focusing on them as change agents in their communities. The programme is expected to improve women's

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<sup>1</sup> Kigoma is in the Northwest of Tanzania and Mtwara in the Southeast approximately 1,890Ks apart

<sup>2</sup> Within the programme *Empowerment* is considered to be about both process and outcome that comprises three dimensions—agency, structure, and relationships. These three dimensions are intimately related, structuring and influencing one another. It is critical when aiming for empowerment that issues of access to resources are addressed, but also building the agency of individuals to utilise and have control over these resources in order to reach the higher level outcomes of behaviour changes and representation of interests.

<sup>3</sup> Concern uses a unique model to describe Extreme Poverty that focuses on the poor's assets, as well as their returns on these assets and the causes, maintainers and obstacles to people moving out of extreme poverty, in particular Inequality and Risk and Vulnerability.

economic assets and their returns on these assets, to increase women's involvement in and control over resources and decision making in household and community, and improve Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and private sector's capacity and willingness to address gender equality.

The key components of the programme are:

**ER1: Economic: Improving Women's economic assets and return on assets.** This focuses on economic empowerment utilising various approaches such as increasing capacities and skills in agricultural production and access to resources such as improved seeds, tools and extension support to improve farming skills. Access to savings and credit has been targeted through the setting up of village banks called VICOBA's and access and control over land is facilitated through supporting people, especially women, to access formalise their land tenure via the Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy (CCRO) process.

**ER2: Social: Increasing Women's involvement in and control over decision making in the household and community.** As the programme aims to increase women's access to resources it also needs to increase their control over how these resources are used. This aspect is the innovative and critical element of the programme and focuses on creating spaces for men and women to reflect on gender relations, roles, access, decision-making, violence and conflict resolution. It addresses men's views of gender roles within the household and challenges rigid gender norms and masculinities. Through community dialogues men are being helped to focus on the positive elements, and remove the negative elements of their masculinities. This aspect of the programme is critical for the success of the programme, as focusing on result one only and building the asset base of women without addressing issues of power and control will not reach the goal of women's empowerment. It was highlighted during the mid-term review that this component needs to be more closely aligned with the other elements of the programme in order for greater impact. .

**ER3: Advocacy and policy: Improving the LGA and private sector's capacity and willingness to address gender equality.** This result area aims to engage at the institutional and structural levels of government and CSOs around issues policies and laws and lobbying for their implementation, particularly as the commitment to improving the situation of women exist on paper but not in practice. It is envisaged through changes in attitudes towards women in the community that support will increase for female representation and participation in community decision making.

The programme has a multiple and complex range of activities that aims to empower women both economically and socially, organised around the three Expected Results (ERs). The programme recognised the basic needs of women and men to accessing assets in order to increase their asset base. But focusing on economic empowerment alone is not sufficient to influence a change in power dynamics between men and women and decision making of women at a household or community level, and hence the programme has built on previous experience of building up assets but built in an additional focus on gender equality through the setting up of community dialogues that aim to breakdown rigid gender norms and roles of men and women in the context. Learning from the previous livelihoods programme in Tanzania highlighted that gender mainstreaming didn't really have an impact on gender equality at the household level, because it wasn't well understood what the truly means and looks like within a programme. For instance, on land tenure, women have always been prioritised for Certificates of Customary Right of Occupancy in Concern's programming either on their own if they have land or jointly with their husband. However, having their name on the CCRO didn't have a great effect on relations in the household in practice

according to some beneficiaries. As one woman stated during the Rights-based Livelihoods Programme documentation process in 2009/10 *“I leave my rights outside the door when I come home at night”*. Some other female beneficiaries in Iringa had their name on the CCRO but didn't exercise any control over it as someone else managed it. Another woman stated that *“the greatest barriers we have to improving our lives are our husbands*.

Building on research and evidence on engaging men, Concern through the WSER programme designed a component of the programme which followed a group education process to engage men as allies in women's economic empowerment. Men are engaged in group discussions –some with their partners –on issues of power, tasks and roles, communication and couple negotiation, decision making and planning, respect, participation and non-violent relationships.,

### **Development of Community Dialogues**

To design the content of the curriculum to guide the community dialogues the team completed three behaviour change frameworks using the methodology of Designing for Behaviour Change framework, which uses a formative approach to understand the barriers to certain behaviour and what are the motivators. The behaviours focused on were agreed as a result of the rapid gender assessment carried out and key challenges faced by women in the context. The team completed a barrier analysis on three behaviours focused as follows:

- 1) Married women influence decisions (buy, sell, and use) on major assets in the households
- 2) Men share workload with women in the household (domestic chores)
- 3) Women participate in community meetings (attend, ask question, and contribute ideas)

**Findings from the Barrier Analysis (BA).** In all three BA men came out as a key influencer group and important to engage and target within the programme to influence any attitudinal and behaviour change. The results informed the design of the community dialogues highlighted that doers of shared decision making in the household could see the benefits within the household, improvement in relationships, communication, reduction in stress and conflict which are all positive impacts that needed to come through in the community dialogues. The barriers to more equal status for women and men was the belief that husbands don't want women involved in decision making, and religion and culture disapproves. It came out clearly that the programme needed to address the barriers by working to promote positive masculinities and role models, facilitating discussion with traditional and religious leaders and encouraging husbands to involve their wives in decision making. It also came out the importance of raising awareness amongst women many who were also holding rigid attitudes and beliefs regarding the position and roles of women and men.

**Content of Community Dialogue Curriculum** The community dialogue approach has been specifically designed to address the social constructions of masculinities and femininities in this context, which has led to the subordination of women, leading to their low status and low access and control over resources and representation or voice at a community level. Further the approach recognises that in order to address gender inequalities there is a need to work with men who hold the power to change the social relations and inequalities faced by women. Approaching this in a manner where men begin to see the benefits of increased equality, not just to their wives and families but to themselves and their own relationships, the economic status and well-being of the whole family, changes can occur.

Through promoting and supporting positive attitudes and behaviours of men, towards their wives and families, the programme is inspiring positive changes to take place for everyone.

The community dialogues take place over six sessions of between two and three hours in length over a three month period. The sessions are facilitated by two community mentors; male and female who were identified by the community themselves. The mentors were trained over five days in leading the dialogues. In each group there is a maximum of 30 members, both male and female. Couples are encouraged to attend together, but in reality this hasn't happened systematically, and in some cases only one partner attending, but in many cases they encourage the partner to attend. Times and locations of sessions are set by the group, and tend to take place either early morning or late in the evening to work around people's schedules. This has created some challenges for the mentoring and support aspect as it is more challenging for partner staff to attend.

Topics covered relate to relationships and power, communications, roles and tasks, making decisions, respect, participation, and the role of men holding other men accountable. Key tools to support the facilitation of discussions are a series of cartoons, along with the guidance manual and key activities for each session which are interactive, experiential in nature utilizing role plays, games and reflective discussions.

### **Findings from the Mid Term Review**

A mid-term review was completed in September 2014, utilising both a quantitative survey administered in a sample of 20 villages and 440 households. 61.4% of respondents were women. Qualitative approaches such as focus groups and key informant interviews were carried out in 7 villages, with all partners and the district land department staff. The findings provide evidence of the positive outcomes of the community dialogues on both household level decision making but also family dynamics and levels of conflict.

Throughout discussions during the mid-term review the community dialogues were continuously cited as an effective methodology for addressing rigid gender norms and gender roles within the household. They have provided a new space for women and men to unpack issues of gender inequities, perceptions and attitudes, and are proving to be a highly effective approach to bringing change within the household. During the review many men acknowledged the influence of how they were socialised and raised to become a man as key barriers to change. They had no reference points, as one man highlighted

*'We were taught to be the boss growing up'....and another explained how 'tradition and culture built men to be superior and have more knowledge and opportunities'*

Targets outlined in the proposal in relation to women's involvement and control over decision making in the household are set to be achieved and exceeded amongst those who have participated in the programme. Table 1 shows how female respondents with husbands had very modest control over household assets at baseline, but in the midline there has been large increases in these figures, with the notable exception of cash, which 'only' increased from 41.7% to 67.2%. During FGDs a number of women highlighted that this area is one that men are less willing to change on.

Across the districts both men and women talked about changes in relation to making decisions, as one woman explained:

*'he did all decisions on his own, now he discusses with me – now much better as we decide for the family together.'*

Men reiterated throughout that once men see the benefits economically in the home because of increased cooperation they will start to make changes.

**Table 1 Female Respondents stating they have some level of control over assorted household assets (%)**

	<b>Baseline (n=268)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>MTR (n =253)</b>
Land	28.0	29.6	90.6
House	24.2	27.2	93.8
Cows	35.3	41.3	93.0
Goats	26.1	28.7	91.4
Small livestock	37.9	42.3	83.6
Cash	41.7	45.6	67.2

Men who have participated have subsequently become strong advocates of the approach. A number of stories were related around the changes that some of these initially sceptical men were making in their lives. One man explained

*‘I would sleep all day and if his food was late I would abuse my wife, but now I am sorry and feel remorse. Once my wife saw the changes in me she also wanted to join the group’.*

Data from the midline survey back up these testimonies from men with substantial changes in the percentage of household chores being shared between women and men (the target was to increase these by 10%). Interestingly, as the figures in Table 2 show, the changes have been bigger for the domestic chores than they had been for the more productive tasks. Although the sharing of productive chores was already high and indeed remains higher than the sharing of domestic chores. Not only is this change affecting the workloads of women, but also men now feel more involved in the family. Discussions also revealed how men have realised how approaching problems through discussion and dialogue has reduced the levels of conflict in the home, and instilled a mutual respect between husband and wife.

As one man described it ‘we started to realise that a lot of role in the home can be done by anybody, by sharing these we can see the changes on the welfare of the family, how women are treated.. If no discussion, no agreement, you can’t see development – no peace’

**Table 2: Married Women (%) identify Chores are Shared Equally**

	<b>Baseline (n=119)</b>	<b>MTR (n=128)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Fetching water	5.0	34.4	29.4
Fetching firewood	6.7	35.2	28.5
Washing clothes	5.9	29.7	23.8
Cooking	5.0	28.1	23.1
Cleaning house	4.2	23.4	19.2

Washing children	2.5	20.3	17.8
Caring for elderly/sick relatives	16.0	54.7	38.7
Ploughing	64.7	71.8	7.1
Sowing	66.4	75.0	8.6
Weeding	65.5	77.3	11.8
Harvesting	64.7	78.9	14.2

There has also been change in the levels of public participation amongst women, with the midline survey showing an increase in the percentage of females in leadership positions across various committees. However, it is difficult to say if this is the result of the programme or because of government policy to have quotas for women on such committees. However, one area where the programme can be seen as having a direct impact is in the promotion of females as leaders through their appointment as paraprofessionals and mentors. The endorsement of being elected by the community and the commitment that they are giving to their new roles contributes to wider acknowledgement of the capabilities of women with the community. Mentors all mentioned this sense of pride of being nominated by the community, and a number are being actively approached outside of sessions to support with the mediation of conflict.

Similarly, the proportion of female respondents who say they never speak at a meeting has decreased between the baseline and the midline for each of the type of meeting assessed (see Table 3 for further details on this).

**Table 3: Female Respondents who say they ‘Never Speak’ at Meetings**

	<b>Baseline (%) (n=268)</b>	<b>MTR (%) (n=253)</b>
Quarterly Village General Meeting	71.6	60.1
Water Management Committee	88.1	48.7
Community School/Education Management Committee	90.5	41.9
Community Health care Management Committee	88.4	35.5
Village Community Bank (VICOBA)	74.0	16.7
Farmers' association	92.3	40.2
Committee deciding on the use of communal lands	88.6	36.0

However, the results show some variation across contexts with women in Masasi appearing to be able to speak more freely in community meetings (Table 5 shows women’s different levels of participation in the QVGM across the three districts). This is potentially because Masasi, as a predominantly matrilineal society, is more open to women’s involvement in community meetings, and acceptance of hearing their voices, which would explain the better score on this at baseline as well. Discussions with women revealed that efforts to raise awareness and education about the inclusion of women’s voices were bearing fruit and they were increasingly being listened to; one example highlighted was in Mnopwe village and the installation of a water tap in the village.

**Table 4 Level of Women’s Participation in Quarterly Village General Meeting, by district**

	Baseline				Midline			
	Masasi	Kigoma	Kasulu	Total	Masasi	Kigoma	Kasulu	Total
Never Speaks	72.9	77.8	86.9	77.3	48.0	65.5	63.0	60.1
Asked Questions	11.9	4.4	8.7	7.6	26.0	25.3	23.9	25.1
Suggests Ideas	15.3	17.8	4.4	15.1	26.0	9.2	13.0	14.8

While, the midline survey illustrated that although the proportion of women in leadership positions has increased, women in general report their level of influence over decisions is still low - Table 5 shows the change in the proportion of women who feel they have no influence whatsoever over decisions in selected committees. There also appears to be geographical differences, with the FGDs in Masasi suggesting there was a greater recognition of the role of women in public decision making and an opportunity for their voices to be heard, while in Kigoma and Kasulu women reiterated the challenges in participating and speaking in public meetings associated with a fear of negative reactions. Strategies to ensure safer spaces for women to bring their views together as women would be helpful to move this process forward.

**Table 5: Do women feel they have Influence in Decisions of selected committees**

	Baseline		MTR	
	Not at all (%)	A lot (%)	Not at all (%)	A lot (%)
Quarterly Village General Meeting	77.9	1.2	57.4	0.5
Water Management Committee	92.4	1.3	48.7	1.3
Community School/Education Management Committee	89.3	1.3	46.7	1.0
Community Health care Management Committee	91.6	1.4	38.7	6.5
Village Community Bank (VICOBA)	76.5	2.4	25.0	1.0
Farmers' association	93.8	1.6	42.4	9.8
Committee deciding on the use of communal lands	89.7	1.5	24.0	4.0
Political party	84.3	2.3	50.4	0.7
Self-help group	91.4	2.9	29.5	1.0
Other bodies	88.9	1.6	35.9	2.6

## Challenges

In terms of the community mentors the decision to ensure they were both male and female, as opposed to all male as outlined in the proposal, is a welcome one and came as a result of realising the importance of having community members who can stand side by side when influencing change amongst men and women in the community. Engaging men as mentors was appreciated and acknowledged as a way of involving men in the programme, rather than just focus on investing in women.

Initially it was planned that the community dialogues would be led by partner staff, however a decision was later made that it would be more effective if community mentors lead the sessions. This was largely based on the challenges of scale and reach. A five day training of trainers was delivered but if time had permitted it would have been more ideal for mentors to be brought through the sessions as participants first. to allow them to process the ideas and concepts, and give them the space to be challenged and to challenge their own thinking, attitudes and practices. Mentors requested close supervision for the initial sessions and were supported for the first two in Masasi, but less support was given to mentors in Kigoma. Further, where and when sessions will take place are decided by the members, at a time suitable for them, meaning most take place in the late afternoon / evening or very early in the morning. However, this has presented a challenge for some partner staff to attend, as this is outside their regular working hours, resulting in a reduction in the availability of support for the community mentors.

To enhance the effectiveness of the community mentors refresher trainings will be provided, addressing issues that have emerged during their sessions, such as how to deal with disruptive group members. Further, a strategy for engaging community and religious leaders needs to be developed, these leaders are critical in terms of influencing long term changes and if they go through some of the sessions as participants it could have a substantial long term impact.

## Outcomes

The community dialogues have led to a number of changes in the relationships between men and women, one cited continuously at community level has been in relation to the sharing of workloads in the house, whereby men and sons are now more involved in chores that were traditional seen as women's work (see previous figures in Table 2). Other changes relate to women's participation in meetings (see **Error! Reference source not found.**Table 3) and their level of control over assorted household assets (see Table 1). Skills in listening and negotiating problems were also cited by men across the districts as a positive step forward which is influencing the level of conflict within the home.

Discussions at community level further revealed that men who are now engaging in positive displays of masculinities are being put under pressure from relatives who claim they have been bewitched. However they see themselves as catalysts for change in their community and through the support of other men see the value of these new traditions and ways of living. The process has built on developing men's higher levels of emotional intelligence so they can now verbalise how they are feeling. Men in many communities talked about the relief that the changes have brought to their lives. One participant in the discussion in Nyarubanda village indicated *'I feel very proud as I carry my daughter to church, every time church members tell me to give the baby to my wife, but I say no since she is also my daughter'*.

These changes will have powerful impacts on the lives of children as they are experiencing more care, and less conflict and violence in the home. This has the potential to have significant impacts on future generations as witnessing conflict and violence as a child has a direct correlation to the potential of perpetrating violence as an adult (Barker 2012) . One

male community mentor talked of bringing his child to the health centre for the first time and how this had never been seen before in the community. A village leader spoke of how he now washes the baby, an activity that he was never involved in before. Opening up the opportunities for men to be caring fathers is engaging with a strategic need that men often miss. Research and evidence shows that active involvement in fatherhood is good for women, children and men themselves.

Interestingly, because of the changes that men are making in the home, this has also brought about some changes in how women communicate and treat their husbands. During discussions it was explained that previously if a woman was unhappy with her husband she may not prepare his food or wash his clothes which further fuelled conflicts and misunderstandings. However in households where men are changing, being more open about decisions and assisting more with chores, women are also changing their attitudes and behaviours. Throughout the discussions at community level people spoke of increased peace and harmony in the home and how community dialogues had brought a sense of relief.

Changes in levels of mutual respect and in means of communication and dialogue on various issues have had a positive influence on levels of conflict and violence in the home. This is borne out in the results from the midline survey which shows considerable changes in attitudes to gender based violence. Notwithstanding attitudes around the expectation of women to tolerate violence in the home for family harmony, a widely held belief amongst women in many contexts, remains quite high. We need to recognise that this approach is a process that will take time for widespread change to take hold across communities.

### **In Conclusion:**

The changes as highlighted by participants in the midterm review really brought through that many people both men and women are willing to change and look to new ways of relating to each other and managing their households. Both men and women spoke passionately about the greater peace and harmony in the home and how their homes were now happier places to be. The frustrations and tensions that used to build up are now dealt with through discussing and resolving problems together. The impact that the dialogues have had on household dynamics and sharing of workloads is really striking. By engaging with both men and women as couples in the dialogues there were opportunities to encourage the change as couples or household level and not just at an individual level. For female headed households the opportunities and impacts were different. For FHH the change was more at the level of parenting, and how they were treating their boys and girls in the home, and shifting from allocation of traditional gendered roles and tasks for the children, how communication and conflicts were dealt with.

It is true that it will not be possible to get every man on board immediately and it does require courage from men to do things differently in their lives, but over time more and more men will begin to see the positive impacts and begin to take them up. As more men get involved and begin to realise the negative impact that social and gender norms and masculinities has had on their life and their family their perceptions of what it is to be a man can be influenced. There are opportunities now for the programme to work with men who have completed the sessions and are now key advocates and allies of new ways of living to become key influencers for other men.

Engaging men in gender transformative and well-designed approaches leads to positive outcomes for women, men and children. Including men as equal partners, involved caregivers and supportive members of society is a responsible approach that considers relationships as a

whole and synergies between people rather than pieces of them. Men have shown that they can change their attitudes and behaviours around care giving, decision making and gender-based violence when given the space is created within the local context.

Engaging with men doesn't mean that women lose out and in fact we would suggest that engaging men is an essential element of approaches to women's empowerment, so that benefits are brought to children, women and men themselves.

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