

CARE International in Rwanda Developing a 'Life Free from Violence'



*Modelling Programme Approaches, Lessons
Learned, Successes and Challenges*



Section 1: Introduction

Purpose and Audience

CARE International has been championing a *Life Free from Violence* for women and girls in Rwanda since 2005, resulting in the evolution of some highly impactful models, covering women's economic empowerment, engaging men as allies of women's rights, couple's curriculums to address power imbalances at household level, and using activism as a means to address holistic changes within communities.

CARE International in Rwanda's approach was borne out of a recognition that many women's economic empowerment interventions result in household decision-making continuing to be dominated by men. Research by CARE Rwanda indicated that entrenched social expectations left men feeling mocked and threatened when their spouses attained resources—this disrupts the social norms, placing women as dominant, or decision-makers.

A consequence of women attaining economic resources (such as through Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups), is that women face increased power struggles within the home, that manifest themselves in disharmony, a lack of respect, and oftentimes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). IPV has strong implications on individual and family health and wellbeing, and in Rwanda, is also the most common form of Gender Based Violence (GBV) according to the Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC).

While programmes to promote women's economic empowerment efforts outside the household (VSLA for example) are popular, few efforts have been made to focus on change within the household itself. Alongside this, while the majority of women's financial empowerment approaches typically take place outside of the household, many women operate—and need to negotiate relationships—within their households.

CARE knows that Women's Economic Empowerment works, but that it can be made to work better and to achieve even more movement toward equality, when men are deliberately engaged as allies. CARE Rwanda's *Life Free from Violence* intervention models, have been designed to address just this—engaging men in the promotion and protection of women's rights, recognizing that economic and social empowerment for women and girls is unsustainable unless widely supported by men, boys,

communities, and society as a whole.

The first *Life Free from Violence* pilot—called *Journeys of Transformation*—resulted in:

Family life was better: Couples reported less violence, better relationships, and more openness. They talked about how to take care of their children, when to use family planning, and what kinds of investments to make.

Families had more income: gaining nearly twice as much as families who weren't in the programme. They were also more likely to share the income between family members, rather than just the husband making decisions.

Men were more likely to help at home, so women didn't need to take care of all household and childcare chores

While developed in the specific context of Rwanda, CARE and its partners—Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) and Rwanda Women's Network (RWN)—recognise that this *Life Free from Violence* approach is relevant for other settings and other women's economic empowerment initiatives.

This paper is a collation of the lessons learned, challenges and opportunities encountered, as *Journeys of Transformation* has gone from a small-scale pilot in 2010, through to a multi-faceted and scalable *Life Free from Violence* model to date (2018), which provides positive and empowered change for men and women across Rwanda.

The purpose of this document is to outline CARE Rwanda's *Life Free from Violence* journey, in the anticipation that other CARE International Country Offices and Women's Empowerment organisations can learn from CARE Rwanda's successes, and with us, take to scale this proven and easily adaptable model in the name of achieving women's and girls' rights to a life free from violence, in partnership with men and boys.

This paper has been developed using the findings and recommendations from numerous programme documents, curriculums, reports, evaluations, and research papers—the most prominent of which, are documented on the final page. Throughout you'll find breakout boxes referencing useful resources and materials—these are all available from CARE Rwanda.

The problem the model helps to address

The *Life Free from Violence* model helps address persisting challenges of rigid gender constructions that lead to Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In Rwanda, GBV is a stark reality. According to the 2014/15 Demographic and Health Survey, 35% of women and girls in Rwanda (aged 15-59) experience physical violence from the age of 15, and 22% experience sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. 4 in 10 women (aged 15-59) report having experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence from a spouse—45% of men aged 15-24 see this to be socially acceptable, as an indication of the man's right to control his wife's behaviour.

The need is not just Rwandan—in regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 40% of women indicated that their husbands had exclusive control over household expenditures.¹ By neglecting to address the power dynamics within women's economic empowerment, countries are affecting their potential to achieve and sustain economic growth.

These woefully inadequate statistics are the reason that inspired the development of *Journeys of Transformation*, and its subsequent iterations, in a bid to disrupt the deeply entrenched social and cultural norms that allow these power imbalances to play out on a daily basis, causing harm to individuals and the community at large.

Useful Resources and Materials

- CARE Rwanda strategy—one page summary
- CARE International's [Life Free from Violence Strategy](#)
- CARE International's [Gender Wiki](#)
- CARE International's [Social Analysis and Action](#) model which helps to address social norm change

Short description of the model

CARE International in Rwanda's *Life Free from Violence* programming approach, is comprised of four models of working: (1) Couple's Curriculum; (2) Women's Spaces; (3) Opinion Leaders; and (4) Community Activism. Combined, these four models are illustrating high impact results, with a relatively low level of resource or programme intensity required—full details of the models can be found on pages 15-21. The value proposition for those wishing to scale CARE Rwanda's *Life Free from Violence* approach is:

Value Proposition—Users: For couples within a family context—particularly couples experiencing risk, conflict, and domestic abuse—the *Life Free from Violence* model equips these couples with the knowledge and skills needed to realign family dynamics, live a more balanced relationship, and achieve increased income to reduce poverty and vulnerability (through the Couples Curriculum), while the Community Activism, Opinion Leaders, and Women's Safe Spaces components provide an enabling environment for community-wide change.

Value Proposition—Scalers: For organisations looking for a strategy to engage men to support women's empowerment, the *Life Free from Violence* model is a proven transformative approach that brings men and the couple to achieve and sustain, genuine behaviour change, which in turn reinforces the gains and values of economic empowerment programming. It has demonstrated important ripple effects, which broaden the impact to the wider community.

When looking at **CARE's competitive advantage** to lead the propulsion of the scaling of this model, it should be noted that CARE has:

- Supported and strengthened a large network of VSLA groups, which provide a firm foundation on which to build the proven model. In Rwanda, CARE has supported 18,500 groups (with 600,000 members, 70% women)—globally, CARE's groups reach 12 million women.
- Developed and tested various iterations of the Couple's Curriculum, including introducing new complementary models to provide a holistic approach to reducing Intimate Partner Violence. To complement this, CARE has a pool of experts to support quality implementation.
- Established resources that defray implementation costs.
- Developed, delivered, and adapted the curriculum for differing contexts.

Section 2: The Models

Timeline of the evolution of the models:

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<i>Journeys of Transformation</i> pilot (2010-2011). A couple's curriculum with a focus on financial management.	<i>GEWEP</i> (2012-2015) scales the <i>Journeys of Transformation</i> Couple's Curriculum within its wider programme framework.		<i>Indashyikirwa</i> (2014-2018) develops the couple's curriculum to focus on power relations, and introduces new modules focusing on Community Activism, Opinion Leaders and Women's Spaces.		<i>GEWEP II</i> (2016-2018) incorporates updated power relations Couples Curriculum and Community Activism into programming.		(2017-2018) CARE provides technical support to the World Bank funded and Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion implemented scale up of <i>Indashyikirwa</i> .

Journeys of Transformation

Where the journey began

CARE International in Rwanda's 'Mind the Gap' report, was based on research that explored how gender dynamics influence the process and outcomes of Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) methodology as a platform for women's economic empowerment. The report found that ultimately, through entrenched gender imbalances, men control the functioning of VSLA groups—even if they are not themselves members. Some further findings included:

- Normative gender roles and inequitable power relations between men and women significantly constrain women's ability to fully participate in and benefit from the VSL methodology;
- Gendered social norms and power relations define the ways in which women and men members of VSLA groups access money for savings, invest the loans they take from the groups, and the decision-making authority they have regarding use of loans taken; and
- Women's participation in VSLA groups is limited by their widespread dependency on their husband: for the money for their weekly savings contribution, and for the decision-making on taking a loan—whether to take one, how much to borrow, and what to use the money for.

What is VSLA?

CARE is widely recognized for its organization of poor, rural communities into Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups. The method is a well-tested way of providing the unbanked and financially excluded poor, with saving and credit services.

Groups have between 25-30 members who meet regularly to buy shares with their savings. After a certain period of time, members can take out a loan, usually of three times the value of their shares. After repaying the loan (with interest), the group has their 'share out' where all members receive their savings with interest. Such an approach allows vulnerable communities to invest in their businesses and development, despite being excluded from formal finance.

Membership is usually 70% women, loan default is 1%, and after five years, more than 85% of groups are functioning fully independently. 200,000 groups have been supported by CARE globally. They have 12-million members generating more than 10 billion financial transactions per year, and millions of dollars in annual savings. Find out more at: <http://www.care.org/vsla>

The 'Mind the Gap' report highlights that men have rigid expectations of the gender role of women. If VSLA activity—including income generating activities—affects the woman's ability to complete all that is expected of her at household level, this is seen by men as a failure of 'respect' on the part of their wives. This means that, in addition to facing the challenge of balancing their domestic workload with income-generating activities outside the household, the women participants of VSLA groups risk becoming subject to increased levels of intra-household conflict. This reinforced the findings in individual project evaluations, which were finding that despite some great strides in VSLA methodology, more

needed to be done to address issues related to gender, power dynamics, and communication at the household level if economic empowerment were to be fully realised.

The Mind the Gap report made six recommendations on how the CARE International team in Rwanda could pursue women's economic empowerment through VSLA groups without compromising women's safety at home, or neglecting to address gender equality. One such recommendation, was:

To engage in complementary programming activities outside VSLA groups, by engaging with couples together and men alone, to share information/address concerns regarding the social outcomes of men and women's participation in VSLA groups, and to explore and address norms relating to household decision-making, and the division of household labour.

This recommendation—combined with evidence showing that integrated programmes that take the social context into consideration are more effective in producing behaviour change than programmes that remain focused on the individual—led to the CARE International in Rwanda team developing *Journeys of Transformation*: a 17-week couple's curriculum, designed to engage men as allies of women's economic empowerment, with a firm focus on financial management.

The curriculum encouraged couples to reflect on rigid gender norms, examine personal attitudes, and question traditional ideas about household decision making and division of labour. Each session lasted 2-4hrs and was interspersed with homework—an assignment to be done outside of the training, and reflected on at the beginning of the next weeks' session. The 17 weekly sessions were split into three thematic blocks—Business, Health, and Laws and Policies—and depending on the topics, were either for couples together, or men-only.

The aim of piloting this couple's curriculum, was to improve the economic empowerment, gender equality, and poverty-alleviation effects of VSLAs by engaging men as allies in the process and by taking into account men's realities and needs. Most importantly, doing so in a way that does not cause harm to women, and that acknowledges the need for women's empowerment.

Results of the Pilot

The curriculum was piloted to 30 couples from VSLA groups partaking in CARE International's existing *Isaro Programme* in Huye District.² Results from the first cohort, showed strong outcomes:

- **Increased income** compared to couples who did not participate: the economic situation of participating families improved significantly after participating in the combined VSL activities (for women) plus the cycle of couple and husband group activities.
- Increased support of **family planning** by husbands, and **increased participation in childcare activities** by husbands: both women and men reported that some men became more supportive of family planning and many men became more involved in child care activities—changes that were not seen in the control VSLA group.
- **Reduced conflicts** between partners as well as **improved health and wellbeing**.
- Eagerness to **share their learning with other couples** living in domestic conflict.

The pilot concluded that such an approach resulted in men and women seeming to be ready to discover alternative ways to manage their households and partner relations—they seemed genuinely motivated to create greater peace at home, and women realized that their male partners should collaborate more as they seek ways to escape the daily hardship of extreme poverty.

“Before the trainings my husband was the only person to decide what to do with the household's resources but now we are deciding together on what, how and when to use the household's resources”.

Female participant | *Journeys of Transformation* Pilot

Lessons learned

There were a number of emerging lessons from piloting this curriculum:

- Couples that completed the training were eager to continue giving advice/counselling, and discussing IPV/GBV among communities;
- Engaging men in the curriculum had positive outcomes;
- The participatory nature of the group sessions played a strong role in the positive outcomes—participants were responsible for providing answers to questions raised by fellow participants. This created a sense of ownership, and meant the attendees weren't being 'preached at' by the facilitator;
- Couples wanted skills in activism, to be able to share the positive changes with community members;
- The delivery of the training needed to be provided by a pair of trainers—one female and one male—to ensure that both female and male participants had appropriate facilitation;
- Classes gradually became safe spaces where couples freely shared their personal life, and there was a feeling of group support and solidarity; and
- A 'do-no-harm' approach to women's economic empowerment should involve activities to engage men at the community level in questioning and ending gender-based violence—building on those interventions that have shown evidence of changes in men's attitudes and behaviours related to gender-based violence.

Challenges encountered

- Recruiting men to join the first sessions was originally motivated by economic gains (they received a transportation fee). With time—perhaps by the third session—the men started to join willingly, and the programme has had very minimal drop outs.

After the pilot in Huye District, CARE Rwanda (in partnership with RWAMREC) scaled up the Couples Curriculum within GEWEP (*Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme*) which was a follow-on of the *Isaro Programme*, and also funded by NORAD and Telethon. This iteration of the curriculum reached 2,670 couples across eight districts of Rwanda's Southern Province.

Useful Resources and Materials

- *Mind the Gap* report
- Journeys of Transformation Couple's Curriculum—second iteration
- Journeys of Transformation—end line documentation (*'I can do women's work': reflections on engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment in Rwanda*)
- Journeys of Transformation: Core Model Documentation

Developing Journeys of Transformation

Following the success of the *Journeys of Transformation* pilot, the curriculum was scaled up within the first (2012-15) and second (2016-18) phases of the Norwegian Government funded *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programme*.³ The Couples Curriculum was incorporated into *GEWEP* as a means to achieve the programme objectives to strengthen the engagement of men and women at the individual, family and community levels, to challenge harmful and restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity that drive inequality, leading to GBV.

Of the 2,670 couples taking part in the curriculum (from 2012-2015), 42% of the women had completed primary education, compared to just 35% of the men, and the majority of the participants (87% men, 82% women) were farmers. 3,280 people were reached by the trained couples through home visits and community sensitization sessions using songs, theatres, and games as techniques. 157 active men engage clubs were developed between 2014 and 2015. A further 42,379 people were reached with messages around gender justice, positive masculinity and GBV prevention, through Behaviour Change Communication campaigns organized at district level.

Incorporating the Couples Curriculum into GEWEP: The Results

An evaluation of *GEWEP*, focusing specifically on engaging men in women's empowerment programming, found the following results from the approach:

- **When men were engaged, they began to: respect their households;** engage in domestic activities—particularly those typically seen as 'female' roles; stop fighting at home; make joint decisions with their wives; save quality time for family; and pay medical insurance for household members and school fees for children.
- **There was a ripple effect:** men approached peers living in conflict to advise them on how to change.
- Engaged men were proud of their change in behavior—it brought them self-esteem
- Women noted **peace, unity and harmony** as the major impacts that change in their husbands brought to their households, as well as **improved economic conditions**, including joint decision making on household assets

“I was called cursed in my community. But when I see those men I used to fear as very important persons coming to me to seek advice on how to address issues of poverty, I feel proud of my change.”

Couple's Curriculum male participant | GEWEP programme

For women, they were happy with the outcomes of the trainings, not just because of the economic development gains but also: the new value their husbands place on them; the new quality time they have for their children (now they are getting help with household chores); their husbands realising the toughness of traditionally female reserved roles; and enjoying the reduced burden of being the only family providers. Women also enjoyed seeing the new appreciation and respect their husbands were being afforded by the community, and their new position as role models.

Lessons Learned ⁴

- **Selection of participants:** much as the majority of participants were couples who were living in conflict before the trainings, some couples who were in good relationships were also invited to join the trainings to avoid stigmatization. They were able to provide their testimonies and views on how different family issues can be addressed in a non-violent way.
- **Home assignments:** after each training session, participants (and men in particular) were given assignments to be completed at home. The assignments sought to involve men in activities that are traditionally female, and they had to provide feedback at the next training session. This way of learning by challenging existing stereotypes through

practical work was transformative as it gave room for men to realize that what were traditionally ‘female’ activities, could be done by men as well.

- **Creation of environment of trust and safety:** participants were encouraged to feel safe, and in turn created an atmosphere of trust for one another—this resulted in the sessions being conducive for progressive transformation.
- **Role modelling by the facilitators:** the training facilitators were not just facilitating the sessions but serving simultaneously as change agents, by sharing their own personal experiences of good relationships with their partners.
- **Power of Testimonies:** Men were touched by the testimonies from other men that had changed, and this in turn encouraged them to want to behave differently.⁵
- **Motivation to engage:** Men were most motivated to be engaged (and remain engaged) due to: the trainings; encouragement from local leaders; neighbours who come to seek advice—aspiring to be like the changed men; awareness of laws protecting women’s (and men’s) rights; and the realization that good relationships are a catalyst to: improve financially, regain lost care and affection from their wives, and improve living conditions.
- **Rapid change:** change was unexpectedly fast to the extent that it started taking place among beneficiaries with the very first trainings sessions. This rapid change is accredited to: (1) the detailed effort in developing the curriculum—the pilot that was delivered ensured the curriculum addressed exactly the right topics and issues, providing a ripe opportunity for change to happen quickly; and (2) the teaching methods, which included a check-in phase at the beginning of every training session, to ensure every participant was in the right mood to actively take part in the trainings.

“My husband started changing with the very first homework when he washed my clothes; today he is involved in every domestic activity whether I am at home or not .”

Couple’s Curriculum female participant | GEWEP programme

- **Initial harassment:** When the trainings started, engaged men faced harassment from peers, friends, relatives and neighbours, who called them names such as cowards, and bewitched (by their wives). When the harassers started realizing the training was associated with tangible and good results, most approached the engaged men for advice.
- **Concern about ‘backsliding’:** 21% of trained men were concerned about ‘backsliding’ into their old ways, which was predominantly thought to happen because of lack of money (62%) and jealousy from other men (13%). Women were concerned backsliding would happen because of the trainings coming to an end.

In light of this concern, a review of the training manual found it contains substantial and strong content around gender transformative approaches, yet has little focus on how to sustain changes, which could be of benefit in the future to mitigate against back-sliding. Some ideas on how to mitigate against this, which are being trialled in the 2016-2018 phase of *GEWEP* include: Continuous support to trained couples, especially through men engage clubs; linking men engage clubs with local authorities to enable their registration and thus additional support; and engaging religious leaders to create synergies between holy scripture messaging and the work of community activists.

Challenges encountered

- **Leadership Positions:** Following the curriculum, it was observed that many men were putting themselves forward for electoral positions in the community—e.g.: Heads of Villages, Heads of Cells and others. While this is a success, there’s little evidence of these same engaged men, supporting their wives or other women to do the same, and little evidence of improved numbers of women applying for such positions.
- **Changing male behaviour:** Engaged and trained men found challenges in the following: accommodating new values and practices in their lives; stigmatization by other men who did not take part in the trainings; abandoning former peers that maintained traditional gender views; having limited skills in income generation; and lack of study tours to exchange with engaged men elsewhere in the country, among others.⁶

- **Change ownership:** Ownership of the change was not felt (by some men), to be their responsibility—they saw it as CARE and RWAMREC’s project which they should ensure sustainability of.
- **Collaboration with local authorities:** There was limited collaboration with authorities at Sector level⁷, again impacting on likelihood of sustained change.
- **Access to finance:** despite the improved relationship among trained couples they still lack sustained finance to support their income generating activities. Lack of money was perceived as the most important factor contributing to backsliding which is likely to affect the newly established peace, unity and harmony.
- **Real conviction in gender equality?** The trainings proved to be a powerful tool for gender equality, but researchers felt the change was more likely to be motivated by economic reasons, than real conviction in gender equality.

Focus Group Discussions following the completion of the couple’s curriculum, saw the following two proverbs repeatedly raised as the ‘answers’ needed to address remaining challenges:

“Kwigisha ni uguhozaho”—meaning that education has no end. Women were most concerned men’s change in behaviour would not be sustained, due to the trainings coming to an end.

“Imvura iguye rimwe yitwa cyumya”—literally translating to mean ‘rain that falls once contributes in just drying up the soil’. Again, building on women’s desire that trainings be sustained. One off curriculums can’t be the long-term solution.

Unintended Consequences

Positive

- **Formation of men engage clubs:** A number of ‘Men’s Clubs’ were developed—with men citing the reason for their establishment as “wanting to give their testimonies to families still experiencing conflict so that they can change as well”. Another reported reason for the development of the clubs, was for men to support one another to prevent backsliding into their old ways.
- **Transformation of couples that did not attend the trainings:** end-line evaluation found some couples (at least one or two in each Sector) that had not attended the training, but had changed because of the behaviour change they saw in their neighbours. When asked why they changed they said that they wanted to have the same peace, harmony and associated development related achievements in their households, as they were witnessing in the trained couple households.
- **Men who shared their own money to boost their wives’ shares in VSLAs:** much as this might sound like normal behaviour for a changed man, it was not a directly predictable effect.
- **Transformed men used as role models or appointed local leaders:** In some Sectors, transformed men were used as role models to help families in conflicts. Other men were appointed heads of Imidugudu/villages because of the exemplary behaviour they showed during and after trainings.

Negative

- **Stigma from peers:** While not many cases of this arose, in some sectors men were stigmatized for endorsing women’s equal rights. This was not reported to be a large problem. A few couples dropped out of the training—when asked why, the common response from their communities was that the men were not happy, as the trainings exposed them to the local leaders.

Emerging Recommendations

Recommendations that emerged from trialling the Couples Curriculum within the *GEWEP programme*, included:

- **Local leaders:** Keep using local leaders as a means to encourage community members to trust engaged men
- **Income Generation:** Incorporate income generation skills into the model to reduce household poverty—e.g.: how to develop an income generating project, how to effectively use start-up capital, and how to access large markets. Combined with this, was the suggestion to organize participants into Credit and Saving Cooperatives to help them

secure larger scale finance for income generating projects, and working with banks to increase access to more significant funding.

- **Family Code:** Incorporate trainings on the family code into the curriculum, for participants to know more about family issues, and the related laws.
- **Men's clubs:** Build the capacity of men's clubs to ensure their sustainability. Consider: organizing study tours for club participants to share and learn from other groups; equipping the clubs with needed transport and communication materials (e.g.: bicycles, airtime etc) to increase their reach; training them as trainers to be able to more effectively communicate the gains of changing their behaviour at home; and securing entrepreneurship trainings for participants. There should also be increased collaboration between local authorities and the men's clubs, to strengthen impact.
- **Public rewards:** Publicly reward participants with simple tokens, in recognition of their role in GBV prevention.
- **Coaching and Mentorship:** Consider organizing coaching and mentorship for trained couples, to support the sustainability of gender equitable relationships, and increased participation in income generating activities.

Each of these learnings fed into the design and development of the 2014-2018 Indashyikirwa Project (covered in detail in the next section).

Useful Resources and Materials

- Engaging Men initiative—evaluation
- Cross country learning agenda on engaging men—case of Rwanda



Agents for Change

In 2014, CARE International was awarded funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to deliver the four-year *Indashyikirwa* project (meaning ‘*Agents for Change*’), which focuses on Gender Based Violence (GBV) primary prevention and aims to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) as a primary outcome.

The prospect of specific funding to address GBV and IPV created the prime opportunity to scale the Couples Curriculum while taking previous lessons on board to incorporate additional models that would strengthen outcomes—particularly in areas that would:

- (1) Allow trained couples to be activists for change in their community;
- (2) Provide safe spaces for women⁸ (as recommended by DFID following a visit in 2014); and
- (3) Integrate Opinion Leaders into the approach so as to create an enabling environment for change by championing gender equality and peaceful communities at Sector and District levels. It was felt that this would also ensure localised ownership of programming, and strengthen sustainability of outcomes.

A key difference within *Agents for Change* was for the Couples Curriculum to focus on couples understanding **power and the consequences of power imbalances in the household relationships**. This moved away from its original priority focus on financial management.

The resultant design for *Agents for Change*, was a programme that uses a gender synchronized approach to bring about sustainable social change, through the engagement of not only men and women at the **individual** level, but also at **family** and **community** levels. The purpose being to challenge harmful and restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity that drive inequality leading to GBV. This approach also focuses on supporting women at the community level to transition from survivors of GBV and gender inequality, to agents of change through grassroots advocacy and mobilization for collective action.

The project theory of change is based on the evidence of effective models to prevent GBV at household and community levels, beginning with a focus on empowering women economically and socially, including through awareness of their rights. This approach is based on working across the ecological levels of individual, family, and community, with changes at each level happening alongside the theory of behaviour change, upon which the change stages of SASA!⁹ is based.

Within the programmes theory of change, is the construct that: *When a critical mass of people change, their beliefs, behaviours, and social norms change. When social norms change, this in turn also reinforces and catalyses the behaviour changes of individuals and families, which in turn creates a multiplier or diffusion effect, where other individuals from other communities that are not part of the intervention start changing as well, because they see social norms shifting in a community near them.*

Agents for Change had a one-year inception phase to develop and pre-test the four different models. Each model required a curriculum to provide the required trainings. The structure and content for all of the curriculums was built from the latest learning from the field about what makes effective GBV prevention, including:

- Addressing power imbalance as the root cause of GBV
- Recognizing change as a process
- Understanding triggers of GBV
- Building skills to manage triggers and create a healthy, non-violent relationship

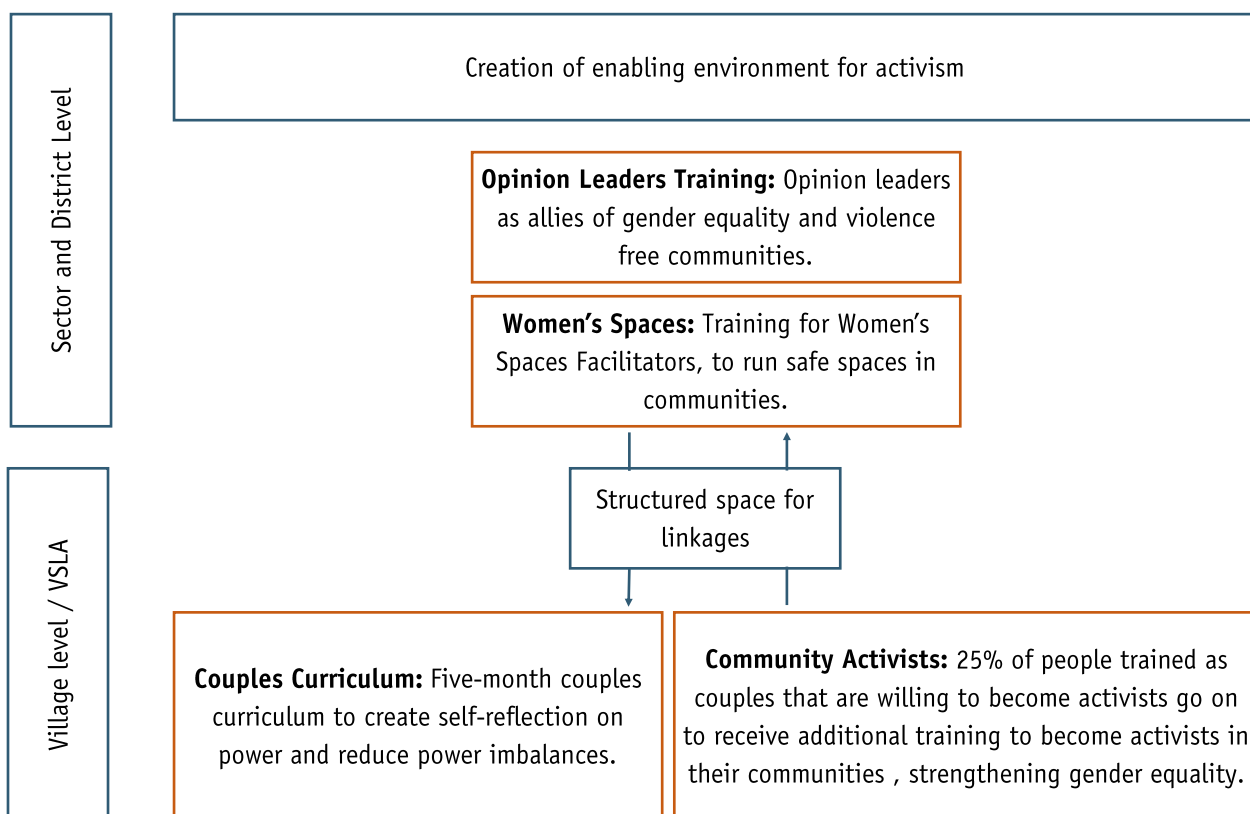
The Couples Curriculum was adapted with revised modules, resulting in a 20-week course. For 25% of the trained couples, this was followed by two weeks of activism preparation training, and a subsequent two-day training ahead of each of the four activism phases. The theory behind introducing the Community Activism model, was to go beyond awareness raising at individual level, and ride on the passion of those individuals to then engage them and their wider communities as the agents of change needed to free communities from GBV through achieving broader social change and an enabling environment. The Community Activism model was developed based on learnings from Raising Voices’ SASA! approach in Uganda⁹. The Women Space Facilitators guide and Opinion Leaders training modules were developed from scratch during the first year.

The inception phase provided time to develop, test, and adapt the four curriculums. This process was based on:

- Social norms and gender research through 24 vignette focus groups¹⁰ with community members. This informed content and delivery of community activism activities and messages.
- Interviews with 30 couples and nine opinion leaders, before and after training, to assess impressions and impact of trainings. The findings were used to inform refresher trainings for couples and opinion leaders, as well as detail how curriculums could be revised for scale up.
- It was found that staff were more open about implementation challenges than beneficiaries, and so interviews with 15 staff after the delivery of trainings were held to assess impressions and impact.
- Interviews with six women’s space attendees, three women’s space facilitators, and six observations of women’s space activities. Combined, these informed refresher trainings for facilitators, and identified and addressed implementation challenges, including how to effectively engage men.
- 12 interviews and observations with community activists to assess impressions of activism training, challenges, and community reactions—as a result, activism activities and messages were updated.

The inception period also allowed time to test the underlying theory of change, draw on core characteristics responsible for effective programmes, and develop participant appropriate curriculums. Following all of this, the team were able to identify the enabling factors and barriers to changing gender norms and intimate partner violence, and concretely understand how the four models could interconnect best, for strong outcomes.

The following illustrates the final approach:



Detailed information on each model is provided later, on pages 15-21.

Prior to implementation and pre-testing of the curriculum, staff from CARE and partners (RWAMREC and RWN) completed a two-week intensive training on the curriculum content and approach, including participatory methodologies and ensuring safe spaces for equal participation. At this training, staff practiced implementing curriculum sessions and modified them before the pre-test with community members. Each staff member had the opportunity to practice facilitating at least one session during the curriculum pre-test. All of the facilitators also had at least a few years of previous facilitation experience. In addition, project staff received several trainings on gender and GBV, as well as facilitated dialogue on CARE’s Gender Equity and Diversity (GED) model, to ensure that staff had achieved, and were experiencing, a positive transformation before they went out to train community members.

Lessons Learned: Design

During the inception phase of piloting and testing, the following lessons emerged:

Content:

- Clarity is needed on foundational concepts (such as types of power, and gender vs. sex). This is essential to ensure the trainers can deliver accurate information.
- Pre-test any new curriculum/programme components before widespread implementation—the pre-test sessions can be seen to have helped to strengthen language, and ensured the content was relevant.
- Translations must be verified to ensure absolute understanding among participants

Delivery:

- Sessions should be shorter and spread out over a longer period of time—this supports concentration, uptake of information, and contact time with trainers. Following this, training for *Opinion Leaders* and *Women's Space Facilitators* was adjusted from five full days, to 10 half days
- Having two facilitators for the couple's curriculum was a strength—this allowed one male, one female. It ensured that the training modelled gender equality, there was more support available for illiterate couples, and more capacity to support with emotional reactions in sessions.
- During the Training of Trainers, facilitators needed more time to practice participatory management.
- There is a need to equip trainers in basic psychosocial counselling skills. During pre-test, it was noticed that participants were having high emotions that required immediate psychosocial support. This was provided by *Agents for Change*, and should be considered by others wanting to replicate the model.

Lessons Learned: Implementation

Subsequent lessons have been captured between 2015 and 2017, as the four adapted curriculums and complementary programming has been delivered. To date, the Couples Curriculum has been delivered to 840 couples, with 25% of them (210) going on to receive additional Community Activism training. Curriculum specific learnings are detailed on pages 15-21.

General

- Human centred design—plan programme model and materials with beneficiaries in mind. The programme model was designed and progressively reviewed based on the needs of beneficiaries that were identified during the process of implementation, or based on the qualitative research results.
- Identify key enablers/barriers to change in specific contexts, including social norms, policy, legal framework.
- Ensure research and programming agendas are working collaboratively from the outset.
- Allowing time for adaptation (e.g.: one-year inception phase). This will enhance delivery results.

Community Activists

- The ideal ratio is to have three community activists per village—bear this in mind when developing ratios of target couples. In the case of Rwanda, a village is made up of about 100 households.
- Activists identify cycles of influence and follow them

Women's Spaces

- A fundamental component of preventing GBV is ensuring the provision of community mobilization spaces for women—secure the buy-in and engagement of Sector and District (or equivalent) officials to strengthen the localised ownership and sustainability of such spaces.
- When women come to community spaces, they may also be seeking services—it's important to map GBV and rights-related services so that women's spaces can link women to nearby and relevant services.
- Spaces provide an opportunity for women to engage and receive support from their peers, and to raise issues they may not be comfortable raising in other spaces.

- Women’s Space Facilitators should also be trained in advocacy, to strengthen their capacity to develop an advocacy action plan. This advocacy action plan will support the facilitators to address issues raised by women attending, as well as connect with the commitments made by Opinion Leaders.¹¹

Emerging Challenges

- It was challenging to develop a clear and cohesive Theory of Change, based on the compiled learnings from multiple prior interventions
- Due to the design of the evaluation and research component of *Agents for Change*, the intervention and control Sectors to be part of the programme were randomized. As a result, there are some large distances between the intervention Sectors, which has resulted in subsequent challenges between staff and local leaders. The evaluation component of the programme has hosted a workshop with partners to better understand the process and practice of randomization to local leaders.
- There is not a strong history of community mobilization and/or participatory approaches within the intervention locations—this required more intensive support to the trainers for them to be able to deliver training that met this standard, as well as a different kind of engagement from participants.

Results

Implementation of *Agents for Change* concludes in August 2018 and will benefit from a separate and independent impact evaluation, as part of the centrally funded DFID initiative: *What Works to prevent violence against women and girls*. *What Works* is a consortium (comprised of South African Medical Research Council (lead), London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Social Development Direct) working to support 18 DFID funded programmes, each working in violence prevention. The consortium provides research, innovation, capacity building and policy agenda support to the 18 different programmes, supporting DFIDs agenda to determine the most successful models to prevent violence, to subsequently scale.

The *Agents for Change* mid-term data will be available in March 2018, with final evaluation available in November 2018.

The following pages illustrate the four models in terms of how they work, how they should be delivered, and lessons learned—this is to assist others wishing to scale the integrated approach to achieving a *Life Free from Violence*.

Within CARE Rwanda, scaling of the *Agents for Change* version of the couple’s curriculum, along with the additional Community Activism model is taking place within the second phase of *GEWEP* (2016-2018).

Useful Resources and Materials

- [Agents of Change: A Community-based GBV Prevention Project—Project Document](#)
- [Research to inform Adaptation: An IPV Case Study from Rwanda \(Strive Learning Lab\)](#)
- [A Process Review of the Indashyikirwa Couples Curriculum to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence and Support Healthy, Equitable Relationships in Rwanda](#)
- [Mid-term Interviews: Opinion Leaders](#)
- [Mid-term Interview Impressions: Indashyikirwa](#)
- [Research Document: Shifting Perceptions of Consequences of IPV Among Beneficiaries of Indashyikirwa: An IPV Prevention Program in Rwanda](#)
- [Research Document: A Process Review of the Indashyikirwa Couples Curriculum to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence and Support Healthy, Equitable Relationships in Rwanda](#)
- [Opinion Leaders: training curriculum](#)
- [Community Activists: training curriculum](#)
- [Journeys of Transformation: training curriculum](#)
- [Women’s Space Facilitators: training curriculum](#)

Couple's Curriculum: in detail

Training

The Couple's Curriculum is a five-month-long (20 sessions, once weekly) set of interactive trainings and take-home exercises designed to create a space for self-reflection on power and power relationships within couples, and to help foster a process of change to reduce gender-based violence within couples in Rwanda.

Themes highlighted for reflection and questioning include rigid gender norms, personal attitudes and beliefs, traditional ideas about household decision-making and division of labour, and taking care of children. The group activities are also focused on promoting men's acceptance of and support for their wives' participation in the VSLA groups and on encouraging men to reflect on the negative consequences of gender inequality for themselves.

Training Set Up:

Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Skilled staff of organizations working to address GBV in Rwanda, who have received proper training– Each session requires two facilitators—one male, one female– All staff facilitating the curriculum should be trained in basic counselling and referral skills for victims of GBV
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Couples—both man and woman. They should have been cohabiting for minimum 6-months.– One member of the couple should be a member of a Savings Group (e.g.: VSLA)– Up to 30 Participants/15 couples
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– 20 weeks/five months

Curriculum Outline:

- 20 sessions—one a week, and each session a maximum of three hours
- There are two reflection sessions in the curriculum (10 and 16), which provide space to review key learnings and reflect on participants' personal experiences
- Each person within a couple (both husband and wife) was paid RwF 2,000 per session to cover transport costs—approximately \$2.50 USD.

The intensive curriculum-based work cannot be a stand-alone effort—it is the first step in a larger process, designed to ignite change within individuals and fuel their spirit of activism, which will in turn serve as the basis for ongoing community-based activism to be sustained for the duration of the project.

Delivery In Action

Lessons

- More than 24 trained couples formalised their marriages, for reasons such as: a sign of commitment; to ensure protection of women's and children's rights; and/or from learning how to have harmonious marriages. This was an unexpected outcome.
- Couples appreciated being trained together, not least because it supported their joint understanding as a couple
- Couples appreciated the relevance and participatory approach of the curriculum
- Although some men dominated the first few sessions, participation gradually became more gender-balanced
- Great value was found in having two facilitators of both genders—namely to encourage participation from both men and women participants, separating men and women for some activities, and offering counselling to participants that wanted to speak to someone of the same sex.
- Style of delivery was excellent for those that are illiterate
- There was high retention, dedication, and regular attendance at the sessions
- Separating men and women for some activities was helpful for encouraging women's active participation—particularly for more taboo topics, e.g.: sexuality
- Use of 'take-home' exercises to complete in between weekly sessions helped couples to apply and benefit from learnings, have time to discuss together, and mitigate resistance to certain topics

- The concept of positive and negative types and uses of power appears to be fundamental to the process of change, for couples to identify causes and consequences of various forms of Intimate Partner Violence, and support their ability to prevent and respond to Intimate Partner Violence in their own relationships and within their communities.

Challenges

- Men and women were initially reluctant to men sharing household and domestic duties due to concerns that men cannot perform tasks assigned for women—in turn, this reflects badly on women being unable to perform their duties, and husbands can be stigmatized for performing such duties
- Some of the topics and discussions were challenging for staff members, and/or participants to understand, namely: distinction between gender and sex, as well as talking about sexuality issues
- Concepts of activism (final module)
- Ways to provide empowering responses to GBV survivors such as being validating, inclusive, and giving options instead of advice;
- Details and sentences of the laws introduced

Opportunities

- Each training block had one session delivered by an invited expert. This strengthened the credibility of the information being relayed, and should be optimised in scaled-up approaches to make the training relevant to the local context, cultures and laws.
- There is real importance in encouraging participatory discussions. When participants disagreed with certain content, or asked a question, the facilitator would ask another who can respond—this way, the participants paved their own way through dialogue, and owned the changes they were making.
- Field officers were asked to offer individual and couples counselling—attributed to the close relationships they built with couples. This is an opportunity to be building on in future scaled versions.



Community Activists: in detail

Training

The Community Activists curriculum was created to develop the skills that are necessary for selected couples and individuals to conduct effective activism at community level. It has been recognised that it is not new for community members to be taught about GBV—but this approach is unique for harnessing community solutions by themselves.

Training Set Up:

Facilitator	– Partner Staff (that have received TOT training)
Participants	– Individuals that have completed the couple's curriculum – Couples selected based on willingness, location (to ensure even distribution across villages) and known capacity to be a strong activist – Up to 30 in one group
Duration	– Two weeks, followed by four additional two-day trainings to take place before each of the four phases of activism

Curriculum Outline: 16 total sessions—each session is a maximum of three hours

Notes to implementers:

- Sessions are long and require critical thinking from all involved. Monitor the energy levels of the group and be prepared to run energizers as needed;
- Adapt the language used throughout training, to suit your audience;
- Pay careful attention to the safety of participants throughout the process. Encouraging women to re-think power dynamics in relationships, could expose them to greater risk with their husbands;
- It is key to run regular practice sessions for utilizing the project's activist tools; and
- The module list is not exhaustive—topics aim to cover the fundamentals that are needed for CAs to get started.

Delivery in Action

Lessons

- Community Activists are engaged, committed and highly motivated, wanting to support other couples experiencing violence. The support the activists have received through the couple's curriculum, is critical in generating motivation.
- Community Activists need to be recruited from the communities in which they're from—this leads to a positive response from community members.
- Community members were initially sceptical of the Community Activists—it has taken some time for them to garner trust.
- Engaging village and local leaders where activism would take place and introducing them to the project, has been critical in ensuring Community Activists are welcomed and given priority time to speak at community dialogues, meetings and events—reinforced by quarterly meetings between the lead organisation and leaders. This has boosted Community Activist's confidence.
- Local leader engagement is critical for scale up and sustainability.
- The activism posters engage community members in open, reflective dialogue.
- Continued monitoring and support from Field Officers is critical for success,
- Monthly coordination meetings were emphasized as critical for supporting the motivation levels, skills, and abilities of the Community Activists—as well as providing a platform for activists to offer one another advice, share ideas, and receive feedback from Field Officers,
- Activism activities are generally attended less well by men and youth. Men are also generally more resistant to the content, cautious that the activism is teaching their wives to have power over them.
- Older community members are more resistant to the community activism—older community activists are needed, to

engage with this demographic.

- Some of the trained couples, that did not progress to become Community Activists, have struggled with the feeling of exclusion.

Challenges

- Motivation levels vary, based on location—those based in more urban and busy settings, are not as easy to motivate to work continuously
- Male activists are on the whole, slightly less motivated than female activists
- Activists struggle to dedicate time during peak agricultural seasons
- Activist discussions are often in open fields, which means community members struggle to participate in the rainy season
- Monitoring of activities is challenging due to the varied schedules activists keep, combined with local leaders oftentimes changing meeting times/locations at the last minute—this prohibits monitoring by Field Officers (as well as engagement of activists)
- The power posters, while useful, are too busy with content
- Men often react defensively to content, particularly around men balancing power with women
- Cultural expectations are so entrenched, that many women continue to agree with patriarchal norms

Opportunities

- Local leader engagement has resulted in them referring couples and individuals experiencing violence, to Community Activists and the Women's Spaces. Similarly, Community Activists are linking up well with the Women's Spaces, actively referring women for support. The interconnection of models is strong.
- Community Activists support one another—seen as a critical achievement
- Community Activists would gain from more refresher trainings, given their generally low educational backgrounds
- Community Activists should meet with trained couples that are not activists, to keep them involved, and engaged—this will create space to share experiences
- Couples turning up to activism events together should be encouraged—hearing both sides of the experience is well received by community members. This is to be recommended with the recognition that rarely can both husband and wife be out together when children need looking after.
- Community Activists are being asked to provide counselling to community members, and thus need more support in this area.



Women's Space Facilitators: in detail

Training

The training for Women's Spaces Facilitators is designed to be interactive and self-reflective, to help foster a process of change to reduce gender-based violence within Rwandan communities. Women Space Facilitators constitute an important resource that once trained and supported can help:

- (1) Build solidarity, network, organize and engage women to find sustainable solutions to issues of GBV in their communities;
- (2) Receive/give advice and relevant information on gender-based violence;
- (3) Safely access information and referral to GBV response services including psychosocial, legal and health services; and
- (4) Take advocacy actions to address power and gender inequalities as well as GBV issues on behalf of women and their communities in general.

Training Set Up:

Facilitator	– Partner Staff (that have received TOT training)
Participants	– Identified women from the community deemed to have the skills needed to support other women. They do not need to have partaken in the Couple's Curriculum training. – Up to 20 in one group
Duration	– One session a day, for 10 days

Curriculum Outline:

- 10 total sessions in the core module—each session is a maximum of three hours
- Five additional sessions once the facilitators are actively providing support

Notes to implementers:

- Sessions are long and require critical thinking from all involved. Monitor the energy levels of the group and be prepared to run energizers as needed
- Adapt the language used throughout training, to suit your audience
- Pay careful attention to the safety of participants throughout the process. Encouraging women to re-think power dynamics in relationships, could expose them to greater risk with their husbands.

Delivery in Action

Lessons

- Women are actively using and strongly appreciate the dedicated support they receive at the safe spaces
- Women's Space Facilitators are partnering with Community Activists to collaborate on activism
- The safe spaces are successfully resolving Intimate Partner Violence
- Women's Space Facilitators are themselves also living with reduced violence at home, and improved relationships
- Establishment of the women's spaces motivates Opinion Leaders and holds them accountable to actions they have committed to
- Regular monitoring, constructive feedback, support, and refresher trainings, are critical for strengthening facilitation, listening skills, confidence, and reporting mechanisms of the facilitators.
- Motivation levels of Women's Space Facilitators are, on the whole, high. They're dedicated, committed and motivated by their improved community status. Motivation is improved by weekly travel stipend.
- Women's Spaces are sustainable—the facilitators have expressed a wish to continue even after the programme ends.

Challenges:

- Women attending the safe spaces expect financial support
- Women who attend the safe spaces struggle to work with their husbands at home to create change
- Limited resources constrain women's ability to attend the safe spaces and/or join the income generating 'Solidarity Groups' that have evolved (more below)
- Women's Space Facilitators can live far from the safe spaces—during rainy seasons, they are hindered from attending the spaces
- When Women's Space Facilitators are speaking at community meetings, leaders often prioritize their own agendas, not always providing sufficient time for gender-based dialogues
- Generally low educational backgrounds of the Women's Space Facilitators means they require more regular refresher trainings

Opportunities:

- Solidarity groups have been initiated by the spaces, whereby women contribute some money each month and use the cumulative amount to meet each other's needs
- Posters strengthen the capacity of Women's Space Facilitators to speak in front of large groups, and conduct participatory dialogues



Opinion Leaders: in detail

Training

GBV affects the lives of victims, families, and whole communities. This presents a key opportunity for different actors—including government, NGOs, opinion leaders and all stakeholders—to build an understanding on issues of GBV. This training was delivered to Opinion Leaders as a way of building their understanding and garnering their support to strengthen programmes combating Gender Based Violence, based on their strong role in shaping public perceptions, attitudes and practices.

Training Set Up:

Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Skilled trainers, who have in-depth understanding and analysis of GBV, and are versed in participatory methods of training– Trainers need to be able to offer basic counselling and referral skills for victims of GBV
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Opinion Leaders from the intervention community—for example Police Officers, Religious Leaders, Local Leaders—that are selected with support by the local authorities– The training is designed for 40 participants
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– One session a day, for eight days

Curriculum Outline: Eight sessions in total, each a maximum of three hours

Notes to implementers:

- Sessions are long, and require critical thinking from all involved. Monitor the energy levels of the group and be prepared to run energizers as needed
- Adapt the language used throughout training, to suit your audience
- Pay careful attention to the safety of participants throughout the process. Encouraging women to re-think power dynamics in relationships, could expose them to greater risk with their husbands.
- A key element of the training is supporting leaders to develop commitments, for promoting gender equality and reduced GBV in the community.

Delivery in Action

Lessons

- Opinion leaders are more accountable following training, to provide appropriate responses to GBV survivors
- Opinion leaders feel more equipped to respond to GBV survivors
- Opinion leaders are providing opportunities for Women's Space Facilitators to conduct activism at various community meetings—active coordination between Opinion Leaders and Women's Space Facilitators is a success
- Engaging Opinion Leaders in this way strengthens the rest of the programme's activities—particularly Women's Space Facilitators and Community Activists, as they receive the support they need from community leaders.
- There are reports of service providers' responses to GBV improving, as a result of programming
- Successful advocacy has resulted in health care providers accepting Mituel health insurance to treat survivors of GBV, rather than fining them for related care services

Challenges

- It is challenging to monitor Opinion Leaders (as independent individuals, rather than programme participants), and thus truly understand the impact of their interventions
- A number of Opinion Leaders are not yet engaged in the concept of what the programme is trying to achieve—securing their buy-in takes time
- Opinion Leaders have multiple responsibilities, and GBV reduction is not always number one on their priority list
- Opinion Leaders have restricted budget, so despite strong advocacy approaches and intentions, little may change in terms of financial input
- Opinion Leaders are not always supporting completion of the referral forms for services provided to GBV survivors
- Both trained, and untrained Opinion Leaders are requesting detailed and confidential information from the women's safe spaces, seeing it as their right to know what's going on.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Both the *Agents for Change* and 2016-2018 *GEWEP programme* have dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Managers, working at 100% level of effort (LOE). They provide training to the Field Officers and Field Advisors, who as the on-the-ground implementers, are responsible for day-to-day data collection. Both programmes collect outcome and impact data through research and routine data collection.

The monitoring tools being used by both programmes include:

Observation Check List—this is used throughout the Couple's Curriculum, Community Activism, Opinion Leaders, and Women's Space Facilitator training sessions, by the field supervisor who observes the training sessions and captures main issues from the training that can then be taken on board. For example, adaptations needed to the curriculums, insights on certain modules that may trigger emotional responses that require psychosocial support, or how content and facilitation can be improved.

Community Activity Report Form—through which field staff capture key data on Community Activism activities including topics covered, number of people reached, main issues arising etc. This form also helps to capture feedback on how Community Activists can improve their activities based on the feedback that arises.

Women's Space Registers—a monitoring tool to document number of people accessing the space (especially first-time visitors), why they're accessing the space, how they have been supported, and number of cases resolved. It is also used for documenting GBV case load, and increasingly is trying to capture data on people with disabilities.

Men's Club Registers—a tool to document the activities undertaken by the GEWEP Men's Clubs, including the materials they're using, number of people they've reached, topics discussed, number of cases brought to the men's clubs for support etc.

Women's Space Referral forms—a tool to document where people using the Women's Spaces have been referred on to

Opinion Leader Commitments—monitoring the Opinion Leaders is more challenging, as they're not working solely for the programme. The *Agents for Change* programme has worked with the authorities to document the commitments that Opinion Leaders make following the training they receive (such as influencing peers, or communicating about GBV in public forums), and then set indicators that become part of the leaders' performance contract. Field Officers are responsible for documenting achievement of the commitment using outcome mapping, and outcome journals.

Outcome mapping is an approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation that: (1) puts people at the centre; (2) defines outcomes as changes in behaviour; and (3) helps measure contribution to complex change processes.

Each of these tools are completed in paper version, and then uploaded to excel reporting forms by the Field Officers before being submitted quarterly to the M&E Managers for consolidation and analysis.

The main challenges that are encountered in Monitoring and Evaluation under both the *GEWEP* and *Agents for Change* programme are:

- It is challenging to hold the Opinion Leaders accountable to the commitment they make, as they're not project staff. It is also challenging to collect reports or evidence on what they have done.
- Collecting timely data from the field officers—the field team have received a number of trainings on the importance of their monitoring role, to increase their capacity and willingness to prioritise capturing data.
- Data collection around the outcome of actions has been more challenging throughout. For example if 30 women attending the women's spaces have had support to resolve their problems, the programme does not know what has changed—at individual and household level—as a result of that support. This level of follow up has been challenging on the whole due to the capacity staff have to dedicate time to such intensive follow up.

Both programmes have undertaken baseline evaluations and will be conducting impact evaluations in 2018

Scaling through Institutional Structures

In 2017 the Government of Rwanda received funding from the World Bank to scale the Couples Curriculum component of the *Agents for Change* model to four additional districts in the Eastern Province (these are districts where neither *Agents for Change* or *GEWEP* are working).

The funding sits with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) who have brought on board CARE as a technical advisor, and grassroots organisations as the implementers (these grassroots organisations are the same as CARE's partners for *Agents for Change*). Before rolling out the curriculum, MIGEPROF wanted to incorporate a focus on child care. CARE, MIGEPROF and partners worked to design new modules to be incorporated within the original 20 module structure, along with adaptations to the introductory and closing modules.

The new modules include:

The Children are our future: building understanding of how violence in couples affects their children; exploring the benefits of raising boys and girls equally and identifying positive changes that can be made in how we treat boys and girls; and identifying a change that can be made to treat our boys and girls equally.

Small Actions, Big Impact: building an understanding of questioning as an effective way of raising awareness; building the skills to engage other community members in discussions around power and GBV; and identifying opportunities for activism to prevent violence against women.

The delivery of the curriculum is for one year only, and so this version will not incorporate Community Activism, Opinion Leaders or Women's Spaces.

The key takeaway for CARE Rwanda within this process has been the flexibility of the curriculum to address different, yet hugely aligned needs—positive parenting, children and violence.



Section 3: Taking the Model to Scale

Considerations for Scale

For CARE Country Offices, and other organisations, seeking to adopt and adapt this model for use in other countries and contexts, there are a number of considerations (alongside those noted throughout this document) that should be taken into account:

General Considerations

- Is the language of materials appropriate for the priority population, considering developmental level, cultural norms, language, literacy?
- Is the research-based information in the curriculums up-to-date?
- Are the images and examples (in curriculums and activism tools) up-to-date and culturally appropriate?
- Are process and outcome evaluation materials appropriate?

The Life Free from Violence models are likely to work best where:

- There is a large unmet need to address intimate partner violence;
- There are unhealthy gender dynamics within households;
- Implementing organizations have a strong existing relationship with target participants;
- Female economic empowerment activities are undertaken;
- The burden of intimate partner violence is known to be high;
- The relevant target group (low-income, traditional ideologies regarding gender) can be easily reached (e.g.: VSLA groups on which to build the programme); and
- The Couple's Curriculum is a value add to VSLA/savings groups, when recognizing that economic empowerment activities can often times aggravate issues related to gender power dynamics.

Additional success-enabling factors

Participant selection: Rigid views of masculinity prevail in Rwanda—such that randomization of VSLA participants for participation in the Couples Curriculum produces an adequate sample of couples facing issues related to intimate partner violence. For model adaptation outside of Rwanda, it may be necessary to use more targeted methods to reach couple participants that are more likely to have used violence against a partner.

Rwanda has a large and **established network of VSLAs and NGO partnerships**—both of these factors are crucial for scale and success. The VSLAs provide an easy method of reaching the target population, and established partnerships ensure there are capable scalars with dedication to the model who will implement it in a manner that preserves quality standards.

Scale up is likely to struggle where:

- The landscape for GBV prevention work is crowded;
- Target participants are difficult to identify and reach; and
- There is a lack of devoted, trained, and capable scalars.

Some of the **Key Metrics** that could be considered, to monitor the impact of your interventions, include:

- Household income pre- and post- intervention
- Measures of balanced partnership
- Qualitative feedback on a digital platform
- Comparison of outcomes against evidence from different contexts to build a comparable body of data
- Number of couples reached
- Number of couples reached through Ripple effect

Emerging recommendations

Programmatic

- Programmes like *Agents for Change* should raise awareness among women in informal marriages, about the legal strategies to secure land rights for women and their children. In Rwanda for example, this would be to register their children on the property and be familiar with the GBV Law Article 39 (which allows a woman to claim rights to property if an informal spouse intends to formally marry someone else). Local leaders who mediate separation of informal couples also require greater awareness of this exception.
- Couples based programmes should promote the value of informal marriages, and discourage communities from describing such unions as ‘illegal’, or referring to women in informal marriages as ‘prostitutes’—this has the potential of preventing authorities from assisting such couples and dissuading couples from claiming their rights.
- Programmes like *Agents for Change* should promote awareness of the revised Family Law Article 206, which for the first time in Rwanda promotes joint headship of households, and could de-naturalize the notion of men as primary authorities and breadwinners in the family.
- The *Life Free from Violence* model would benefit from being adapted to train widows, single mothers, and/or women who are not in relationships, with whichever male partner is exercising power imbalances and/or committing violence. This is very relevant in Rwanda, where a large number of women have been widowed by the genocide against Tutsi—these women are being violated by their male relatives.

Taking the Life free from Violence model to scale

- The Couple’s Curriculum, Opinion Leaders, Community Activism and Women’s Spaces models should be digitized into video/audio clips, with associated toolkits, for scalars to pick up and use in their own contexts. In this scenario, CARE would maintain quality insurance and intellectual property, and commit to co-creation with other actors.
- Recognising that all four of the interconnected curriculums need to be delivered by appropriately qualified and trained facilitators, there’s scope for CARE to implement a training-of-trainer course for organisations looking to scale the models.
- A cost/benefit analysis should be completed, for scalars to understand the true cost and associated cost savings, of investing in such a model. This study is currently being conducted on *Agents for Change*, with findings expected in the next 6 months (mid-2018). The CARE Rwanda team have roughly calculated that the current cost is approximately \$150 USD per couple ¹² to take part in the Couple’s Curriculum alone—this does not include the other three model costs. The benefit costs could look at:
 - Increased income at household level of those couple’s completing the curriculum, in line with the increased income generation underway by both couples.
 - The cost benefits of children being back in school
 - Savings to the health system if women cease to need medical support following abusive episodes
 - Savings to the Government, if households experiencing IPV no longer need to be part of national safety net programmes

What next for CARE Rwanda’s Life Free from Violence strategy?

Under CARE Rwanda’s Country Programme strategy (2018-2025), the *Life Free from Violence* sub-strategy intends to support 500,000 women and girls, men and boys to enjoy equal power relations at the family and community levels, by:

- Ensuring women, girls, men and boys are empowered to individually and collectively foster non-violent relationships at all levels (intra- and inter-families and with peers; and
- Shifting harmful social norms, and creating a supportive environment that promotes sustainable social change for gender equality in the community.

This will be achieved by, among others:

- Developing and taking to scale models to transform negative social norms that contribute to gender-based violence—including the *Life Free from Violence* models, and *Social Analysis and Action*;
- Expanding learning about approaches that work in Gender Based Violence prevention and response (e.g.: models that facilitate GBV victim rehabilitation and access to psychosocial, legal and health services); and
- Putting in place GBV prevention and response mechanisms for pre- and adolescent youth that address child abuse and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

References

- 1) 'Discriminatory Family Codes' report by Chronic Poverty: http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/Chapter%201.pdf
- 2) The Isaro Programme (2009-2013) was a Norwegian Government (NORAD) funded Women's Empowerment Programme, that worked to ensure: *women and girls in particular, are economically secured, exercise their rights to health and education, and influence decision making at all levels in the society*. It was delivered across six districts in Rwanda, using VSLA groups as the point of entry. NORAD welcomed the Journeys of Transformation curriculum being piloted within the Isaro programme. The pilot was funded by Telethon, a private corporation in Norway.
- 3) *GEWEP* was a follow-on programme to the afore mentioned *Isaro Programme*
- 4) The *GEWEP* evaluation focused heavily on men's engagement and outcomes, hence few lessons relating to women
- 5) When asked what was in the testimonies that inspired them, the men commented on the achievements the changed men had made, including: constructing a nice house, being able to buy livestock, and the atmosphere of peace in their households.
- 6) One main recommendation made in response to these challenges, was to provide sustained coaching, paired with trainings in income generation. Combined, this would fight poverty, which was seen as the major factor likely to contribute to men dropping out from their engagement in promoting gender equality.
- 7) Sectors are the third-level administrative subdivision in Rwanda. Rwanda's four Provinces, are subdivided into 30 districts, which is in turn divided into sectors—there are 416 Sectors
- 8) Women's Spaces were felt to be of importance, to ensure space for women to discuss issues faced by women in the community, to then develop an advocacy agenda. Women facing violence was just one component, and they were able to use the spaces for initial counselling and referral to services.
- 9) SASA! is a community mobilization methodology for addressing the link between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. SASA! supports community members and diverse stakeholders—including government and service providers—to engage in activism to prevent violence against women and HIV by changing social norms to balance power between men and women.
- 10) A Vignette Focus Group involves scenarios for social norms.
- 11) One expected result is that even men are using Women's Spaces to seek services and advice (when they are a GBV victim) or for participation in different discussion. For this reason, a day for mixed gender attendance has been planned in the spaces.
- 12) The key drivers of this cost are transportation for couple participants and cost of materials, compensation for training the trainers, and costs for trainers that lead the sessions

Annex A: Available documentation to support the model

Training Documents

- Couple's Curriculum training modules (2016)
- Community Activism training modules (2016)
- Opinion Leaders training modules (2016)
- Women's Space Facilitator training modules (2016)
- Journeys of Transformation manual: GEWEP (2012)

Details on models, approaches, and lessons learned

- Journeys of Transformation—Business Model Canvas (2017)
- Journeys of Transformation—Core Model Documentation (2017)
- Findings from second round of interviews with RWAMREC Staff (2107)
- Findings from second round of interviews with RWN Staff (2017)
- Field Notes from Women's Spaces (2016)
- Agents for Change: A Community-based GBV Prevention Project—Project Document (2015)
- Agents for Change: Model (2015)
- A Process Review of the Indashyikirwa Couples Curriculum to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence and Support Healthy, Equitable Relationships in Rwanda (2017)
- Research to inform Adaptation: An IPV Case Study from Rwanda (Strive Learning Lab) (2017)
- Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Programme Fidelity: Adaptation of SASA! to the Indashyikirwa Programme in Rwanda (due 2018)

Evaluations

- 'I can do women's work': reflections on engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment in Rwanda (Journeys of Transformation pilot) (2013)
- Final Evaluation Report on Engaging Men Initiative (EMI) (2015)
- Women's Empowerment Programme Rwanda—Evaluation 2009-2013 (2015)
- Mind the Gap—Exploring the Gender Dynamics of CARE Rwanda's Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Programming (2012)
- Economic Evaluation for What Works interventions (2016)
- Love matters: Exploring conceptions of love in Rwanda and Swaziland and relationship to HIV and intimate partner violence | *By Allison Ruark, Erin Stern, Marie Fidele Kakuze* (2017)
- The 'Bending' of Gender Norms around Economic Roles and Household Decision-Making in Rwanda and the implications for Gender Transformative Programming | *By Erin Stern, Lyndsay McLean, Lori Heise* (2016)
- Intersectionalities of formality of marital status and women's risk and protective factors for IPV in rural Rwanda | *By Erin Stern, Justine Mirembe* (2017)
- Shifting perceptions of consequences of IPV among beneficiaries of Indashyikirwa: An IPV prevention programme in Rwanda | *By Erin Stern, Lea Liliane Niyibizi* (2017)