



OXFAM
Novib

**Final narrative report
Influencing Body Politics**

Small grant Share-Net

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1 Background

At the end of 2014 Oxfam Novib received a small Share-Net grant for its project “Influencing Body Politics”. The aim of the grant was to sustain and connect existing Oxfam Novib country and regional SRHR programmes and projects, and link national and regional SRHR influencing efforts through the process of joint programme development. Within the process of joint programme development, the need was felt to strengthen the capacity of national partners in designing Theories of Change, especially in the area of influencing. The idea was to implement gender power analyses in a number of countries and to test assumptions with the aim to inform and strengthen existing national SRHR lobby and advocacy initiatives from a women’s rights perspective.

2 Implementation

2.1 Joint programme development workshop in the Netherlands

In November 2014 Oxfam Novib staff from Africa and Asia, responsible for managing and implementing SRHR programmes and projects in their respective countries came to The Hague to jointly work on multi-country programme development. Also, representatives of two long-standing counterparts Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) and FEMNET joined the one-week workshop. Representatives from the following countries participated:

1. Pakistan
2. Bangladesh
3. Niger
4. Mali
5. DRC
6. Nigeria
7. Laos, representing South East Asia

Unfortunately not all interested country staff could participate for different reasons (timing of the workshop, visa problems, etc), so even though Oxfam Novib implements SRHR programmes in SRHR programming in more countries, they were not all represented. This was for instance the case for Mozambique, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel, and Egypt.

During the workshop, the group decided to work on 2 different Theories of Change, one focusing on Ending Early / Child Marriages; and the other group focusing on ‘Women on the Move’. The first topic speaks for itself; the second topic focused on women who are for whatever reason ‘on the move’, e.g. moving from rural areas to cities to work in the garment industry, or fleeing for conflict. But also, the title implies that women build a movement, standing up for their SRH rights. ‘Women on the move’ also focused on the connection between SRHR and Violence against Women (VAW).

The groups jointly developed the overall Theories of Change for the topics, and committed to

bringing those back to their countries for specification at country level.

At the meeting in The Hague, a planning was agreed upon and Country Offices and The Hague office were jointly working on developing the programmes further, specifying country details and making the overall backbone document / narrative proposal.

Please find in Annex 1 the full report of the programme development workshop.

2.2 Country level workshops

At country level, workshops took place with counterpart organisations to further work on the specific country-level Theory of Change. The project leader joined and co-facilitated the workshop in Mali and in the other countries the country office staff led the workshops (e.g. Pakistan, Laos and DRC). See Annex 2 and the DVD for the workshop report in DRC. The other countries' workshops were not charged to Share-Net, and did not provide a visual report.

2.3 Programme development for funding proposals

In January 2015 the Oxfam Novib Country Offices, The Hague office, and counterparts WGNRR and FEMNET worked in together on a concrete funding opportunity with the Finnish government for SRHR. This gave the opportunity to intensely work on the "Women on the Move" proposal, which was submitted at the end of January 2015 to the Finnish government.

Unfortunately the Finnish Government diminished its funding for development cooperation during the assessment period, and our proposal did not receive a grant.

Summary of "Women of the Move" proposal submitted to the Finnish government

Women on the Move will address two interlinked issues that affect women's empowerment and socioeconomic development – the ability to uphold their sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and the ability to live free from violence. The beneficiaries of this project are marginalised women who face severe challenges in accessing SRH services while being at an increased risk of experiencing Violence against Women (VAW).

Access to SRH services is necessary for women to fully exercise their human rights.¹ And VAW is an obstacle to exercising SRH rights since it restricts the choices of those who experience it, curtailing access to critical SRH information and services. Societal attitudes towards women's sexuality and assigned gender roles are rooted in inequitable gender norms and compound the problem.² Evidence shows that a significant number of women³ seeking SRHR services will have

¹ CEDAW/ICPD

² <http://arrow.org.my/publications/AFC/v17n2.pdf>

experienced violence.⁴ These inequities and experiences of violence particularly apply to marginalised groups of women who are often already ostracised within their communities. Research furthermore shows that a woman who visits a health professional some time during her life for SRH needs may also disclose that she has been a victim of violence.⁵ Thus, the health care system offers a significant entry point to initiate a comprehensive approach to uphold SRH rights and to address VAW. By addressing SRHR and VAW together we will simultaneously address a significant barrier to women in accessing SRHR services, whilst ensuring the provision of non-discriminatory holistic and appropriate SRH services for the most marginalised women and girls.

Accordingly, the overall objective of *Women on the Move* is to enable marginalised women and girls – sex workers, transgender, displaced women and girls, garment industry workers, HIV+ women – in Nigeria, DRC, Pakistan and Laos, to claim and exercise their SRHR, in a society that more fully protects them from VAW and supports comprehensive SRH/VAW services. The programmatic approach will therefore combine rights' advocacy towards governments and stakeholders and support to comprehensive SRH/VAW services.

Oxfam Novib, WGNRR and FEMNET's strategy is to work together with an alliance of local, national, regional and international CSOs, service providers, marginalised women, women's/human rights organisations, men, and other key stakeholders, to bring about change in policy and practice, and social and cultural norms and values. The dual approach and strategy helps ensure better impact and sustainability because underlying structures are addressed to bring about fundamental change in the ability of women to claim and exercise their rights and access SRH and VAW services. The project is planned to take place over 3 years and will cost €4,3 million.

During the spring of 2015, Oxfam Novib The Hague office and Country Offices worked together on 2 funding proposals for submission to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs SRHR Strategic Partnership Call for Proposals. We were building on the work done during the November 2014 Programme Development workshop, and built one proposal on the Women on the Move concept, together with WGNRR and new partner RNW. For this funding submission titled "She Dares: Women and Girls Discuss, Advocate, Reframe, Engage on SRHR", we developed 2 Theories of Change in one submission: one overall / broader Theory of Change on youth and SRHR, and one specifically on the right to abortion.

Unfortunately this proposal was not granted.

Summary of She Dares programme submitted to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

The "She Dares" programme is based on the belief that it is always possible to advance SRHR even in the most restrictive settings by changing the prevailing discourse and challenging existing taboos; by strengthening civil society so they can effectively advocate to improve and strengthen

³While we use the term 'woman/women' we do so with a critical reflexivity that recognises the nuances and right to people's unique sexual and gender identities and expressions. We also recognise that 'women' are not a monolithic group and that they have diverse identities that vary due to their social location and the socio-economic, political, and multicultural contexts in which their lives are embedded.

⁴http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/addressing_violence.pdf, p. 16-17

⁵Garcia-Moreno C., Hegarty K., Lucas d' Oliveira AF., ao. The health systems response to violence against women. Lancet 2014 (online published November 2014).

SRHR policies/legislation and ensuring implementation; by providing people with comprehensive SRH information and, by empowering women and girls to claim their rights. Indeed it is crucial to focus our efforts in the most restrictive settings to develop the capacity of local Civil Society so they can develop knowledgeable and skilled actors who can undertake direct influencing actions as soon as opportunities arise. This is crucially important to counter opposition to the neglected SRHR issues such as abortion.

Each year 6.9 million women in developing countries are treated for complications from unsafe abortion (Guttmacher 2015). Many women who experience complications do not receive medical care the actual number of women injured by unsafe treatment is much higher and it has been estimated at 40% (same source). Almost no one is funding programs addressing this problem because it is highly stigmatized, due to religious or cultural taboos. Most funders steer clear from this issue resulting in women being denied the help they need.

She DARES sees access to safe abortion as a precondition for women to fully realise their self - autonomy, self-determination and right to health and a priority issue for SRHR programmes,

Vision: We envision a world where all people enjoy their sexual and reproductive health rights and contribute to the social and economic development of their families and communities. We envision a world where women are able to exercise their right to bodily autonomy, self-determination and right to health as realised by access to safe abortion and by access to non discriminatory, non judgemental comprehensive SRHR services.

ToC Rational: Lack of access to information, existence of stigmatising and discriminatory discourse, and lack of implementation of international and national frameworks on women's rights are key barriers to the fulfilment of the SRHR of women and girls. This situation also hinders the sustainable social and economic development of communities.

Often, SRHR is conceived as an issue of public health, but it is much more than that. The capacity to choose a safe and satisfying sex life, unburdened by stigma and superstition, are fundamental human rights. In this programme, building on the combined capacity of the She DARES alliance's partners, we will undertake activities to ensure: the ability for young women and girls to make informed choices about entering into safe and pleasurable sexual relationships; information about the full range of contraceptives options and how to access services; promotion of non-judgmental, not discriminatory SRH services; information about the consequences of unsafe abortions and information on safe abortion options; increase access to services.

The second proposal we submitted to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on ending Child Marriage, and was developed together with Save the Children (lead applicant), SIMAVI and Population Council – jointly called the More Than Brides Alliance (MTBA). This proposal on Ending Child Marriages and its adverse effects on young women and girls, titled: "Marriage, No Child's Play" was awarded (2016-2020).

Summary of Marriage, No Child's Play programme submitted to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

The MTBA will work in countries where child marriage prevalence is an important impediment to achieving adolescent wellbeing (India, Pakistan, Malawi, Niger and Mali). The two crucial components of the Theory of Change that we will apply in each country include girls' empowerment and changing harmful customs, traditions, norms and practices.

To ensure structural cross-sectoral prevention and response towards girls at risk of early marriage and already married, we will strengthen child protection systems in countries where this is opportune. We will advocate for the development or amendment of laws, policies and/or action plans and the implementation thereof.

Strategies

1. Empowering at risk-, and already married adolescents, girls in particular, with life skills education (LSE), Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and/or Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information. We will strengthen adolescents' protective assets and equip them with knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges and opportunities in the transitions from puberty to adulthood.
2. Providing alternatives to child marriage and mitigate the impact on married girls, through enhancing access to education-, economic opportunities-, and child protection systems for girls and their families.
3. Increasing access to SRHR services for young people.
4. Changing social norms. We will engage a variety of stakeholders to raise awareness, promote community dialogue, facilitate social mobilisation and support collective action.
5. Influencing legal and policy frameworks. We will conduct policy dialogue and advocate towards policy makers for the development, adaptation and implementation of laws and policies that reduce child marriage.

Outcomes MTBA programme

1. 1,2 Million adolescents are better informed about SRHR, including adverse effects of child marriage and empowered to voice their needs and rights
2. Increased access to formal education for girls at risk of and affected by child marriage
3. Increased access to economic opportunities for girls at risk of and affected by child marriage, and their families
4. Increased access to child protection systems for girls at risk of and affected by child marriage
5. Increased utilization of SRHR services that are responsive to the needs of young people, particular girls at risk of-, and affected by child marriage
6. Increased engagement and collective social action against child marriage and in support of Adolescent SRHR
7. Supportive rights-based legal and policy environment against child marriage

During the last quarter of 2015, a short concept note was submitted to the [Amplify Change Fund](#), which focused on sexual violence in Nigeria and DRC. Unfortunately this concept note was not successful.

2.4 Testing assumptions

Another aspect of the Share-Net grant was focused on doing research and testing assumptions. A Masters student from ISS joined the Oxfam Novib SRHR team to work on DRC-specific research around changing social norms for SRHR / VAW, and working with men.

The comparative research explored attitudes regarding gender equality and gender roles among men who have participated in men engage programs and men who have not, to determine if these programs bring about sustainable change in behaviour regarding gender equality, thereby positively affecting women's lives. The research took place in Eastern DRC and used models from social psychology to analyze the extent of behavioural change amongst the participants of the men engage forum of Oxfam's WECAN campaign. It finds that even though there is an intention to change, there seems to be no substantial change in attitudes or beliefs regarding gender equality amongst men and women interviewed, in Eastern DRC. Thereby, concluding that context specific programs are required to affect long-term change and that 'one – size – fits – all' kind of development is often set up to fail. Further it explored ideas of women's empowerment through their own eyes to stress upon the importance of contextual implementation of programs.

The full report is sent as a separate document (Annex 3).

3 Management of the Influencing Body Politics project

The programme development was led by a project leader in The Hague. Unfortunately the project leader left the organization in the first quarter of 2015, which hampered proper management of the Influencing Body Politics project. In addition, Oxfam Novib went through a major reorganization during 2015, with a number of staff changes and vacancies specifically for the SRHR team.

Also at Country level, Oxfam Novib underwent changes – and some countries were not able to properly follow-up on the gender power analyses workshops.

As a result of staff changes and upcoming funding opportunities, especially from the Dutch government, the Influencing Body Politics project has seen a change of budget spending as compared to the of the planned budget.

We have spent quite some staff time on programme development, working on a number of funding proposal submissions.

We did not manage to organize an international launch event on a multi-country SRHR programme as originally envisioned, due to the changed staffing situation both at the Netherlands office and the Country Offices.

4 Conclusion

The Share-Net grant has given Oxfam Novib the possibility to strengthen SRHR programme development, supporting some countries with their gender power analyses workshops. This has provided good input for four funding proposals that were developed in the course of 2015.

The Share-Net grant has been instrumental in research into changing social norms in DRC. This research also contributes to the new Oxfam campaign on changing social norms to end violence against women and girls, to be launched in November 2016. Please find in Annex 4 the draft campaign strategy.

Even though some changes were made during the course of implementation, and we under spent the project budget; the results achieved were important for further developing programmes, and provided useful input for programme and campaign development.

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