

Engaging Men for Improved Nutrition Outcomes in Mozambique

A Concern Worldwide Learning Paper

Helga Sólveig Gunnell and Erin Homiak – August 2017



Members of Nhapende Dialogue Club during their final session on new beginnings in Inhassunge, Zambezia



This Learning Paper was developed with the financial support of the European Commission. Whilst they, together with UKAid and Irish Aid, supported the Engaging Men initiative, the contents of this Policy Brief are the sole responsibility of the authors and Concern Worldwide and in no way reflect the views of the EC, UKAid or Irish Aid.

Contents

Introduction:	2
Why Engaging Men?	3
The Dialogue Club Approach:	3
Key Results:	4
Key Lessons:	5
Ensuring Staff Buy-In	5
Ensuring Participant Buy-In	6
Tailoring to the Local Context:	7
<i>Polygamy</i>	7
<i>Decision Making</i>	7
<i>Early Marriage</i>	8
<i>Nutrition Outcomes</i>	8
Linking to the Wider Community:	8
Conclusion:	9

Introduction:

Through its “Engaging Men in Gender Transformation to Improve Mother-Child Nutrition” (*Engaging Men*) pilot project, Concern directly targeted rural women and engaged their male partners. Using a ‘Dialogue Club’ approach, the pilot aimed to shift social and cultural constructs and reproduction of negative forms of masculinities in everyday life in order to improve nutrition outcomes for women and children, through changed attitudes around gender equality and an increase in decision-making power amongst women.

Expected results for the project included:

- Improved nutritional status of women and children by actively promoting gender equality in the household;
- An increase in men’s understanding of how gender inequality negatively impacts the lives of women and children as well as the men themselves;
- Men embracing caring roles in the home, which includes contributing to domestic work;
- Shared household decision-making, especially as it relates to household finances;
- Increased understanding among men of the cycles of violence and how to promote non-violent and caring relationships;
- Challenging deeply held harmful beliefs around marriage practices such as polygamy and early marriage.

Concern’s strategy for achieving the project’s goal proved to be highly motivating and transformative both for the dialogue club members (men and women) and in some cases their immediate communities as well. Both quantitative and qualitative findings from the programme show notable improvements in attitudes to enhancing gender equality amongst participants, an increase in equitable division of household labour as well as an increase in female household and financial decision-making power.

Implementation of the “Engaging Men” project began in July 2016 and was piloted in 17 communities across Zambezia and Manica provinces. Positive results and local interest resulted in a further eight dialogue clubs being formed in Zambezia from May - October 2017. This lesson learning paper underscores the successes, challenges and key lessons learned during the pilot period, and provides recommendations for future iterations of this approach¹. While the importance of a solid grounding in the local context was emphasized in the design of this initiative, we believe evidence from this pilot can serve as a guide for developing and strengthening similar initiatives elsewhere.

¹ This paper on the Engaging Men pilot initiative in Mozambique has been developed in light of significant positive evidence on the relevance and effectiveness of the Engaging Men approach. The aim of the paper is to highlight why the approach is so successful and to suggest areas for improvement. The paper addresses evidence from this pilot initiative in four districts in two provinces in Mozambique. Evidence for the paper is based on qualitative data from baseline and endline surveys undertaken with all participants before and after the implementation of the 14-week behaviour change curriculum, evidence from regular programme visits, interviews with dialogue club facilitators and focus group discussions (FGD) with dialogue club members. FGDs were conducted in two districts over the course of four days.

Why Engaging Men?

In many developing nations such as Mozambique, women are the main food producers yet are disproportionately affected by hunger and malnutrition.² “FAO estimates that if women worldwide had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30%.”³ Producing more food, however, does not necessarily translate into improved nutrition outcomes because often selling the food products is prioritized over consumption and women lack decision-making power regarding the harvest and how the earnings are spent. One way to ensure these desirable outcomes is through addressing women’s empowerment – more specifically addressing women’s social status and improving gender equality.⁴ Additionally, the global evidence-base suggests that the empowerment of women to improve nutritional outcomes is difficult to achieve without also addressing the underlying culturally embedded gender dynamics, which reinforce the imbalance of power between men and women⁵.

In 2014, Concern conducted a Nutrition Barrier Analysis in Manica province which highlighted the need to address the social determinants of nutrition, whereby issues of gender equality appeared most prominent. The findings showed that in addition to limited resources, mothers struggled to exclusively breastfeed and ensure that their children received three nutritious meals a day due to heavy workloads in the fields and attending to household chores given that these jobs are generally culturally regarded as women’s responsibilities.⁶ Furthermore, the key influencers in women’s and children’s nutrition uptake were found to be husbands who tend to make major food and household decisions as they retain control over household finances, thus highlighting the need to engage men to ensure sustainable improvements in nutrition and health behaviours among women, children, and men during and beyond the life of the project. This emphasized the fact that empowering girls and women cannot be achieved without engaging men as both allies in gender equality and as beneficiaries of that equality themselves. As a result, Concern collaborated with Promundo-US and HOPEM, global and local leaders at the international and national levels respectively in engaging men and boys for gender equality, to develop the “Engaging Men in Gender Transformation to Improve Mother-Child Nutrition” (Engaging Men) project. The component was developed as a pilot initiative as part of Concern’s integrated rural development approach: Linking Agriculture and Nutrition for Development (LAND) with the aim of shifting the programme from a *gender-sensitive* to a *gender-transformative* intervention.

The Dialogue Club Approach:

Based on further formative qualitative research in both provinces,⁷ Concern, Promundo-US and HOPEM developed the gender-transformative engaging men curriculum, which promotes men’s involvement as equitable and supportive partners, as responsive fathers and caregivers, through participation in ‘dialogue clubs’. The dialogue club activities were carefully designed to fit the specific context, foster cooperation and partnership within households and communities in order to improve mother-child nutrition. The 14-week, gender-transformative curriculum was designed with a dialogue club approach where participants, both men and women discuss a specific topic each week facilitated by a trained dialogue club facilitator, although there are a couple of sessions designed for men only.

Each dialogue club has around 20 members⁸ (10 couples) that consist of members of the Concern Farmer Field Schools, Care Group members and their spouses. It is vital that both husband and wife are willing and able to participate in order to truly create change within the participating households.

“Similar activities have been attempted by other organisations in our community but our husbands would never participate, dismissing the meetings as women’s business, so when we returned home with the lessons our husbands would simply accuse us of lying.” Female FGD, Casado dialogue club, Tambara, Manica

² Verhart et al., *Bringing Agriculture and Gender Together using a Gender Lens*, 2015

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Men Care (2014) What Fathers Have to do with it:

Engaging Men as Caregiving Partners. Accessible on: http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/What_Fathers_Have_to_do_with_it.pdf

⁶ Women are generally seen to wake up at 4am to fetch water, prepare breakfast and prepare the children before heading to the fields until around 11am when they arrange lunch (gather food and firewood, and fetch water). In the afternoon they go back to the field and then arrange dinner, clean up, bathe the children and tidy the house before going to bed around 8 – 9pm. Men generally wake up later and depending on the context also work in the fields, fish or seek out activities to earn an income. The men come and go as they please while the women are expected to be available at all times and where the two work together in the fields the women are generally the ones to carry the tools, children and anything else that is brought to and from the fields. (Evidence from programme sessions: *Understanding men and women*.)

⁷ In Barue and Guro in Manica, and Inhassunge and Chinde in Zambezia. See: Concern Worldwide (2016) *Transforming Gender Relations within an Existing Project: The Mozambique*.

experience

⁸ Prevalence of polygamy meant that some groups had more women.

When Concern staff were recruiting dialogue club members, potential participants were informed that in the dialogue club they would discuss how to work collaboratively as respectful partners and that the sessions would help them create positive changes at home and within the community, including promoting healthy, non-violent relationships to ensure happy, healthy families. Staff avoided using the word “gender” throughout to ensure that the participants did not think this was just a group for women to discuss only women’s issues.

Each weekly session was designed to take around 2 to 2.5 hours. The dialogue club members agreed upon a day and time for the sessions in order to ensure their participation. The sessions generally took place at the same time each week but in order to avoid delays to the implementation of the curriculum the project also called for substantial flexibility from the facilitators in the case of low participation or unavoidable events in the community that called for rescheduling of sessions.

Weekly session titles:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>The Welcome Session</i> | 8. <i>What is Violence?</i> |
| 2. <i>Everyday Fatherhood</i> | 9. <i>Ending Violence Together</i> |
| 3. <i>Understanding Men and Women</i> | 10. <i>Household Decision-Making</i> |
| 4. <i>Sharing Experiences of Being a Man and Being a Woman</i> | 11. <i>Challenging Early Marriage</i> |
| 5. <i>Examining Power</i> | 12. <i>On Polygamy</i> |
| 6. <i>Being Involved from the Start</i> | 13. <i>On Alcoholism</i> |
| 7. <i>Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition</i> | 14. <i>New Beginnings</i> |

While the central goal of the initiative in this case is to strengthen nutrition outcomes through improved gender equality, the curriculum itself was designed to enlighten participants and encourage them to acknowledge the structural inequalities that exist within their communities and their households, more specifically. This approach can be applied and adapted in a wide range of contexts. Through the discussions, gender barriers are slowly broken down and negative norms such as unequal distribution of labour and decision making, violence against women and child marriage were addressed and challenged using participatory adult education approaches such as drama, role-play and debates. This, in turn, created space for key issues, such as chronic malnutrition, to be addressed directly through the programme intervention as norms are challenged and altered. Customised posters were also developed to accompany the curriculum and each session as key tools to strengthen the uptake of the behaviour change messages among participants.

Our learning is that the development of visual tools are extremely important to develop when working in communities where there are high rates of illiteracy.

Key Results:

Programme implementation emphasised monitoring of gender attitudes among programme participants in order to effectively track results, in addition to simple weekly narrative reports and regular programme visits. Before and after implementing the 14 sessions of the curriculum a baseline and endline survey was conducted with all participants in order to track programme impact. The specially designed questions are focused around four key indicators: the gender attitudes scale, household decision-making, financial-decision making, and division of labour within the home. Analysis of programme data following the pilot in Mozambique shows that the ‘Engaging Men approach’ made a considerable impact in all four indicator areas.

Combined baseline and endline data from Manica and Zambezia:

	Gender role attitude score			General household decision making			Financial household decision making score			Gendered division of labour		
	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M	All	F	M
Baseline	4.80	4.65	4.72	22%	20%	23%	4.95	4.97	4.96	16%	15%	17%
Endline	6.80	6.85	6.74	86%	84%	88%	0.63	0.63	0.62	69%	65%	74%

As the data indicates, general gender role attitudes, which are measured through 33 questions on family relations, marriage, economic participation, women’s rights, community decision-making and domestic violence, have shifted from being moderately negative to being moderately positive whereby a very positive gender role attitude score is 10. This is a notable shift although more specific indicators show more clearly a marked shift towards greater equality within the participating households. As an example, 100% of households reported that women are at least consulted in key household

decision-making following participation in the dialogue clubs⁹ and 70% of the households indicated a reasonably equitable division of labour at the endline. Endline data additionally shows a significant shift in how finances are managed at the household (HH) level from moderate male domination (10 being complete male domination) at the baseline, to an average score of 0.65 at the endline indicating near complete equality in financial decision-making.

The qualitative findings triangulate that dialogue between men and women have increased significantly and women feel they have a space to share their opinions without potential repercussions. The qualitative findings highlighted a considerable decrease in violence against women and increased harmony among couples within the households. When asked if the level of conflict in their household has decreased, there was an overwhelming and unanimous response from both men and women that conflict has declined or is non-existent. Discussions with programme participants in both provinces showed that women feel they have more agency around the use of household finances and many women and men noted an increase in shared decision-making as well as increased transparency and honesty with respect to the earnings of the male head of household. The male participants clearly expressed a shift in recognizing that their earnings do not “belong” solely to them but rather the household at large and in Manica many men had taken up the custom of giving their money to their wives to keep it safe and ensure that they stuck to their jointly agreed plans. Moreover, men and women also reported an increase in shared domestic labour, a shift from men doing hardly any chores around the house as it was considered women’s work. The shared division of labour has in turn granted participants more time to discuss their lives/ futures as a family. Many noted that their homes were in a better state and some had even made improvements together, like building a toilet for example.

“I could sense relief from my wives and children when I said I was travelling and the children used to run away from me when I came home. Now they run to me to greet me and we all sit together, me, my wives and the children. There is a feeling of respect and this feels good.”

Male FGD, Casado dialogue club, Tambara, Manica

“I go home and ask her if she needs food or clothes for our kids. Now we might even save money for another day. We make financial plans together. Before when I had money, I wouldn’t show my wife how much money I had. I see my wife likes my behaviour.”

Male FGD, Zaneira dialogue club, Inhassunge, Zambezia

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative project results show a considerable shift towards behaviour that promotes healthier households and improved relationships between husbands and wives and fathers and their children. The following sections serve to further highlight key points identified that ensured the success of this initiative as well as, discussing lessons learned and recommendations for further strengthening an already dynamic and innovative approach.

Key Lessons:

Ensuring Staff Buy-In


Unlike LAND’s other nutrition and agriculture activities, understanding a methodology and being able to transfer knowledge in an accessible way is not enough for a gender- behaviour-change initiative like this one. Given the sensitive, culturally-embedded behaviours that are being addressed, the work requires facilitators to believe in the message and be capable of delivering *counter-cultural* lessons in an accessible manner, often to their seniors who already have very different life experiences to them. To ensure understanding of the approach and enable initial staff buy-in, selected Concern Mozambique staff went through an initial four-day gender-transformative training co-facilitated by Promundo-US, HOPEM and CWW’s Equality Advisor. The training was based on Promundo’s gender-transformative curriculum and challenged deeply-held beliefs of what it means to be men and women because it is individuals within society who, sometimes unintentionally, reinforce gender inequality by supporting patriarchal systems. The gender-transformative training encouraged staff to deeply reflect on their personal beliefs around gender in order to truly *own* the transformative messages which were built into the Engaging men curriculum.

“At the beginning, it was challenging to facilitate a group of participants, who were my seniors and who have been married for a long time as I am attempting to alter their way of life. As an example, it was particularly difficult responding to people who are very convinced of the relevance of polygamy, especially in a situation where the first wife has not had any children yet and doesn’t seem to be able to.”

EM facilitator, Tambara, Manica

During the transformative training, participating staff contributed to the programme’s formative research in identifying key themes for the curriculum, which further emphasized staff ownership of the initiative. Once the Engaging Men curriculum was designed, key Concern Worldwide implementing staff who demonstrated a clear interest and the flexibility

⁹ 86% of participants claimed that to be making joint decisions while the remaining 14% claimed that men were still the main decision makers, but that they consulted their wives.



required for this initiative went through a 10-day training of trainers to successfully facilitate the sessions at the community level. Field visits and discussions with facilitators and participants showed that, despite some to-be-expected challenges, the facilitators were effectively able to build a solid rapport with the participants where they felt able to confide in the facilitators both within the group and individually. The training equipped the facilitators with tools – built into the manual which include case studies and activities – to help build trust and understanding with beneficiaries.

The Dialogue Clubs were originally meant to be co-facilitated by female and male co-leaders to facilitate the implementation of the sessions alongside on-going agriculture and nutrition activities. Ultimately due to time constraints, the sessions were implemented by one staff member in each district who focused only on Engaging Men.

It is important to note the importance of higher-level management and coordinating staff having a good understanding of the gender-transformative approach and the complexities of challenging traditional gender dynamics in order to effectively support the implementing staff, and to enable effective budgeting. Should the programme be implemented as intended initially, it is important that enough staff of both genders are trained to implement the project, to ensure a programme-wide understanding of the approach, to facilitate shared responsibilities and ensure that the project is effectively integrated with the nutrition and agriculture activities.

Ensuring participant Buy-In

Unlike other LAND activities where participants receive some sort of inputs (agricultural seeds, tools, cooking pans, or snacks during meetings), participants were clearly informed that aside from receiving t-shirts, dialogue club members could not expect to receive any material goods. Therefore, the initial sessions are very important to ensure participant buy-in, particularly among the men who might see education activities such as this as a waste of time which they could use to earn an income.


The initial sessions are focused on encouraging the men and women to reflect inwardly to understand the power imbalance within their households and the way in which they treat their spouses. Meanwhile the initial sessions are also an important bridge to enable women to express themselves in front of their husbands and the wider group. As the men participate, share and accept the messages, the women's confidence grows and they gradually begin to feel free to express themselves. Solidarity among the group is formed during the initial sessions which then allows members to express themselves more freely on particularly sensitive topics such as violence, alcoholism, polygamy, and early child marriage, which are addressed during the second half of the curriculum. The focus group discussions in both provinces showed that these particular topics really seemed to resonate with the participants at the end of the programme, but they wouldn't have been able to address them as effectively without going through the initial sessions and associated process of behaviour change. It is in the first half that all participants learn the value of dialogue

“Before I thought domestic work was just for women. Now I bring firewood when I go out to the fields, carry water, wash clothes and sweep outside. If my wife is taking care of the kids, I’ll do another chore around the house. Now I think the work is for both of us to share.”
Male FGD, Nhapende dialogue club, Inhassunge, Zambezia

The importance of the process: An example from Manica:

When the Engaging Men Dialogue Club sessions started in the Mangale neighbourhood in Tambara district in Manica, the facilitator could see that Angela and Zinha were very afraid of their husband, Manuel. The facilitator would regularly notice them wanting to contribute to discussions, but rather than speak up they would timidly look to Manuel and stay quiet, turning their gaze back down to the floor. It was evident that a lot of inequality existed in this particular household, to a point where Angela eventually plucked up the courage to approach the EM facilitator once he had gained her trust, pleading for an intervention as their husband would beat them all the time. In their household beatings could be expected on any occasion, if they did not respond on time or if they disagreed in any way. As the sessions progressed, and Manuel appeared to be internalising the messages just like his fellow male members, he started changing his way of communicating with them and actually helping in the home. His wives started to open up and felt more comfortable in sharing their experiences and opinions during the weekly sessions. Angela even became one of the most vocal and determined members of the group.

Reflecting back on the greatest gains they experienced from the programme, both women noted that communication with their husband had improved. “In the morning when we wake up we will greet each other and talk about our days and our children”. Both women now feel capable of sharing their opinions. Reflecting on the level of violence in the home, Angela indicated a level above her head, “the violence used to be here,” pausing for thought she then pointed to her hip stating, “now it is here,” the violence has at least halved. “He used to use a stick to beat us and he always made sure it was visible and within reach. Since participating in the dialogue clubs the stick has now been thrown out.” While the changes are significant, it is also clear that change cannot happen overnight. It is an on-going process.



and shared responsibilities and men realise that there are no negative consequences to them taking on *women's activities* and that this actually frees up time and allows for more time together as a family.

Targeting married couples and having them participate and learn together in the same group seems to have led to joint reflection and subsequent changes within the households. One male from Nhapende in Inhassunge said, “the learning was very important for us. If it had just been a women’s group then [our wives] would have come back to ‘annoy us’. Whoever thought to involve us both planned well.”

Despite the very positive results of the initiative and feedback from both men and women, the consistent involvement of men was a challenge in some places, whereby men would prioritize economic activities if it was in conflict with the scheduled meeting time. Given the importance of men’s participation throughout, this is a challenge which would benefit from further exploration ahead of implementation to ensure the desired impact.¹⁰

Tailoring to the Local Context:

The ‘Dialogue Club’ manual was designed and informed by the key themes and findings from the barrier analysis and subsequent formative research. In discussing the curriculum with participants during the evaluation, they really felt the

“Before my husband used to come home drunk and beat me. Now he comes homes and goes to sleep.”

Natalia, Nhapende dialogue club, Inhassunge, Zambezia

curriculum reflected their realities and provided them with accessible tools to address harmful gender norms, which they had never thought to question before. Early child marriage, domestic violence and alcoholism were prominent themes that stood out in the formative research in Zambezia and Manica and sessions on these topics clearly resonated with the participants. Indeed the most notable changes recorded from discussions were increased dialogue, shared

responsibilities and a significant reduction¹¹ in domestic violence as the case study above highlights. Many of the men (and wives) also proudly exclaimed that alcohol consumption had reduced and if the men did drink alcohol their behaviour had significantly improved. These positive results highlight a great success in ensuring that the curriculum reflects the participant’s realities in an accessible way, in many cases even inspiring participants to reach out to the wider community. **Despite these successes, some of the sessions required particular care and could benefit from further thought or strengthening in future implementation as is indicated below:**

Polygamy

Polygamy is very common in the given context with some men having as many as four or five wives, while men could bring a maximum of two wives to the dialogue club in order to maintain the integrity of the participatory methodology. This, however, meant that there was no guarantee that the key messaging would reach the other wives and men could often resist some aspects of behaviour change, exclaiming that it was impossible for them to help all their wives. Additionally, this raised concern that only including part of the household might cause discrimination and new challenges within the polygamous families. While the session on polygamy encouraged the participants to reconsider the perceived ‘merits’ of polygamy and in most cases was met with unanimous agreement that having more than one wife and the associated children was a costly burden, the facilitators had to be very careful not to offend those who were polygamous and not to cause resentment. **The ways in which polygamist households are incorporated into the Dialogue Clubs should be further explored. Furthermore, despite shifts in behaviour, increased dialogue and respect, there is still evidence of men having multiple concurrent partners (girlfriends in addition to multiple wives). The programme curriculum could benefit from incorporating a session on HIV/AIDS prevention, taking advantage of the barriers that have been broken down between the participating couples.**¹²

Decision Making

Given women’s limited participation in financial decision-making, great care was taken in designing the household decision-making session which largely focuses on household budgeting. Widespread evidence of participants discussing shared plans for household expenses and men giving their wives money for safe keeping shows that the message of this session clearly resonated with participants and proved that men now understand the value of the women’s opinion in decision making. However, finer details of household budgeting were found to be particularly challenging given participants’ reluctance to discuss their household incomes and expenses with their neighbours. A majority of participants also struggled to participate in calculating earnings and expenses due to low levels of literacy and numeracy, which called for some creative thinking from facilitators to at least ensure that the message was understood. **It would be worthwhile**

¹⁰ Names in case studies have been changed to protect identities

¹¹ Many men and women claimed that any kind of violence had been eliminated from their households as a result of their participation.

¹² Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Communication Programs Tchova programme implemented in Mozambique in 2012 embodied similar dynamics to Engaging Men to prevent and address HIV/AIDS. (See: Communication Impact: Tchova tchova, pushing forward together we will change. April 2012, Number 27. http://ccp.jhu.edu/documents/Communication%20Impact%20TTHV_FINAL2.pdf).

exploring ways to simplify the financial management content to make it more relevant and accessible to the participants to enable participants to apply independently the key lessons from this session.

Early Marriage

The session on early marriage was very well received by participants who voiced their desire to ensure that their daughters finish school and choose their husbands when they are ready (as the case study below demonstrates). The related discussions however raised challenges of unplanned pregnancies among adolescent girls and highlighted what could be perceived as a gap in parents' understanding of how best to address these challenges and the girls' vulnerable positions within their communities.¹³ If left unaddressed these issues can result in the perpetuation of chronic undernutrition among the young mothers and their children, and continued school drop-out rates among adolescent girls. This additionally raises concerns of the girl's particular vulnerability to HIV given the high prevalence in the country. **It would be important to explore the possibility**

"Before we didn't send our daughter to school with frequency. We prioritized her working in the fields. We realized we were treating our son and daughter differently. Now sending her to school is more importance to us."

Female FGD, Zaneira dialogue club, Inhassunge, Zambezia

of including a session on positive communication between parents and their children to help break down existing barriers in discussing such sensitive topics effectively in future iterations of the methodology.

Nutrition Outcomes

Given that the Engaging Men project's desired impact is to improve nutrition outcomes for women and children, it is also worth noting observations on food consumption within the households.¹⁴ It is commonplace for males to be served first and to be given the largest quantity and best quality of food and a pattern follows from the eldest son down to the youngest daughter. This practice negatively impacts nutrition outcomes for women, girls and children. During the FGDs a man in Inhassunge stated that his wife would not get any meat when the family killed a chicken because he would divide it between himself and his children. Now, after the sessions, he makes sure his wife gets a portion too. In Tambara district, the male focus group laughed and said, "just look at our wives, they are becoming fat because things are better in the home." **While it is clear that men are recognising the importance of a more equal distribution of food within the household and have changed how they share food with their wives, the mother and child nutrition session could be further strengthened to better address the negative impacts of the hierarchy of food distribution more directly. This would include challenging widely-held myths around women's and children's consumption of certain foods.**

Linking to the wider community:

Interest from the wider community (neighbours, family and friends) developed organically from the start of the 'Dialogue Clubs'. Participants generally described three different reactions to their participation in the programme which was noticeable by their distinct white t-shirts and the men and women taking on non-traditional roles. Both were regularly cited as conversation starters in the community.

1. People judged them and said that the men were being controlled by the women;
2. There was reluctant curiosity where observers wanted to see the clear benefits before making any changes of their own;
3. Curiosity led to direct replication in neighbouring households.

Pride in the changes taking place in their households and receiving regular questions from neighbours encouraged participants to reach out and share their experiences, and a number of groups requested material to better enable them to share their experiences with other community members. In response to this organic development, a mini-manual containing smaller versions of the programme posters and key messages was developed by the programme team and distributed to all dialogue clubs. **A recommendation for future iterations of the initiative would be to build in funding and action plans for media campaigns working with local radio or even television to bring the key lessons and benefits experienced by the participants to an even wider audience.**

Community leaders have been involved in the initiative throughout with many groups having one community leader and their spouse as dialogue club members,¹⁵ and through participation in graduation ceremonies following the completion of

¹³ Girls are less likely to receive money from their parents than boys so they remain vulnerable to manipulation by both boys of the same age and older men. In Inhassunge participants reported traditional healers charging high inaccessible fees to adolescent girls to cover basic treatments and abusing their position of power within the community by 'accepting' sexual favours as payment.

¹⁴ Nutrition outcomes are only measured through the general LAND programme annual surveys.

¹⁵ While this had been discouraged during programme design due to fears that leaders might discourage change, the observations from all facilitators actually indicated that the presence of a leader in a group meant that people were more likely to participate and might have strengthened the members perception of the 'importance' of their work as dialogue club members.

the curriculum.¹⁶ Furthermore, in the case of Zambezia, Concern worked with HOPEM to run two-day leaders' workshops in each district (Inhassunge and Chinde) which covered some of the key lessons from the curriculum and encouraged the leaders to discuss the key (equality) challenges within their communities. It was important to engage them because of their decision-making power and authority within the community and their ability to reinforce or challenge gender inequality. In general, community leaders were very impressed and mentioned during the evaluation process that the community was a lot calmer, and there were fewer cases of household disputes since the programme started.

Preventing early marriage

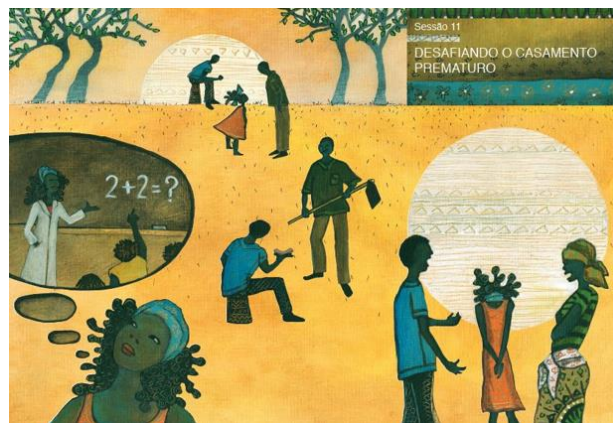
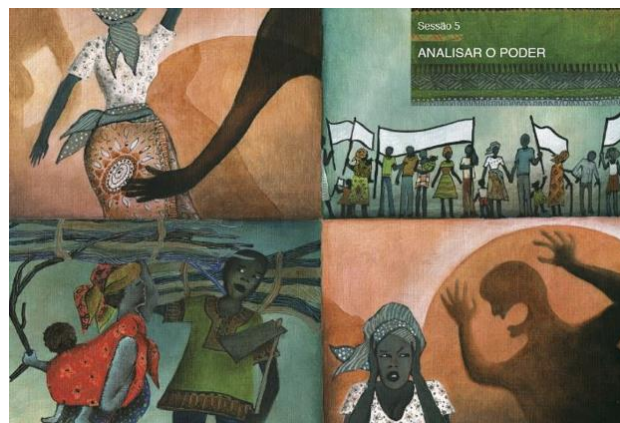
"One of the most memorable sessions, which also had a direct impact on my family's life, is the dialogue club session on early child marriage where we discussed the story of Carlotta. One day when I was visiting my parents, they brought up their plans of arranging a husband for my 14 year-old sister to prevent her from becoming a prostitute. Having learned why early marriage is bad both for my sister and our family, I invited Maene our local community leader and also a member of our dialogue club, to join me in speaking with my family. When I asked my sister what she wanted she said that she did not want to get married, she wanted to continue to go to school. Together, Maene and I shared with my parents the lessons we had learned on early marriage, citing both the immediate and long-term dangers for my sister and explaining to them that rather than 'eating the money' now from the lobolo, they will gain much more if she gets a chance to finish school, find a paying job and choose a nice husband for herself when she is ready. My parents listened and agreed that it would be better to let her finish school than marry her before she is ready."

Tomé Jaime, Mangale dialogue club, Tambara, Manica.

Engagement with community leaders should be further strengthened. Given their standing in the community, they are critical for ensuring the sustainability of the gains from the dialogue clubs. Regular direct involvement of local authorities would also be recommended to extend learning and local buy-in. Additionally the central role and power of traditional healers in both maintaining and surpassing traditional barriers to ensuring the long-term well-being of families should be taken into account with regard to wider community outreach, particularly in relation to child nutrition, family planning and early marriage.

Conclusion:

In Mozambique, Concern Worldwide has found an effective way to facilitate a shift in harmful gender norms by tailoring an equality intervention to the local context. The 'Engaging Men' project through the 'Dialogue Clubs' for men and women, created a positive environment that facilitated increased levels of joint decision making within households and increased levels of shared domestic work among participants. As the results demonstrate, gendered norms are learned and as such can also be unlearned. However, as the discussion above demonstrates, behaviour change of this scale is a delicate process and there are still some gaps that can be filled to further deepen the impact of this work. The programme results suggest a significant impact on strengthening programme wide-results if implemented from the start of a long-term initiative such as the LAND programme, by ensuring an equitable impact throughout the programme life-cycle. With effective investment, both in staff development, time and adequate financial budget, a scale-up of the Engaging Men initiative has the potential to enable a much deeper programme impact on the lives of participants, their families and the wider community.



¹⁶ The graduations were treated as an opportunity for participants to celebrate their achievements but also to link nutrition-messaging with a cooking demonstration and for participants to share what they felt were the key lessons through community theatre (or other means) with a wider audience.