

# PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

'enhancing effectiveness through evidence-based learning'



## The We Can Campaign: Bangladesh 2011/12

The We Can Campaign seeks to transform deeply ingrained attitudes and practices that endorse gender discrimination and violence. The primary drivers of the campaign's activities are change makers. These are both women and men that purportedly have both desire and interest in tackling issues relating to violence against women (VAW) in their communities. Newly recruited change makers first undergo training and are encouraged to reflect on and change their own behaviour and then encourage others to do the same.

After undergoing this initial "conscientisation" process, change makers are encouraged to form committees at Ward level and are supported by local partner organisations to carry out VAW campaigns in their communities. Through their campaigning and personal interaction with others, two things are intended to happen: First, more women and men are to sign up as change makers and, in turn, also experience deep rooted personal transformation. However, levels of awareness among those that do not become change makers also increases, and they too come to recognise that VAW is unacceptable. Popular beliefs and attitudes are, consequently, improved. Men are thus motivated to change their behaviour, and both women and men take action to stop VAW. The final result is decrease in the prevalence of VAW.

***"Each change maker commits to never tolerating or perpetrating violence against women in their own lives and to reach out to ten others in an attempt to influence their attitudes and practices regarding gender discrimination and gender-based violence."***

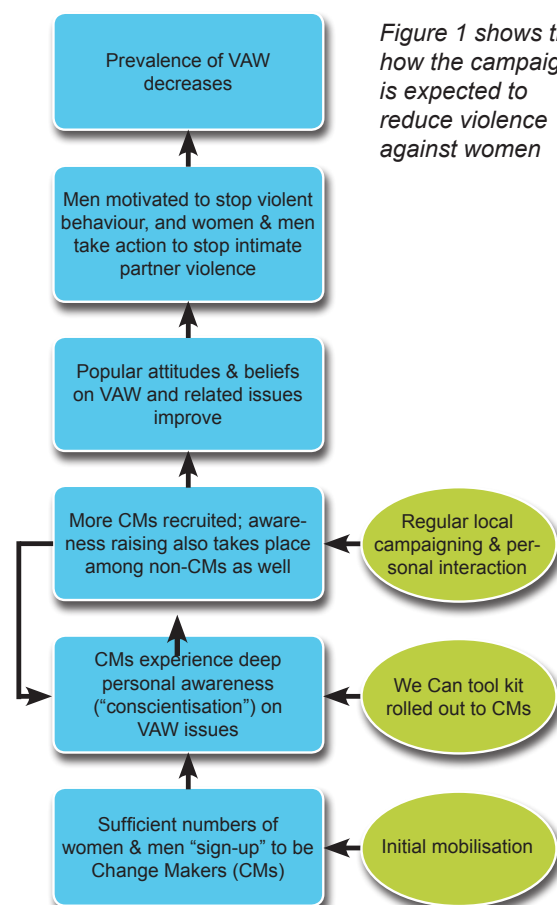


Figure 1 shows the how the campaign is expected to reduce violence against women

## Evaluation Method

Under Oxfam GB's Global Performance Framework, a project focusing on the provision of support to the We Can Secretariat of Bangladesh was randomly selected for an effectiveness review under the policy influencing thematic area. Having been implemented in many areas of Bangladesh, it was unrealistic to assess the effectiveness of the entire campaign. A decision was consequently taken to focus the impact assessment on the work of one of the We Can Alliance partners – Polli Sree. This organisation, based in Dijnapur district in Bangladesh's Rangpur division, was chosen particularly due to the high prevalence of domestic violence that takes place in its operational area.

In September 2011, with the support of an external consultant, specially designed questionnaires relating to intra-marital violence were administered to randomly selected samples of 1,159 women and 1,154 men in 92 villages situated in Thakugaon, Panchagar and Niphamari districts of Rangpur division and Naogaon district of Rajshahi division. Campaign activities were implemented in 42 of these villages, while the other 50 villages were selected for comparison purposes. Both questionnaires and the data collection process were informed by the World Health Organisation and PATH's guidelines for researching violence against women. Statistical analysis was undertaken using propensity score matching and multivariable regression to control for measured differences between the women and men of the intervention and comparison villages.

## Results

Overall, statistically significant and positive differences were found between women and men residing in the implemented and non-implemented sites in relation to both gender and intra-marital violence attitudes ( $p$ -value < 0.001). However, when the data are disaggregated by research site, it is clear that these differences only apply to one site in particular. In this site the campaign was more intensely implemented. The lack of evidence of impact in the other sites, then, appears to be due to differences in implementation, rather than the We Can Campaign model per se. The other interesting – but perhaps not surprising – finding is that the campaign had a greater impact on the attitudes of change makers than on non-change makers in the site where the campaign was more intensely implemented. Finally, in this particular site, women were more likely to report cessation of intra-marital violence ( $p$ -value < 0.05).

It is important to point out that the review's findings do not imply that the campaign had no impact on either the change makers and/or those in their immediate circles of influence in those sites where the implementation of the campaign was less intense. It is simply that there is no evidence that the campaign had an impact on the general population in these sites.

**Rating key:** ● - Evidence supporting large impact; ● - Evidence supporting more modest impact; ● - Evidence of large impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - Evidence of modest impact, but only for specific sub-groups/measures; ● - No evidence of impact

Outcome	Rating	Commentary
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Improved gender attitudes	●	Strong evidence of impact, but only in relation to the Naogaon site. Change makers impacted significantly more than non-change makers.
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Reduced popular acceptance of violence against women	●	Strong evidence of impact, but only in relation to the Naogaon site. Change makers impacted significantly more than non-change makers.
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Reduced prevalence of intra-marital violence against women	●	Evidence of impact, but only in relation to the Naogaon site. No evidence that change makers were more impacted than non-change makers.

## Going forward

The We Can Campaign Secretariat – now fully responsible for the campaign in Bangladesh – was involved in the effectiveness review and has committed itself to sharing its findings with alliance partners and other stakeholders throughout the country. It has expressed commitment to using the lessons learned to guide its ways of working and focus, particularly for the campaign's next phase. This includes reviewing and strengthening its implementation modalities and training methods and tools. Oxfam Bangladesh is further using what has been learned to influence its decisions on its other interventions that also seek to foster large scale social change.

Photo credit: G. M. B Akash