

We Can Campaign Bangladesh Effectiveness Review - Summary Report



Oxfam GB
Policy Influencing Outcome Indicator

March 2012

Acknowledgments:

We would like to thank *Polli Sree* staff and the Oxfam Bangladesh team for being so supportive during the exercise. Particular thanks to the Bangladesh We Can Secretariat and the Consultant, Nasrin Khandoker.
Photo:G.M.B. Akash

Executive Summary

As per Oxfam Great Britain's (OGB) Global Performance Framework (GPF), samples of mature projects are being randomly selected each year and their effectiveness rigorously assessed. A project focusing on the provision of support to the We Can Secretariat of Bangladesh was selected in this way under the policy influencing thematic area. However, rather than simply assessing the effectiveness of this support in terms of strengthening the work of the Secretariat, it was decided that it would be more useful to assess the effectiveness of the core campaign that it was set up to spearhead. This campaign – the We Can Campaign – seeks to change deeply ingrained attitudes and practices that endorse gender discrimination and violence. It was initially launched in 2004 in six South Asian countries and has since been replicated in several African and Middle Eastern countries.

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 (WHO) and PATH's guidelines for researching violence against women. Statistical analysis was undertaken using propensity score matching (PSM) and multivariable regression (MVR) to control for measured differences between the women and men of the intervention and comparison villages.

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 there is evidence that the campaign affected the attitudes of change makers to a greater extent than non-change makers in the site where it 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.

To strengthen the campaign's impact, the We Can Alliance is encouraged to consider the following:

- Identify key reasons for differences in campaign implementation in the Naogaon site vis-à-vis the Thakugaon/Panchagar and Nilphamari sites
- Explore ways to ensure that the We Can Campaign is carried out with significant intensity at the local level in the future, possibly sacrificing geographic scale
- Consider carrying out complementary qualitative research to interrogate, and possibly, challenge the We Can Campaign's theory of change
- Review either the design and/or implementation of the We Can "conscientisation" tools/processes for change makers
- Investigate possibilities for further testing the effectiveness of the We Can Campaign model

Introduction and Purpose

Oxfam GB has put in place a Global Performance Framework (GPF) as part of its effort to better understand and communicate its effectiveness, as well as enhance learning across the organisation. As part of this framework, modest samples of sufficiently mature projects (e.g. those closing during a given financial year) are being randomly selected each year and rigorously evaluated. One key focus is on the extent they have promoted change in relation to relevant OGB global outcome indicators. The original project in Bangladesh that was randomly selected for the effectiveness review was entitled “We Can Campaign in Bangladesh: Alliance & Secretariat Management” (P00115).

Given that an effectiveness review is, for all intent and purposes, a type of impact assessment, it made sense to focus the review on the effectiveness of the We Can Campaign itself. The work of the campaign in Bangladesh is not primarily focused on changing government policy but on changing popularly held patriarchal values, attitudes, and practices that perpetuate violence against women (VAW). The evaluation design that was adopted, therefore, sought to compare comparable geographic areas where campaign activities had and had not been implemented.

However, it was impractical to carry out the evaluation in all areas of the country where such activities had taken place. A decision was therefore made to focus on the work of a local partner organisation in one particular area of the country. The name of this local partner is *Polli Sree* (meaning “real beauty” in English). Its headquarters is in Dijnapur district, Rangpur division, in north-west Bangladesh. It has been spearheading the campaign in this part of the country since 2005, starting first with its home district of Dijnapur and then reaching out to several other surrounding districts.

It is important to point out that the focus of the effectiveness review was *not* to assess the impact of the campaign on its change makers or even those in their immediate circles of influence. Rather, the primary aim was to investigate whether there is evidence that the campaign has improved attitudes and experiences of the “average” man and woman in selected areas where it has been implemented.

Evaluation Approach

The We Can Campaign is attempting to change the attitudes of practices of mass numbers of people at the grassroots level. From a rigorous impact evaluation perspective, the best way to evaluate such an intervention would have been to restrict the campaign’s implementation to randomly selected geographical areas, leaving others sites for comparison purposes, i.e. as controls. This impact evaluation design is known as a clustered randomised control trial. If it was successfully implemented, the impact of the campaign could have been assessed by directly comparing the attitudes and experiences of women and men residing in the implementation and control sites. This is particularly because the randomisation process would have made the women and men in the intervention and control sites comparable in every way, save their exposure to the campaign.

However, *Polli Sree* did not implement the campaign in randomly selected geographic areas; the sites where it implemented the campaign were purposively chosen. An alternative impact assessment design was consequently pursued. This design is referred to as a quasi-experiment because it attempts to “mimic” what a randomised control trial does by purposively identifying a comparison population similar to the intervention population, and then statistically controlling for any measured differences between them.

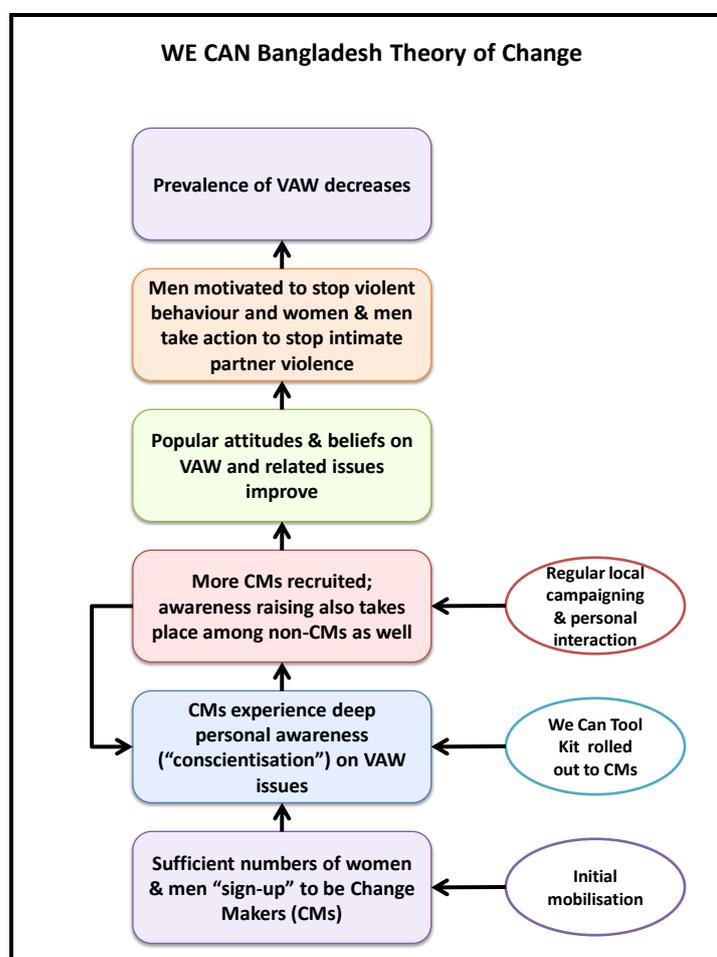
To implement the design, considerable time was spent mapping out areas in the districts where *Polli Sree* implemented and did not implement the campaign. A total of six intervention union councils in the districts of Thakugaon, Panchagar, Niphamari, and Naogaon were selected for the data collection exercise. Each of these union councils was matched with two other union councils located in the same district. This resulted in the administration of questionnaires in a total of 18 union councils comprising of 92 villages. Specially designed questionnaires were subsequently administered to 1,159 married women and 1,154 married men selected at random from these villages. During the statistical analysis of data obtained through the administration of these questionnaires, propensity score matching (PSM) and multi-variable regression (MVR) were used to control for measured differences between the women and men that were interviewed.

The We Can Campaign’s Theory of Change

As part of the formative work that was undertaken to prepare for the data collection exercise, efforts were made with both We Can Campaign Secretariat and *Polli Sree* staff to understand and unpack the intervention logic or “theory of change” underpinning the Bangladesh variation of the We Can Campaign. This is particularly relating to the work taking place at the grassroots level. The resulting theory of change emerging from this process is visually depicted below.

In new areas (e.g. villages and wards), initial work is undertaken to recruit change makers. These are both women and men who purportedly have both desire and interest in tackling VAW issues in their communities. The recruited change makers then undergo training and several other reflection and awareness raising processes. They are encouraged to reflect on and change their own behaviour and then to encourage others to do the same. *“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.”*¹

After the change makers undergo this initial “conscientisation” process, they form committees at Ward level and are supported by local partner organisations like *Polli Sree* 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, thereby, also experience deep rooted personal transformation. In

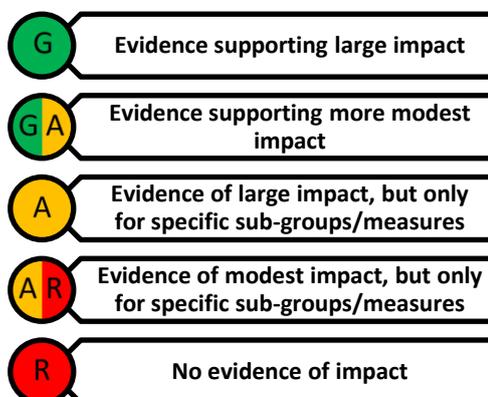


¹ We Can Campaign Strategy Paper, Updated March 2007, page 7.

addition, levels of awareness, even among non-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 a decrease in women’s subjection to VAW.

Impact Assessment Summary Table

The following summary table provides a snapshot of the effectiveness review’s key findings. A short narrative description related to each outcome then follows. A separate, more technical report is also available. This report provides a more detailed and technical description of the evaluation design, process, and results. The table below summarises the extent there is evidence that the campaign realised its targeted outcomes in the form of a simple five-point ‘traffic light’ system. The key to the right presents what the various traffic lights represent.



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

Impact Assessment Findings

Outcome 1 – Improved gender attitudes

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To measure gender attitudes, the respondents were asked their level of agreement and disagreement to 10 statements. These statements included:

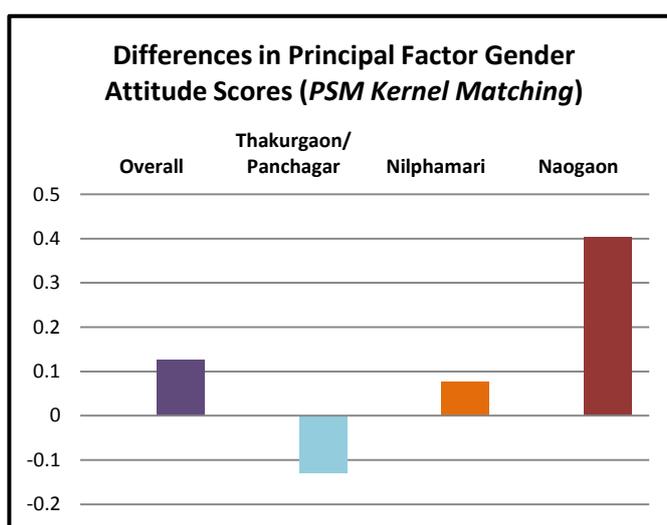
1. A wife should obey her husband, even if she disagrees with him.
2. Men should help with work around the house such as doing dishes, cleaning, looking after children, and so forth.
3. It is important for a husband to show his wife that he is the boss.
4. A wife should be able to choose her own friends even if her husband disagrees.
5. A man’s job is to earn money; a women’s job is to look after the home and family.
6. It’s a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn’t want to.
7. If a man mistreats his wife, others outside the family should intervene.
8. Women are as important as men in ensuring that the basic needs of families are met.

9. Men have a responsibility in childcare.
10. A man who works outside the home should not be expected to help with housework

As is apparent, some of these statements are positive from a gender perspective, while others are negative. As such, respondents scored more positively the more they agreed with positive statements and more negatively the more they agreed with negative statements. The statistical analysis could have been undertaken with the raw scores associated with each respondent. However, a statistical technique called principal factor analysis was used to cut out some of the “statistical noise”, thereby, enhancing measurement precision.

To control for measured differences between the interviewed men and women, two propensity score matching (PSM) and three multivariable regression (MVR) procedures were applied. All procedures revealed that both the women and men of the intervention villages, on average, have better gender attitudes than those residing in the comparison villages. However, when the data are disaggregated by district, it is clear that this is due to the influence of the Naogoan site.

The graph to the right shows the differences in factor scores both overall and for each survey site, as derived from one of the statistical adjustment procedures that was implemented, namely, propensity score matching (kernel). As is evident, the difference for the Naogoan site stands out from the others, and this difference is highly statistically significant (p -value < 0.001). The overall difference is also statistically significant, but those for the other sites are not. The negative difference for the Thakurgaon/Panchagar site, in particular, does not imply that the campaign had a negative impact in these districts.



The analysis was also disaggregated by gender to see if there is any evidence that the campaign had a different effect on men and women in relation to general gender attitudes. On the face of it, it appears that men were impacted more. However, this apparent difference was found to be insignificant following a statistical interaction test. As one may expect, there is strong evidence that change makers were more greatly impacted by the campaign in terms of their gender attitudes than non-change makers. This was also the case for the other attitudinal measures that follow.

Outcome 2 – Reduced popular acceptance of violence against women

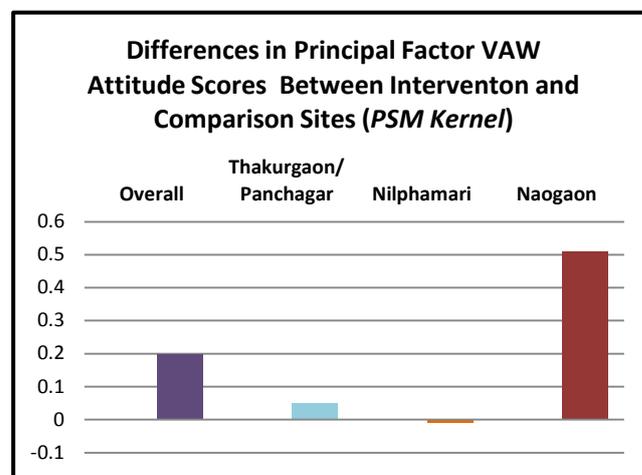
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Two modules were used to measure the respondents’ VAW attitudes. The first was similar in structure as the gender attitudes measure but, of course, differed in content. It comprised of the following statements:

1. A husband has the right to hit his wife when she is disobedient.
2. There is no excuse for a man hitting a woman.
3. Some wives try to get beaten by their husbands in order to get sympathy from others.
4. A wife should move out of the house if her husband hits her often.

5. Government agencies and NGOs should do more to stop husbands from hitting their wives.
6. Even when wives lie to their husbands, they should not get beaten.
7. It does some wives some good to be occasionally hit by their husbands.
8. A man should be arrested if he hits his wife.
9. A husband has no right to hit his wife even if she breaks agreements she made with him.
10. Sometimes it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife.
11. Women should be protected by law if their husbands beat them.
12. Cases of wife beating are the fault of the husband, not the wife.

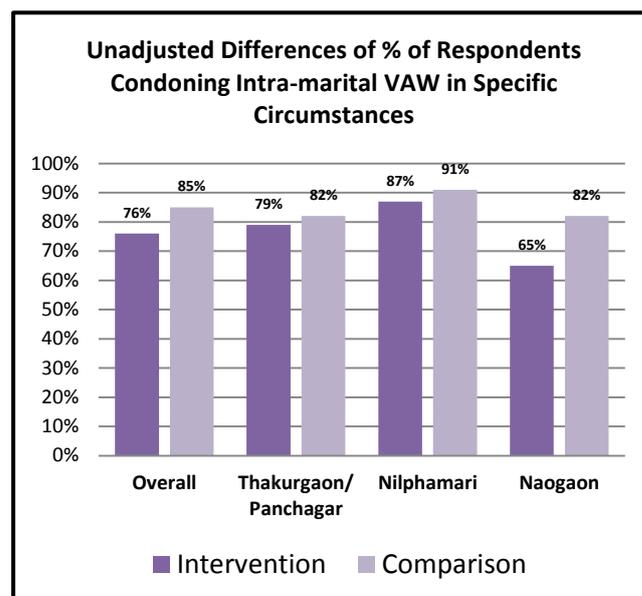
As was the case for responses to the gender attitude statements, principal factor analysis was again used to generate factor scores. The graph to the right again presents the differences between the respondents from the intervention and comparison villages in relation to their VAW attitude scores. Clearly, more of a difference exists for the Naogaon site, and this difference is again highly statistically significant (p -value < 0.001). Gender disaggregated analysis was again carried out. This time a different effect of the campaign on the attitudes of men and women was identified: While both men and women’s VAW attitudes have improved, women’s have improved more.



The other module was adapted from the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women.² Here, the respondents were asked the following: *In your opinion, does a husband have good reason to hit his wife if:*

1. She spends money on things he does not approve of.
2. She goes outside of the home without his permission.
3. She talks back to him.
4. She disobeys him.
5. She refuses to have sex with him.
6. He suspects that she has been unfaithful.
7. She does not serve him as he expects to be served.

If the respondent answered yes to any of the above, s/he was coded as condoning VAW. The graph to the right indicates that a very high percentage of respondents reported condoning intra-marital VAW. However, there is clearly a big difference between the intervention and comparison villages in the Naogaon site. And this difference remains highly statistically following the implementation of all the statistical adjustment procedures that were implemented (p -value < 0.001). However, no statistically significant differences were found between men and women on this particular measure.



² http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/

Outcome 3 – Reduced prevalence of intra-marital violence against women

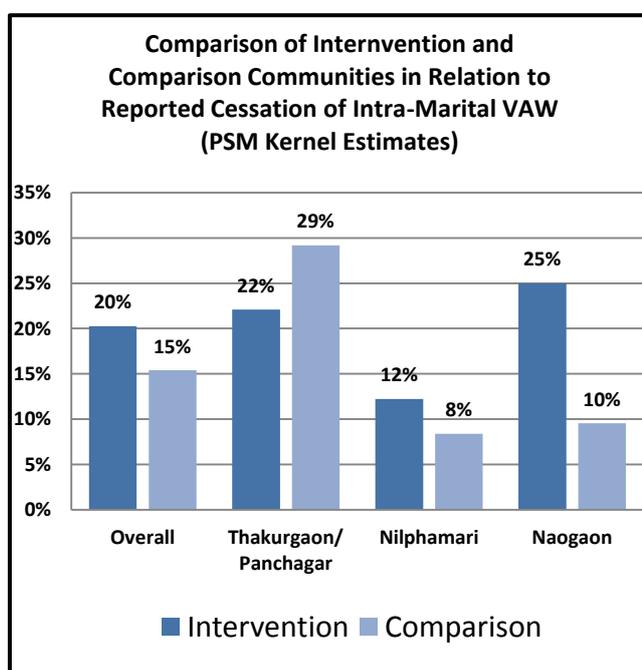
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In addition to the attitude questions, female enumerators also asked female married respondents the extent to which they experienced intra-marital violence – both mental and physical – during the last 12 months. The particular questions were again adapted from WHO/PATH’s multi-country study. The respondent was first asked whether her husband had subjected her to one of the actions outlined below and, if they responded in the affirmative, a follow-up question was asked on the number of times over the past year, i.e. 1-2 times, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, or over 10 times. In particular, the women were asked: *Has your husband ever done any of the following in the past 12 months, that is, since the ending of Ramadan one year ago up to the present:*

1. Ignored you?
2. Tried to keep you from seeing your friends/neighbours?
3. Expected you to ask his permission before seeking healthcare for yourself?
4. Refused to give you enough money for household expenses, even when he had enough money?
5. Insulted you or made you feel bad about yourself?
6. Humiliated you in front of other people like other family members, neighbours, or others in the community?
7. Verbally threatened to hurt you or someone you care about?
8. Slapped you or thrown something at you that could hurt you?
9. Pushed you or pulled your hair?
10. Hit you with his fist or with anything else that could hurt you?
11. Kicked, dragged, or choked you or beat you up?
12. Attempted to do serious harm to any part of your body?
13. Actually inflicted serious damage to one or more parts of your body?
14. Physically forced you to have sexual intercourse even though you did not want to?

The specific questions were further subdivided into specific categories of abuse – mental abuse, general physical abuse, and serious physical abuse. Several of the introductory questions were asked to gradually lead the respondent to the more pertinent questions. As such, their responses to these introductory questions did not inform any of the categories. Only the responses starting from question 5 were used. In particular, any positive response to either question 5 or 6 was coded as subjection to mental abuse, while any positive response to questions 7 through to 14 as subjection to physical abuse. Finally, a positive response to any of the questions from 10 to 14 was coded as subjection to serious physical abuse.

The women who had been married for more than six years, i.e. since before the commencement of the We Can Campaign, were re-asked these same questions, but this time with 2004 being the reference period. Historical reference markers were used to help the women recall back to this particular



year. This was done in an attempt to reconstruct baseline data on women's experience of intra-marital violence.

When *all* women of the intervention and comparison sites were directly compared, no statistically significant difference was found in terms of intra-marital violence experience, either mental, physical, or serious physical violence. However, a different picture emerged when the recalled baseline data were incorporated into the analysis. Women residing in the Naogaon intervention villages, in particular, actually reported being subjected to more violence in the baseline period, as compared with those of this district's' comparison villages. Consequently, when this was controlled for in the analysis, a different picture was revealed. This was clearest when the numbers of women who reported being subjected to intra-marital violence in the baseline period but had not in the last 12 months were analysed. In particular, a significantly higher percentage (nine to 16 percent depending on the statistical adjustment procedure) of the women in the Naogaon intervention villages reported no longer being subjected to intra-marital violence in comparison with women residing in the comparison villages of this district. This reported drop is statistically significant across all the PSM and MVR procedures (p -value < 0.05).

Programme Learning Considerations

Based on the findings of this effectiveness review, there are a number of points that We Can Campaign stakeholders, both in Bangladesh and beyond, can consider to increase the effectiveness of the campaign. These include:

- *Identify key reasons for differences in campaign implementation in the Naogaon site vis-à-vis the Thakugaon/Panchagar and Nilphamari sites*

A key lesson learned is that implementation of the We Can Campaign matters. The data clearly reveal that implementation was significantly less intense in the intervention villages surveyed in Thakugaon, Panchagar, and Niphamari districts. And this is the most plausible explanation why no differences in the outcome measures between the intervention and comparison populations of these districts were identified. Why did such different approaches to the campaign's implementation take place in the Naogaon site as compared with the Thakugaon/Panchagar and Niphamari sites?

- *Explore ways to ensure that the We Can Campaign is carried out with significant intensity at local level in the future, possibly sacrificing geographic scale*

Again, the findings of the effectiveness review clearly reveal that implementation matters. We also came to understand that significant efforts were made by *Polli Sree*, as well as the other We Can Alliance partners in Bangladesh, to mobilise increasing numbers of change makers to reach the campaign's targets. Could the pressure to expand the campaign to new areas inadvertently have resulted in lack of follow-up with, as well as support to, previously mobilised sites?

- *Consider carrying out complementary qualitative research to interrogate, and possibly, challenge the We Can Campaign's theory of change*

The hypothesised way the campaign is to bring about one of its ultimate intended outcome – reduced intra-marital violence – essentially boils down to one key hypothesis: Changing people's attitudes about VAW will change practice and, by extension, women's experience of VAW. While there is evidence to suggest that the campaign, where implemented with significant intensity, can reduce intra-marital violence, the findings of the review raises some questions concerning the hypothesised way the campaign works to reduce intra-marital violence.

In particular, while there is evidence that the campaign improved VAW attitudes among non-change makers in the intervention villages of the Naogaon site, this was only in relation to one of the two VAW attitudinal measures. Thus, the impact of the campaign on the attitudes of non-change makers was not considerably significant. Despite this, a greater reduction in intra-marital VAW was reported among women residing in the Naogaon site's intervention villages who are either not change makers themselves or married to change makers.

Investing in undertaking in-depth qualitative research to probe further into how the reduction in intra-marital in the Naogaon site was actually brought about by the campaign would help campaign stakeholders to strengthen the campaign's effectiveness.

- *Review either the design and/or implementation of the We Can “conscientisation” tools/processes for change makers.*

A very interesting finding of the review is that approximately 60 percent of female change makers, as opposed to 30 percent of male change makers, reported that they find it justifiable for a man to hit his wife, at least in certain circumstances. This is also true for the Naogaon site. If the change makers, as per the We Can theory of change, really do go through such a deep rooted attitudinal transformational process, how could this be possible?

- *Investigate possibilities for further testing the effectiveness of the We Can Campaign model*

While the findings of the effectiveness review provide some reasonably reliable evidence that the We Can Campaign model can – when implemented with a significant degree of intensity – change attitudes and women's experience of intra-marital VAW, further testing of its effectiveness and underlying mechanisms is recommended. There is evidence that the campaign worked in one particular context – selected rural areas of Naogaon district. Are there particular contextual issues in these particular areas that enable it to work, or does it work equally as well in other areas of Bangladesh and beyond? Is the We Can Campaign model also effective in urban contexts? What level of intensity of the campaign's implementation is needed in order to bring about its effects on the average man or woman residing in a community?