



The 500 Men March, held during the 16 Days of Activism in November 2012. Photo credit: Oxfam in Zambia.

I CARE ABOUT HER

Building a Movement of Champions in Zambia to End Violence against Women and Girls

Over half of women in Zambia have experienced physical or sexual violence (Zambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2007). Oxfam is partnering with several local organisations to implement I Care About Her, a programme which works to end violence against women and girls by transforming attitudes and beliefs and mobilising men and boys to champion non-violence. The programme has been successful in organising men to speak out against violence, and has engaged national media, traditional leaders, the police, the military and the government of Zambia. Initial results have been promising, and the programme has potential to be an effective model to scale up in the fight to end violence against women and girls in Southern Africa.



OXFAM

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is endemic in Zambia, and intimate partner violence is particularly widespread – 90% of women who have been in an intimate relationship have experienced violence by a partner.ⁱ Oxfam and partners are working to end this. The *I Care About Her* programme uses diverse strategies, including mass media, marches, community discussion groups and a school curriculum, to engage men and boys as allies in the fight against VAWG and transform the inequalities which perpetuate their power over women and girls.

VAWG IN ZAMBIA

51.9% of women in Zambia have experienced physical or sexual violence,ⁱⁱ and when economic and emotional abuse are included, the figure may be as high as 89%.ⁱⁱⁱ In most cases, the perpetrators are never brought to justice.

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Cultural, traditional and religious practices and beliefs all contribute towards maintaining unequal power relations which place men and boys in a position of power over women and girls. In recent years, progress has been made at national level in laws promoting gender equality. However, Zambia's dual legal system, which allows local courts to administer customary law, allows practices which discriminate against women to continue.

As many as 62% of women and 49% of men believe that a man is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances.^{iv} Violence is often considered part of being a "real man" – 72% of men in Zambia admit to having committed some form of violence against women.^v "We have always been taught that to be loving is to be weak," says Solomon Jere, Deputy Inspector-General of the Zambian Police Force. "The first thing a man feels he must do when he is married is to exert his superiority. It is time to change."

**72% of men
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WORKING TO END VAWG

Oxfam has been working in Zambia since the early 1980s, and VAWG is one of the key focus areas. Oxfam works to bring about change through changing policy, raising consciousness and empowering women to speak for themselves and take part in making the decisions that impact their lives.

I Care About Her has been running since 2012. The programme is building a movement of men and women who reject violence. It works primarily with men, as the primary perpetrators, to transform the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate violence, while also advocating for better laws and policies to address gender inequality, better implementation of existing laws, and ending impunity for perpetrators.

Oxfam is implementing the programme in partnership with local organisations – the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Zambia National Women’s Lobby (ZNWL), Panos Institute Southern Africa (PSAf), Women in Law in Southern Africa (WiLSA) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWEZA).

In addition to developing and funding the programme, Oxfam supports partners with capacity development, and is facilitating monitoring and evaluation. Regular field visits and learning events allow Oxfam and partner staff to improve the programme collaboratively. Oxfam also acts as a convener, facilitating linkages between partners, larger networks and major players such as government organisations.

MOBILISING MEN TO TAKE ACTION AND CREATE LASTING CHANGE

“If you think you are going to be macho by beating women... you are in a wrong generation. If you think you are going to impress your fellow men by beating your wife, you are in a wrong generation.”

Edgar Lungu, Minister of Defence, speaking at the 2,000 Men March

I Care About Her began with a media campaign, spearheaded by Oxfam partner PSAf, a media and development co-ordination organisation. Media adverts and billboards communicated the need for men to play a role in the fight against violence, and a series of regular broadcasts on national television and radio created a platform for men to discuss and challenge their beliefs and behaviours around VAWG.

I Care About Her also mobilises men through public events, including marches to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence and International Women’s Day, two major rallying points within the international women’s movement. 2013 saw over 2,000 men mobilised to march to end VAWG.

Box 1: 2,000 men march to show they care^{vi}

On 23 November, 2013, Oxfam and partners arranged the 2,000 Men March – an ambitious target, but men rose to the challenge. Over 2,500 men, including police officers and government officials, marched to show their support for the women in their lives. The Zambia Police Brass band played, calling men, women and children of all ages to join the march.

Addressing the community, Hon. Edgar Lungu, Minister of Defence, urged the men present to take an active role in stopping violence against women and girls.

“When this type of violence is happening in our communities, we often look the other way. Cross the boundary and see how your neighbour is treating his wife. Befriend him, since he is a man like you, and teach him to stop being violent!”



Men march for the women they care about at the 2,000 Men March. Photo Credit: Oxfam in Zambia.

Building on the interest developed through this mass mobilisation, a grassroots campaign to train men as “champions” to end VAWG was launched in late 2013, facilitated by the YWCA Men’s Network. Champions are responsible for identifying a core group of men to start discussion groups. Discussions are based on 17

Community Education Cards, each of which deals with topics such as women’s rights, the nature of VAWG, and common myths about domestic violence and rape.



Sample of a Community Education Card, dealing with myths around rape. Image credit: Oxfam in Zambia.

Women have formed parallel discussion groups in some communities, to raise consciousness around the attitudes that propagate violence, and explore the attitudes which they themselves may hold.

50 police officers have also been trained as champions by WiLSA. *I Care About Her* aims to have one champion at every police station in Zambia. These officers are responsible for attending to cases

of VAWG and educating colleagues about women’s rights.

The school project, coordinated by FAWEZA, is the newest component of the programme, officially launched in April 2014. Discussion groups are being run in 20 schools, with plans to expand. These groups aim to educate girls and boys about VAWG and encourage them to take action to end it, and challenge unhealthy gender norms from a young age. Curriculum materials are being developed especially for schools, and school heads have requested training to support the programme.

IMPACT

“Since this programme, men feel they can express themselves.”

“We talk more openly between us now.”

I Care About Her champion and his wife, Linda Compound

“It has been a success here,” says Raymond Havwala, Coordinator of the YWCA Men’s Network, speaking from Linda Compound, a community of around 35,000 people on the outskirts of Lusaka. Before the campaign, four women a month were killed in the area on average, through beating or poisoning. As of early 2014, the rate had decreased to one death a month. Interviews with men across four target districts reveal a significant reduction in reported incidences of violence against their wives and increased understanding about VAWG, as well as greater respect for women. The community groups have proven powerful accountability mechanisms, creating social incentive for men to change violent behaviours.

Programme areas have seen an increase in the number of cases of VAWG reported to the police, and WiLSA reports that there has also been an improvement in how police handle these cases. Schools clubs have been active in bringing perpetrators of violence to account in their schools.

The programme has also been highly successful in involving men in the fight against VAWG. 90 champions have been trained, and more and more men are asking to join the movement. Over 3,900 men have taken part in community discussion groups, thousands more have joined the marches, and the billboards and broadcast panel discussions have been effective in generating debate. The programme received an award at the Gender Links Summit in April 2014 in the category of “Alliance and Coalition Building” for its successes.

I Care About Her has achieved significant visibility in Zambia. Influential figures like the First Lady and government ministers have spoken up in support of the programme, and government agencies and traditional leaders have reached out to Oxfam and partners to become involved. The Ministry of Gender has asked Oxfam to submit a proposal for the programme to be scaled up across Zambia. The police have appealed to Oxfam to mainstream the *I Care About Her* methodology in their police training colleges, while the Department of Education is already using the Community Education Cards as part of training for new teachers.

The programme has been featured in several national newspapers, and has received attention from celebrities and media outside Zambia. Writer Esther Freud and musician Emeli Sandé have visited to raise awareness about VAWG in Zambia. During her visit, Sandé took part in a workshop with local musicians to explore ways of using music to stop violence, and Freud wrote an article on the campaign, which was published in the UK Financial Times magazine.^{vii}

Box 2: Reaching the nation – live!^{viii}



Lights, camera, action! September 2013 saw the launch of the second season of the *I Care About Her* men’s discussion series on national TV and radio.

The upbeat discussions are broadcast live across Zambia, and feature men discussing topics such as how they can support ending violence against women and girls and the impact this violence has on communities.

Many men have called in to say how much they appreciate the show. “It is refreshing to see ordinary men on live TV taking a strong stand... This is the right step in creating a safe and violence-free Zambia,” said Benson Nwalya, a caller from Northern Province.

Raymond Havwala, of the YWCA Men’s Network, moderates a televised discussion. Photo credit: Oxfam in Zambia.

THE FUTURE OF *I CARE ABOUT HER*

"The increased number of men involved in the fight against gender-based violence and other interventions that ensure that both men and women participate equally and effectively is indeed a major encouragement and a pointer to the fact that the war is about to be won. [*I Care About Her*] brought about very innovative ideas."

Rosemary K. Kakompe, Judge, Gender Links Summit Awards

I Care About Her has shown potential to be wide-reaching and sustainable, and as such its suitability to be scaled up, following rigorous monitoring and evaluation which will take place in 2015. As part of Oxfam's regional gender programme, there are plans to adapt the campaign in Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa, working closely with women's rights organisations.

In Zambia, 100 men will be trained in new districts, which will lead to the establishment of many more community discussion groups. The focus on women and couples will be expanded, and the programme will also work

with local musicians to develop songs aimed at challenging the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate VAWG. There are also plans to work with members of parliament, the military and religious groups.

As the programme extends its reach in this way, Oxfam and partners will increase their ability to mobilise men and women across Zambia to join the fight against VAWG and promote women's rights in Southern Africa.



Members of the police force join the 2,000 Men March. Photo credit: Oxfam in Zambia

ⁱ Zambia Barometer, Gender Links, 2013 (<http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/zambia-barometer-2013-chapter-5-gender-based-violence-2013-11-25>)

ⁱⁱ Zambia Demographic Health Survey, 2007 (<http://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR211/FR211%5BRevised-05-12-2009%5D.pdf>)

ⁱⁱⁱ Zambia Barometer, Gender Links, 2013 (<http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/zambia-barometer-2013-chapter-5-gender-based-violence-2013-11-25>)

^{iv} Zambia Demographic and Health Survey, 2007

^v Zambia Barometer, Gender Links, 2013

^{vi} A version of this story originally appeared on Oxfam's blog (<http://www.oxfamblogs.org/southernafrica/?p=3659>)

^{vii} Esther Freud, Financial Times, Esther Freud on Zambia's campaign against male violence, February 2014 (<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/f3f94cbc-99bc-11e3-91cd-00144feab7de.html#slide0>). Some of the quotes in this case study originally appeared in this article.

^{viii} A version of this story originally appeared on Oxfam's blog (<http://www.oxfamblogs.org/southernafrica/?p=341>)

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