

Channels of Hope for Gender

OVERVIEW

Channels of Hope is an interactive process to create a safe space for faith leaders, their spouses and faith communities to become active participants in the well-being of children through science-based information and insight from religious texts. It reaches to the root causes and deepest convictions that impact attitudes, norms, values and practices toward the most vulnerable. The process is grounded in guiding principles from participants' religious texts and is designed to move the heart, inform the mind and motivate a sustained and effective response to significant issues. Channels of Hope equips faith leaders to apply their religious texts to key social issues and encourage other faith leaders and faith communities to do the same.



The Channels of Hope process

Channels of Hope is both a methodology and a process focused on partnering with local faith leaders, their congregations and communities for sustainable solutions to community needs. The process is structured into four phases of activity: prepare, catalyse, strategise, and empower.



The Channels of Hope for Gender objectives

Channels of Hope for Gender is an innovative approach to exploring gender identities, norms and values that impact male and female relationships in families and communities. The programme methodology challenges participants to see men and women as created by God as equals and to treat each other accordingly. The new understanding empowers both women and men to celebrate who they are, moves people towards healthier relationships, and contributes to reducing gender-based violence.

When faith leaders promote principles of equality, and the shared access and utilisation of family and community resources, this contributes to harmonious relationships within families, faith groups and communities and strengthen community systems and structures and contribute in meaningful ways to addressing violence in the community.

Key outcomes

- Faith communities are engaged in actions that contribute to gender-based violence prevention, advocacy or care
- Faith leaders demonstrate a healthy faith perspective on gender and are able to frame faith-based responses relating to gender justice
- Faith, community and young leaders become role models influencing the positive change of attitudes, values and norms regarding gender relationships
- Participation, access and control of resources are improved for both male and female members of communities

South Sudan case study

In 2013 hundreds of thousands of women and children lives were affected when conflict broke out in South Sudan. Six years after the world's newest country was born, close to 4 million people have been forced to flee their homes, with girls and women particularly affected by multiple forms of sexual and gender-based violence such as rape. In 2016 in Yambio County, former Western Equatoria state, communities reported to World Vision that the majority of victims of sexual violence were girls and half of those surveyed knew of children who were born of rape. Insecurity in the area contributed to a rise in the number of rape cases. Many children born of rape were reportedly bullied, excluded from education and segregated from other children in the community.

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office funded World Vision to work with communities in Yambio over two years to change attitudes, promote community acceptance of survivors and children born of rape, and improve locally managed systems to prevent and respond to sexual violence. The project mobilised and worked with faith leaders, children and youth groups, and community members using an adaptation of Channels of Hope for Gender.

Results of the project have included demonstrated increased knowledge on gender-based violence and the referral system, reduced stigma resulting in communities

being more often willing to accept and support survivors, and the development of action plans owned by stakeholders which continue to be used to engage with the local government and communities.

Faith leader transformation in South Sudan

Prior to the project, **51% of faith leaders** felt a female victim of rape may have been at fault and should marry her perpetrator as a form of settlement. At the project closure, **97% of faith leaders** reported that they understand the harm of gender-based violence and seek to respect the wishes of survivors in their approaches.

Story of transformation in Ethiopia

Pastor Ergete Mesfin of Shasheme, Ethiopia firmly believed the Bible taught that women should sit quietly in church, never asking questions or expressing their opinions. His beliefs carried over to his marriage. Pastor Ergete said, 'I used to think that husband has authority over the wife.'

His wife, Woinshet Lemma, reflected on their marriage: 'Wives are considered as one of the properties of the husband.'



World Vision's Channels of Hope for Gender training opened their eyes to a new understanding of the Bible's approach to women, 'I developed the biblical understanding of gender equality and realised the potential God has given to women,' said Pastor Ergete. He and his wife's partnership in marriage has become a role model for other couples in their community.

For more information on World Vision's Channels of Hope work please visit www.wvi.org/faith-and-development/channels-hope