

POWER TO THE GIRLS!

Reflect and learn on how to drive change for girls

December 2015



Preface

2015 is an important year for the Girl Power Alliance. Taking stock of five years of collaboration, the alliance concludes that the Girl Power Programme contributed to positive changes for more than 1,5 million girls and young women in ten countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We can confirm that these girls and young women experience less violence than before the programme and increasingly claim their rights. Discriminatory and harmful practices against them have become less acceptable. Additionally, Girl Power partner organisations have found practical ways to engage governments at various levels while involving civil society as an agent for gender equality.

2015 is also an important year for the international development community: millions of people's lives have improved due to concerted global, regional, national and local efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and the agenda has been set for the next fifteen years of international cooperation. But as we transition to the Sustainable Development Goals, it is clear that in the light of emerging global realities, including worsening environmental pressures and a growing number of middle-income countries with tremendous internal poverty challenges, girls and young women need continued support. Despite positive changes, they still face violence and abuse, and cannot

fully and equally participate in their societies. Harmful norms and traditions change only slowly. Governments and institutions are still a long way from fulfilling their responsibilities towards girls and young women.

In this publication, the Girl Power Alliance shares some of its important lessons and experiences. It is not only the 'what' and 'why' that matter to convince donors, policy makers and practitioners to join their efforts for Girl Power; taking an in-depth look at the 'how' often reveals powerful pathways of change.

The Alliance would like to thank all the girls, young women, families, organisations and institutions who shared their insights and experiences for these Girl Power case studies. Our gratitude also goes to the Avance evaluation team for their capable work and commitment.

The stories are intended to be shared – may they help inspire, mobilise and guide many others to contribute to gender equality!

Because, in the words of Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations: "Investing in women is not only the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do. I am deeply convinced that, in women, the world has at its disposal the most significant and yet largely untapped

potential for development and peace. Gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but a prerequisite for reaching all the other international development goals." ¹

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¹ Secretary-General Message on International Women's Day 2008, New York.

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Reflect and learn from five unique Girl Power cases

How do you end violence against girls and young women and promote gender equality? It's a tough question, but we believe that the answer is to increase female economic and social-political participation and provide high quality education. In other words, by giving girls and young women Girl Power! We empower girls and young women to have a secure and independent life, full of social and economic opportunities.

Over the past five years the Girl Power Alliance (GPA) ran programmes in ten countries with this goal in mind. During the mid-term review and end-evaluation the results and impact of the programme on the lives of girls and young women, in ten and four countries respectively, were analysed. We realised that while these reports provide great insights into what has been achieved and how this improved the lives of young girls and young women, they don't show how this change came about.

About the Girl Power Alliance

The Girl Power Alliance (GPA, also known as The Child Rights Alliance) is formed by Plan Nederland, Child Helpline International, Defence for Children - ECPAT, Free Press Unlimited, International Child Development Initiatives and Women Win.

The Girl Power Programme (GPP, 2011-2015) is a joint effort to fight the injustices girls and young women face daily in 10 developing countries. The programme runs in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Zambia. All activities revolve around the protection of girls and young women against violence, (post) primary education and economic- and political participation.

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds the programme.

Therefore, this publication illustrates the concrete and observed changes identified in five cases. As the programme's success is an interrelated process that addresses the rights of girls and young women on different intervention levels, we believe that conducting case studies is a valuable way of exploring how these contributions took place.

The Girl Power Programme resulted in a significant drop in physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence against participating girls and young women. This can be partly attributed to the programme's focus on economic prosperity, social political participation and education. Therefore the lessons in this study will not focus on whether or not GPP achieved its objectives (this will be covered in more detail in the Final Evaluation Report) but concentrate on how change happened and the knowledge and insights these changes reveal.

Each study focuses on a specific thematic issue, while the global case study addresses the strategies used in the four evaluation countries to strengthen civil society's role in achieving gender equality.

Country	Theme	This case is about
Bolivia	Socio-political	Bolivian girls and boys: helping their voices to be heard Stimulating Bolivian youth to organise themselves in youth organisations as a mean to participate in public decision-making and to improve their role in society.
Ethiopia	Education	Levelling the playing field for Ethiopian girls: making schools gender sensitive Creating safe and girl-friendly school environments to positively change the lives of Ethiopian girls and young women.
Ghana	Protection	Giving the girls of Ghana the means to call for help A Child Helpline to give Ghanaian girls and young women the opportunity to speak out, call for help and access protection services.
Nepal	Economic	Female trekking guides reach great heights in Nepali society Empowering young Nepali women to become trekking guides and to improve their economic position and living standards in society.
Global	Civil Society	Strengthening networks for a stronger civil society for girls and young women to participate in Strengthening the networks of Civil Society Organisations in the four countries, and encourage them to work together to realise gender equality.

Case study approach

In order to understand which factors influenced change realised by the GPP, the case studies will assess the underlying processes behind each achievement. We hope this will give a broader context to the lessons learned. Using Outcome Harvesting as a reference, the data collection focused on concrete observed changes and explaining them by logically organizing and structurally cross-checking information provided by key stakeholders in the change process. Such changes may be foreseen or unforeseen, intended or unintended and positive or negative. Respondents were invited to give their opinions about the GPP's contribution to these changes. By exploring five unique case studies, inspirational stories came to light about how crucial changes actually came about.

Within each case we looked at the key drivers for change: who were the key contributors? What influence did external political, social events, happenings or stakeholders have? What were the most important lessons learned? And what would we do differently next time?

All five case studies have been compiled with the intention of pointing out important lessons from the GPP that may prove to be valuable for all alliance partners within their future work, as well as anyone else striving to end violence against girls and young women and promoting gender equality.

How the Girl Power cases were selected

The five cases are intended to cover the GPP's four thematic areas and provide a fair representation of GPP members' work. To select these cases every GPP partner was invited to submit the case study that describes the most significant change achieved in their national programme. A shortlist was made, and after a review, the Girl Power Desk selected five case studies based on their relevance for this publication.

Impact of the Girl Power Programme

The GPP has scored some major achievements over the last five years. Girls and young women who have participated in the programme experience an increased involvement in decision-making processes of authorities like school boards, community boards and/or municipalities.

Another notable result is an overall decrease in the amount of physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence against girls and young women. This positive change is accompanied by the repudiation of violence against girls and young women, and the growing role of boys and men in reducing these levels of violence. Furthermore, we see a positive trend for school enrol-

ment and graduation rates for girls in (post-primary) education. However, despite these achievements there remain many challenges that need to be overcome in the quest to fully end violence against girls and young women and promote gender equality. We must continue to strive for the implementation of the formal policies and legislation necessary to guarantee the sustainability of the work of existing alliances and public entities and maximise programme results after 2015.

GIRL POWER! A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The programme launched by the Girl Power Alliance in 2011, was developed to build and strengthen a civil society that can ensure equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women in ten countries. The programme worked on several intervention levels to achieve its goal of realising significant change.

The GPP focused on four UN-promoted issues: violence against girls and women, (post-primary) education, economic participation and socio-political participation. These four areas are addressed at three intervention levels: individual, socio-cultural and institutional. In addition, the programme addressed the two specific result areas of (organisational) capacity development and civil society strengthening.

Strengthening future work

The value of this publication lies in a range of examples illustrating how five years of hard work made a difference in the position of girls and young women in four of the ten GPP countries. It is not intended to be a complete and exhaustive account of everything that has been done, but a truthful presentation of the scope of the GPP and its achievements.

Every lesson is intended to contribute to the overall review of the GPP and support its conclusions. We hope that they will provide food for thought in planning future work: we believe they are viable suggestions to help sustain a safe, healthy and prosperous future for girls and young women.

Case I. Bolivian girls and boys: helping their voices to be heard



In Sica Sica, a municipality and provincial capital in the La Paz Department of Bolivia, youth have a very subordinate role in society. As social and cultural customs give high regard to traditions and values of elders, young people are generally socially sidelined in decision-making processes. Community leaders, teachers and even parents, generally do not consult younger people when making significant decisions on, for instance, public expenditures, school regulations or arrangements at home. As a result, young girls and boys in Sica Sica are rarely challenged or stimulated to develop or voice their critical opinions. Consequently they have little to no influence on decisions that directly affect their own future.

At the start of the Girl Power programme (GPP), the youth in Sica Sica was generally perceived as a problematic group in society, largely incapable of achieving anything on their own. The prevailing strong patriarchal social values ensured that girls were seen as second-class citizens with a limited role to play in society. These levels of social exclusion and negativity create counter-productive feelings of low self-esteem amongst young Bolivian girls and boys. All in all, it was a hopeless situation, in which youth was left with little opportunity to realise their full potential.

However, the overall policy environment in Bolivia has

recently shown signs of progress. The Bolivian government took a big step forward by approving 'The New Code for Boys, Girls and Adolescents'. This is a real milestone, as the code recognises the right of girls and boys to organise themselves in youth organisations united under a municipal youth council. Moreover it encourages municipalities to establish youth units and allocate resources for the development and implementation of plans and programmes for, and by, children and adolescents. In terms of gender equality, a law prohibiting sexual harassment and political violence towards women also was approved. This law calls for female political participation: the level of women in public posts should reach at least 50%. These developments suggest positive changes in the Bolivian political environment and a positive shift in societal norms and values regarding participation of youth – especially of girls.

Empowering youth to create a brighter future for themselves

In the last few years the GPP worked hard to empower and stimulate young people to organise themselves in youth organisations, with the goal of actively involving young Bolivians, particularly girls and young women, in community and public decision-making processes. This self-organising process is critical as many young people, especially in more traditional indigenous communities, do not have many opportunities to have their voices heard, nor have their points of view taken seriously.

Moreover, it is a chance to breakthrough societal stigmas and seizing opportunities to speak up and build a better future for themselves and others. This case study focuses on how increasing the organisation of youth into groups and providing them with access to public decision-making processes can significantly improve the position and participation of Bolivian boys and girls in society.

Sica Sica leading the way

Originally a conservative, indigenous community in the highlands, Sica Sica has become one of the most advanced municipalities in rural Bolivia in terms of youth participation in public policy formulation and decision-making. According to girls, boys and municipal representatives, this is due to the activities Defence for Children International-Bolivia (DCI-Bolivia) has developed with them as part of the Girl Power Programme.

Sica Sica is one of the first municipalities in rural Bolivia to allocate and use a specific budget for youth within their Annual Operational Plan (AOP). Moreover, it is the first of the 14 municipalities participating in the GPP to form its own Secondary Students Federation (SSF). What makes Sica Sica very interesting is that the stakeholders were highly effective in overcoming traditional barriers against the participation of youth in public decision-making.

Most important stakeholders

GPP Partner	Youth Organisations	Institutional Stakeholders	Community Stakeholders	Individual Stakeholders
DCI-Bolivia	Secondary Students Federation, COMONNA, student councils, brigades	National government, Municipality of Sica Sica	Parents and other family members, Boards of schools / colleges and their teachers, Local organisations (Tupac Katari, Bartolina Sisa Sisa)	Boys – Young Men Girls – Young Women

Youth participation in Bolivian society is increasing

The encouragement and empowerment of boys and girls to formally organise themselves has had a positive effect on the participation of youth in community and municipal decision-making. According to several municipal representatives (mayors and counsellors) and representatives of social organisations, more youth organisations are now active and have access to a municipal fund to finance their activities and processes. Girls and boys interviewed said that they are now more involved in municipal decision-making thanks to GPP support. In combination with the positive changes on national legislation, the overall landscape for youth participation, specifically for girls and young women, has improved considerably.

More youth organisations with women at the top

Youth organisations, like student councils and COMONNAs (Municipal Coordination of Girls, Boys and Adolescents Organisations), work particularly well for young people to organise themselves in – not least because they are endorsed by new Bolivian legislation. Through these groups young people can interact and work together on an equal and secure level with school or municipal authorities and voice their opinions. To ensure that Bolivian youth in Sica Sica can establish and access similar structures, the GPP – specifically Defence for Children International-Bolivia (DCI-Bolivia) – focused on strengthening their organisational capacity.

This resulted in the establishment of the Secondary Students Federation (SFF) and COMONNA in Sica Sica. A COMONNA connects every kind of municipal youth organization including the SSF, student councils, religious youth groups and many others.

During 2014 and 2015, girls and boys have used the SSF and COMONNAs as a place to talk about their situations (needs, difficulties and strengths) and develop solutions to the problems they face.

A combination of the support provided by new legislation that encourages women’s political participation and DCI awareness raising activities on this topic, has resulted in more gender equality in the SSF and COMONNAs. These groups have pledged that girls or young women should represent 50% of the positions on the boards of student councils and youth organisations. The only organisation where this target hasn’t been fully achieved is the SSF, but they are getting there: girls fill 40% of the leadership positions and positions are balanced at the highest posts (i.e. if the president is a man, the vice-president is a woman). At the COMONNA and other student councils the 50% balance is realised and in several of these organisations the majority of members are girls!

Getting governmental recognition and funds through lobbying

During the GPP, DCI has lobbied several local government authorities, and organised intensive training courses for government officials, on important issues like the right of girls and young women to receive a full education and participate in public decision-making. As a result, municipalities have become more aware of young people’s rights and their value to society and have started to acknowledge the importance

of youth organisations, as shown by the official recognition of the Sica Sica SSF by the local municipality. These activities have brought the municipal council and youth organisations closer together.

At the same time, the municipal government of Sica Sica has started to recognise that it should be young people themselves who should be consulted on suitable solutions for their problems, not just adults. Youth opinions are now taken into account before the municipal budget is allocated, and the municipality finances some of the youth organisations' activities. From 2016 onwards, a specific youth fund will be created and channelled through the Municipal Youth Unit, specifically set up for this purpose with the help of DCI.

Positive support starts at home

On a community level, DCI provided awareness-raising workshops on the importance of youth leadership for parents, teachers and members of social organisations. While these groups are in the best position to listen to and support young people, not all are sympathetic to, or aware of, relevant youth-related issues. As a result of the workshops, a large number of people in the community now take the opinions and problems of their younger members into account. In the bigger picture, this has diminished the adult-centrism in the Sica Sica community and resulted in community members seeing boys and girls as serious stakeholders for development, specifically in their own futures.

A shift in men's attitudes towards female leadership

DCI convinced (young) men to also participate in their workshops. This was a vital step in boys changing their attitudes. Men and boys have started to acknowledge the rights of girls and young women and to accept female leaders within youth organisations. According to a local DCI field officer: "They don't reject a girl's application to a leadership post any more, or laugh at them and make sarcastic comments." The Bartolina Sisa of Sora Sora (a community in Sica Sica municipality founded in 2012) is an organisation for all women in the community. It has played an important part in the empowerment of women in current leadership positions in Sora Sora. Although it is mostly adult women who participate in the organisation, the female leaders serve as important role models for girls and young women and pave the way for them to assume leadership positions.

Improving confidence and self-esteem of young women

On a more individual level, girls in Sica Sica can now assume leadership positions in youth organisations and participate in decision-making processes: 50% of leadership positions at community brigades, student councils and COMONNAs are filled by girls, including presidencies. This has been achieved by organising intensive individual training and awareness-raising programmes for the youth of Sica Sica. This programme, focusing on girls' rights within the broader child

rights framework, involved workshops, meetings and other events on leadership, self-esteem, protection, education and socio-political participation. After the workshops, girls and young women said that they felt more confident speaking in public and in front of authorities, and that participating in youth structures and boards of directors helped increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Get what you need by asking for it

A good example of the ability of youth organisations to influence social and municipal authorities and create better circumstances for themselves occurred at the National Education summit in August 2013. Young people presented a series of demands to the municipality that had been developed with DCI's support. As a result, the municipality started to provide funding to ensure more youth will receive a proper breakfast, get access to improved sport infrastructure and have audio-visual equipment at their schools. Plus more youth are able to use public transport to get to school instead of having to walk for three hours – or even worse, being forced to stay at home because of the risk of violence during the long distance travelling to school.

Changing perceptions towards the leaders of tomorrow

One of the GPP's biggest achievements in Sica Sica is raising awareness amongst key stakeholders on the importance of youth participation in decision-making. The GPP and its partners have succeeded in convincing various stakeholders that youth can play a valuable role in society if they organise themselves structurally in youth organisations or student councils. Moreover, the GPP contributed to a reversal of the previously negative public view on the role of young people in Bolivian society, in particular that of girls and young women.

Contribution #1: Bringing parents, officials, teachers and youth together

For change to happen, all key stakeholders had to be on the same page. In Sica Sica, the GPP - through DCI - has created a broader sense of awareness amongst government officials, parents and teachers by providing them with training and education, and showing them the benefits a committed young generation of people can provide to the communities they live in. The GPP's training created a favourable environment for adults' attitude that caused their perception towards youth to change positively. During these awareness-raising sessions the importance of the rights and participation levels of girls and young women in society was always underlined. In Sica Sica, these activities led to more girls and boys participating in public decision-making processes, thereby enhancing the youth's position in their own communities.

Girl leaders coming with a Bang!

The COMONNAs president is a fourteen-year-old girl who is very much aware of her rights as a citizen and her potential as leader. She is the president of her class and vice-president of her school's student council. As if that wasn't enough, she's also president of a brigade called 'Big Bang'. This name was chosen, because, as she puts it: "We want to be the youth explosion that gives life to a new country; we want to train new leaders who fight against violence and make their rights known to all their fellow human beings" She's grateful to DCI, who helped her and other girls to get where they are today: "DCI has helped us to become good leaders and become more participative. Two years ago, I was very quiet and I was scared of everybody and everything; I was afraid to fail, especially in front of older people. In the meetings with DCI they applaud us when we present our proposals, and this helps me to believe in myself."

Contribution #2: Mobilising youth organisations and building leadership

An important success factor in the establishment of the SSF and COMONNA in Sica Sica has been showing young people what it takes to genuinely participate in public discussions and decision-making processes. Building on the willingness of the youth to organise themselves and become more active, DCI supported them by strengthening their leadership capabilities, with a special focus on girls and young women. For instance, in 2015, DCI organised two competitions for youth organisations to present their best ideas on leadership development, participation in decision-making and providing citizen support.

Contribution #3: Empowering girls to take on leadership roles

Encouraging and facilitating girls and young women to become members of student councils, youth organisations or other public spaces is just the first step. The GPP and DCI placed a heavy emphasis on empowering girls and young women to take up leadership positions in these organisations as well. As a result, girls interviewed explained that they feel more confident speaking in public, lobbying authorities and taking on leadership positions within youth organisations.

Lessons learned: ingredients for an effective youth organisation

Lesson #1: Create systems that allow everyone to be a leader

A way to ensure that every member of a youth organisation is offered the opportunity to lead the group is to incorporate a working process in which leadership positions continuously rotate. Changing half the board every year can do this. In this way fresh ideas are constantly generated and the commitment of all members is guaranteed. It's also important to train young people in leadership skills and community mobilisation to further unlock their leadership potential.

How youth can make new laws - if they get the right support

On Children's Day 2014, girls and boys formed the Municipal Council and a girl was elected as mayor. The Council proposed laws but hadn't received enough training on the decision-making process to take full advantage of their temporary position. As mayor, the girl could have approved municipal decrees but she was afraid, so she didn't. Although it was an interesting event, it fell short of achieving real change. More could have been achieved if the girls and boys had gone through a stronger empowerment and capacity development process. This process should include legislation training so that youth organisations' proposals will not be rejected.

Lesson #2: Engage parents, teachers and other caretakers

To maximise the impact of adult support for youth representation it is vital to set up activities for lobbying and sensitizing aimed at parents, teachers, social organisations, other community members and municipal authorities. These activities should run parallel to youth activities and must include events where adults and youth are brought together. This will strengthen the relationship building between both groups.

Lesson #3: Ensure men support female leadership

One of the GPP's key objectives was to help girls influence public policies and municipal decision-making. To do this, it is important that men have to accept girls and women as leaders. Once they do, they can play a vital role in encouraging organisations to open up to female leadership. A successful way to promote female leadership is sensitization workshops with men.

Lesson #4: Get official acknowledgement to secure funding

Several procedural aspects have to be taken into account in public policy processes. For example, in Sica Sica, youth organisations first needed to be officially acknowledged in order to successfully obtain a municipal fund for youth programmes. Secondly, a municipal Youth Unit had to be set up to channel municipal funds to these organisations. Finally, the youth fund had to be included within the municipal annual operational plan in order to secure funding to increase the youth organisations' organisational sustainability.

Lesson #5: Mind the generation gap

An adult-centric vision can prevent the implementation of activities by youth and the realisation of joint actions. Municipal analysis workshops helped to overcome these generational barriers and offered a place for adults and youth to interact and get to understand each other's perspectives. These shared-spaces promote more interaction between young people and adults, and strengthen and encourage adult support for young people's needs and dreams. It's vital that youth leads the way in these processes, not their elders.

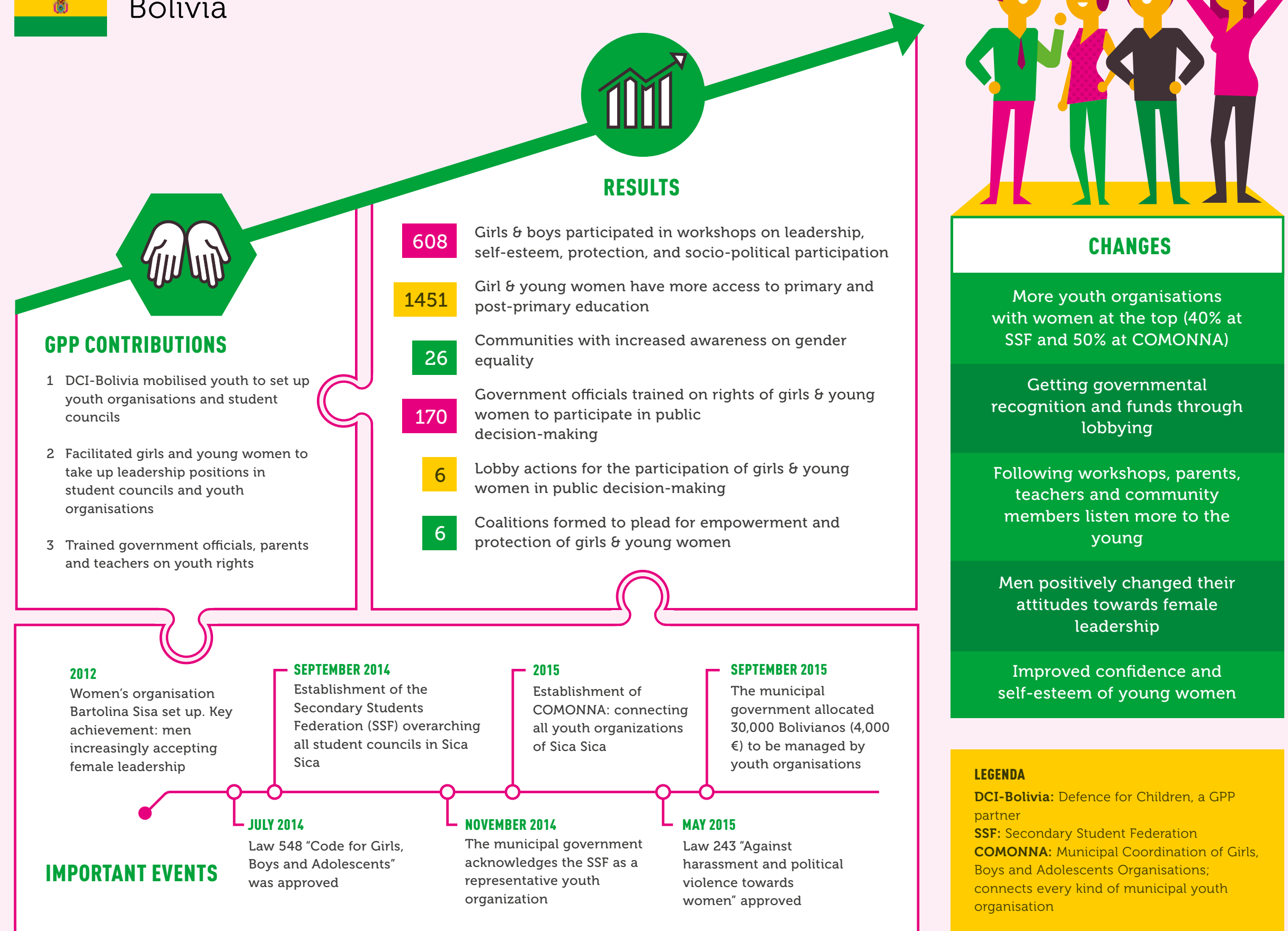
Concluding: replicating youth-led processes in other Bolivian municipalities

The GPP and its partners have succeeded in empowering youth, specifically girls and young women, to organise themselves in groups and stand up for their rights to influence public policy decision-making. Youth organisations and student councils have been successfully established in all fourteen municipalities where Girl Power is operational, providing increased public roles and responsibilities to boys and girls. By implementing trainings, workshops and lobbying activities in support of the SFF, the COMONNA and the municipal youth fund in Sica Sica, the GPP has made a genuine difference to the daily lives and future prospects of girls and boys. We believe that lessons learned from this experience can inspire similar results in other Bolivian municipalities.

Bolivian boys & girls: helping their voices to be heard



Bolivia



GPP CONTRIBUTIONS

- 1 DCI-Bolivia mobilised youth to set up youth organisations and student councils
- 2 Facilitated girls and young women to take up leadership positions in student councils and youth organisations
- 3 Trained government officials, parents and teachers on youth rights

RESULTS

- 608** Girls & boys participated in workshops on leadership, self-esteem, protection, and socio-political participation
- 1451** Girl & young women have more access to primary and post-primary education
- 26** Communities with increased awareness on gender equality
- 170** Government officials trained on rights of girls & young women to participate in public decision-making
- 6** Lobby actions for the participation of girls & young women in public decision-making
- 6** Coalitions formed to plead for empowerment and protection of girls & young women

CHANGES

- More youth organisations with women at the top (40% at SSF and 50% at COMONNA)
- Getting governmental recognition and funds through lobbying
- Following workshops, parents, teachers and community members listen more to the young
- Men positively changed their attitudes towards female leadership
- Improved confidence and self-esteem of young women

IMPORTANT EVENTS

- 2012** Women's organisation Bartolina Sisa set up. Key achievement: men increasingly accepting female leadership
- JULY 2014** Law 548 "Code for Girls, Boys and Adolescents" was approved
- SEPTEMBER 2014** Establishment of the Secondary Students Federation (SSF) overarching all student councils in Sica Sica
- NOVEMBER 2014** The municipal government acknowledges the SSF as a representative youth organization
- 2015** Establishment of COMONNA: connecting all youth organizations of Sica Sica
- MAY 2015** Law 243 "Against harassment and political violence towards women" approved
- SEPTEMBER 2015** The municipal government allocated 30,000 Bolivianos (4,000 €) to be managed by youth organisations

LEGENDA

DCI-Bolivia: Defence for Children, a GPP partner
SSF: Secondary Student Federation
COMONNA: Municipal Coordination of Girls, Boys and Adolescents Organisations; connects every kind of municipal youth organisation



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 Create systems, such as an annually changing board, to provide leadership opportunities for all youngsters
- 2 Adult support for youth participation is vital; lobby and sensitize parents, teachers, community members, municipalities and social institutions
- 3 Make sure men accept women as their leaders; once they do they can encourage youth organisations to open up to female leadership
- 4 The municipality has to officially allocate funds for youth empowerment. For example by setting up a youth fund managed by the youth themselves
- 5 To overcome generational barriers, promote interaction between young people and adults and strengthen adult support for the needs and dreams of youth.

Case II. Levelling the playing field for Ethiopian girls: making schools gender sensitive



In Ethiopia, traditional gender stereotypes relegate women to an inferior position to men. Many Ethiopian girls and young women fall victim to early marriage, abduction and rape. Girls begin to face these daily threats during the second cycle of primary education and they have a drastic effect on the performance and safety of girls at school. A lack of support and encouragement for girls to be assertive and competitive has resulted in a steady fall of girls' results in national exams, and girls' completion rates are consistently lower than those of boys.

Distance and security factors play an important role in these figures, as parents are discouraged from sending their daughters to both primary and secondary schools, especially in rural communities. To further complicate matters, women are still very underrepresented in the teaching profession and leadership positions at every level of the education system.

Nevertheless, considerable achievements have recently been made in making Ethiopia's education system more female-friendly. According to the Gender Parity Index, more teenage girls are attending and completing school at primary and secondary level. Moreover, the proportion of women in the teaching profession has shown a relatively positive improvement at both primary and secondary level, as well as at Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE). Despite this progress, critical challenges still remain in achieving gender equality in education and training. These challenges are influenced by

an array of socio-economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. For example, in low-income households labour and time-intensive domestic chores, such as fetching water and firewood, are commonly seen as tasks for girls, thereby affecting their school attendance and grades. A further economic barrier is the lack of funds for building girl-friendly facilities, providing sanitation pads and purchasing educational materials. Finally, gender-based violence unfortunately remains a common occurrence in classrooms and other educational settings.

Most important stakeholders			
GPP Partners	Institutional Stakeholders	Community Stakeholders	Individual Stakeholders
Education partners: PIE, FAWE, ESD, DEC, ADV, MCMDO, IWCIDA Protection partners: ACPF, ANPPCAN, FSCE, ECFA	National government; Ministry of Education	Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), Schools: primary/secondary, Parents and other community members	Girls – Young Women

Gender responsive schools to improve the lives of Ethiopian girls

The GPP's goals in Ethiopia were: to create a safe and gender sensitive school environment; to promote equal rights for girls and young women; and to overcome traditional societal stereotypes. Therefore the Girl Power Alliance (GPA) worked on improving educational standards in Ethiopia to build 'Gender Responsive Schools'. This involves creating a girl-friendly school environment that will reduce the risk of violence against girls and increase female school attendance and completion.

This case study focuses on how the gender sensitive improvements in the educational sector took place and the ways in which they contributed to positive change in the lives of girls and young Ethiopian women.

Gender Terms & Definitions

- 1. Gender discrimination:** Denying opportunities and rights to individuals on the basis of their sex.
- 2. Gender equality:** The elimination of all forms of gender discrimination so that both sexes enjoy equal opportunities and benefits.
- 3. Gender equity:** Giving both sexes equal access to resources and opportunities. In the educational context, it means ensuring that girls and boys have equal access to enrolment and other educational opportunities.
- 4. Gender stereotype:** The constant portrayal, whether in the media, conversation, jokes or books, of women and men occupying social roles according to a traditional gender role. In textbooks, for example, women are often portrayed as cleaners, caregivers and nurses, and men as drivers, doctors and leaders. These images reinforce socially constructed gender roles.
- 5. Gender mainstreaming:** The consistent integration of gender equality issues into the development and implementation of policies, plans, programmes and projects at every level, including at national, community, school and classroom levels.
- 6. Gender sensitive:** The ability to recognize and/or the recognition of gender equality issues.
- 7. Gender responsive:** Taking action to correct gender discrimination to help ensure greater gender equality.
- 8. Gender blind:** Failure to recognize and address the different needs and interests of males and females.

Creating the right environment for change

Gender-sensitive improvements in schools in the GPP-districts have been important in reducing gender-based violence risks for Ethiopian girls and young women. Officials from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and several other social authorities have confirmed that girls at girl-friendly schools perform better and attain higher grades. There's also less absenteeism and dropout. These positive changes can largely be attributed to the joint efforts of GPP partners and their fruitful collaborations with the government, CTEs and schools.

Successful political advocacy for institutional support

Action at political level is vital in realising change in promoting gender equality and banning violence against girls and young women. Therefore, FAWE's successful advocacy for the adaptation and implementation of an international Gender Responsive Pedagogy-handbook by the Ethiopian MoE was an important step towards establishing girl-friendly school environments on national level. The MoE adopted the manual in October 2014 as a national policy and together with FAWE paved the way for further rollout of the model. On top of that, FAWE supported the MoE in its revision of the gender equality strategy for the education sector.

Following in the footsteps of two successful CTEs

The collaboration with FAWE was particularly successful at two CTEs in Hawassa and Gondar. Both colleges implemented a Gender Plan of Action, including the use of the GRP-handbook. As a result, the CTEs' management became more supportive to its gender offices and the Gender Focal Points provide more support to girls by using the tutorial from the handbook. The CTEs also adopted guidelines to reduce sexual harassment at several colleges that put in place clear and consistent procedures. As a result, the CTEs expect to establish a safer environment for girls and levels of harassment to drop. The scale of the progress made so far is shown by the fact that in 2015 Gondar CTE has more female than male students for the first time ever. This can serve as an example for the rest of Ethiopia in how to tackle gender inequality in schools. The work of the two CTEs should be showcased at national level by the MoE to stimulate other CTEs to integrate GRP principles and methods in their regulations and curricula.

The next generation of teachers holds the key to the future

In 2013 the GPP supported FAWE and 6 (out of 29) CTEs aiming to help teachers to make the education system more gender-sensitive. Together with FAWE, these institutions set up trainings for graduating primary school teachers based on the GRP handbook. The CTEs also developed a college specific Gender Plan of Action, and were given

a small grant for the rollout. An important part of the Plan of Action is the development of new curricula in line with GRP with which future generations of teachers will be educated. In this way, FAWE and CTEs succeeded in including gender equality in (future) educational programmes. The success of this approach contributed to the endorsement of the GRP manual as a national policy and the mainstreaming of gender in the Ethiopian Education and Training sector.

Most girls haven't experienced change

Activities like building separate latrines, establishing girls clubs, handing out sanitary pads and giving advice and counselling at primary and secondary schools could lead to immediate and real change in the lives of girls. However, most girls interviewed weren't satisfied with their school's gender responsiveness so far. Complaints were made about the lack of separate toilets and girls clubs, and harassment from boys and teachers was reported. Primary schools are generally perceived to be safer for girls than secondary schools. According to girls who were part of the research discussion groups, primary schools have more girl-oriented structures and initiatives, such as girls clubs and girl advisory committees that are largely absent at secondary schools. This feedback underlines the importance of integrating protection-related measures at schools: something that GPP partners have started to do, but apparently not yet sufficiently, at every school.

“Girl-Friendly Schools”

“Girl-Friendly Schools” create gender equality and address the barriers to girls’ education. Gender responsive pedagogy is a teaching and learning process that takes into consideration the difference in boys’ and girls’ learning needs by following the six major components of the teaching programme:

- Lesson planning
- Classroom arrangement
- Language, classroom interaction
- Teaching and learning materials
- School management
- Management of sexual maturation

According to the GRP manual teachers are often unaware of situations that discriminate against either female or male students. For example, they may use learning materials that depict only one sex performing certain types of activities, or make stereotypical remarks about the capability or characteristics of girls or boys. This can discourage students, girls in particular, from participating fully and succeeding in their classroom learning. Teachers’ understanding and awareness of gender equality issues is critical to the participation and achievement of both girls and boys in schools.

Supportive collaborations and interventions to build upon

All over Ethiopia girls’ enrolment and completion rate is increasing and grades are improving (especially at primary school level). Unfortunately, due to a lack of systematic data collection and monitoring, it is hard to confirm that school environments have changed directly as a result of the GPP interventions. However, it is possible to state that FAWE’s interventions have been helpful and made some concrete contributions on institutional and community level.

Contribution #1: Investing in strong political relationships pays off

One of the GPP’s most significant contributions in Ethiopia is FAWE’s success in creating an enabling political landscape in which gender responsiveness has been set on the Ministry of Education (MoE)’s agenda. Over the course of a relationship built up over ten years, FAWE has given the MoE advisory support, technical assistance and collaborated on gender responsiveness policies. FAWE’s advocacy succeeded in 2014 when the MoE revised FAWE’s handbook and endorsed the Gender Responsive Pedagogy manual. At the start of the same year, the MoE also started training deans and module writers with FAWE’s support. Thanks to the MoE’s direct support, the right support is in place on an institutional level to make educational programmes in Ethiopia more gender

responsive. This major achievement is a result of FAWE’s long-term strategy and lays the ground for future change.

Contribution #2: First steps towards gender responsive school policies

Another GPP success is the collaboration between FAWE and the CTEs. Together they achieved considerable results, with a relatively small input, by training instructors in six colleges. The establishment of this collaboration and the development of GRP methodology within the CTEs were important steps towards structural improvement of the Ethiopian education sector’s gender sensitivity. The contributing factors to this success are:

- 1) FAWE’s continued interaction with individual CTEs
- 2) The support for women to become teachers through the provision of scholarships
- 3) FAWE’s financial and technical support to the gender action plans
- 4) The support for the CTEs’ gender offices to give a structure for the implementation of gender action plans
- 5) Strong alignment with governmental policies

The CTEs have assigned specific “gender offices”. These offices take action to support girls, such as welcome days for girls, tutorials, and providing sanitary pads. Both Hawassa and Gondar say that offices were already in place but they are stronger since FAWE’s work with them and more activities, like GRP trainings on sexual harassment, have been implemented. Overall, case study research has

indicated that CTEs and schools show a strong willingness to work together with FAWE to implement gender equality in their policies and daily way of working.

Contribution #3: A joint effort with multiple interventions

FAWE isn't alone in its success. Other GPP partners active in education, such as MCMDO and ESD, have made major contributions towards making schools gender responsive by giving direct support to schools. They built latrines, established girls clubs, handed out sanitary pads, provided training, developed tutorials and gave advice and counselling. These interventions are supported by national policies and legislation, as well as the work of other NGOs.

Lessons learned: What next?

Lesson #1: We need to keep track to measure progress

One of the biggest lessons learned is that a more systematic approach for Monitoring & Evaluation has to be set up to evaluate which interventions are most (cost) effective. It's also important to include the feedback and perceptions of girls and young women (the beneficiaries of the interventions) in the process.

There are four main areas of concern:

1. There are no consistent criteria on what makes a school environment girl-friendly; this should be developed.
2. Girl Power partners do not collect (or report on) girls' enrolment, completion data or other relevant gender sensitivity data in the districts and schools where they work. This makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of interventions.
3. Neither FAWE nor the CTEs monitor the effects of the GRP training on graduated teachers. There is no pre- or post training test, and when teachers graduate, their contact details are not registered by FAWE or the CTEs.
4. CTEs assume that sexual harassment has reduced as a result of the intervention but as no specific data is collected, these assumptions are hard to substantiate.

These factors make it almost impossible to determine if actions and policies are successfully implemented and hamper the creation of a safe, girl-friendly school environment. In the future, a way of working must be set up in which structures are developed for measurement, data collection, monitoring, reflection and improvement loops. This is the only way to measure progress in the situation of girls and young women.

Lesson #2: Creating sustainable training structures is essential

Another lesson learned is that sustainable training structures have to be set up to implement GRP education measures at other CTEs across Ethiopia. It's unrealistic to expect that the MoE's endorsement of the GRP and initial interventions at 6 CTEs by FAWE will lead to the cascading of the training outcomes to each teacher-student in every college without any further interventions. The following factors prevent this happening:

1. The continuation of training programmes depends on the goodwill of instructors and support from management
2. The CTE may not have (allocated) budget for real implementation
3. GRP is mentioned in policies but not yet enforced by the MoE.

Besides these points, the training only consisted of one training day of awareness creation. This is clearly not enough to inspire a fundamental change in knowledge and practices. Nevertheless, the establishment of the training programme should be considered as a promising start and a first step in stimulating change.

Lesson #3: Commitment is needed from all stakeholders

Aside from a sustainable training structure, creating a gender responsive school environment is a process that requires the action and commitment of all stakeholders (other teachers, parents and students) led by the school management. One trained teacher in isolation cannot inspire an entire institution to become gender responsive. On top of that, as the effort to establish a gender responsive pedagogy will require the introduction of different approaches, practices and systems, it must be supported by an equally gender responsive school management system. FAWE agrees: "FAWE Ethiopia would like to share that the formal integration of GRP into the curriculum is a long process involving policy makers who are often busy and bureaucratic; so we recommend to work directly with schools to integrate GRP in their programs and practices."

Lesson #4: Tools must be shared and promoted

In light of the GRP model's potential, it has become clear that stakeholders must involve each other more intensively in projects, communicate better and exchange knowledge and tools. Despite the fact that FAWE and the MoE have successfully developed the GRP model and integrated it into national policy and strategy, other GPP education partners are yet to implement these documents. Research outcomes indicate that little promotion of the GRP model has taken place in- and outside the

GPP. FAWE didn't organise a GRP workshop for GPP partners until 2015. All this is not enough to build on the GRP approach's earlier successes.

Concluding: Systematic implementation can bring real change

Interventions by the GPP have been principally successful at institutional level: the MoE has acknowledged and adopted the GRP model as a standard for national education policies and strategies. To achieve this, the GPP has successfully made use of a positive political climate and existing strong institutional network structures, and provided constructive support to the government in building girl-friendly school environments across Ethiopia. Successful changes have also been realised at CTE level: several policies have been developed and implemented, in particular relating to sexual harassment. Training has been provided to large numbers of newly graduated teachers. However, the effect of these efforts remains to be seen, as no monitoring or tracking system is in place to trace the actual use of these knowledge and skills in classrooms.

No demonstrable changes in the lives of girls and young women have been reported at individual level. Most girls interviewed have not yet experienced a positive change in their learning environments. However, this does not necessarily mean that changes did not happen. In order to really determine the effects for individual girls and young women, it is critical that their experiences, feedback and perceptions of life at school are taken into account at every step of the process. More consistent monitoring of the school environment, graduated teachers and (groups of) individual children is essential to realize this.

Levelling the playing field for Ethiopian girls: making schools gender sensitive



Ethiopia

IMPORTANT EVENTS

2014

The MoE updated and contextualised the GRP handbook developed by FAWE (international)

2014

The MoE develops a code of conduct on anti-sexual harassment

The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs has established a national platform, the National Alliance to End Child Marriage

A COMPLEX PROCESS TO IMPROVE GENDER EQUALITY

GPP CONTRIBUTIONS

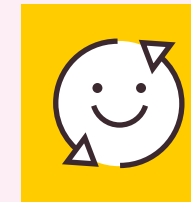
1 By successful lobbying, FAWE put gender responsiveness and the GRP method on the agenda of the MoE

2 6 CTEs trained on the GRP handbook by FAWE

3 600 teacher students at The Hawassa CTE trained on GRP

4 300 teacher-students at The Gondar CTE trained on GRP

5 Built latrines, set up girl clubs, handed out sanitary pads, developed tutorials, gave training, advice and counselling



CHANGES

The implementation of the GRP-handbook by the MoE led to more girl-friendly schools at national level

The Gender Plan of Action is implemented by the CTEs, including the use of the GRP-handbook

The next generation of teachers at the CTEs is trained with the GRP-handbook

More children are completing school, the gap between boys and girls is reducing and schools are becoming more girl-friendly



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1 A systematic approach for monitoring & evaluation is a must; it evaluates which interventions are most (cost) effective and generate impact.
- 2 Sustainable train-the-trainer like structures must be created to ensure implementation of GRP education at other CTEs across Ethiopia
- 3 Sharing and anchoring knowledge and tool on how to successfully implement the GRP methodology is necessary to scale up
- 4 Creating gender-responsive schools requires action by – and commitment of – the school management, teachers, parents and students

A GIRL-FRIENDLY SCHOOL:

- RECOGNIZES THE DIFFERENCE IN BOYS' AND GIRLS' LEARNING
- ADJUSTS LESSON PLANNING
- MAKES GIRL-FRIENDLY CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENTS
- MINDS LANGUAGE AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION
- TAKES INTO ACCOUNT SEXUAL MATURATION

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LEGENDA

GRP: Gender Responsive Pedagogy
 FAWE: Forum for African Women Educationalists, a GPP partner
 CTE: College for Teacher Education
 MoE: Ministry of Education

Case III. Giving the girls of Ghana the means to call for help



All over Ghana, children are exposed to the dangers of verbal, physical and sexual assault. Many are at risk from being separated from their parents due to forced marriages or trafficking. Or can't go to school because they are forced to work, often under dreadful conditions. Abuse, violence and neglect affect girls more than boys.

A culture of silence exists within most families. This prevents family members from talking about – or acting against – violence and abuse towards children. This is especially true for girls and young women. As a result, children are hesitant to speak up about their [traumatic] experiences. Furthermore, children in Ghana are expected to play a submissive role, even though they often take on adult responsibilities. This makes them vulnerable to harmful practices and exploitation by adults. Therefore, incidents of violations and abuse are left undealt with and, ultimately, have a long-lasting negative impact on the future of these victims.

Children do sometimes turn to churches, mosques, doctors, teachers and community leaders to seek help. But there is still a severe lack of specialised services that can deal with mental, physical and sexual violence in a professional manner. As a result, topics such as child protection and gender equality have been high on the policy agenda of the government of Ghana and other development actors.

This led to the adoption of a Gender Responsive Budgeting framework in 2007. At the same time, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police were assigned to work together on decreasing gender-based violence. Another major breakthrough was made at the end of 2014 when the joint efforts of several international partners, national child protection organisations and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection resulted in the adoption of the National Child and Family Welfare Policy: an important step in fighting child abuse.

Unfortunately governmental agencies still have little or no funds available for activities to follow up on these policies and substantially improve and secure child protection. Furthermore, lack of coordination by the government and weak leadership in opposing child protection risks has curtailed real improvements for young boys and girls. In short: many children in much of Ghana can't be sufficiently protected. This case assesses a Girl Power Programme (GPP) initiated by partners AMPCAN, CHI and CRRECENT in Akuapem North, a municipal district in the Eastern region of Ghana. Between 2011 and 2015, these partners undertook different actions to align and strengthen collaborations between the important child protection actors in order to contribute to a more formalised and coherent child protection system. One of its key achievements was the launch of a Child Helpline. Since October 2014, more than 650 children in Akuapem North depended on the toll-free telephone Helpline to report abuse, ask for advice or seek help. Incidents reported through the

Helpline are directly linked to, and followed up by, government institutions such as the police. In a culture of silence and taboos, the GPP believes the Helpline to be a powerful tool in giving Ghanaian children the opportunity to speak out, call for help, and ultimately have better access to protection services.

This case study focuses on how the establishment of the Child Helpline has empowered girls and young women to protect themselves – and how it has improved their access to protection services.

Most important stakeholders

GPP Partners	Institutional Stakeholders	Community Stakeholders	Individual Stakeholders
AMPCAN CRRECENT	National government (Dep. of Social Welfare, Children, Women) Akuapem North Municipal Assembly, Municipal Child Protection Committee, Police / DOVVSU, Court of Justice	Parents and family members, Teachers, Chiefs, Religious bodies (churches, mosques)	Girls – Young Women, Boys – Young Men

The Child Helpline. A catalyst for greater protection of girls and young women

The ability to call the Child Helpline for support has increased the sense of security for girls and young women in Akuapem North. Training and awareness-raising activities by the GPP partners has changed the perception of violence against girls and women for many community members. More and more, it is seen as unacceptable behaviour that must be stopped. In combination with the improved collaboration between governmental organisations and institutions, these might be the first steps towards a more coherent child protection system in Ghana.

A potential foundation for an operational child protection system

The launch of the Helpline was the result of an intensive process of collaboration between all relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, as well as private sector stakeholders such as telecommunication providers. These intensive processes helped the referral network of local NGOs, CBOs and government institutions, such as the police and health organisations to effectively align their roles and responsibilities. This resulted in the introduction of new gender legislation; an additional resource investment by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection for a toll-free Child Helpline; and funding to fight the challenges faced by child protection service providers.

A Helpline to reach out for help and access child protection services

In October 2014, the Ghana Child Helpline was launched with the goal to promote and strengthen child protection services. It gives children, especially girls who are more vulnerable to abuse, the opportunity to speak out and voice their concerns – hopefully resulting in an end to the culture of silence. Moreover, the Helpline provides them with access to available child protection services that previously wouldn't have been known to them. As the Helpline is still being actively promoted, the number of calls is also growing. New partners are also interested in extending the Helpline to their areas of operation, making its potential even greater.

Community members begin to reject violence towards girls and young women

As part of the GPP activities, awareness was raised amongst girls, young women and other community members about what constitutes violence, abuse and neglect. This has helped them to gain a better understanding of the responsibilities of community members in the protection of both girls and boys. Part of the awareness creation was to increase the knowledge, skills and capabilities of communities in caring for their children and keeping them safe. This enabled an effective launch of the Helpline. By the time the Helpline became operational, community members knew how to report cases of abuse and felt confident in doing so.

The existence of the Helpline, the on-going awareness raising, and access to more child protection services has equipped the community with the means for action. In all 50 communities in the Akuapem North district, communities expressed that they now have a better appreciation and understanding of girls' and women's rights and reject violence – in any form – against them. These changes have also been observed in school environments. Increasingly, more teachers are reporting abuse against their students. Unfortunately, violence against girls in school environments still remains a major issue in itself. A GPP attempt to set up an anonymous report & support system in schools using a Secret Box was unsuccessful.

More girls and young women speak out and empower themselves

Many girls and young women interviewed in Akuapem North explained that the Helpline had a big influence on their lives. To know that the toll-free line exists and is available 24 hours a day makes them feel empowered to defend their rights. One girl interviewed said: "If something happens to me, I will pick up the phone and report it immediately." Thanks to intensive training and promotion, more girls and young women are aware about issues such as gender, gender-based violence, rape, child rights and parental responsibilities. However, victims are often still afraid to report cases of sexual violence because of the traditional norms and beliefs that are still prevalent in their community. They fear what might happen if they officially report the abuse.

Introducing an unified report & support system for child abuse and violations

With the introduction of the Child Helpline, the GPP and its partners established a significantly large contribution to the improvement of child protection levels in Akuapem North. This intervention could be regarded as a satisfactory attempt to formalise reporting and response mechanisms in an [generally] informal community structure that is typical of the municipality. Now, incidents re-

ported through the Helpline are directly linked to – and followed-up by – government institutions, such as the police. And their responses are properly documented. In combination with the training and education of girls, boys and numerous community members, the GPP has contributed in strengthening a child protection system in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Contribution #1: Successfully launching the Helpline in a difficult institutional climate

Together, the GPP partners AMPCAN, CHI and CRRE-CENT have succeeded in getting the Helpline fully operational. Although they mostly provided funding and technical support, they also played a key role in mediating between important governmental institutions, NGOs and telecommunication providers. Lobbying these stakeholders and assigning the Municipal Child Protection Committee as coordinator are considered key success factors of the successful launch of the Helpline. However, the process did not run smoothly. The slow response and low commitment of government institutions, their limited availability of resources – and ensuing lack of transparency on who was responsible for funding – delayed the launch of the Helpline enormously. Eventually, concerted lobbying efforts towards telecommunication companies and the National Communications Authority resulted in the establishment of a toll-free number for the Helpline. Although, it was not the short and easy-to-remember number hoped for: 02 68116611.

Overall, in a difficult institutional climate with competing interests and a lack of financial resources, the well-functioning Child Helpline can be seen, one year on, as a major accomplishment by the GPP.

Contribution #2: Training girls to make them aware of their rights and opportunities

Through several trainings, workshops and mentor programmes, the GPP partners educated and coached girls and boys on gender issues and child or gender-related violence. Participants also learnt about the responsibilities of their parents and other community members in preventing and rejecting these violations. The trainings were given in boys' and girls' clubs, annual [sport] camps or engagement programmes, amongst others. The GPP also supported girls in increasing their knowledge of what they can do to prevent violence, neglect or abuse from happening – and where to seek assistance if they find themselves confronted with it.

Contribution #3: Training parents, teachers and community members on child rights

Simultaneously, the GPP put a major effort into educating parents, teachers and other community members on how they should care for their children and protect them. In these trainings, the GPP emphasised all the negative effects of abuse and violation incidents on children; what the legal repercussions were; and what to do as an adult when confronted with such incidents. These trainings, in combination with the existence of the Helpline,

made people in the community aware of all the alternatives for action.

All in all, with these training efforts, the GPP partners contributed to a decrease in violence, neglect, and abuse of girls and young women. According to the girls interviewed, the GPP made the biggest difference to physical violence, followed by economic violence. Incidents of emotional violence changed the least, and sexual violence seems to have remained a taboo issue: “This is not happening here.”

Lessons learned: ways to professionalise and scale-up

Lesson #1: Collaborate and build on existing infrastructure gets things done quickly

In establishing the Helpline, the GPP partners AMP-CAN and CRRECENT worked smartly together with the Municipal Child Protection Committee and community-based child protection teams. This level of collaboration ensured that the wheel was not ‘reinvented’ and that interventions were built on the foundations of what had been achieved in the past. It enabled the GPP to quickly establish their strategy and reach out to communities – without much hassle.

Lesson #2: Adequate logistic support for call handling is crucial

In order for the Child Helpline to function properly and have the ability to respond quickly to calls and offer help, there should be an adequate logistic support system in place. A number of times, members of the Municipal Child Protection Committee were not even able to visit the victims, as they didn't have access to means of transportation.

Adequate logistics also entails the set-up around the handling, coordination and follow-up of the incoming calls: some calls made to the Helpline did not receive the necessary attention by child protection institutions because of bad coordination and communication. As a result, the AMPCAM received incoming calls but didn't immediately report them to the Municipal Child Protection Committees. Or sometimes when they did, they did not provide any details, promising to do so later. Naturally, this affects the ability of the Municipal Child Committees to offer the right support in time. Such situations can potentially lead to a loss of interest or trust in the modus operandi of the Helpline and its services.

Lesson #3: Network connectivity: a priority

When there is no or limited network connectivity, it is hard to fully operate the Child Helpline. Thus, possibilities to improve network connectivity in rural areas of Ghana should be explored by the local government and telecommunication companies. Furthermore, high

schools sometimes ban the use of mobile phones during class or inside schools. This makes it difficult for girls, boys, teachers and other school representatives to access the service.

Lesson #4: The Child Helpline should run as an independent facility

In order to maintain the service of the Helpline in a sustainable way, it must run as an independent facility. For now, the facility is run by AMPCAM. Once funding stops, the continuation of the Helpline will be threatened. It is therefore better if the government hires professionals to take on this role and run it as an independent facility.

Concluding: A big leap in child protection that the rest of Ghana can profit from

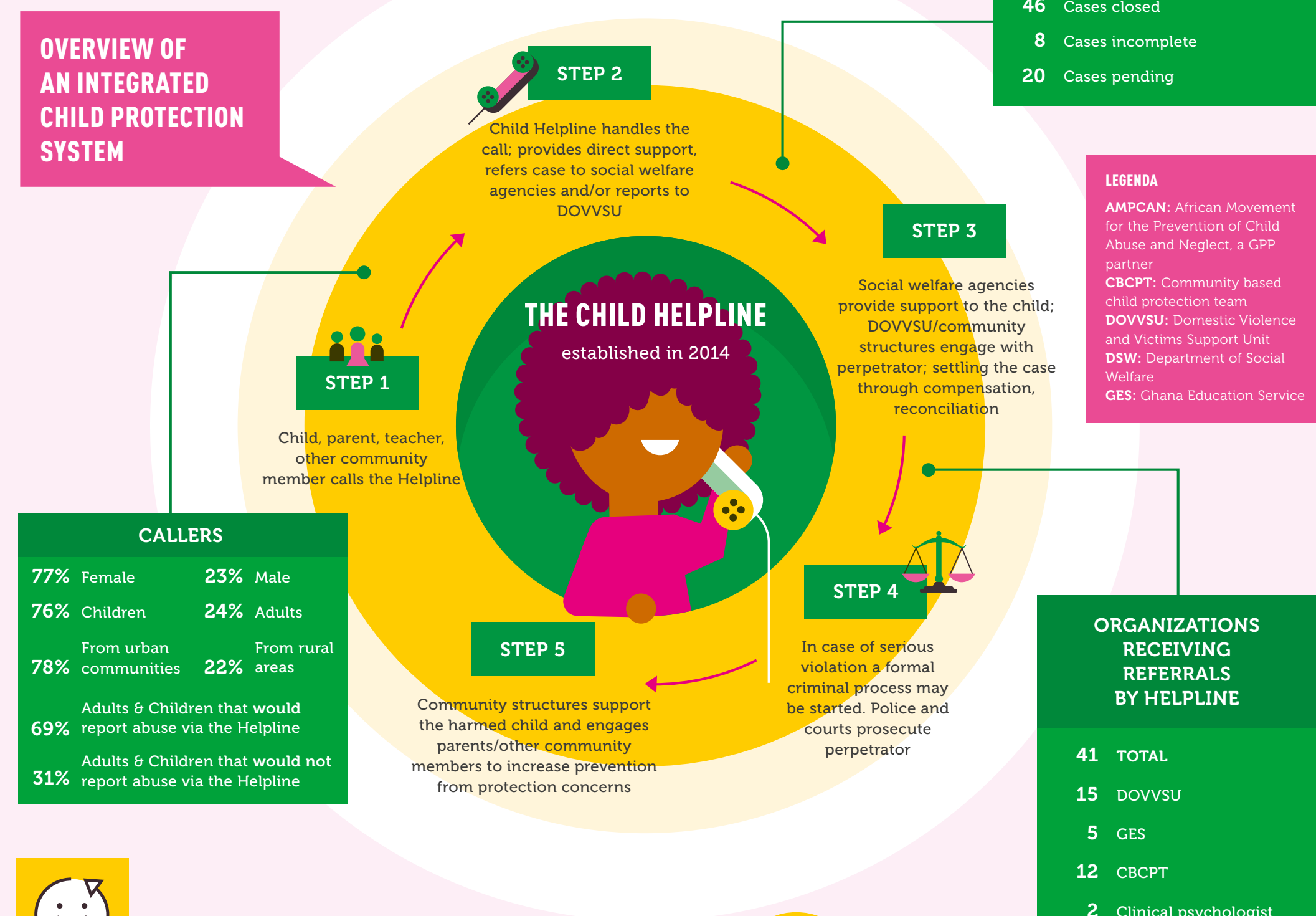
The Child Helpline, running as a pilot project in Akwapem North, gave girls and young women the chance to speak out and report instances of abuse and/or violation. This can truly be seen as an important step in working towards a broader child protection system across all of Ghana. Additional training and education created increased awareness amongst parents, teachers, and other community members on the importance of protecting their children from violence – in all forms. This supported them in avoiding, preventing or dealing with gender- or child-related violence. All these actions of the GPP partners, in collaboration with the government and telecommunication providers, resulted in a safer environment for both girls and young women.

Giving the Girls of Ghana the means to call for help



Ghana

OVERVIEW OF AN INTEGRATED CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM



CASES

642	Total calls between October 2014 and October 2015
540	Cases handled directly through caller contact
74	Cases considered serious and in need of follow up
46	Cases closed
8	Cases incomplete
20	Cases pending

LEGENDA

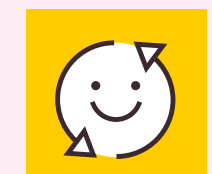
- AMPCAN: African Movement for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, a GPP partner
- CBCPT: Community based child protection team
- DOVVSU: Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit
- DSW: Department of Social Welfare
- GES: Ghana Education Service

CALLERS

77%	Female	23%	Male
76%	Children	24%	Adults
78%	From urban communities	22%	From rural areas
69%	Adults & Children that would report abuse via the Helpline		
31%	Adults & Children that would not report abuse via the Helpline		

ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING REFERRALS BY HELPLINE

41	TOTAL
15	DOVVSU
5	GES
12	CBCPT
2	Clinical psychologist
2	Court
5	DSW



CHANGES

- The establishment of The Child Helpline for children – especially girls and young women – to reach out for help, and access protection services previously unknown to them
- The Child Helpline is part of a nationwide effort between stakeholders to set up a well functioning Child Protection System
- As a result of education community members have started to reject violence towards girls and know how to take care of their children
- Thanks to the helpline, girls and young women feel protected when it comes to speaking out and asking for advice or help



LESSONS LEARNED

- The Helpline GPP partners smartly collaborated with local institutions to make sure that interventions were built on already existing fundaments
- To respond to calls properly, a support system must be set up to include transportation, call handling and coordination
- Local government and telecommunication companies must improve network connectivity in rural areas so every child can use the helpline
- In order to sustain the service of the Helpline, it should run as an independent facility

Case IV. Female trekking guides reach great heights in Nepali society



Communities in rural Nepal are generally organised in a very traditional and patriarchal way, and are characterised by rigid gender stereotypes.

Women are traditionally restricted to work in and around the house and most of their time is spent cooking, cleaning and looking after children. Any social, political and economic positions are considered jobs for men, as women are seen as being less capable of performing these roles successfully. However, the gender equality situation is better in Nepal's urban areas, where more and more women are able to find work in the public sector.

Three sisters on a mission to improve the lives of young Nepali women

Nepal's mountains are famous the world over. The country's trekking industry is almost as big as Mount Everest. However, sadly for Nepalese women, trekking is a business dominated by men and gender discrimination is rife. Women, especially young women, are not considered capable of working as trekkers because they are perceived as being physically weak, feeble and vulnerable. The Chettri sisters wanted to bust these unfair and out-dated myths. These three women saw 'the trekking guide' as a viable profession for young women and an

exciting (and important) way for themselves and other women to get out of their houses and show their worth and potential to the people around them. Typical tasks that a guide carries out during a trek are ensuring the safety and wellbeing of trekkers, providing information about route options, weather conditions and local nature, people and culture. They also cook and sometimes work as porters, carrying trekkers' loads and equipment. All in all, female trekking guides take good care of every visitor during a trek.

In the mid 1990s, the Chettri sisters set up a course of training programmes: 'The female trekking guide and porter services for lady trekkers'. Their first training course was completed in 1996 with 10 participants. Things moved quickly after that. In 1998, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking was officially registered as the first trekking company for young women. In 1999 Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN) was founded to continue the training program with the wider goal of improving the position of young Nepali women. Since then, 3 Sisters and EWN have been working closely together to empower women in the trekking industry and enable them to be independent, confident and self-sufficient. Nowadays, the training courses are so popular that they take place twice a year and are highly in demand by many young women, all of who qualify as trekking guides afterwards. As well as trekking, the EWN also offers other courses in English conversation, computer skills, photography, peer leader training, first aid training, and reproductive & sexual health.

Supporting young Nepali women as aspiring trekking guides

In the last five years, the GPP's primary goals were: to strengthen the organisational structures of the EWN; enhance the economic position of female trekking guides; lower the protection risks they faced by breaking through gender stereotypes; and end the male domination in the trekking industry. On a practical level, this meant creating a larger female workforce in the trekking and mountain climbing industry in Nepal. On a deeper level, the goal was to positively change general social perceptions towards women and raise awareness that women are just as capable, physically and mentally, as men to perform as professional trekking guides. In short, to improve gender equality in rural Nepal.

This case study focuses on how empowering young Nepali women to become trekking guides has improved their individual living standards and position in society. Next to these aspects, the study concentrates on how the GPP's support has helped EWN to establish itself in different communal areas and operate as a successful independent organisation in the trekking industry.

Most important stakeholders

GPP Partner	Trekking Companies	Institutional Stakeholders	Community Stakeholders	Individual Stakeholders
EWN	The 3 Sisters, Other trekking companies	National government, Municipality of Pokhara (Annapurna Mountain)	Husbands, Family members, Other community members, Fellow (male/female) trekking guides	Female trekking guides, Girls - young women

A black day for Nepal...

The devastating earthquake that hit Nepal on April 25, 2015 and its aftershock on May 12 had a major impact on the Nepali society and mountain regions in particular. The trekking industry was severely impacted: the April 25 avalanche on Mount Everest resulted in the deadliest day on the mountain in history. Consequently, Mount Everest has been closed for almost six months. A few months after this tragedy, the trekking sector started to get back to its feet. The EWN reports to have recovered to 75% of its operational capacity at the current height of the tourism season.

Young Nepali women are making a decent living as trekking guides

As a result of EWN's persistent work in overcoming stereotypes and barriers, with the support of the GPP, the lives of many young women in the Annapurna Mountain region have improved. The economic position of female trekking guides in this region has increased considerably as trekking is a relatively profitable business. Thanks to EWN's trekking guide training, young women are no longer a vulnerable group and have started to earn a decent living. They can now support their own education, as well as the education of their children and even their siblings. These positive developments have in turn contributed to increased respect from their families and communities.

Business moves faster than government

No real change or activity in terms of policy or legal change have been initiated by the Nepalese government – nor is any expected for the future. Official institutions like the Department of Tourism, the National Academy of Tourism (NATHM) and the Trekking Agencies Association Nepal (TAAN) have yet to take a visible role in promoting female participation in the trekking industry. However, they have supported activities to ensure female safety, security and respect. This positive attitude should be considered an important institutional shift towards female empowerment in a male-dominated industry and society. In stark contrast, businesses have taken a markedly more positive approach to female trekkers. Trekking company owners and professionals who had previous-

ly ruled out employing women, are now more open to making their businesses more female-friendly and encouraging women to follow trekking courses. Six trekking and tour company owners who were interviewed confirmed this.

Khadka's full support for female trekking guides

Khadka, a renowned male trekking guide with 22 years of experience, states that the Chettri sisters have inspired him. He had always felt that Nepalese women weren't respected by the trekking industry but thinks that this barrier has been broken by the efforts of EWN. Khadka has owned a trekking company since 2012 and promotes female trekking guides whenever possible. However, he is concerned that guaranteeing their safety during trekking remains a challenge. He does not send girls out with male trekkers and always sends female trekkers out in groups with trusted male trekkers. He is also committed to taking legal action if sexual harassment and abuse of any female trekkers is reported. Khadka's explicit willingness to do so signals a change in the mind-set within the trekking business.

Winning respect at home

Situations at family level have changed for the better as well. Men and other family members used to be hesitant and scared to let their women or daughters go out and work - now they increasingly see the advantages and how it benefits their families. Female guides reported that they did not let their family members know about their trekking guide activities, as they were afraid

of negative consequences. However, as they gain in confidence through the training and begin to earn money, they start telling their relatives about their newfound profession. After initial hesitations within their families, the majority of female guides report a positive change in attitudes. Husbands appreciate their wives providing an important financial contribution to the household income and being able to provide more support and care to their children including food, clothing, and guidance. These practical considerations played a key role in drastically changing the attitudes of their husbands and in-laws, who now give more respect to these newly confident female workers.

"After I started working as a guide, my relationship with my husband improved. Initially he thought that I was doing a bad job, but later he realized that the common social perception was wrong. There was nothing bad about this work as long as we don't want to do a bad job. Now he helps me with household chores and makes the children ready for school. My mother in-law is also very proud of me. She thinks that I have so much knowledge about everything and whenever she needs to go out she wants me to accompany her. She says 'I only go with Laxmi!'"

- Laxmi, a female trekking guide who joined the programme -

Prior to the foundation of EWN, the trekking sector was considered too dangerous for women. Not only just because of all the hardships women (and men) have to endure on the mountains, but also due to fear of sexual abuse and male aggression. These concerns were aggravated by the general cultural perception that women are more suitable for household tasks and caring for families. These attitudes changed as soon as more women started following the training courses and it became clear that women could be just as trekking guides as men. This change in attitude can largely be credited to the achievements of the female trekking guides. They have shown themselves (and men) that they are physically capable of completing the trekking and moreover, they were not injured, attacked or abused by anybody en route. Another major factor contributing to this change in attitude is the positive reporting about female trekking guides in the media. Since this positive shift, they can be open about their profession with their friends, families and other community members. Having seen the success of female trekkers, some family members have even started sending their girls to EWN training.

Proud, confident young women with brighter futures

Finally, one of the biggest changes brought about by the Female Trekking Guides training is that young women, who would otherwise have been confined to household work, are now qualified mountaineering adventur-

ers. Most of these women feel confident and are very proud that they followed and completed the training. Several women interviewed said they are physically and mentally more in balance as a result. Furthermore, they feel more secure in expressing themselves and their improved English conversation skills have stirred their ambitions. They dream big and want to explore other economic opportunities. Some of these girls' dreams have already become reality as they founded their own trekking company after working for four years at EWN. Others have gone abroad or started working for NGOs or other organisations in the non-profit sector. However, many women indicated that they are still in need of an improved social and state system within Nepal to provide proper support and services for women of all ages.

"The Basic Female Trekking Guide Training changed my life. Before I did it, I didn't appreciate or enjoy my life. Because our society places so many restrictions on women, I often wished I had been born a man instead of a woman. I had no self-confidence and didn't think I could achieve anything. Over the last three years, my views on my life and women's roles in Nepal have gradually changed. Today, I am a proud and confident woman. I know that women can do anything if we have the opportunity and support. Now I work and earn a living as a permanent guide during the peak trekking season and as an office assistant off-season."

– Young trekking guide Dawa Sherpa –

Strengthening EWN in its mission to improve the lives of Nepali women

One of GPP's achievements is their organisational support to EWN, which has made the Nepali trekking guide sector more female-friendly and gives young women an opportunity to break through the gender stereotypes that dominated their communities. Whilst doing so, the GPP helped to change the negative social perspective on women and made it more acceptable for women to work as trekking guides.

Contribution #1: Providing scholarships and better conditions for female trekking guides

As the training programme grew in popularity, EWN started to face structural challenges in running the courses effectively on management, financial and technical levels. Women Win, through the GPP, was the first organisation to substantially support EWN. Since the two organisations started working together in 2011, EWN has been able to unconditionally offer 'Female Trekking Guides' training to young women with a full scholarship programme available: a huge step forward in EWN's ability to empower more women. Thanks to GPP support, a total of 320 girls received training, of which 316 completed the apprenticeships and are currently working as guides. On top of that, Women Win developed the GOAL Coach training, a sports programme that is used as a tool for empowering girls and young women. The GOAL Curriculum for Boys, on the other hand, was used to motivate boys to be sensitive

towards girl's issues. Many of these women have successfully started their own businesses like trekking companies, restaurants and tourist shops. Furthermore, as many female trekking guides complained about the lack of safety measures and female-friendly circumstances in accommodation on the mountains, the GPP has helped to establish improved conditions and services in hotels.

Contribution #2: Strengthening EWN's capacity sustainably

By providing (financial) support to EWN, GPP and Women Win helped to bring their work to a larger scale. To ensure this change becomes sustainable, they have also helped strengthening the EWN's organisational capacities in several key areas:

- Providing increased institutional capacity. This has resulted in improvements in: accounting, HR and Admin Policy, Code of Conduct and proper recording of documents using a web-based monitoring and reporting tool.
- Extra networking capacity with other organisations, e.g. GPP partners and local women's rights organisations.
- Building EWN's capacity on the web-based M&E method, i.e. extra sales force, and developing EWN's employee handbook and child protection policy.
- Increased contact with international networks, thanks to participation in international forums and campaigns, like Men Engage Alliance and One Billion Rising campaign.

Contribution #3: Helping in breaking down gender stereotypes

EWN's initial goal was to carve a place for female guides in the trekking industry. Twenty years of hard work later, EWN has challenged male domination in the trekking guide profession in the Annapurna Mountain region. Men still outnumber women in the business, but now women's right to become guides is respected and recognised. By helping EWN to expand their activities and workforce, the GPP played an important part in breaking down ruling gender stereotypes and achieving a more equal gender balance in the trekking industry. However, it should not be forgotten that this region is the exception to the rule and much work remains to be done in the rest of the country.

Lessons learned: How to further expand a proven concept

Lesson #1: Linking non-profit to profit works!

The EWN's innovative commercial approach to training female trekking guides is an inspirational example for others to follow. What makes its approach innovative – and successful – is that it provides participants with an opportunity to learn and get experience in a business environment during and after their training in the form of an internship or work placement at the 3 Sisters. These valuable experiences are an essential follow-up to

the Female Trekking Guide training offered by EWN and provide female trekking guides with skills that they can use in the trekking business and the wider world.

Lesson #2: Lobbying the business sector pays off

The 3 Sisters and EWN have enjoyed significant success in actively lobbying the business sector. Talking as one entrepreneur to another, the sisters successfully lobbied businesses for a better environment for female trekkers in terms of safety, protection and the increased availability of facilities for women. In this way, 3 Sisters and EWN built up a network of businesses supportive to female participation, and stimulated other businesses to recognise that they need to become women-friendly too.

Lesson #3: Include strategic lobbying of other key actors

Governmental actors should be lobbied simultaneously in order to sustain success in female empowerment and upgrading of trekking facilities. The Department of Tourism and TAAN could be important allies in upscaling, promoting and professionalising the Female Trekking Guides training in Nepal. To get these parties onside, relationships should be carefully and enthusiastically developed and maintained. The GPP could have assumed a bigger role in this lobbying process, as it already has an established network of NGO partners in place. The media is another important stakeholder to cultivate for

increased public sensitization. Both local and national media should be mobilised to promote gender sensitivity across Nepal and share success stories about female trekkers to educate men and inspire other women.

Lesson #4: A strict code of conduct protects female trekking guides

The 3 Sisters developed a code of conduct to ensure the protection and safety of female trekking guides. The code prescribes that female guides and porters cannot guide groups of men, only groups of other women and their families. Thanks to these strict rules the risks and incidents of sexual abuse by clients or other men have decreased. This has led to the 3 Sisters being widely respected as an organisation that cares deeply about women's protection.

Lesson #5: Make sure the door is always open

A valuable aspect of EWN and 3 Sisters' way of working is that they give unconditional help and assistance to girls and young women whenever it is needed. Girls and young women are always welcome to share their problems and emotions with EWN and 3 Sisters in a safe, supportive environment. This openness raises the motivation and professionalism of girls in the training schemes and trekking industry as they feel completely supported at all times. This is important, as their position in the trekking industry remains vulnerable.

Lesson #6: Chances for further expansion lie ahead

Despite of its success, a missed opportunity of the GPP's collaboration with EWN was that their achievements were not extended to the expansion of more programmes – e.g. helping to start and sustain women's cooperatives or improving capacity and services on female protection. Some female trekking guides were interested in establishing and operating a cooperative but somehow never received a follow up. Neither the GPP nor EWN supported such collaborations. If the GPP had engaged the support and expertise of partners like Plan Nepal and CWIN, it could have made a big impact on up-scaling EWN's programme.

Concluding: The key to success? Collaborating with multiple partners

By successfully integrating the Female Trekking Guide training into the trekking industry, EWN and the 3 Sisters, with the support of the GPP, have made a real difference to the position of women in the rural areas of Nepal. Thanks to their bravery and persistence, most parts of society now accept - and support - female trekking guides. This has led to an increase in empowered and confident women who make a decent living for themselves and their families. Thanks to the pioneering work of EWN and the three Chettri sisters, young women in the Annapurna Mountain region of Nepal now have a chance of a brighter future in which their professional peers and communities treat them with respect. This is a remarkable achievement in an otherwise traditional society.

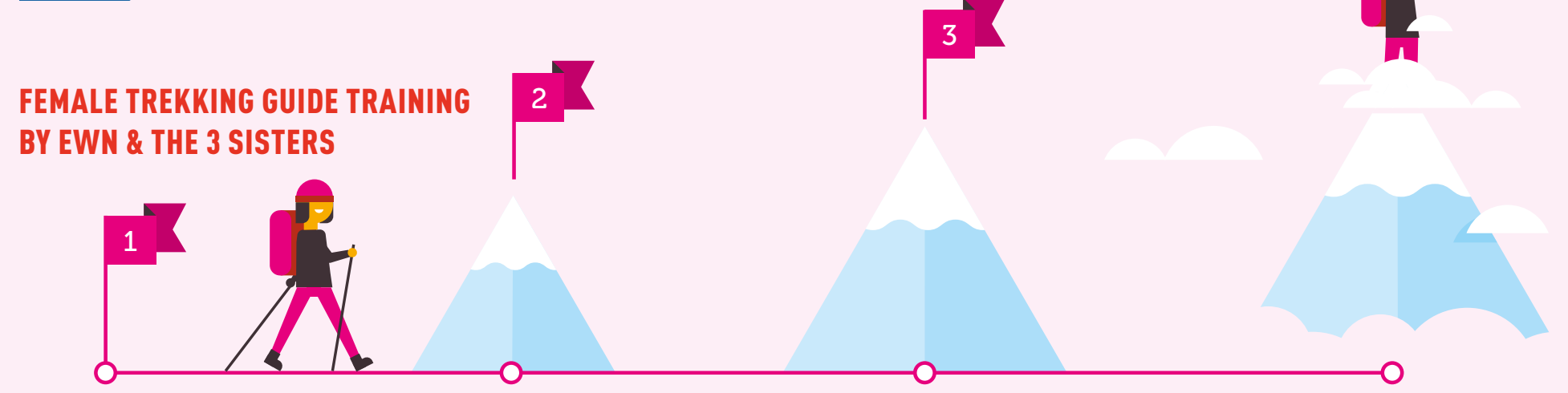
However, to make sure that more Nepali women can enjoy this opportunity and gender equality is further promoted, future work should enable EWN and 3 Sisters to increase their collaboration with different sector partners and governmental institutions. For instance, female entrepreneurs in tourism and trekking sectors, together with TAAN – the federation of trekking businesses – could join forces to lobby for more gender sensitive services and facilities in the trekking sector.

Female trekking guides reach great heights in Nepali society

LEGENDA
 EWN: Empowering Women of Nepal, a GPP partner
 The 3 Sisters: a trekking company



FEMALE TREKKING GUIDE TRAINING BY EWN & THE 3 SISTERS



Preparation of the Female Trekking Guide Training

- Announcement of the training
- Selection of trainees
- Logistical arrangements

1st Round (1 month)

- Female Trekking Guide Training
- 1 trek a day – six days a week
- Exam to become assistant trekking guide
- Next 5 months: on paid trekking destination

2nd Round (1 month)

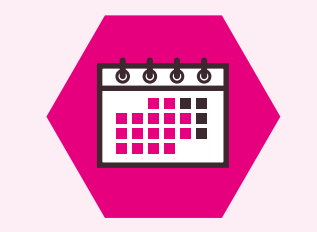
- Female Trekking Training: more interactive and pragmatic
- Trained in English, first aid etc
- Exam to become female trekking guide

Female trekking guides at work

- Working for EWN / 3 Sisters
- Starting their own business

2000 women licensed female trekking guides

- 4** Dropped out
- 540** are working as guides
- 10** started their own businesses
- 20** female trekking guides work at 3 Sisters



IMPORTANT EVENTS

1999
 Foundation of The 3 Sisters Company & EWN as first female trekking guide organisation



CHANGES

- The Female Trekking Guide training enabled women to earn a decent living for themselves, which makes them feel confident and proud
- Men and other community members see how their women, as trekking guides, (financially) contribute to their families
- Trekking companies see business opportunities and actively encourage women to follow trekking courses and work for them
- The Nepali government supports activities to ensure female safety, security and respect during trekking



LESSONS LEARNED

- 1** Give participants the opportunity to gain work experience via internships or work placements, to make them ready for the trekking business
- 2** Show the business sector that a better and safer working environment for female trekking guides leads to a win-win situation.
- 3** In order to sustain trekking facilities, governmental actors should be lobbied to invest. For instance by using the media to share success stories about female trekkers
- 4** A strict code of conduct will decrease the risk of sexual abuse by clients or other men.
- 5** Unconditional help and assistance increases the motivation and professionalism of the girls and young women.
- 6** Had EWN worked more closely with partners like Plan Nepal and CWIN, current successes could have been scaled up nationally

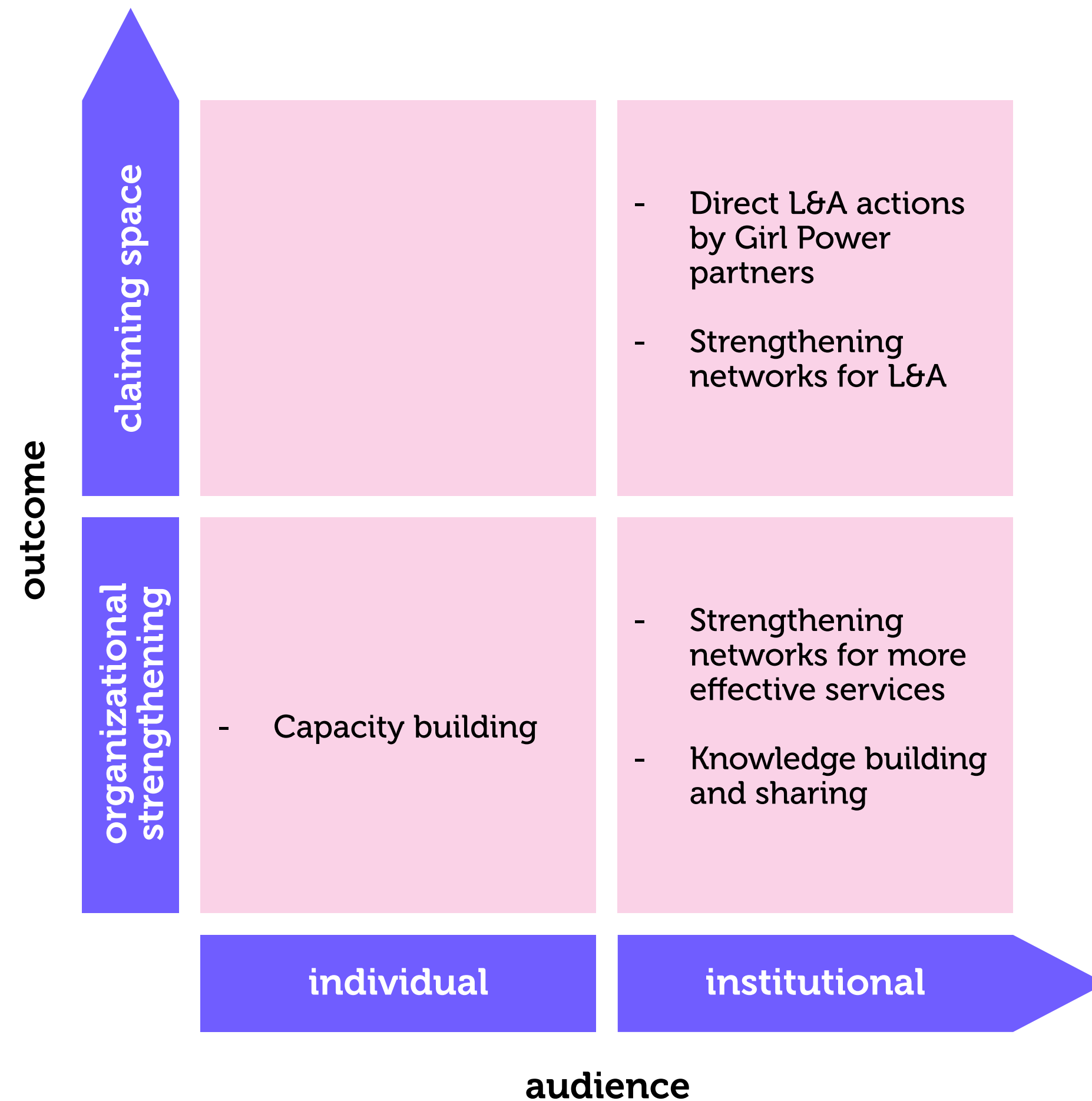
Case V. Strengthening networks for a stronger civil society for girls and young women to participate in



It turns out that two heads really are better than one: when Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) work together, they contribute more efficiently and effectively to the realisation of equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women. To strengthen these organisations and civil society as a whole, GPP partners implemented a variety of country-specific strategies. The purpose was to enlarge the space in which CSOs operate (claiming space), or improve how an organisation or network functions (organisational strengthening), with the shared goal of creating the right environment for girls and young woman to safely and actively take part in society.

Civil Society is the space outside of the state, the private sector and the family/household in which people organise themselves and act together to pursue their common interests. Civil Society is also used to describe the organisations and institutions that operate within that space, e.g. NGOs, CSOs, girls clubs and media organisations.

As part of the End-evaluation of the Girl Power Programme, an inventory was made of strategies used in four countries: Bolivia, Nepal, Ethiopia and Ghana. These strategies are plotted in the figure below.



This case study describes the GPP's work on strengthening networks in all four countries and the most important lessons captured from implementing these strategies.

Strengthening networks to support civil society

Over the last five years the GPP supported 478 networks of different sizes in the ten programme countries.

Networks are democratic, self-governing groups of organisations. Members retain their basic autonomy, as well as their own identity, mission, and governance. Networks can either be based on informal relationships or formal bodies that are legally registered and institutionalized.

In trying to develop these networks, the programme focused on one or more of the following objectives:

1. Strengthen CSO capacities the first step was raising awareness among network members on children and women's rights and gender equality; this was followed by capacity building initiatives like sharing information and exchanging experiences.
2. Improve coordination: addressing duplication in service delivery and maximizing use of resources.
3. Increase awareness and community mobilisation: educating and empowering girls, young women and communities to advocate for gender equality.

4. Improve service provision for girls, young women or children: improving the quality of services or expanding their scale.
5. Coordinated lobbying and advocacy: supporting and facilitating policy and practice change to third parties (e.g. government institutions and private sector companies) on issues related to challenges faced by girls and young women.

The following objectives were formulated for the four countries studied for the end-evaluation.

Main focus of analysed examples	Bolivia	Ethiopia	Ghana	Nepal
1. Strengthened CSO capacities			X	
2. Improved coordination		X		X
3. Increased awareness and mobilization	X			
4. Improved service provision	X	X	X	X
5. Coordinated lobbying and advocacy	X	X	X	X

There's no such thing as a typical network

The networks studied vary considerably in size and organisation. The first variant is the degree to which a network is financed and whether it is dependent on external financing. GPP partners mostly financed networks' activities like meetings, trainings etc. However members of individual networks did contribute to prioritised actions with their own funds.

The second distinction is membership. In Nepal and Bolivia some of the networks consisted of, and were managed by, girls and young women, while elsewhere networks were comprised of civil society members and governmental organisations. The third and final factor is the extent of centralisation and formal structures. With the exception of Bolivia, the networks analysed are relatively formal organisations with a shared mission statement, formal structure and standard decision-making procedures. The networks in Nepal are predominately district networks with representation in a central nationwide network organisation.

Insights from Nepal: “Networks of different shapes and sizes lead to stronger response”

The GPP and CWIN founded civil society networks in 13 Nepali districts. Each one had a different model, membership and focus: in GPP’s working districts, the networks are led and operated by young women and focus mainly on economic empowerment; In CWIN’s working districts, the networks focus on protection, developing a platform to collectively address cases of child protection and carrying out case-based lobbying and advocacy, a strategy that proved to be very effective. To achieve their goals the networks facilitated regular meetings for discussion, sharing challenges and achieving joint plans. Members were educated on the rights of children and women, as well as essential civil society skills like organisational management and advocacy tactics.

As most board members of the participating CSOs are young women, a large number of are involved in network meetings. These meetings give young women a valuable platform to voice their issues and become convincing change agents.

Significant results achieved:

- Members of the network became more aware of the issues faced by vulnerable girls and young women through training, discussing and sharing information. This was further strength-

ened through the involvement of professional women in the network including CSO workers, policewomen and attorneys.

- By working together with strong coordination mechanisms CSOs could allocate resources effectively without duplicating programs.
- Faster response to cases of violence. Using a dedicated helpline allowed CSOs to swiftly alert protection desks to individual cases. Furthermore, people using the helpline felt protected because it was part of a bigger network.

Lessons learned from Nepal:

- Working in networks gives member organisations a stronger voice and a broader outreach.
- CSOs that work together become more efficient and effective. A network offers possibilities for cross-organizational learning, better allocation of resources, and less duplication of work.
- Objectives should be specific and realistic. Small short-term gains keep people motivated on the way to reaching larger objectives.
- There needs to be a clear source of funding to facilitate a network’s activities. This can be an outside resource, such as funds provided by GPP, or membership contributions from within the network.

The role of the Girl Power Programme

The GPP offered support to networks in six different ways:

#1 Taking initiative

The GPP invited important actors in each country to discuss and promote network opportunities. In Nepal, CSC piloted this action in one district before rolling it out nationwide. In the other three countries one partner remained in the lead for the programme’s duration.

#2 Thinking sustainable

During network development, GPP partners had a strong coordinating and facilitating role in all activities. However, it needs to be considered what will happen when the GPP ends. Who will take over activities and coordination? Therefore each country is still working on sustainability plans for the networks to run on after 2015.

#3 Capacity building

A lot was invested in building the capacity of the network members. Activities ranged from awareness raising on rights of girls and young women to training in organisation development, financial management and fundraising. Our Ghana partner, DCI, reported that this was the main reason for the network’s success.

#4 Funding activities

Besides donating time and experience, GPP partners funded many network activities. With relatively small budgets they paid for meeting facilities, communication materials, travel costs and much more. With the exception of Bolivia, all network members contributed their own resources to activities undertaken by the network.

#5 Lending legitimacy

CSOs reported that being part of a network made them feel empowered. It helped in negotiations with governments and other stakeholders' in- and outside the network. For example, young girls in Bolivia said that it was impossible on an individual level to voice their opinions to government representatives. Being part of a network of young girls and a larger committee of CSOs granted them access to decision-making authorities. However, many girls and young women stated that they may be heard but are still not sufficiently listened to.

#6 Sharing knowledge and experience

It's vital to know how to work (successfully) with others. It helps grease wheels and set change in motion. GPP partners shared their invaluable knowledge on social processes and working within a network to facilitate the development of collaborations in all four countries.

Insights from Bolivia: "The youth is now heard in El Alto and beyond"

Agentes de Cambio (Agents for Change) is a network of teenagers from El Alto (a satellite city of the capital La Paz, with extremely poor neighbourhoods), working to claim their sexual and reproductive rights (SRR). GPP partner Gregoria Apaza helped form the network and trained youth leaders (Brigadistas) in El Alto. Through sports, theatre and arts Brigadistas learn about self-protection, self-determination, social mobilization, and leadership. After completing the training, they are encouraged to join the Agentes de Cambio network. Together they raise awareness amongst other young men and women of their rights and to train them to identify violations of these rights, specifically within their relationships. On an individual level, members are trained to effectively exchange knowledge between peers, while on local and national level; they work to realize change by influencing political processes. Through Agentes de Cambio teenagers have an opportunity to amplify their voice to be heard at governmental level. Slowly but surely their voices are now being heard by several authorities with a traditionally adult-centric mentality.

Gregoria Apaza supports Agentes de Cambio by providing the training program and promoting and co-organizing its activities. Teenagers are offered space in Gregoria Apaza's offices to meet to discuss and develop new initiatives.

Significant results achieved:

- Increased understanding of sexual rights and the right to a violence-free life: The Brigadistas learned to question the power relations in their environ-

ment and are empowered to achieve change through the network.

- Mobilisation of the community: Brigadistas taught their peers about violence-free relationships by putting on activities like a public play, "Living in me". Moreover, they organized and participated in at least nine demonstrations to promote gender equality.
- Demanding attention at institutional level: The Brigadistas have become protagonists of change and succeeded in getting local, departmental and national authorities to consider their demands regarding infringements of their rights. Their demands for fulfilling SRR and the right to a violence-free life have been included in the political agenda – e.g. the integration of violence and SRR issues in the Youth Law (#548).

Lessons learned from Bolivia:

- Networks of individuals can be built on the basis of a sustained training process. This helps ensure strong personal commitment and a shared goal.
- Giving young people a stronger voice can change adult-centric thinking. Operating in a network can offer young people this power.
- The prevailing (patriarchal) culture, as well as the level of education, will influence the extent to which your message is understood and how quickly it can lead to change. Therefore it is very important to raise awareness of rights issues amongst adults, including authorities. Setting up political forums or organising street demonstrations can do this.

How civil society can improve gender equality

The following list shows how networks can contribute to gender equality in civil society.

Increased capacity...

Capacity-building initiatives allow networks to target larger number of organisations. In all four countries, joint training sessions were organised and educational materials shared between network members, as well as experiences, tools and expertise. Awareness raising on women's rights and current inequalities was often the first step.

...and more efficiency...

Coordinating efforts within networks created more efficient ways of working. Joint program management enabled networks to reach scale with the same inputs by copying approaches or sharing tools. However, when individual roles weren't clear, duplication of coordination efforts caused delay and frustration. It's important to note that the strength of a network can also become a weakness if its not well organised.

...combined with increased civil society space...

Working together in a network creates more space for civil society, the possibility to realise goals and gain influence in the public domain. Cooperation between network members led to increased understanding and a stronger position for civil society, especially in countries where government institutions were involved. CSOs interviewed said that they felt more confident being part of a network and had never worked so closely with government institutions before. In Ethiopia this turned out to be a unique opportunity to establish trust between the two sides.

...has the potential to reach more impact on gender equality

As the challenges faced by girls and young women require contributions from different stakeholders, networks have been shown to have more impact than individual actors, especially as they could assure a larger reach with activities leading to scale.

Insights from Ethiopia: “Increasing space for civil society”

In 2012, a referral network was formed by the Children’s Legal Protection Centre (CLPC) to enhance collaboration between legal and psychosocial organizations. The network’s objective is to give every child in need of protective services access to legal aid and psychosocial support. It consists of 38 specialist governmental and non-governmental organizations including; police, women, youth and children affairs offices, public prosecutors, medical institutions and psychosocial service providers. A unique feature of the network is the fact that it is a collaboration of local and international partners that is overseen by the government. This is rare in Ethiopia, as collaborations between CSOs and the government is not easy.

To improve referrals, a transparent process and clear regulations were needed. This was supported in several ways: first, CLPC developed and distributed guidelines to network members who subsequently agreed to use them. This included a referral guide for children in the judicial system and justice administration guidelines. Second, the network organised quarterly meetings to share lessons and identify strengths and weaknesses. Finally, experience-sharing visits were organised for network members to learn from each other.

The referral network is coordinated by the CLPC and supported by GPA member African Child Policy Forum (ACPF). Its other partners African Network Prevention

and Protection of Children against Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) and Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE) also represent the GPP in the referral network.

Significant results achieved:

- Improved access to aid for children: legal aid was provided to 1,666 girls and their families in civil and criminal matters. Additionally, 129 girls and their families were represented in cases brought to courts. A further 573 girls and boys benefited from psychosocial services. The strength of the network also resulted in improved coordination between services and a faster incident response.
- Improved quality of work through higher standards and uniformity: in a memorandum of understanding member organisations agreed to use a new set of guidelines and communication materials, such as a reporting format. However, this agreement is currently at risk due to reorganisation at the police department.
- Creation of space for a civil society that can influence government: Through lobbying and advocacy by the network, the government agency that provides licences to, and monitors, civil society organisations in Ethiopia.

Lessons learned

Unfortunately, the referral network did not work as effectively after 2014. According to the memorandum of understanding, CLPC should coordinate the referral system:

every child in need of psychosocial support should go through the centre, and every organization should report on the status of that specific child, the case closure and the child’s return to his or her family. Due to various administrative reforms within the police force, this is no longer the case. In 2014 the Children Protection Unity (CPU) in different sub-cities decided not to send children via CLPC but refer them directly to service NGOs. As a result more than half of the organizations don’t report to CLPC whether they have brought the child back to his or her family after being informed about the case closure. This has led to poor coordination and follow-up.

The most important lessons learned from this network are:

- All stakeholders should be involved when defining the best way of coordination. This should also be periodically evaluated.
- A network should offer clear advantages to each member to secure motivation and participation.
- Communication is essential in identifying and solving problems. Earlier consultation with the police might have prevented their administrative reform.
- Innovative solutions are only created when diverse stakeholders meet, share, learn and make decisions together.
- To maintain uniformity a network needs to dedicate staff to follow-up on reporting requirements.

Insights from Ghana: “Capacity building in a network for girls’ rights”

The Child Protection Network (CPN) lobbies and advocates for children’s rights in Ghana. The CPN unites 11 CSOs and links them with 14 government departments. The Girl Power Alliance (GPA) and Defence for Children International in Ghana (DCI) founded the CPN in 2012. Its goals are to improve children’s welfare and share ideas and data amongst network members. By providing a platform for meetings and discussions, CPN facilitates and enhances collaboration between its members. This has led to increased capacity of the member organizations. CPN also invests strongly in more formal capacity building. Members are educated on child and gender issues, resulting in better mutual understanding and increased consideration for these issues within the network. DCI was the driving force behind the network and has a leading role in organizing network-meetings and seminars. The GPA’s role was to provide resources for organizing the activities and running the network.

Significant results achieved:

- Breaking down barriers between CSOs and government departments. Some CSOs had such difficulty interacting with governmental institutions that they hesitated to contact the police to report cases of violence against children. This improved

after CPN provided spaces for both parties to interact freely with each other.

- Successful lobbying & advocacy activities for girls and women. For example, many female head porters are in desperate need of medical aid and shelter. Thanks to CPN’s lobbying the issue was discussed parliament and these young women were offered free health screening and medical follow-up.
- Effective response to children and women’s rights cases. For example, the deplorable state of a juvenile remand home. Thanks to CPN’s activities, several government institutions became involved in the case and the home was closed.
- Sharing in-depth knowledge and know-how on gender equality with CSOs. This strengthened the CSOs’ capacity, resulting in the inclusion of gender issues in the work of CSOs.

Lessons learned from Ghana:

- The engagement of network members on child and gender issues is strongly related to capacity building efforts on these issues.
- Regular face-to-face meeting are crucial in building a powerful network and strong individual relationships between members.
- Sense of ownership and allocated responsibilities enhances engagement in a network.

- Delegated envoys will not always transfer all essential information to their superiors and/or teams. Stimulating the transfer of knowledge throughout network organizations is therefore essential.
- For maximum participation in meetings and field visits, compensation of members’ expenses is required.

Seven important insights into successful networks

#1 Networks go through life cycles

The development of networks is characterised by cycles of ups and downs, not linear phases. In each network studied a phase of trust and activity was frequently alternated with periods of confusion and frustration. The challenge for the GPP is to recognise the current cycle a network is in and offer the right support to make improvements. Instead of a push and pull policy, it's more important to support network members with initiatives they are already working on.

#2 Strong relationship between expertise level and a networks success

Experience in working in groups or other networks will raise the probability of a networks' success¹. The networks studied, varied greatly in their expertise levels, but all showed that sound capacity building and awareness-raising was needed before joint actions could be undertaken. And the more sound technical expertise a network owned, the more results it achieved.

#3 Clarity, clarity and more clarity

Everyone interviewed underlined the importance of clarity on the mission, roles of members and decision-making processes. Clarity is as equally important as trust and respect between members, especially as it appears to be

necessary for achieving these two conditions. This also applies to GPP partners, who have to be equally clear on their role, mandate, financial contributions and long-term vision.

#4 Gender equality must be put firmly on the agenda

Gender equality needs to be made an explicit goal if a network desires to achieve results in this area. If it's not prioritised on the agenda, it simply won't happen. Plus the contribution of the network to gender equality becomes very difficult to monitor beyond output figures, as was the case for the Ethiopia network.

#5 A network's structure should reflect its mission and purpose

Strong networks have governance structure in place that include clear agreements on roles, responsibilities and decision-making procedures. However, leadership in terms of a shared mission and sense of ownership is just as important². Coordination and sharing of information on their own is not enough to reach the objectives. Therefore a network's structure has to match its purpose. For joint lobbying, advocacy or other social impact goals for instance, alignment and organisation is extremely important within a network. For capacity building, sharing information and improved service provision, a less formal cooperation model might work better.

"We strongly have a feeling that the network should always be a complete package and not just a floor to share.

Sharing is important but tying that up with action and the follow up makes it more meaningful and sustainable"

- The representative of the CSO network of Banke in Nepal -

#6 A sustainable strategy must be in place from the start

Network sustainability doesn't happen overnight. Network partners, facilitators and financiers need to start considering the future development of a network in terms of ownership, organisational structure, and funding from the word 'go'. The networks studied were initiated and facilitated intensively by GPP partners. In some cases, sustainability was gradually reached by gradually handing over more responsibility to network members and GPP partners phasing out of their active role. Other networks started with a clear transition phase formulated beforehand.

#7 Strengths can turn into weaknesses

Strangely enough, it seems that some of the characteristics and advantages of a network can also form risks. For example, diversity in the membership base and the democratic nature of network can also cause misunderstanding, delays in decision-making and failure to act, as seen in Ghana where delegated envoys did not always transfer the information correctly to the superiors in their organisations, thereby delaying decision making.

1 Supporting Civil Society Networks. AED Center for Civil Society and Governance, December 2005.

2 Supporting Civil Society Networks. AED Center for Civil Society and Governance, December 2005.

Strengthening networks for a stronger civil society for girls and young women to participate in

 Global

HOW NETWORKS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO GENDER EQUALITY IN CIVIL SOCIETY



A GPP STRENGTHENED NETWORKS IN 6 WAYS

- 1 Took Initiative,
- 2 Thought sustainable
- 3 Built capacity
- 4 Funded network activities
- 5 Lent legitimacy
- 6 Shared knowledge and experience



1. Bolivia: Agentes de Cambio: a network of teenagers in El Alto

- 80 active graduates
- 400+ Facebook members
- 35 Youth Office graduates

2. Ethiopia: the Children's Legal Protection Center

- Provided legal aid to 1,666 girls
- Represented 129 girls in their cases brought to courts
- 573 girls and boys benefited from psychosocial services

3. Ghana: The Child Protection Network

- Unites 11 CSOs and links them to 14 governmental departments

4. Nepal: CSOs and Young Women Organisations

- 8 CSOs and 57 Young Women Organisations were set up
- All CSOs alert protection desks via the helpline 1098

INSIGHTS IN HOW TO STRENGTHEN EFFECTIVE NETWORKS

1. Be aware, networks go through life cycles - for example, phases of high trust and activity, alternate periods of confusion and frustration
2. Sound technical expertise and working together in groups or other networks are key success factors
3. All members should be equally clear on their role, mandate, financial contributions and long-term vision
4. Gender equality needs to be on the agenda and to be made an explicit goal
5. Strong networks have governance structures, including clear agreements on roles, responsibilities and decision-making procedures
6. Partners, facilitators and financiers need to consider the networks' future development in terms of mission, organisation form and funding
7. Characteristics and advantages of a network can also be risks - for example, democratic structures vs. delays in decision-making

Colophon

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A special thank you goes out to all the girls, women, organisations and institutions in the countries who were willing to share their stories. They inspire us with their drive to end violence against girls and young women and promote gender equality so that all girls and young women can have a safe, healthy and prosperous future.

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