



# MAKING IT REAL: GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 Volume 1: September 2011

Welcome to the fifth edition of CARE USA's Gender Equity and Diversity Newsletter! The newsletter includes information on regional, country office and headquarter-level initiatives to promote organizational and programmatic change in Gender Equity and Diversity (GED). To be included in the next issue, please send your ideas or updates by November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to Doris Bartel, Director of the Gender Unit in the Program Partnerships Learning and Advocacy division at [dbartel@care.org](mailto:dbartel@care.org) or Allison Burden, Senior Advisor for Gender Equity and Diversity in the Human Resources division at [aburden@care.org](mailto:aburden@care.org).

## Highlighting Women's Work Contributes to Empowerment and Independence – A Story from Latin America

By **Miriam Moya Herrera** [miriam.moya@lacrmu.care.org](mailto:miriam.moya@lacrmu.care.org)

In 2009 CARE in Latin America and the Caribbean took on the challenge of working with others to reflect deeply on the impact on the lives of men and women of norms around the sexual division of labor. As a result of this work CARE built strong partnerships with 6 women's social organizations in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru.<sup>1</sup>

Our shared strategy prioritized: capacity building; participatory research; the development of conceptual and methodological tools around the sexual division of labor; proposing wording for policy legislation in order to influence public politics on issues of social security protection for women who do unpaid domestic work as well as to promote the fulfillment of workers' rights for paid domestic workers; the communication and sharing of women's rights particularly workers rights; and the inclusion of reflection the sexual division of labor in CARE's programs.

We highlighted the reality lived by millions of women in Latin America who do unpaid domestic work without shared responsibility or protection from society or the State, we showed how this limits their enjoyment of human rights. And above all we brought to light the poor conditions of 4 million paid domestic workers in the Central America and the Andean Region, working without fixed salaries, between 12 and 14 hours per day, without social protection and without support and accompaniment from women's and development organizations. Some consider this lack of protection and labor regulation to be a form of modern-day slavery.

For CARE it has been a valuable learning process because we found that we are able to establish horizontal, respectful relationships without imposing our views, we built strong alliances between women in pursuit of their rights and we realized that we have to be creative to respond proactively to the context in each country and achieve our program principles.

From this learning, we have defined a regional gender strategy. The basic components are: to sustain and strengthen alliances with women's organizations and other actors to bring to light the impact of sexual division of labor in the lives of men and women; to provide direct accompaniment to domestic worker organizations in the region and in the different countries so that these countries ratify Convention 189 of the International Labor Organization, which guarantees these women decent work conditions; to bring to light the valuable contribution that paid and unpaid domestic work brings to national economies; and to strengthen CARE's capacity to achieve the strategy. Video documentaries are available at: <http://youtu.be/VwLFEKOrxno> (Part 1) and <http://youtu.be/xmyQwv-loc8> (Part 2)

## Making Financial Sector Policies Work for All

By **Atiqua Hashim** [ahashim@care.org](mailto:ahashim@care.org) (or **Milkah Kihunah** [mkihunah@care.org](mailto:mkihunah@care.org))

The Access Africa Advocacy Pilot (AAP) culminated with three workshops in Malawi, Rwanda and Mali. The pilot's theory of change was 'increased equitable access to pro-poor and gender sensitive microfinance leads to financial inclusion, increased financial inclusion leads to increased food security and increased gender equality'. The goal of the pilot was to enable country offices to identify advocacy opportunities *within financial sector laws and policies* that would increase access to financial services particularly for poor, vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.

Across all three pilot countries from the gender, law and policy perspective, the starting point of inquiry was each country's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and a review of reservations to Article 13(b) in particular provides that women should be afforded equal rights to bank loans, mortgages, and other forms of financial credit free from discrimination. Acceptance of an international convention allows a state to back the convention with the force of law and to integrate into its national laws and policies.

All three countries accepted (or ratified) CEDAW without reservation to Article 13(b), and the AAP workshops opened up space for dialogue on the effectiveness of national microfinance and gender policies in increasing access to financial

<sup>1</sup> The Association of Salvadorian Women-El Salvador; The Working and Unemployed Women's Movement (Maria Elena Cuadra)-Nicaragua; The Women for Life Movement and the Popular and Diverse Women's Assembly - Ecuador; The Afro-Bolivian Centre for Integrated and Community Development-Bolivia and the Development Centre for Domestic Workers-Perú.



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services. CARE microfinance sector colleagues deliberately engaged in targeted gender law and policy analysis and considered their advocacy role with ministries of commerce and finance and Central Banks to further effective implementation of national gender policies to expand financial opportunities for women. Simultaneously, CARE gender and colleagues in other sectors (e.g. health and education), engaged in the analysis of national microfinance laws and policies to understand their impact in furthering goals of poverty alleviation. These colleagues also considered their advocacy role in increasing financial access through advocacy with other ministries, such as the ministry of gender. For example, during external stakeholder meetings in Malawi, CARE Malawi's gender focal point led a meeting with ministry of finance officials on the need for gender-sensitive implementation of Malawi's forth-coming national financial literacy policy.

Another critical dimension of the gender-related discussions was the opening of space to surface reservations with the AAAP theory of change. One session deliberately sought thoughts on the inter-play of marriage laws, inheritance laws and the implications of increased financial independence of women within the customs and culture of each country. In Rwanda, this led to a debate on the perceived link between increased financial independence and increased gender based violence. In Mali, it opened discussion on the normative impact of *sharia* on inheritance laws and its implications on women's ability to access and control assets needed to provide collateral for bank loans.

All in all, AAAP was a unique opportunity to challenge ourselves to take a deep look at the quantitative and qualitative data generated from traditional gender analysis at the programmatic level and find ways to use that data to assess the effectiveness of sectoral policies that impact the vulnerable and marginalized populations CARE serves. The inter-disciplinary design enabled us to think about partners for collaboration both at the Country Office level and at the technical assistance team level. We partnered with the internationally reputed law firm, "DLA Piper," to provide, free, analysis of national microfinance laws as well as general comparative law research on the sharia approach to microfinance in the case of Mali.

## Gender Updates from Around the Globe

### Gender Mainstreaming: Taking Action in Mozambique

By **Nacima Figia** [nacima@care.org.mz](mailto:nacima@care.org.mz)

In June 2011, a workshop entitled "Promotion of the Mechanism of Gender Mainstreaming Tools in the Different Development Processes at the District level" took place at Ministry of Woman and Social Welfare in Mozambique. Government officials, representatives from CARE, and local women leaders attended. The workshop represented an initiative promoted jointly by CARE and the Woman's Department at the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare aimed to promote gender reflection amongst leaders from neighborhoods where CARE's Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) Project is implemented. Workshop objectives included:

- Creating a space of joint reflection regarding gender issues and practical tools to approach them, with examples of good practices in the context of sanitation and water management;
- Guaranteeing the knowledge of legal instruments that provide a leadership with a gender perspective;
- Promoting and maintaining a gender approach in all the community actions.

### Gender Equity and Diversity Training

By **Monica Trigg** [mtrigg@care.org](mailto:mtrigg@care.org)

GED Training has been under development for nearly ten years and available to staff globally for several years. Workshops are built around insightful and interactive activities and discussions on gender equity and diversity and promote CARE's principles.

Starting in FY 11, US-based teams began requesting training and capacity building on both GED and programmatic implications. Thus, the revised workshops began reflecting both programmatic elements and personal reflection on discrimination and power. This dual focus allowed teams to get to know each other better, understand different working styles, and develop specific action steps for themselves. Teams trained in FY 11 included: Executive Management Team, Senior Leadership Team, Basic and Girls Education (BGE), Foundations, and Human Resources. Globally, GED trainings have been held in Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi, Sri Lanka, and Ghana.

If you want to know how you can arrange training for your team or office, contact Allison Burden at [aburden@care.org](mailto:aburden@care.org) or Walter Fordham at [fordham@care.org](mailto:fordham@care.org).

### **CARE's GED Model**

**Awareness.**

**Dialogue.**

**Action.**



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### Organizational Redesign Confirms Gender as High Priority for CARE USA

By Doris Bartel [dbartel@care.org](mailto:dbartel@care.org)

Gender was identified as one of four areas of strategic importance and investment for CARE USA, according to the team designated to lead CUSA's organizational redesign (OR). Given CARE's vision and branding, the OR team recommended a greater investment in gender. Acknowledging the practical links to women's and girls' empowerment, and the majority of country office long-term programs that target women and girls, the gender unit is now linked more closely to the Basic and Girls' Education team with a mandate to focus on empowerment and leadership. The combined team has a new title of "Gender and Empowerment," with Doris Bartel in an acting role as head of the team.

### CARE International Gender Network Collaboration

By Doris Bartel [dbartel@care.org](mailto:dbartel@care.org)

Through the hard work and coordination of the CI Gender Network, CI members have been consolidating reports on the current efforts of CARE to implement its Gender Policy (approved in 2009). The CI Gender Network is working with the CI Secretariat to plan a presentation of the findings to the CI Executive Committee in November 2011. When finalized, the consolidated report will be posted on the CARE Gender Wiki. In the past months, CIGN members have also been coordinating on issues of governance, training and capacity building, and knowledge management. Diana Wu conducted training on the CIGN Gender Toolkit website for CUSA, CI UK, CARE Norge, CARE Netherlands, CARE France, and CARE Österreich in June and July 2011.

### Asia Women Leadership Program – A Step Forward

By Munmun Chowdhury [munmun@bd.care.org](mailto:munmun@bd.care.org)

Women in Asia are becoming more visible outside the domestic sphere in different professions but their struggle for empowerment and leadership is as difficult as decades ago because of social norms and expectations. CARE in the Asia Region, has committed to changing the lives of 50 million women by 2020. To achieve this, CARE will need to have more women leaders within the organization because evidence shows that diverse representation leads to greater relevance and impact. In 2010, the Asia Regional Leadership Team decided upon a Women Leadership Program and proposed an inaugural workshop as a first step. In February 2011, CARE brought together 24 women staff members from 12 countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand); the objectives of the meeting were to:

- **explore leadership** and build a sense of common understanding of what leadership means in CARE (both positional and 'opportunistic')
- **establish a way forward** for the women leadership program in the Asia Pacific region
- **build solidarity and community** amongst women staff in the Asia Pacific region

The process of exploration was not easy; there was discomfort in the room and there were debates and disagreement, but in the end the women were in consensus in identifying the priorities of the leadership program and finalizing the goal of the program. Participants identified the following goal for the CARE in Asia:

**By 2020, increase females in leadership roles in CARE in Asia and the Pacific to at least/more than/not less than 50%. In order to do this, it is expected that a change in the organizational culture is required.**

They identified three priority ways forward:

1. Recruit, Retain and Develop Women Leaders
2. Recognize the 'Whole Person' and implications of family engagement
3. Increase accountability to achieve our goal

Each of the priorities was supported by action items and by the end of the meeting, participants felt a strong sense of solidarity, purpose, and commitment to work within their own contexts as well as regionally and globally within CARE.

Solidarity and commitment continued beyond the workshop, with participants meeting via webinars to report progress as well as challenges within the Country Office. Many have formed women groups to promote this commitment, while others included goals in annual plans. Debates and conversations are ongoing and include topics such as: Influencing skills (a link to the recording is here: <https://care.webex.com/care/lsr.php?AT=pb&SP=MC&rID=59882847&rKey=75a5f9eb1aadbd9f>), men's perspectives, effective leadership and work/life balance. Support, inspiration and mutual encouragement are vital to



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this process. CARE USA has come forward to assist the group to meet virtually over webinars and SharePoint. Women in CARE Asia have taken a step forward, aspiring to make a difference in the leadership and change the world for women.

For more information, contact Chowdhury at [mchowdhurt@care.org](mailto:mchowdhurt@care.org) or Meg Burns at [mburns@care.org](mailto:mburns@care.org)

## A Safe Space to Be Me: Shifting Organizational Culture in CARE Nepal

By **Indu Pant** [indu@np.care.org](mailto:indu@np.care.org)

I remember the struggles of starting out on my career 20 years ago and if I compare those days with today, things have not changed much when it comes to attitudes about women at the workplace. Career paths for women are still largely viewed as an extension of their domestic roles. Social norms, cultural stereotypes and power and privilege define the “invisible foundation” for women’s subordination and create barriers for women’s advancement.

To create an enabling work environment for all in CARE Nepal, we had the idea of forming a Women’s Forum as a result of the Asia Regional ‘Women’s Leadership Program.’ During discussions in CARE Nepal about promoting women’s leadership, women colleagues expressed a need for a safe place to share their issues, aspirations and “unspoken discomfort” and to draw management’s attention to them in order that the playing field between men and women could be leveled.

Many women and also some men shared there are staff with unspoken feelings of discomfort at work that need to be explored and addressed. Women staff especially at the lower levels feels that they are not always treated with respect and fairness. There is limited understanding of “women as whole beings” with various and multiple socially defined demands on their time at work and in the domestic sphere. These discussions revealed that although women and men experience many of the same barriers, women face a host of stereotypes and environmental challenges that their male colleagues do not. Women staff, especially those living away from home shared they are facing challenges balancing their work and family life.

Quite often, I hear women colleagues sharing frustration that they are ignored because of their gender. For example, they tell me that when they try to raise an issue or make a point at a meeting they are mostly ignored; a male colleague then restates it and the very same idea becomes an excellent one and everyone pays attention.

A number of meetings have been held in regional offices in Nepal and at CO level where both women and men participated. They shared their concerns, challenges, suggestions and fears. Many men and women expressed that the creation of the Women’s Forum may bring strong gendered power dynamics to the surface in the organization, for example the issue of harassment which will need to be handled with fairness and confidentiality. Staff also report noticing a new alertness among all staff and some positive changes in behavior that result from the Women’s Forum discussions.

This initiative also brought some apprehension that it might create a culture of “men versus women”. There is a kind of resistance or suspicion among colleagues. But at the same time there are strong men allies who are supportive. It is always a challenge to start something new in an organization, especially if it is related to women’s leadership and gender equality. There are hidden fears among staff that such an initiative may challenge their realities. Others are sceptical about sustainability because past initiatives didn’t get sustained attention. Similarly, many of them have expressed hope that strong management support may contribute to bring expected results. It is easier for staff to talk about women’s empowerment and equality while designing and implementing programs, but it is a challenge to implement such initiatives in our own lives and organization.

We realize therefore, that strong buy-in and support from senior management is required to ensure continuity. If implemented successfully CARE Nepal’s ‘Women’s Forum’ could change the organizational culture creating a better space for all staff to speak their minds, share their issues and develop better interpersonal and working relationships. That will ultimately have positive impact on staff’s performance at work and in their personal lives.

### Some interesting quotes shared during the women’s forum

*“You got this job because CARE is a women’s organization”*

*“I am working at the same level as him but I am always forced to feel that I am junior to him.”*

*“When men talk in the meeting there is no time limit but when women start sharing their views they are asked to manage time.”*

### Remember to check out these two fantastic resources

CARE’s Gender Wiki, found at <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/>

CARE’s Gender Toolkit at <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/home>