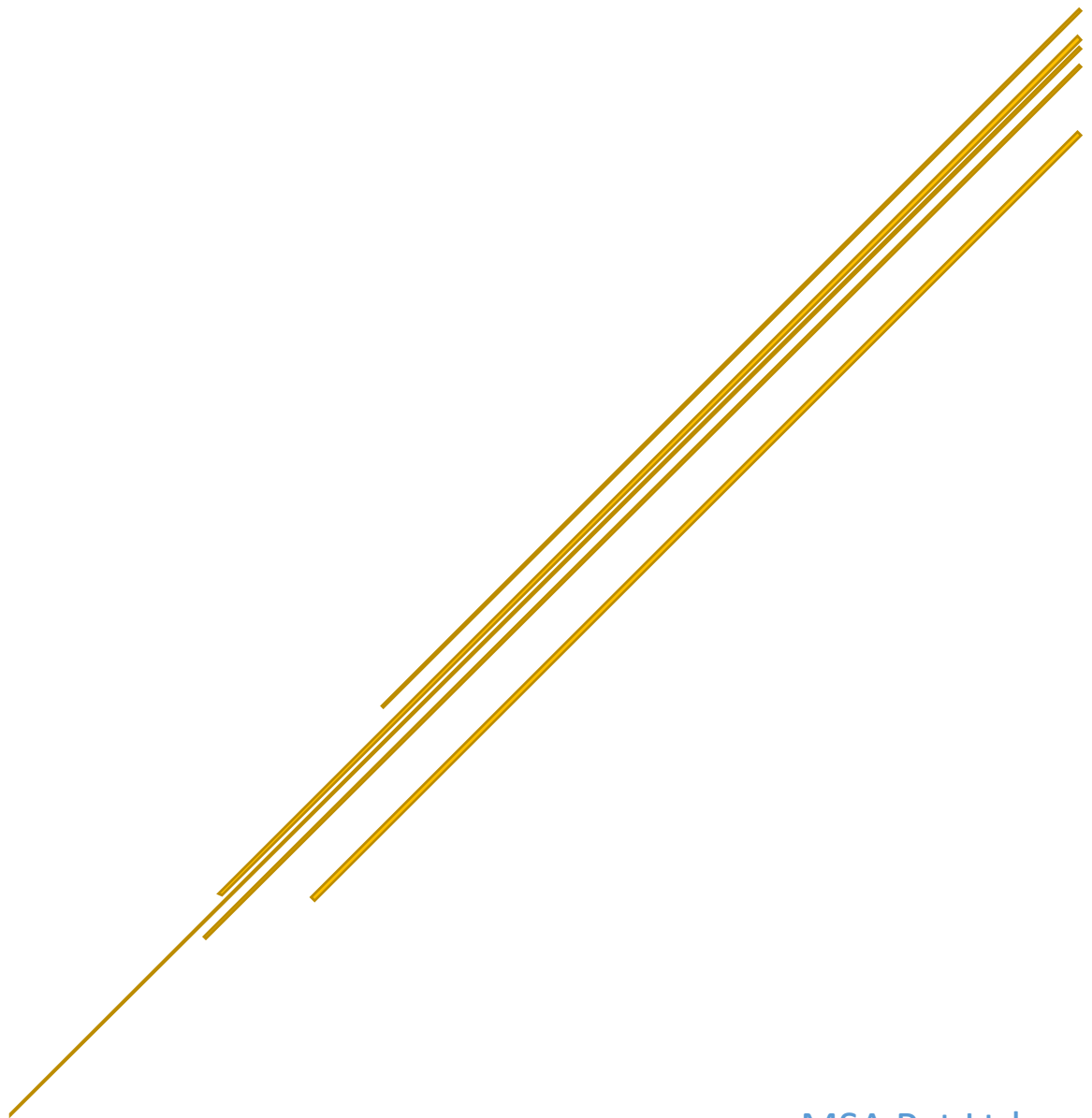


Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence against Women and Girls

End-line Evaluation



MSA Pvt Ltd
March 23, 2021

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Acronyms

AF	Aurat Foundation
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CS	Creating Spaces
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EVAWG	Ending Violence against Women and Girls
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
IDI	In-depth Interview
ITA	Idara e Taleem o Agahi
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
OiP	Oxfam in Pakistan
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UC	Union Council
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
WLG	Women Leaders Group
WPF	Women Protection Forum
WRO	Women Rights Organization

Creating Spaces End-line Evaluation

Executive Summary

Participation in CS

The evaluation findings depict that OIP invested heavily on capacity building of community and its direct and indirect beneficiaries. Men, Women and Youth beneficiaries as well as WLG & WPF members actively participated in awareness raising and training programmes in the project. They either had developed enhanced understanding or had witnessed change in mind-sets related to child marriages, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. As a result of the CS project, women felt that they were more empowered and were confident about taking different social decisions that impact them or their children and men stated that they both accepted and provided support to women as per their rights. Youth and WLG/WPF groups were engaged in providing awareness raising support to women since their establishment. All the beneficiaries felt that COVID led to halt in programme awareness spreading activities which could be correlated to increase in cases of violence and sexual abuse as findings from 'Perceptions on VAWG' section indicates.

The findings also revealed that both men and women have positioned in different roles. Women serve both as the prime beneficiary, so their viewpoints were more focused on how they have been socially empowered through the project. Views of men were more related to their role as facilitators towards providing comforting environment to women. Although all male participants understood nuances of women rights, half of men FGDs participants actively provided support to women. Youth groups as well as WLG & WPF served more as community-based institutions towards advocating elimination of VAWG. Several members of youth group witnessed complete change of perception in a positive way as a result of the project whereas others developed more deepened understanding of problem complexity.

Perceptions on VAWG

The evaluation findings from all interviewed groups indicated that cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse and child marriages had increased due to COVI 19 crisis. Despite unrest created by COVID 19, women stakeholders had generally felt secured and protected due to project interventions as they were now well equipped to report cases to relevant authorities. However, they specified that trainings should be sustained so that causes and harms of these social issues are continuously reinforced.

Members of WLG and WPF highlighted that not many cases were reported by women as expected due to lack of confidence among the victims or survivors. Further elaborating their point, they mentioned that the infrastructure for women protection houses were either dysfunctional or unavailable due to lack of funds, which posed multiple challenges for women even if they had increased access to local authorities for reporting of cases, as a result of project intervention.

Male beneficiaries depicted deep understanding of issues and challenges faced by women. Although, they didn't mention any specific measures which were undertaken, they believed that legal measures and safe sanctuaries for women along with trainings were needed to mitigate harms of VAWG. Youth groups as

well as WPF/WLG were more active in taking measures to report and resolve cases of VAWG at community level and found to be working closely with relevant stakeholders in this regard.

In relation to effects of COVID 19 on VAWG, there were consistency across opinions given. Role of youth groups and WLG was more active with regard to taking measures for VAWG, however, WLG have concerns over confidence of women in reporting cases. Men groups didn't depict any measures undertaken by them personally or at communal level, although they did accept VAWG as social malaise which needs to be addressed. Women as prime beneficiaries felt protected due to programme at certain level, however, COVID 19 effects on VAWG are a concern which questions whether programme has completely succeeded in changing behavior and attitude of communities

Perceptions on CEFM practices

The evaluation findings from all groups affirmed that child marriages have declined in the community over the years and expressed that the age of marriage for both boys and girls should be above 18 years. Though it was not evident if it was entirely due to the project but as depicted from findings in '*Participation in Creating Spaces*' section, awareness raising campaigns have enlightened the communities, which have consequently changed their attitudes and behaviors around CEFM practices. All the groups also elaborated that sustained trainings of Molvis/religious leaders needed to be carried out along with interventions at community and school level for addressing CEFM.

During the discussion with national influencers, it was observed that transition from policy to implementation is a major challenge due to financial and human resource capacity gaps at the institutional level. Government influencers from both Sindh and Punjab highlighted that programmes for CFEM and VAGM should invest in institutional strengthening activities particularly focusing on helping departments develop pertinent policies and SOPs for implementation of those policies.

Theatres emerged as an interesting and impactful activity to engage youth groups and school children. Through project annual report for the fourth year, it was evident that partnership with the Rafi Peer Theatre spread massive awareness through the performances on fighting VAWG and CEFM in a personal capacity by strengthening and promoting positive gender norms. 80% of the students felt that the performances based on the content and the acting were excellent. Since VAWG and CEFM were the underlying themes of the performance, the students who viewed the performances naturally absorbed the message both consciously and unconsciously, triggering a conversation against negative social norms at home and other personal spaces which propel the two issues.

In Punjab there was smooth transition from Aurat Foundation to ITA as implementation partner as noted by national influencers. However, in Sindh role of ITA wasn't clear and neither in views of National Influencers nor in field observations their roles and presence weren't identified towards the project.

The programme carried out holistic interventions on awareness raising on VAWG and CFEM; however, there is need to further invest in legal support and economic opportunities so that women survivors can independently stand on their own feet

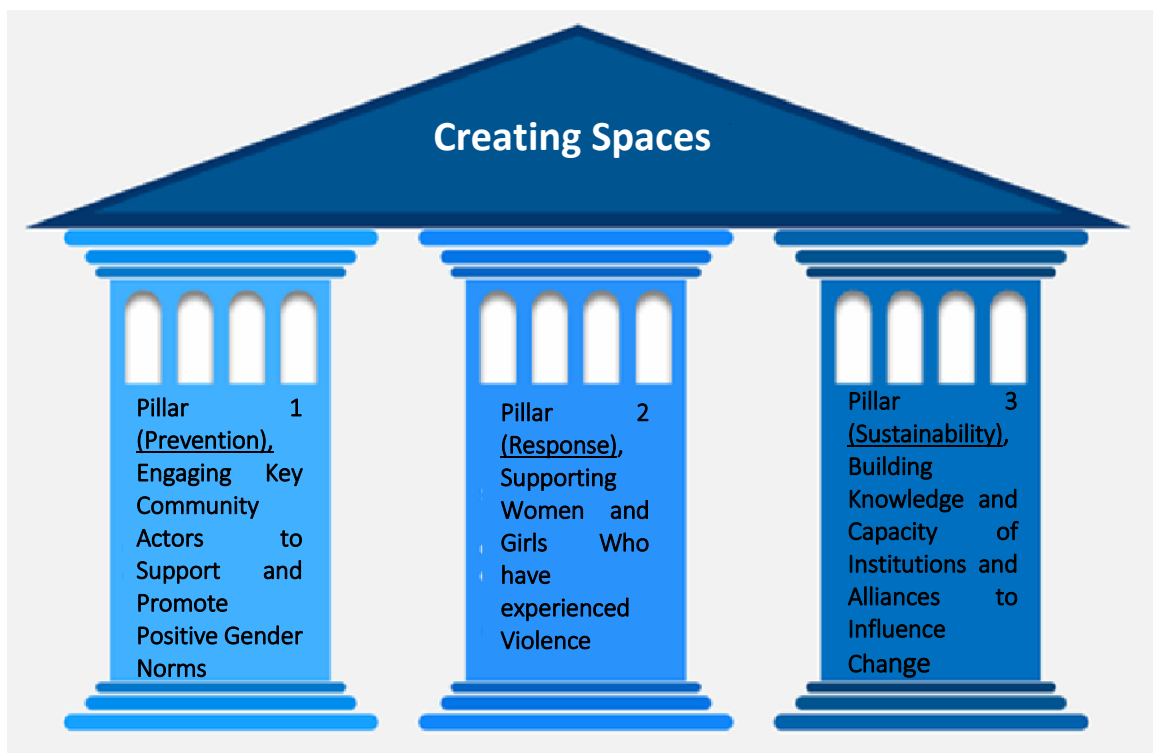
Introduction

‘Creating spaces to take action on violence against women and girls’ is a five-year project (2016-21), being implemented in the 09 districts of Sindh and Punjab under the umbrella of GAC (Global Affairs Canada) and Oxfam Canada to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG), including child and early forced marriage (CEFM). Since 2016, Creating Spaces in Pakistan has reached approximately 35,619 direct beneficiaries, majority of which are women and girls through local community partners to provide our expertise in building networks of change, increasing capacity and creating spaces for women and girls to be safe, respected and included.

Since Oxfam in Pakistan has learned through its extensive experience of working on gender empowerment, it has integrated working with men and boys alongside women and girls to create an impact that could sustain in a patriarchal society and that could give an equal intersectional buy-in to all the stakeholders. In Asia, the five-year project (2016-21) focuses on targeting 245,000 beneficiaries across these six countries: Nepal, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India and Philippines, in addition to Pakistan.

In Pakistan, the project, “Creating Spaces”, is expected to potentially make a vital contribution to the governmental and non-governmental initiatives aimed at addressing violence against women and girls and achieving gender equality. The project planning was aligned with OiP’s country strategy, which has gender justice as one of its goals, seeking to ensure that “women are better able to exercise agency, collective action, and leadership in economic, social, legal and political spheres”. This strategy will in turn help Pakistan in its commitment of achieving gender equality and empowering all women through SDG 5.

Creating Spaces’ interventions are guided by its Theory of Change (ToC), which sets out the project’s interventions, assumptions, and outcomes, and frames its approach to activities. The ToC includes three programmatic pillars: **Prevention**, **Response**, and **Sustainability**.



Key Principles of End-line Evaluation

Oxfam communicated in its first orientation meeting (Annexure 1: Agenda of zoom meeting), that it is highly recommended to not only use gender lens throughout the sections and processes of end-line evaluation, apply its Feminist MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) approach in all the stages from designing to data collection and analysis. In doing so, OiP prioritized five key principles for carrying out end-line evaluation process, including:

1. Understanding feminist MEAL as an approach,
2. Positioning MEAL as an integral part of social transformation,
3. Shifting power to participants in evaluations,
4. Understanding the role of the evaluator as a facilitator, Valuing collective, context-driven knowledge generation,
5. Providing a learning orientation to evaluative exercises, and Rooting feminist MEAL in safe programming, guided by “Do no Harm”

Main Objectives of the End-line Evaluation

The main purpose of carrying out endline evaluation of Creating Spaces is to learn from the implementation of project in achieving the outcomes that were defined in the project baseline line and to document the lessons for future programming and implementation in the same thematic areas. In addition to that, the endline methodology is also designed to give comparison between mid-term targets achieved and the ones at the fifth or the last year of the project implementation. Thus, the endline evaluation is focused on achieving the following primary objectives:

1. Provide an independent assessment of the project, including strengths and weaknesses.
2. Assess how findings, best practices, gaps and recommendations from the MTLR impacted the program
3. Identify discrepancies, if any, between Creating Spaces initial assumptions and actual occurrences.
4. Establish progression on targets (immediate to intermediate and immediate to ultimate).
5. Indicate adjustments and changes relevant to potential future projects.
6. Capture lessons learned and provide recommendations to enhance EVAWG programming in the country

Methodology

Desk Review

In order to understand the scope of the project implementation across its breadth and width, it was important to carry out an initial desk review of the project documents. This exercise has helped the consultant in not only adapting to the Lead International Consultant’s suggested tools and methodology, it also helped in creating additional tools that will allow the evaluation to shed more light on the outcomes and impact of the project. At this initial inception stage, following key documents were thoroughly studied and the understanding developed is presented below:

Understanding Project Scope

As mentioned above, in Pakistan, project envisions on covering 36,526 beneficiaries including children up-to age of 14, Youth Adolescent (15-24 years) and Adult groups over age of 25 years. The Project primarily covers beneficiaries particularly women and girls affected by gender-based violence.

Beneficiaries Count

Following table depicts total beneficiaries targeted in the project. Sample of these beneficiaries will be studied in the project:

Year 1 - Year 5 (Semi-Annual)						
CHILDREN UPTO THE AGE 14		YOUTH /ADOLESCENTS AGE 15-24		ADULTS AGES 25 & UP		TOTAL
Girls	Boys	Females	Males	Women	Men	36,326

Project Baseline to Mid-line Overview

The baseline study for the project was conducted in December 2016. in the districts of Lahore, Rawalpindi and Dadu. The findings of the report were based on qualitative and quantitative research approaches that included focus group discussions (FGD), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), "I"-stories, media monitoring, policy analysis, a rapid service quality assessment and a household survey.

As per findings of baseline report; awareness level regarding violence against women was very low amongst different social groups which included media, lawyers, social activist, CBOs and Politicians. In Pakistan there are entrenched stereotypical attitudes regarding specific role of women and men. Hence due to patriarchal social normative dominated by men; tolerance level of domestic violence, forced/child marriages were very high. Awareness level of VAWG was very negligible amongst religious leaders; teachers and clerics. As they form major source of influence in the community; it was greatly emphasized that capacity building of these groups should be conducted so that they can serve as source of influence to mitigate and curb domestic violence, sexual/physical/Psychological abuse as well as forced marriages

Awareness level about laws and policies related to pro-women right mechanisms were vague; with little or no accountability and reporting mechanisms; case of gender violence were not reported adequately. Also, absence of shelter homes, Panah gaah and legal aid services for women further created barriers for women seek protection.

The mid-term evaluation conducted in July 2019 revealed that project had succeeded in creating learning spaces for community members including women, girls, adolescents, youth and adults. This has allowed and fostered responsive to address and curb gender-based violence while changing behavior, attitudes and norms against this social practice. Women Protection Forums (WPFs) established under the project have generated a much-needed space for debating, articulating and aggregating issues and demands in relation to women's rights, violence against women (VAWG) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

At level of baseline, social and political workers held a rather restrictive and narrow view of GBV and VAW. However, after being associated as members of WPFs, Women Leaders Groups (WLGs) and Youth Groups formed in the project, they now articulate a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of complexity of

the issue and means through which it can be curbed. The change in attitude as depicted through findings of mid-term evaluation was generated as result of various training and capacity building sessions conducted in the project. Moreover, the campaigning done under the project has helped some survivors become aware of formal and informal mechanisms of legal aid and social protection.

However, as per mid-term findings, women's access to medical, socio-psychological, and financial support is hampered by limited institutional and personnel capacity of support services, lack of information on the available services, and stigmatization of the survivors of violence. Hence in year 5 project has worked on strengthening linkages with Government Departments including Women Development and Social Welfare Departments. Also ties have been extended further with Darul-Amans and Panah Gaah; so that access to socio-economic and legal support to victims and survivors is smoothly provided.

Designing Evaluation around Project Theory of Change (ToC)

The ultimate outcome of the project is to *“Reduce violence against women and girls and child, early and forced marriage”*. To achieve ultimate outcome; project design has been segmented into three pillars. Each Pillar is segmented into intermediate and immediate outcomes as per Project theory of change. During the end-line evaluation each analysis of strategies employed and project interventions in each pillar will be analyzed along with progression from immediate to intermediate outcomes.

The evaluation will also qualitatively study cross linkages between intermediate outcomes in each pillar and gauge how they contribute towards achieving the ultimate outcome. The segmentation in the Theory of change is depicted as of below:

<p>Pillar 1: Engaging key community actors to support and promote positive gender norms.</p> <p>Strategies and activities for this project pillar target three groups: influencers (religious, community, political, and private sector leaders), youth/ adolescents, and women and girl community leaders, with the desired outcome of strengthening their engagement to advance women's leadership and rights, and to reduce VAWG and CEFM.</p>
<p>Intermediate Outcome 1100: Strengthened engagement of key religious, community, private sector and political actors and youth in advancing women's leadership, women's rights and in reducing violence against women</p>
<p>Immediate Outcome 1110: Increased knowledge, skills and capacity of Influencers to enact and implement laws, policies and accountability mechanisms to reduce VAWG and the prevalence of CEFM</p> <p>Immediate Outcome 1120: Improved positive attitudes and behavior modeled by Influencers and Youth in support of social norms to prevent VAWG and CEFM</p> <p>Immediate Outcome 1130: Strengthened skills and capacity of women and girl leaders to advance their rights and contribute to the prevention of VAWG and CEFM</p>
<p>Pillar 2: Supporting women and girls who have experienced violence</p> <p>Strategies and activities in this pillar target women and girls who have experienced violence, including CEFM, along with staff of key institutions—such as civil society organizations (CSOs), especially</p>

women's rights organizations (WROs), as well as state and private sector institutions—that offer social and/or legal support services or economic opportunities, with the desired outcome of improving access for women and girls to such services.
Intermediate Outcome 1100: Strengthened engagement of key religious, community, private sector and political actors and youth in advancing women's leadership, women's rights and in reducing violence against women
Immediate Outcome 1110: Increased knowledge, skills and capacity of Influencers to enact and implement laws, policies and accountability mechanisms to reduce VAWG and the prevalence of CEFM
Immediate Outcome 1120: Improved positive attitudes and behavior modeled by Influencers and Youth in support of social norms to prevent VAWG and CEFM
Immediate Outcome 1130: Strengthened skills and capacity of women and girl leaders to advance their rights and contribute to the prevention of VAWG and CEFM

Pillar 3: Building knowledge and capacity of institutions and alliances to influence change: Strategies and activities in this pillar target partner CSOs, especially WROs, and national and regional networks and alliances.
Intermediate Outcome 1200: Greater access to support services and economic opportunities for women and girls affected by violence and child, early and forced marriage
Immediate Outcome 1210: Increased ability of women and girls who have experienced violence and CEFM to access quality shelters, legal and psycho-social support services

Oxfam Feminist MEAL

Oxfam Canada presents an innovative approach in MEAL exercises that allows application of a critical Feminist lens to MEAL and which is intended to entail a transformative social change towards unequal gender and power relations. This approach not only promotes contextualization, it also encourages inclusivity and application of intersectionality to figure out how female individuals with diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Expression (SOGIE) experience inequality and discrimination.

Oxfam Canada is committed to mutual accountability and shared decision making through MEAL thereby supporting its program implementing partners to fully participate in the process of evaluations. Keeping this mandate in view, all the qualitative tools have been developed to facilitate partners' participation.

Feminist MEAL has seven key foundations

1. Feminist MEAL is an approach that focuses more on process and principles. Therefore participation with this lens would expose gender-biases and how intersecting identities further marginalize specific groups so it's about inclusion of voices not often heard.
2. Feminist MEAL is an Integral Part of Social Transformation that does not inclined towards a castigatory accountability practice, but is focused on capturing significant changes and impact that could inform all the stakeholders for decision making in future or way forward.

3. Feminist MEAL shifts power to participants in evaluations. This approach gives space to partners like women rights organizations and partners to be involved in every stage of the MEAL process thereby giving them ownership
4. The role of the evaluator is as a facilitator who understands relationships of Power. This principle requires evaluator to be aware of sensitive power dynamics, practice reflexivity, facilitate participant ownership and pose evaluative questions in line with MEAL.
5. A Feminist MEAL approach aims for context-driven collective knowledge appreciating it as both a resource and a source of power. These different perspectives bring diverse understanding to evaluative processes helping to axe power imbalances and gender inequality.
6. Feminist MEAL prioritizes strategic learning through evaluative exercises and nurtures collective ownership, evidence-based decision making and shared knowledge through transformative approaches for gender equality and women's rights.
7. Ethical and safety standards centering on the principles of 'Do No Harm' are at the heart of Feminist MEAL programs. Voluntary and informed consent with complete confidentiality regarding data collection and usage should be applied.

Mid Term Review

The MTR findings in July 2019 reveal that the project has successfully “created space” for community members, including men and women, boys and girls, to “identify, take responsibility for and nurture positive gender attitudes and norms” as envisaged in the project theory of change.

The campaigning done under the project has helped some survivors become aware of formal and informal mechanisms of support and some of them have been able to avail the support services and show positive deviance. The main rule in increasing access of survivors of violence was identified as of Women Protection Forums (WPFs), which were established under the project. These WPF along with Women Leaders Groups furnish a much-needed space for debating, articulating and aggregating issues and demands in relation to women's rights, violence against women (VAWG) including but not limited to child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

MTR also highlighted some of the key recommendations which were instrumental in designing the interview tools to identify if those recommendations have been taken into consideration post mid term review. These key recommendations that are being evaluated in endline include linkages of project initiatives with Women Alliance Pakistan, capacity building of WRO to carry out independent advocacy and campaigns, trimming down district level forums, capacity building of implementing partners and collaboration with research institutes to carry out independent research on gender and VAWG.

Data Collection Methodology and Tools

Based on the briefing and updates received from OiP MEAL and Program teams, data collection methodology encompassed two kinds of approaches. Primarily Oxfam Canada's International Lead Consultant suggested tools for qualitative survey were being adapted as they were according to the guidance provided through document of 'Checklist for CS Final Evaluation' (Annexure: 2). This document included guidance for both quantitative as well qualitative data collection. However, since in Pakistan, end-line evaluation only entails qualitative analysis, therefore, only qualitative component of the guidance document was taken into consideration. All the survey tools have been designed based on the

set of learning questions (Annexure 3). Data gathered against the survey tools was transcribed verbatim (Annexure 4).

1. FGDs:

According to the guidelines given in “Checklist for CS Final Evaluation”, a pilot was carried out in a community and learnings from the pilot were used in the actual data collection. Later, during actual field data collection exercise, four FGDs recommended in each of the six suggested sites were conducted as shown in the table below, i.e., 24 FGDs in total were conducted across all the six locations. These four FGDs were divided among the category of survey participants as per the following table for each of the selected sites:

FGD Participants	
Women beneficiaries (25+ years)	2 per site
Young women/men (15-24) – youth leaders/clubs	1 per site
Men beneficiaries (25+)	1 per site

As guided by the Checklist of FGDs, for each FGD, a demographic form outlining the participants’ ID, their gender, marital status, and age was compiled as shown below:

Sr.	Name	Participant ID	Age	Marital Status	Remarks (If any)
1		P1			
2		P2			
3		P3			
4		P4			
5		P5			
6		P6			

The above information helped the in-country consultant to carry out a brief demographic analysis (presented in the follow up sections below) as well as it was expected to be used for describing the methodology and sample in the final report by the Lead International Consultant.

The six sites proposed for carrying out the above four FGDs each were spread over two geographical locations in Punjab and four in Sindh, with the following categorization:

S. No.	Province	District	Union Council (UC)
1	Punjab	Jhelum	*UC 16
2	Punjab	Jhelum	UC Kotla Fakir
3	Sindh	Shaheed Benazirabad	UC Number 9
4	Sindh	Shaheed Benazirabad	UC Wali Muhammad Rind
5	Sindh	Umerkot	UC Atta Muhammad Kali Ward 2
6	Sindh	Umerkot	UC Mir Atta Muhammad Kali Ward 13

*UC=Union Council

As suggested by the Lead International Consultant, the duration of the FGDs was limited to 1 hour. In some cases, it was extended to maximum of 90 minutes when required. However, Feminist MEAL approach of considering women engagement at household was also taken into consideration.

2. KII-Key Informant Interviews:

Oxfam Canada had proposed two separate KII tools to be carried out with OiP Country Office Staff dealing with the CS project and one with Oxfam's local implementing partner, i.e, ITA in this case. Therefore, the in-country national consultant suggested carrying out both these KIIs with project manager at both the organizations level, respectively.

In addition to the above pre-designed KII tools, the national consultant also proposed interviews with the Women Leaders or key members of Women Protection Forum (Annexure: 5). This additional interview tool enabled the consultant to shed more light on the aspects of how survivors were helped and what were the contribution of these WLG and WPF at the district level. Moreover, analysis of data collected against this tool informed about the sustainability of these two important fora. One of these six interviews was carried out in each of the above selected sites. At one location one interview with WPF and at another, one with WLG was conducted to avoid any duplication or saturation of data collected against this tool. Following table presents the total number of KIIs at all the locations:

Tools	Punjab		Sindh	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
KII (OiP staff)		1		
KII (Partner staff)	1			
KII (Women Leaders/WPF)		2		4
IDI (National Influencers)	2	x	x	2
Total	3	3		6

3. IDI-In depth Interviews:

In addition to above survey tool, the Lead International Consultant had also suggested a tool of in-depth interview with a national influencer. According to the desk review of project documents, these national influencers included parliamentarians, journalists/media personnel, lawyers, shelters officials, police, women commissions' representatives, Provincial Women Protection authority etc.

Keeping in view the dynamics of the project implementation and the time available to complete the survey, two IDIs at each provincial level were carried out. The selection of interview participants or IDIs was made during the outcome harvesting workshop with ITA and OiP participants.

Although survey participants' profiling was not suggested in Oxfam Canada's KII and IDI tools, the national consultant proposed using the same profiling format to record the demographic data that might be helpful in report compilation by the Lead International Consultant. Moreover, KII and IDI survey tools were also reviewed according to the given guidelines after they were used with the survey participants. The learning from the review is documented in the report.

Based on the above-suggested samples for each of the data collection tools, following table presents the consolidated picture of sampling:

Sampling

Tool	Punjab	Sindh	Provincial level Sindh(Karachi)	Provincial level Punjab(Lahore)	Islamabad
FGDs	8	16	x	x	x
KIIs with Oxfam Project Staff	x	x	x	x	1
KII with partner staff (ITA)				1	
KII with Women Leaders/members of WPF	2	4	x	x	x
IDI (National Influencers)			2	2	

Outcome Harvesting Workshop:

As per the ToRs of the evaluation, once inception report along with the set of survey tools and detailed work plan was ready, a two day outcome harvesting workshop was conducted by the national consultant. This workshop served two prime purposes:

2.5a. Gathering information from the partners and Oxfam team on the process of implementation, progress on and progress towards the whole result chain comprising of immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes and finally the ultimate outcome of the project; and

2.5b. Building the capacity of the local partner to support the consultant in gathering information around the outcome chain. Therefore, the consultant briefed the partner in techniques and tools for gathering relevant data from the field that could possibly be used in the analysis and shared with the lead consultant along with all the necessary information.

During this exercise, the consultant also analyzed the intended and unintended progress on the outcomes that would have achieved during implementation using multiple strategies of intervention. For this purpose, OiP shared with the national consultant, its prescribed format and guidelines for conducting the workshop (Annexure 6). The comprehensive report of the OH workshop is attached as annexure 7.

Field Data Collection Plan

Field Data Collection Plan is reflected in the complete work plan attached in Annexure 8. A separate field plan with exact dates (Annexure: 9) was also developed based on the timelines reflected in the complete work plan, according to the assignment ToRs.

Validation workshop

The consultant team then again brought together OiP and its partner, ITA and study team members after the evaluation and preliminary findings were concluded. The consultant guided in the process of assimilation of qualitative narratives, analysis, and validation. Preliminary findings were presented to the

partner, and relevant staff members of Oxfam in Pakistan. All the information required for further in-depth analysis was taken by the consultant at the workshop for drafting the detailed report. During that workshop, a dissemination strategy of the report was also developed.

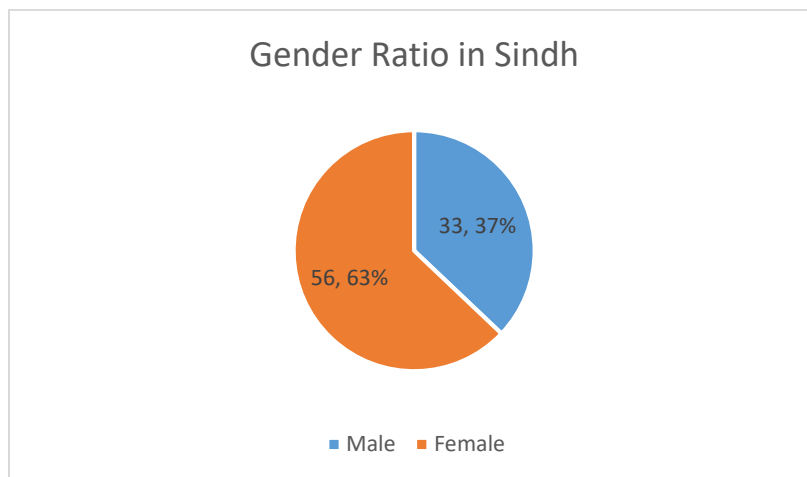
Province Wise Demographic Status from Field Data Collection

Participants' demographic data is attached as annexure 10. A brief analysis is given below.

Sindh Demographic Status

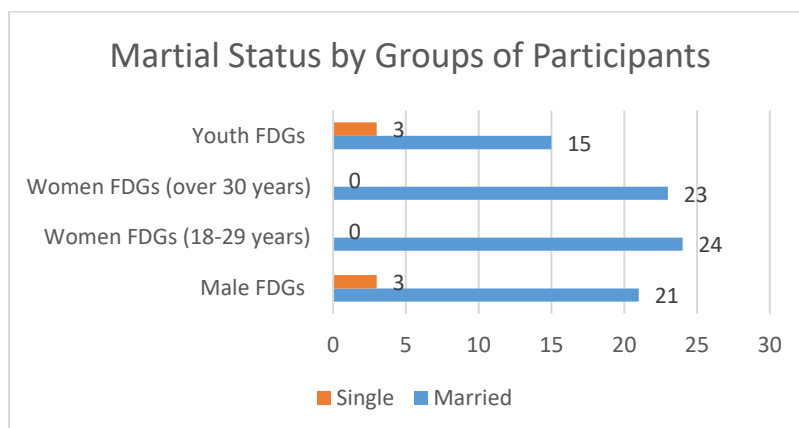
Gender

In Sindh, 62% of the respondents were women while rest of the participants were male



Marital Status

In Sindh, 93% of different groups of participants interviewed were married. All women respondents in groups of 18-29 years and over 30 years were married. In Youth groups, 20% of respondents were single. Below chart highlights marital status by different groups



Average Age

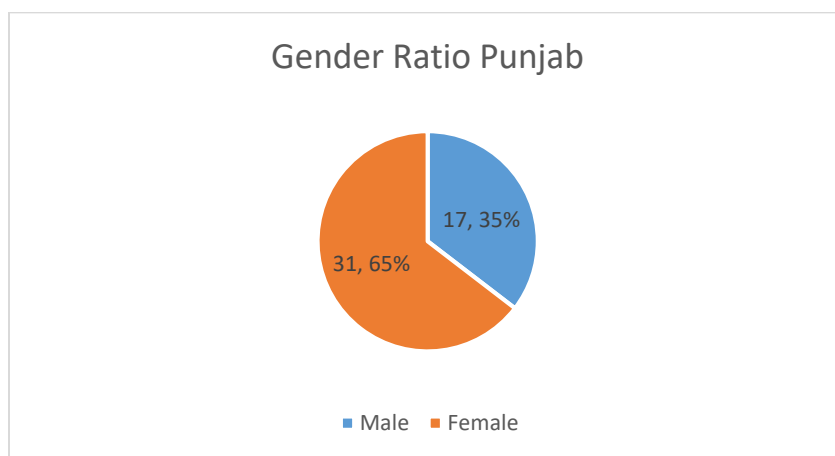
The average age of interviewed participants was 33 years. The youth groups had the lowest average age (21 years) whereas Male FDGs had the highest average age (43 years).

	Male FDGs	Women FDGs (18-29 years)	Women FDGs (over 30 years)	Youth FDGs	Total Average age
Average age	43	26	42	21	33

Punjab Demographic Status

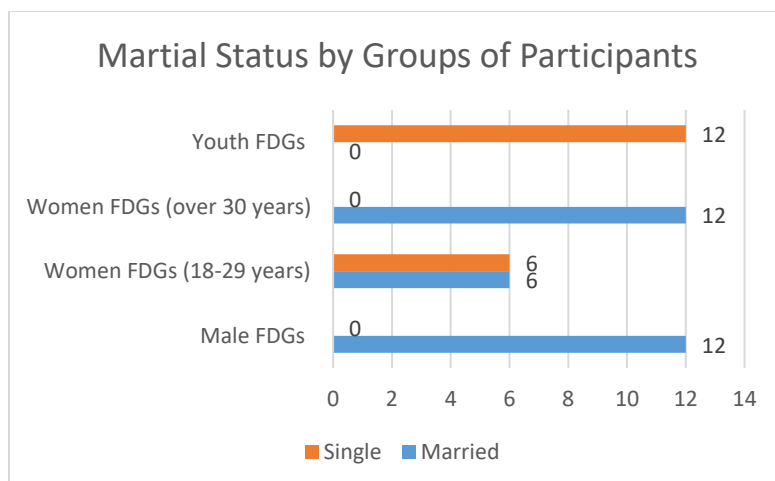
Gender

In Punjab, 65% of the respondents were women while rest of the participants were male



Marital Status

In Punjab, 62.5% of different groups of participants interviewed were married. 50% of Women respondents in groups of 18-29 years were married whereas 100% of women over 30 years were married. In Youth groups, all respondents were single Below chart highlights material status by different groups.



Average age

The average age of interviewed participants was 31 years. The youth groups had the lowest average age (19 years) whereas Women FDG (30 years and above) had the highest average age (43 years).

Average age	Male FDGs	Women FDGs (18-29 years)	Women FDGs (over 30 years)	Youth FDGs	Average age
	38	22	42	19	31

Education Qualifications

Around 43% of the participants interviewed had education till intermediate level, whereas 33% had attained graduation level education. In women FDGs (over 30 years), one respondent had post-graduation degree.

Education	Education Qualification				Total
	Male FDGs	Women FDGs (18-29 years)	Women FDGs (over 30 years)	Youth FDGs	
Middle/Primary	0	0	4	0	4
Metric	3	0	2	1	6
Intermediate	5	7	2	7	21
Graduation	4	5	3	4	16
Post-Graduation	0	0	1	0	1

Findings

Findings from Beneficiaries-Sindh

Participation in Creating Spaces

Members of Women Leader Groups (WLG) and Women Protection Forums (WPF)

Majority of the members of WLG and WPF interviewed have been involved in similar programmes since past 8-10 years. These groups constitute social and political activists (journalists, lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, political leaders, community activists, local councillors, government and NGO service providers, and police officers, etc.). As per discussion, the group leaders stated that they carried awareness raising sessions at community level as per existing laws and policies on VAWG. The awareness raising sessions were usually in the form of rallies, peaceful demonstrations, awareness walks as well as social media campaigning against violence and early force marriages. Prior to the awareness programme, these groups have been involved in training programme on child marriage act, women protection bill, gender equality, which as per KII interviewees increased their knowledge on VAWG issues and laws/policies related to it.

Women Beneficiaries

The Women respondents (Adults) in FGDs attended trainings through the project and participated in advocacy campaigns and rallies which improved their understanding on the issues. The interventions thereby enabled them to raise their voices against GBV and Early Child Marriages and has allowed them to feel more empowered for taking important decisions that affect their lives. Subsequent to awareness raising, majority of women participants are now well versed in causes and effects of child marriages, which according to the given responses affects mental health of girls, creates early pregnancy complications and leads to domestic violence and disturbances in marriage life, often leading to divorce. In few FGDs, women mentioned that immaturity level of girls during child marriages impairs them to manage household chores which often causes domestic violence and resistance from in-laws. In COVID crisis, activities of the project were halted and majority of the women FGDs respondents didn't participate in any activities.

Sharing their opinion on improving the programme, women mentioned that advocacy should be carried out on passing pro-women laws/policies, trained committees should be activated for addressing GBV and local *Molvi* and religious leaders should be part of community groups so that there is sustained change in norms around creating spaces for women social wellbeing.

"After attending the trainings on early child marriage, I stopped one early child marriage in my village with support of police. First I tried to convince the parents to stop early marriage. But they did not agree. Then I informed police and they took action to stop that early child marriage".

Women FGD Respondent in UC Wa;li M Rind, Shaheed Benazirabad

Male FGDs Beneficiaries

Similar to the responses in Women FGDs, the majority of male respondents (adults) participated in various trainings and seminars related to GBV and eliminating child marriages, however, in COVID 19 situation they couldn't adequately participate in the trainings. As a consequence of trainings conducted throughout the project tenure, perception of all men respondents has changed or there have been better understanding of women rights. In half of the FGDs, men treat respectfully, help them in domestic chores, allow girls/wives to participate in education and outdoor activities and also take consent of their daughters before marriage. Furthermore, without mentioning specific changes that have been generated

through the project, most of the men beneficiaries mentioned that there was general change in attitudes related to rights of women and fact that women are now participating in education and girls are not being forcefully married. Men respondents also corroborated with the view of women regarding improvement in the project and stated that religious leader should be involved to resolve GBV issues as well as volunteers and committees should be mobilized to address these issues

“Awareness campaigns should be organized at all levels, women police number should be increased, and women helpline should be effective, financial assistance should be available for women who experience violence”

Member of Women Protection Forum (WPF)
from UC # 9, Shaheed Benazirabad

Youth Group Beneficiaries

Youth groups like male and women FGDs respondents also participated in trainings related to GBV and child marriages. All respondents interviewed subsequently participated in carrying out awareness at community level. Couple of youth groups mentioned that they have been active for 1-2 years and have been working closely with the project partners for carrying out sensitization programmes. Almost all youth group interviewed witnessed either change of perception about women rights or have better understanding of the issues after being involved in project activities.

“After attending the training, I and my sister both go to attend trainings. My perception has been changed. Now I include my sister in all the activities”

Youth Group Respondent in UC UC Mir Atta
Muhammad Kali Ward 13, Umerkot

Prior to project there was bit of narrow-mindedness related to gender equality, however, since associating with the youth groups, respondents have gained more confidence and now also try to address the concerning issues at personal and community level.

In COVID 19 activities of youth groups were halted and they faced issues in communication at both programme and community level. However, for future improvement of the programme, one of the youth group suggested that, they should be registered legally as change agents. Most of the other participants mentioned emphasis on greater training and outreach programmes and involvement of local leaders, so that influence on ending this social harm is far reaching and more sustainable.

Perceptions on VAWG

Members of Women Leader Groups (WLG) and Women Protection Forums (WPF)

WLG and WPF have been active in reporting case of violence and domestic abuse. As per the evaluation findings, members in group interviewed reported and registered 150 cases of violence with local authorities and subsequently provided counseling and legal support. The caseload can be attributed to the effects of COVID 19 as well. The WLG and WPF maintain strong liaison with women helpline, women police station for referrals, however they continually face challenges as cases are not reported consistently by women due to lack of confidence. One of the challenges highlighted by groups was unavailability or dysfunctional safe housing and sanctuaries for protection of women. There are resource gaps at governmental level, which hampers availability of proper facilities including legal aid to women. Hence, in sustained training of relevant authorities including police and legal agencies should be carried out on laws, policies and legal support mechanisms.

Women Beneficiaries

During COVID 19 crisis, majority of women respondents witnessed or observed cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and torture. The reasons cited by them was unemployment, frustration, and lack of access to outdoor activities for men. These factors also created mental pressure on women and led to disturbances in domestic life. However, women also mentioned that the project has led to positive changes in the community norms, as women now know where to seek help and report cases of violence and domestic abuse.

“There was an incident. A husband tortured his wife. The community leaders interfered and called police. That husband was arrested by the police. The community leaders then resolved the conflict and ensured protection of that women. Now both husband and wife are living happily. Community leaders were trained about women rights in this project.”

Women FGDs Respondent, UC UC Atta
Muhammad Kali Ward 2, Umerkot District

Also, they have knowledge of specific laws on the issues, hence they feel protected. Couple of FGDs mentioned cases where community leaders and police were promptly contacted, and they inferred to resolve the matter. This can be attributed to trainings that project has provided on the issues of GBV and domestic violence. To address domestic violence majority of women shared that awareness programmes should be carried on sustained basis. On a related point, couple of FGDs elaborated that women facilitation centers should be created for protection and safety of women and government should enact laws and appropriate women focused allocation towards addressing these issues.

Male FGDs Beneficiaries

Male Beneficiaries depicted adequate understanding of issues faced by women which led to domestic violence, harassment, and abuse. While citing the issues and causes, most of the FGDs elaborated that social harms like early marriages, honor killing, feudal norms and bonded labor causes of harassment and violence. Lack of access to education and safe housing as well as security threats in the community, hampers rights of women. One of the FGDs, mentioned open defecation as one of the major reasons for abuse and violence. While mentioning causes, the participant didn't elucidate if any specific measures are being taken or voices are raised to prevent this social harm.

Drawing reference to COVID 19, majority of FGDs participants stated that violence against women has increased substantial due to COVID 19 because of unemployment related factors. Additional work burden on women, as well as psychological pressure have been prominent in villages that has increased ratio of violence in rural areas as compared to urban segments. Nonetheless, the participants did agree that local mechanisms are available whereby women can report cases. Also, women protection forums serve as facilitation support in sensitive matters and many families and husbands have adopted behavior change towards accepting rights of women and are also taking steps in the right direction. Participants view that to further inculcate and sustain change, it is necessary invest more in 1) community trainings, 2) legal mechanisms to punish culprits and 3) safe housing and sanctuaries for protection of women.

Youth Group Beneficiaries

Youth groups are actively taking steps to end violence against women and address issues of child marriages. In 3-4 FGDs, participants mentioned specific actions they took at community level to report cases to local authorities. The cases were related to domestic violence and abuse. Other than that youth groups are actively engaged with community leader/influencers on sensitization programmes. As mentioned in 'findings' in 'creating spaces' section, youth groups have witnessed behavioral change and have adopted positive mindsets towards advocating for women rights at community level.

"As I got informed that a husband has tortured her wife at my neighbor, I reached there. We registered a complaint at a police station. After that I educated husband of victim women that physical violence against a women is crime and that women have equal right. The husband then apologized from her wife and promised that he could never do any violence on her. They are living happily. That action was a very proud moment for me."

Youth FGDs Respondent, UC Number 9, Shaheed Benazirabad District

Similar to male and female FGDs insights, all youth groups interviewed also stated that COVID 19 has resulted in increase in cases of sexual harassment and violence. Furthermore, one of the FGD participant stated that early and forced marriage cases have increased during lockdown due to isolation and non-reporting of cases. The factors they highlighted included unemployment and social isolation which has increased frustration level of men.

Youth groups also highlighted that women were empowered and were made aware about their rights. In couple of FGDs, they indicated that women had started to report cases due to increased awareness although this contradicts point made by other youth groups who stated that cases were not reported in COVID 19. Similar to viewpoint of male FGDs, the majority youth groups also stated that awareness programme should be sustained on this social issue. They further stressed importance of engaging youth groups as legal entities with interlinkages with relevant authorities so that cases are adequately managed, and appropriate decisions are taken

Perceptions on CEFM practices

Members of Women Leader Groups (WLG) and Women Protection Forums (WPF)

Members of WLG and WPF work in liaison with local authorities and communities in aim to reduce CEFM practices. During the discussion they highlighted that one of their stakeholders are religious leaders who are regularly approached and sensitized on the issues. In some rare instance, resistance is faced however in most cases, religious leaders have supported dialogues regarding early child marriage and violence.

Women Beneficiaries

Adult women interviewed in FGDs had varied understanding of marriage age. In many instances they stated their opinion on the limit, instead of what is happening at the local level. As per the responses given, 18-20 years was cited as age of marriages for girls and 25 years for boys. In view of existing trends of marriage age, all women FGDs cited that child marriages have declined in their areas, due to greater knowledge given in programmes and media about the issue and consequences it can have. While further elaborating the point in the related question, it was stated that ways to reduce child marriages is by 1) educating Nikkah Khuwan, 2) prohibiting marriage out CNIC and 3) punishing parents and Molvi if they

are indulging in such act. Over and above participants further reiterated that awareness sessions need to continue for wider impact on mitigating harms of child marriages.

Women respondents also felt that project has led to some changes in norms and perceptions related to child marriages, as girls are now aware of age limit for marriage, are also able to resist forceful marriages and can complain to local authorities on any forceful act. This has led to changes in attitude of men towards them as they are either more polite or are fearful that any forceful act on their part will be reported to authorities.

Male Beneficiaries

Male FGDs participants viewed that child marriages have declined in their communities and general marriage age of women is between 18-20 years and for boys in it is 20-23 years. These findings correlated with viewpoints shared in women FGDs. Discussing about preventing child marriages, male participants stated that awareness programme should be carried out for molvis (clerics) as well as training at school and community level.

Youth Groups Beneficiaries

Findings from Youth groups also coincided with views of Male and Female FGDs groups, which revealed that child marriages have decreased in the communities and marriage age is between 18-22 years. They also mentioned that trainings of Molvis and religious leaders need to be carried out on sustained basis so that age of marriage is verified and proper protocols of *Nikkah* are implemented as per government rules and regulations

Findings from Beneficiaries-Punjab

Participation in Creating Spaces

Women Leaders and Women Protection Forum Members

The second phase of interviewing women beneficiaries comprised interviews of Women Leaders and proactive members of WPF. At both locations Jhelum, Punjab, the respondents demonstrated familiarity with the objectives of CS and the description of their roles and responsibilities in the project. Both the women from two different interviews were experienced in community mobilization work as they had continued participating in the project since the time of AF, the previous implementing partner of OiP. Their work and positions at other prominent organizations (respondent from UC Kotla Faqeer is the President of Teacher Association and also the Secretary Pakistan Youth Association) help them mobilize the communities and further the cause of CS with dedication. The respondents confirmed attending several training sessions on VAWG, Gender Equality, existing pro-women laws, and prevention of CEFM, by ITA.

The groups/forum of WLG and WPF were established to create community-based structures not only for the community mobilization, but also to identify cases of VAWG/CEFM and facilitate their referrals to the concerned service providers.

It was reported in the interviews that these members had actively used several tools to bring positive change in the communities they worked with. These tools included advocacy campaigns, walks for highlighting women's rights, and community consultations. The members also arranged several

motivational talks at the community level by renowned activists to encourage women for their rights and self-empowerment. Sometimes technology (Fb and WhatsApp) was used for making inspirational videos and uploading them on social media for wider awareness and for helping a victim connect with a service provider through WhatsApp groups of WPF.

Among all the strategies used by WLG and WPF, mobilizing and training the youth was rated as the most effective. Moreover, the members found the youth very receptive and responsive to the awareness sessions as a majority of them supported the objectives of the project in their capacities. She further recommended focusing more on boys and men in the future as their support and sensitization had been instrumental in preventing VAWG.

Besides working actively for the CS project, women leader and WPF highlighted many challenges and obstacles as well. They expressed their concern about people having difficulty in accepting a woman, raising voice against VAWG. It was reported that illiterate community members labeled them as NGO agents. Although these activists mostly had the support of their immediate family members like husband, father, or brother as they have been successful in sensitizing them, their uncles and other relatives discourage them from this service and social work. According to the respondents, it has always been difficult to break cultural barriers. Another main challenge highlighted was that even if the victim/survivor-woman/girl was assisted and her referral was facilitated, the whole process was found to be so cumbersome that the woman was under tremendous pressure to withdraw the complaint.

Moreover, working with religious leaders, especially on the issue of CEFM has been particularly challenging as many of them consider it against religious beliefs. Another obstacle highlighted for women and girls victims was at the time of police reporting. The responses informed that in most of the abuse cases, police reporting is done to a male police officer and women are very uncomfortable in sharing details of the violence with them, especially when the incident is of sexual violence.

Women Beneficiaries

Like women from Sindh, participants from Punjab also shared that they actively participated in the training and awareness raising sessions of the project. The major positive change that occurred due to extensive training resultantly enabled the project participants to be courageous enough to change the rigid mind-sets of their community members. They expressed their concerns about patriarchal society and existing social norms around VAWG. However, majority confidently posited that because of their participation in the

"Before attending the project, I was always very afraid of going out in the market for shopping as men would easily pass by and touch me inappropriately. But now after attending the empowering awareness sessions of CS, I can bravely face such cheap people".

Women FGD Respondent in UC, Kotla Faqeer Jehlum

CS project, they have realized well that VAWG was not to be blamed on women or girls. It was a product of a patriarchal society. Therefore, participants viewed the entire situation of VAWG and child marriage as a global issue wherever there is a gender imbalance in the communities and societies.

Many of them witnessed cancelling child marriages in their communities just because someone had helped them to raise their voice and had reminded them of legal repercussions. Women have also become more responsible towards providing safety for their children to prevent them from sexual abuse. A

participant in Jhelum UC, Akram shaheed library spoke about starting pick and drop of her children from school by herself who were earlier commuting unsupervised which posed a continuous risk of child sexual abuse.

Almost all the participant in both the UCs of Jhelum expressed their concern about the impact of COVID on their participation, especially when a complete lockdown was imposed by the government authorities. A participant in UC Akram Shaheed library in Jhelum described COVID as a horrible experience. As shared during the discussion, the economic burden increased over-night that resulted in increased domestic violence. As effects of COVID 19 increased, the regular contact of project beneficiary women with the project staff was also discontinued. The majority of women FGD participants of ages 30 years and above from UC Akram Shaheed library in Jhelum shared that their contact was soon recovered via online sessions. The women continued their training and awareness sessions through Zoom meetings held per week by ITA officers. They found it quite a new and innovative experience and learned for the first time about the wonders of online learning. However, some women faced a great deal of difficulty during the transition of training and awareness sessions from on-site to the online mode of presentation. The had to face bad connection issues due to weak internet signals and frequent load shedding was an additional challenge.

“The videos were so interesting that my daughter also joined me when there was online session. She even saved all the videos shown in the online sessions”.

Women FGD Respondent in UC, Akram Shaheed library, Jhelum

With regards to change in communities dynamics, women FGDs revealed a split of opinions. Almost half of them were of the view that there has been a lot of change in the community in terms of reduction in VAWG and CM, as a result of the CS project. This response was mainly from women of 30 years and above. However, younger women FGDs depicted that though the change in the communities’ attitude has occurred, there is still a lot to be done to mobilize and sensitize the communities in general for preventing VAWG and century-old criminal practice of CM.

In UC Akram shaheed library Jhelum, local women who participated in the CS project activities have initiated an innovative approach. Besides conventional identification of women’s rights violation cases, these women have also created a WhatsApp group. Social activists, lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers and ex councilors have joined the group. Women are actively using this group to raise awareness and to highlight any incident of VAWG or CM. This social media tool has helped them on several occasion for stopping CM or helping a victim/survivor of VAWG.

At least one participant from each UC expressed views of holding such capacity building initiatives not only at the community but also at schools, colleges and university levels. They mentioned that change in attitude should occur at a very young age, especially for boys so that they do not continue patriarchal practices or contribute to VAWG when they grow up. Moreover, training of DC Office staff was also recommended as all major government departments are party to the DC Office. Their training will ensure the onboarding of all the concerned women and child protection departments across the district.

Some women participants also suggested about increasing the number of religious leaders as ambassadors of women and girls’ protection. They added that these leaders should be made responsible for the safety of women and girls as they have a strong influence on their communities

Men Beneficiaries

Men FGDs confirmed that men were also provided trainings and awareness on the prevention of VAWG and CEFM. All of the respondents were well informed about these two gender based violence. They understood clearly how they can play active role in the prevention of these abuses in their communities. The training enabled them to see the real causes of VAWG. They agreed that as men there was so much that they could do to protect their women and girls. The trained men have even cascaded the ITA training to their other fellow community members. All of them shared that they had started sending their daughters to schools and no one was marrying off her underage girl as it was against the law and has an established adverse effect on girl's health.

Youth Groups Beneficiaries

With regards to youth participation in the CS, the FGDs depict quite similar responses from all across the two selected UCs. Every individual has attended several awareness raising training sessions, in which prevention of VAWG and CEFM was the main focus. Youth also attended consultative meetings in which they discussed their roles as young girls and boys towards reducing child marriages and changing attitudes of their communities about VAWG and CEFM. They all confirmed that the engagement of youth through community-based structures was initiated 4 years back by Aurat Foundation, the earlier implementing partner of OiP. Many of them have been part of the project since then. However, around one third of youth participants joined the youth groups just a few months back.

Respondents posited that through the youth training sessions, they gained new knowledge about several elements around VAWG and CEFM, which they were not familiar with before. They learned what was GBV and its different forms, how to facilitate a victim or survivor through a referral mechanism, what women and girls' rights are and how to support them. They also learnt about existing laws that protect women and girls along with available service providers for women and girls' protection including Police Help Desks and Women shelters or Safe Houses. Girls from the youth group showed their extra enthusiasm and energy as they learned about their rights for the first time through the CS project. They were excited to learn that no body could force them to get married without their consent and free will when they reach legal marriageable age. Both girls and boys felt proud that with CS training they are empowered to contribute to the cause of preventing VAWG and CEFM within their communities. Unlike women FGD responses on adverse effect of COVID's on their training and other project activities, all youth were confident that the pandemic did not affect their activities and they continued to attend the online session and other in person meetings with SOPs.

"The most useful activity was about the service providers. We came to know about institutions such as Dar ul aman and other facilities."

Boy Respondent from Youth FGD, UC, Kotla Faqeer Jehlum

All the boys in youth FGD were convinced that above all, they had learned to respect women and girls because of the CS project. Earlier they assumed that violence, disrespectful behaviour towards girls, child marriage was normal for girls. A male participant from UC Akram Shaheed confessed that he stopped standing outside girls' schools and colleges staring at them as he has realized it well that it was inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour and he had no right to harass girls that way.

The youth had many suggestions regarding improving project activities for future interventions. They wanted to have these activities extend to schools and colleges and also suggested the proactive use of social media to spread the message much faster to young generations. They recommended extending the geographical scope of the project so that the change is much bigger and substantial.

Economic Activities

All the participants confirmed that CS project did not offer any economic opportunity or any monetary incentives during the project. However, a lawyer in women's FGD from UC Akram shaheed library in Jehlum mentioned that although she was providing pro bono legal services to the victims/survivors of VAWG, she also sometimes charged nominal legal fee for representation. Thus, the project indirectly created some income generation sources for legal aid service providers. In UC Kotla Faqeer-Jehlum, a participant shared that her thoughts that although there was no direct economic benefit from the CS project, she felt that enhanced confidence and moral empowerment have paved her way for income generation opportunities. This opinion was seconded by other participants in the same FGD.

"Through these sessions, we feel very confident that I want to do job now and generate income for my family."

Women FGD Respondent in UC, Kotla Faqeer Jehlum

Perceptions on VAWG

Women Beneficiaries

Women became more vulnerable during the pandemic. A lawyer in the group informed that the domestic violence accelerated during the pandemic as she started receiving several abuse cases. The instances of violence and abuse were not from outside but rather from the husband or in-laws. Women found that the main cause of this increased abuse was that males were staying home all the time. Low or no economic activity resulted in tremendous frustration of male family members and they vented out their frustration in the form of domestic abuse on their wives or other female family members. These abuses included sexual, physical, verbal, psychological, economic abuses.

Although by the time pandemic arrived, the project had already started making changes in the perception of the communities and had started empowering women and girls beneficiaries socially, participants described the pandemic situation as "horrible times" in terms of VAWG. In order to be prepared for these challenges, vulnerable women of UC Akram Shaheed library were oriented about preparing their safety plans in case the violence escalated at home during the pandemic. They were aware that the safety plan should include where to go, what essentials items to keep, how to keep children safe and leave the house safely. Members of WLG and WPF identified the domestic violence by husband and in-laws had been most common cases of violence in the communities even before the pandemic hit the country.

"Because of this institute (Apna Ghar) my own daughter went to school and she is a teacher now and earns for herself."

Women FGD Respondent in UC, Kotla Faqeer Jehlum

With the project interventions, many women had an option of going to women shelters like 'Darul' Aman' meaning safe house, or 'Apna Ghar' meaning my home in English, when they were abused. Earlier they were neither aware of such services or were not empowered to make such decisions for their own safety.

Many women respondents have referred victims and survivors to such shelters after learning about them through the project. Women were very satisfied with such services, especially with Apna Ghar as besides offering free shelter, this private institute provides opportunities to women to earn and gives platform for younger girls learn at learning spaces. In addition to increasing accessibility to women shelter services, a massive campaign was run for CNIC registration of women so that women could have their own identity.

Before project intervention, there was no community based mechanism to support the women victim. However, with awareness from the project, women were not only identifying the cases of violence, but they were also mobilizing sensitized local councilors or community leaders to counsel the abuser to change his abusive attitude towards his wife. Women beneficiaries were able to convince some community men for respecting their wives in addition to taking economic responsibility for them. The awareness changed the mindset to some extent. But considerable improvement are still required at community level for changing mindsets. Due to changes in thinking, women beneficiaries reported witnessing some incidents of protecting women after abuse that could not have been possible in the past.

“In my community a robbery incident occurred and robber raped the housewife. But I must salute to her husband and family /in-laws. They accepted this woman again in a respected way. They didn’t taunt her.”

Women FGD Respondent in UC, Kotla Faqeer Jehlum

All the women believed that to further reduce violence against women and girls, it was very important to continue all the activities of the project, specifically awareness on VAWG and CEFM. Moreover, they also noted that the government should take lead to protect women and girls. At the community level, women were happy to note that some people got aware that if a girl was abused, she would raise her voice against the violence. This was enough to keep them away from any intentional violence inflicted on the women and girls.

Men Beneficiaries

It was evident from Men FGDs that they were able to understand the underlying causes of VAWG. Their responses depicted that VAWG or GBV is mainly due to a misbalance of power. They confessed that they live in a patriarchal society where women and girls hardly enjoy their rights. Men also realized that since girls and women were either illiterate or with low literacy, they were not empowered to defend themselves and those girls are the ones who are an easy target of violence and victimization. Surprisingly, one respondent from UC Akram Shaheed Library opinionated that domestic violence is always due to a woman’s fault when she is unable to handle petty domestic issues and starts arguing with husband on ignorable issues.

Youth Beneficiaries

The Youth FGDs revealed that trained girls and boys have contributed towards awareness raising initiatives in their communities, schools and colleges. The majority of them have many proud moments to share. They have been able to stop one form of violence or another on different occasions including stopping the beating of a wife by her husband, connecting a victim of domestic violence with a support group and Police Help Desk, or empowering another victim of domestic violence to warn her husband of complaining to the police if he continued the abuse. Girls and boys from Youth FGDs also expressed that

before the project they thought violence was a family issue and no one should intervene or some of them thought that violence against women is usually because of their own fault, and women and girls should never participate in decision making at household, or community level. However, all these misconceptions have been removed after the awareness and capacity building sessions by ITA. They have now come to know that men and women, boys and girls have equal rights.

On the issue of COVID's impact on VAWG, all but one expressed their concern about increased domestic violence during the pandemic. Only one individual was of the view that it had decreased of risk of violence as women and girls stayed at home during the lockdown.

Perceptions on CEFM practices

Women Beneficiaries

All women FGDs at both locations revealed mixed responses about the trend of CM. Some communities have become sensitive to an extent that many girls are now sent to school and their marriage is delayed until their legal age. The participation of girls in decision making in the formed community structures and their continuous community engagement also played a key role in delaying CEFM. Women confidently feel that this has happened due to CS awareness in the targeted communities.

"In our village everything become change now everyone have awareness related to these child marriages."

*Women FGD Respondent in UC, Kotla
Faqeer Jehlum*

However, a concern was flagged by the participants that there were still some poor ethnic communities like 'Pathans' and 'Sunhars' who haven't changed their practice of CM. They want to get rid of economic burden by marrying off their daughters at a young age. Extreme poverty does not let them change their practice even after some awareness about the harms of CM.

Women shared their observations and experiences that although there were many incidents where boys were also victims of CM, girls suffered the most from this heinous crime. They are even married to much older men if they pay some handsome amount to poor parents in return. The only solution to this menace, besides more frequent community awareness sessions, is girls' education, more economic opportunities for families so that they come out of the vicious cycle of poverty and are not forced to marry their girls at a young age. There should be some home based economic opportunities for girls and women so that instead of being seen as an economic burden, they contribute to the family's income generation.

Men Beneficiaries

Men FGDs depict that men have taken a proactive role in defeating the menace of CEFM within their families. Individuals confirmed that are not marrying off their girls before age. This resulted in the complete eradication of CM in some of the families. They suggested engaging influential people of their communities to stop child marriage. All the men trained in the CS project either had sent their girls to school or have at least intentions to do so in near future. They have realized well that education is the strongest tool that can save girls and women from any form of violence. They further expressed that an educated and empowered woman cannot only protect herself but also her children and the entire family as well.

“The change occurred due to awareness. Now people, especially women are more aware about their rights and are more empowered than before. Education is the main reason for this change, while media also played significant role in spreading awareness.

Men FGD Respondent in UC, Akram
Shaheed Library, Jehlum

Youth

The youth felt quite concerned about CM. They had many suggestions for eliminating it from their communities and the society in general. They wanted to introduce education on CEFM at school and college level, through social media campaigns against CM and stricter laws to punish the violators of child marriage law. One of the FGD participants in UC Kotla Faqeer suggested establishing one youth group in every the school, college and university level that could directly work on preventing VWAG and CEFM.

Findings from National Influencers Interviews

In-depth, interviews of national influencers shed light on several aspects of their engagement in the project at different levels over 5 years, their influence and change in the perception about the issues encompassing VAWG and CEFM within their jurisdiction in particular and across the country in general. Both interviews in Lahore, the provincial capital of Punjab province revealed that substantial work has been done in terms of advocacy and engagement with national influencers in Punjab. The two interview participants spoke clearly and evidently about project interventions, their impact on their department, in the communities and at the policy level

In Sindh, the national influencers have been working in different respective capacities to carry out efforts to combat VAWG and CEFM. Representative of commission on status from women; mentioned policy related and institutional initiatives carried out at government level which have improved coordination between government departments for mitigating effects of VAWG and CEFM. Panah Gah have been working at ground level for supporting and ensuring protection of women in their centers. They indicated that strong liaison with judiciary have also helped them to ensure safety and wellbeing of women survivors. With regard to the project, commission of status for women highlighted several gaps and coordination challenges; due to which needs highlighted by them were not taken into consideration. Panah appreciated collaboration with Oxfam in terms of capacity building; however, their association with Oxfam was for a short duration.

The following section depicts the findings from interviews of these participants:

- Head of Legal at Punjab Commission for the Status of Women

- DG Punjab Women Protection Authority in Punjab
- Chairperson, Commission on Status of women, Sindh
- Executive Director, Panah Gah, Sindh

Participation of National Influencers in CS

Punjab

The Punjab Commission for the Status of Women has been engaged with the CS project right from its inception. The department has worked quite closely with the previous partner, Aurat Foundation who have introduced the CS project to the department. When the project was handed over to the new partner, the department stretched out its full support and collaboration to, ITA. It was learned that continuity of the same focal person at the department since its establishment in 2013, has helped in smooth and continuous coordination with NGOs and therefore, this was also found to be a key element of a successful partnership between ITA and the Commission.

“In 2019, Women Protection Authority was reactivated through the support of like-minded organizations like ITA. ITA presented its support for similar mandate of women protection in 6 districts. Their work matched our mandate. We went into formal partnership with them to work on preventing violence against women and girls and CEFM

Representative of Punjab Women Protection Authority, Lahore

The department has held several consultative meetings, joined capacity building initiatives, advocacy campaigns and policymaking efforts. The Commission has also issued a joint official notification to UCs with ITA, to ensure the applicability of family laws, to control unregistered marriages and to sensitize Nikah Khwa (marriage registrar) about the legal marriageable age of boys and girls. The same response was received from Punjab Women Protection Authority. Since the mandate of both the departments of working on GBV, VAWG, CEFM, exchange marriages and honor killings exactly matched with that of the CS, both the departments wholeheartedly joined the cause. The CS interventions happened to support PWPA's work in particular as the DG expressed that the department was unfortunately dormant until 2019 due to a lack of human and financial resources. In the CS project design the department sought a timely opportunity to revive its work.

Although findings presented clear evidence of the two departments' participation and engagement with the CS project, their involvement at the design stage could not be established. Since the Punjab Commission works quite closely with NGOs working on the mandate of GBV, there could be a possibility that five years back there was some involvement. However, no clear recollection could be ascertained. Similarly, since Punjab Women Protection Authority was engaged in 2019 with ITA's work in the CS project, their participation at the design stage, years back, could not have been possible.

“It is a good project which should go forward & its benefit will reap over time not instantly.”

Representative of Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, Lahore

Discussion around CS's alignment with national or provincial policies presented that the project was well aligned with national policies on GBV as well as with the country's internationally signed commitments on different conventions for women's rights and protection. ITA's outreach to the grass root level was specifically helpful in the implementation of laws and policies that were otherwise only existed in papers.

Sindh

Panah Gah in Sindh was introduced to the project through Aurat foundation as a result of previous association. It was a short-term project and Oxfam provided capacity building support for Panah Gah Staff, which were beneficial for staff, also Oxfam helped with visibility interventions related to publishing Panah story book. The representative further mentioned that funds which were dedicated for book launch, awareness raising for other Darul Aman were transferred to COVID activities related to stress management. The commission for the Status for Women felt that the project didn't involve them appropriately and their institutional and policy related needs were not considered. The Commission representative also expressed that requirement of documentation from OiP took too much of their time, which they wanted to be avoided in the future.

Perception on VAWG and CEFM

Punjab

National influencers in Punjab defined poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, cultural norms, misinterpretation of religion as the main causes of VAWG and Child Marriages. DG PWPA posited that a few years ago administrative and legislatives issue were also prevalent. However, since in recent years ample legislative work has been done to prevent VAWG and CEFM, there is a dire need to work with the communities and ITA has efficiently tried to fill that gap. Several laws are in place to prevent VAWG and stop child marriages such as, Pakistan Penal code & Criminal Procedure Code, the Punjab Child marriage & Restraint Act 2013, Punjab Women Protection Authority Act 2107, Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016. Some of these laws are so comprehensive that not only a detailed description of crime is there, but also a description of punishment. However, the implementation of these laws is the main challenge. Moreover, despite several national and provincial laws enactment, PWPA is still working without any official policy or rules of business, which was identified as one of the main causes of gaps in the implementation.

For future implementations, national influencers presented some concrete suggestions. They suggested engaging and consulting the relevant departments with which partnership is sought at a much later stage, at the very beginning stage of project designing. Specifically, a Stakeholders Analysis was recommended by PWPA which could have increased the mutual understanding and ownership of the project. DG-PWPA further went on to say that if his department were engaged at the designing stage, he would have definitely identified the need for a PWPA's official policy and would have loved to work with ITA to develop the same. It would have certainly helped the department institutionalize the CS project and its learning.

Both the departments in Punjab are involved at the policy level with parliamentarians and legislatures to further strengthen VAWG and CM prevention mechanisms. The Commission has drafted amendments in Punjab Child Marriage Act to increase the legal marriageable age of girls from 16 to 18 years. With its

efforts, the amendments are adopted by legislatures and the draft is currently at the Islamic Council of Ideology for final approval. Moreover, in Punjab Assembly, if any question is raised by an MPA regarding women, it comes to the Commission which takes lead to draft the response notification and sends it further for the approval of the Minister.

In addition to mobilizing and engaging the communities, the project has also played a significant role in sensitizing the departments it engaged with on women's rights based approach, such as Police, Health and Social Welfare Departments. The interview participants expressed that they have become more sensitive towards their female co-workers as a result of participation in the project activities. Besides, it has also changed their perspective about the communities. They had mistakenly assumed that community awareness was not possible. However, the project has proven this perception wrong.

As concluding remarks, DG PWPA shared that CEFM was mainly a cultural issue but it was also an economic issue and this aspect cannot be ignored. Therefore, for future projects, there should be some economic intervention alongside community engagement and advocacy efforts.

Sindh

National influencers from Sindh identified that child marriages and violence against women was undoubtedly a widespread issue in Sindh. There are several laws in place such as child marriages restraint act was passed in 2013, however, implementation of the laws is a major issue. Commission on Status for women highlighted that dearth of financial and human resources affects implementation of laws; however, since last three years, since its formation commission has taken concerted efforts to monitor the situation while carrying out advocacy to highlight the bottlenecks and challenges. One of the success of the commission is that several scattered departments; like child protection authority, shelter homes and complain cells come under ambit of women commission. In the last cabinet meeting, this structure was approved and is under implementation. For reporting and addressing cases of violence, all SSPs and DIGs are connected with commission and work in a coordinated manner with strong response mechanism. Panah Gah Sindh highlighted that child marriage needed to be seen in a larger context and law needs to be reviewed as well. Because it is unviable to have a blanket law where girls are marrying before age limit; other options such as access to education needs to be given as young girls who consider marriage as an easy option for freedom. In Panah situation is such that there are more girls than women; so for that specific awareness sessions need to be carried out to sensitize girls on harms of child marriages and more importantly on role of shelters towards completing transition of girls from shelters to independent life.

The respondents from all the four departments confirmed that complaints of domestic violence increased during COVID lock down when economic activities stopped. Depression among the family members was widely reported which directly impacted the women. As a concluding remark, both national influencers from Sindh highlighted that documentation needs to be improved from Oxfam. Moreover, for disbursement of funds there are several financial requirements which often affects the implementation. Commission specifically highlighted coordinating and

transparency related gaps from Oxfam which created a mistrust and further affects their relationship in the project.

DAC Criteria Findings

In addition to the above findings from each of the project beneficiaries and stakeholders, the study also explored the factors that contributed toward the sustainability of the project, its relevance with the identified problem and gaps, its impact and effectiveness. Primarily findings from the KII tools of Oxfam staff and Oxfam partner staff were triangulated with the findings from other beneficiaries' accounts to suggest data that reflects on the above-mentioned elements of the project. The following section sheds light on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability.

Relevance

The programme intervention was found to be very relevant in terms of the country's landscape on women's rights. Its features were designed to strengthen the systems of implementing partners, support alliances, sensitize all the stakeholders about the landscape of child marriages/Violence against women and girls while creating an effective space for women to raise their voices. Work was also done towards changing social gender norms by engaging influencers at the district level (counselors, lawyers, religious leaders, human rights activists, women leaders, etc).

Initially, the work focus was on MNAs and MPAs for using their influence on the beneficiaries, however, it was realized by OiP after the midterm review findings and recommendations that there was a dire need to use the influence of other community-based influencers as well who were more connected with their community members and could reach out to them and influence them more effectively. The engagement of such influencers was found to be more relevant to the beneficiaries and for the project in general.

Among many other interventions carried out under each of the three pillars, OiP found the following most relevant throughout the project:

- Sensitizing the community under Pillar 1,
- Economic empowerment under Pillar 2,
- OiP's direct linkages and connections with government organizations and institutes (e.g. ROZAN, Darul Aman), under Pillar 3.

Coherence

The data gathered from key informant interviews of OiP and partner's staff indicate that none of the existing staff members have been part of the initial design of the project. OiP staff member leading the project as its Project Manager, joined in year 4 of the project. Partner ITA was taken on board in year 4 too. However, learning from the MTR convinced the OiP staff to redesign and tweak some of the activities. The prominent of which included decreasing total dependence on the partner, developing OiP's own linkages and relationship with the essential departments and institutes such as the Women Development Department, Sindh Commission on the Status of Women. The MTR depicted that in order to meet the expected objectives of the project in the remaining time, OiP needed to expedite and be involved proactively in some parts of the implementation. The support and coordination extended to these departments strengthened their capacity and indicated improvement in service provision to women victims or survivors of violence.

The learning gathered from the evaluation and redesigning not only helped OiP, it also enabled other CS participating countries to learn and reflect on the best practices. The project manager shared that in year 4, she had an opportunity to present the Pakistan programme, at a Regional Learning Review Meeting

where she presented new country strategies of direct linkages, private partnerships, engagement of communities through alternate creative means such as theatres and live talk shows.

Moreover, in addition to the project's alignment with the national laws on women, the project also contributed to OiP's country-level mission of gender justice portfolio. This portfolio specifically emphasizes women's own legal, social & economic rights through leadership. It encourages identifying & linking the survivors to protection mechanisms in the country so that they can carve out space for themselves.

Similarly, several national laws echo the exact understanding that is reflected in the design of the CS project. Some pro-women laws are as follows:

- The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2011
- Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, 2011
- Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offense of Rape) Act 2016
- Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of Honour) Act, 2016
- Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016
- Hindu Marriage Act, 2017

Effectiveness

As depicted by the FGDs of beneficiaries and project participants, the most significant change through the project is the change in the attitude of men, women, boys, and girls under Pillar 1. They demonstrate mature thinking and preparedness to prevent violence against women and children. Another significant change identified in OiP staff's interview was the direct linkage with women focused departments such as the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women and PANA

"An Umerkot woman leader Ruqma was a victim of child marriage. Training and awareness through CS empowered her to take stand for her own daughter against her child marriage."

OiP KII respondent

H (women shelter) that directly fell under Pillar 3. OiP reviewed the SoPs and protocols of these institutions, identified the gaps, further enriched them for effective response mechanisms and timely service provision and for increasing their access to the shelters for the victims and survivors of VAWG. OiP helped develop referral directories. They also provided psychosocial support training to the PANA team so that they could respond to the emotional trauma of the survivors and help them rehabilitate. Besides community men, women, girls, and boys being champions of women and girls' rights, the project reported through the annual reports that some sensitized religious leaders understood the menace of child marriage and helped it stop on several occasions. Moreover, advocacy action plans are now being prepared in the last year of the project implementation to sustain the activities even beyond the life of the project by the communities it engaged with.

Under Pillar 3, the formation of CS Alliance and encouraging women leaders to advocate for its larger membership emerged as the most promising and effective intervention.

The effectiveness of new project design features made OiP proud as they experimented with these new interventions for the first time and were able to achieve the results in the shortest possible time as anticipated. However, the OiP staff expressed that the new project features which were introduced in year 4, would have created much larger effectiveness if these were part of the original design and were implemented right from the onset of the project. In addition to this, turnover at OiP within the project

team, shrinking civil society space, and the bureaucratic registration process of NGOs with EAD tremendously decelerated the pace of the project.

With regards to some elements missing besides tweaking and addition of new features towards the end, OiP and ITA both realized that the addition of economic empowerment component in the project would have given even better results as one of the key reasons of child marriage was found to be poverty and women's total financial dependence on men.

Due to frequent changes in OiP project team and change of partner, the opportunity of Innovation Fund was also not availed that could have added more value to the sustainability of the project. Similarly, due to the centralized role of MEAL at OiP, it has been difficult to capture project-specific learning that could guide the CS team for required changes in interventions or scaling up the project activities. Moreover, the Feminist MEAL concept was introduced quite late in year 4 of the project. This was the year when partner and project beneficiaries were taken on board in all the monitoring process, encouraging them to evaluate, analyze, design, and implement.

Impact

In terms of what elements of the project created the most impact, it was highlighted that empowerment of women leaders for enhancing their role in the identification of VAWG cases within their own community and facilitating referral pathways, was quite instrumental. With all the new design features in year 4, the project picked up quite a pace, however, COVID adversely affected the project. Advocacy and awareness meetings through online mode of communication presented several links such as internet connectivity and understanding of the online presentation. Many women and other participants could not keep their interest and during the complete lockdown, contact with the beneficiaries was broken for a while.

Besides COVID, long political protests and demonstrations of 2019 also affected project activities, which were halted for a while. Participation of earlier partner, Aurat Foundation in women march on International Women Day created some rift between the organization and the government stakeholders and consequently their work was interrupted at several project locations. Delay in OiP's renewal of its MoU with the Ministry of Interior and restriction on collecting quantitative data created additional challenges in implementation.

Sustainability

Women leaders and CS Alliance member groups are expected to be the key drivers of the sustainability of the project. Although they have been trained for the identification of VAWG cases, they need further capacity building and sensitization for linking the victim or the survivor with referral mechanisms in their districts. In addition to this, tailor-made community-based economic activities needed to be introduced so that women could financially support themselves and women leaders could perform their responsibilities without any financial challenges beyond the life of the project.

Some interventions are not expected to be sustained such as technical and financial support to women departments, Sindh Commission for the Status of Women, PANAHA, etc. Therefore, if planned earlier, policy-level support and assistance to key women departments and institutions for developing their 5-year road map could have offered means of sustainability. The road map would have guided these departments for their long-term strategic planning.

As mentioned above, although the project did not have much inclination toward policymaking, it did support the enactment of the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act through advocacy and later they carried out consultations for drafting rules of business of this particular law to support its implementation.

Limitations of the Evaluation Study

The survey tools did not include schools where IEC material was distributed, to study its direct impact on young children.

Although project intervention was carried out in total 9 districts across Sindh and Punjab, the endline evaluation was restricted to only one district in Punjab and two districts in Sindh, which might not shed light on the information and learning about the remaining districts.

Since many of the project activities were initiated either right before the endline study was initiated or after the study has started, therefore, some of them might not have been captured in the endline evaluation.

Since there has been a change of partner and OiP staff during the course of the project, some institutional knowledge and history of the project might have not been captured.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Pillar 1: What approaches/strategies/theories of change are contributing to attitudinal and behavioral changes on VAWG?

Activation of youth groups as well as WPF and WLG have been depicted as effective strategy towards sensitizing women, girl, men and larger communities on harms of VAWG and child marriages in both Sindh and Punjab Provinces. At mid-line evaluation, it was noted that there was need to involve WPFs, WLGs and Youth Groups more closely in campaigning to tap into their enthusiasm for increasing the outreach of the project. As per findings from the community, WPFs and WLGs are found better engaged as active agents towards campaigning and reaching out to communities towards the end of the project; however still there is need to activate these groups as legal entities. Furthermore, the awareness trainings are now embedded with messages about the importance of girls' education in preventing violence and forced marriage, delaying early marriage, and enabling survivors to stand up for their rights. This was one of the concerns noted at mid-term evaluation.

The programme has been effective in mobilizing both women and men groups on harms of child marriages and VAWG as both have different roles and responsibilities towards addressing these social taboos. Through sustained trainings and events in the programme; women feel more confident about addressing and reporting cases and men have better understanding of their role towards empowering and supporting women. In mid-line evaluation it was recommended that WFP should provide capacity building support to selected NGOs in target districts to independently carry out campaigning and advocacy around VAWG and CEFM. In both Sindh and Punjab, collaboration with NGOs was evident in terms of outreach events and capacity building initiatives carried out with NGOs and civil society.

In Punjab, project has been effective and have contributed towards strengthening departmental level linkages with police, health and social welfare departments. Through advocacy efforts carried out in the project in Punjab, departments are involved at the policy level with parliamentarians and legislatures to further strengthen VAWG and CM prevention mechanisms. Consequently, the Commission has drafted amendments in Punjab Child Marriage Act to increase the legal marriageable age of girls from 16 to 18 years. With its efforts, the amendments are adopted by legislatures and the draft is currently at the Islamic Council of Ideology for final approval. Moreover, mobilization of community/religious leaders have led to addressal of child marriages issues. In mid-line evaluation, greater engagement with religious leaders was emphasized.

Pillar 2: What approaches/models can be scaled to improve service provision? What are the enabling factors?

The trainings at community level carried out through WPF, WLG and Youth groups have been one of the enabling factors which has generated wider impact at the community, however these trainings need to be sustained and diversified. Moreover, information material should be regularly distributed to communities and regular sessions need to be carried out in mosques, community centers and panah gah/darul amans as well as in schools through youth groups

Training of men stakeholders have been a enabling factor, however for upscaling service delivery regarding curbing VAWG and child marriages, project would need to invest in men considerably so that there visible impact in terms of actions and steps taken by men to report cases as well taken decisions to curb child marriages. Currently men are sensitized however, there wasn't any evidence of them taking proactive steps at community level to curb these social taboos.

The programme has supported Panah gahs and Darul Amans for capacity building activities; for such initiatives need to be up scaled in terms of areas of holistic protection activities for women which could include economic generation activities and building linkages with government complaint cells as well as judiciaries. Moreover, as emphasized in mid-line evaluation, there is need to publicize the SoPs (Standard Operating Procedure) of safe houses and shelters (Dar-ul-Aman) among community leaders and journalists and provide them technical support in how to monitor and document the violations of SoPs

At level of baseline, social and political workers held a rather restrictive and narrow view of GBV and VAW. However, after being associated as members of WPFs, Women Leaders Groups (WLGs) and Youth Groups formed in the project, now articulate a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of complexity of the issue and means through which it can be curbed. The change in attitude as depicted through findings of end-line as well as mid-term evaluation was generated as a result of various training and capacity building sessions conducted in the project. Moreover, the campaigning done under the project has helped some survivors become aware of formal and informal mechanisms of legal aid and social protection. However, the project didn't have a far reaching impact on providing access to economic opportunities to women survivors; a concern which should be embedded in future programme

Pillar 3: What are lessons learned from programme activities/efforts to build the capacity of partner CSOs/WROs to do more effective work to reduce VAWG and CEFM?

At policy level, laws and legislations are in place to curb VAWG and child marriages, however their implementation is a major challenge. National influencers from both Sindh and Punjab highlighted these concerns. Particularly in Sindh human and financial resource constraints are a major challenge, however commission of status for women have made efforts to bring different scattered departments such as child protection, social welfare and police under its wing so that there is coordinated efforts to ensure implementation of policy actions. In this regard future programmes, need to emphasize greatly on reducing gap between policy and implementation so that results are transpired at local level

Currently WPF, WLG and Youth groups have been carrying out sensitization and awareness raising through platform of the project. However, for future sustainability it is essential that these platforms are legalized and brought under the ambit of the government so that they can effectively carry out advocacy on long-term basis. Moreover, financial incentive schemes need to be devised for these institutions so that they can continue and sustain with increased motivation. Concerns over operationalization of WFP and WLG was also noted at mid-line evaluation; though these groups are working through self-help basis but they haven't gained any legalized entity to work on VAWG and CEFM issues

WPF and WLG particularly in Sindh highlighted challenges in case reporting. Though project has made efforts to sensitize women, however in several cases they still are not confident enough to report cases. Hence, reporting mechanisms need to be strengthened and future programming should emphasize upon trainings of duty bearers with inclusion of women representatives

COVID 19 crisis saw an increase in cases of VAWG and child marriages in the project area. This clearly indicate that the relevant departments and the service providers were not ready for any disaster response.

Recommendations

Recommendations

Pillar 1: Engaging Community Actors to support and promote gender norms

- There is need for more Youth involvement in future implementation as youth proved to be very proactive in preventing and responding to VAWG.

- More men involvement will have a significant change, as wherever men were sensitized, prevention mechanism was stronger. They could stop child marriage and could encourage the girls to attend schools instead. They were able to respond much more effectively as they had strong say in the communities and within their household.
- The future implementations should focus more on the sensitization of religious leaders as they have the strongest say in the communities. In order to further support policy and legislative level work, Islamic Ideology Council, IIC should also be engaged in consultations and passing the draft bills related to VAWG and CEFM.
- Theater emerged as one of the most creative ways to educate youth. To sustain this activity without external financial support, youth should be trained for street/community theater performances.
- Capacity building initiatives should continue at the community level as they proved to be very effective in changing mindsets
- The sharing of concerns about repetition of training content in many sessions indicate a need that there should be change of content of training for every session to avoid participants' boredom.
- Use of Edutainment strategy should continue as a youth enjoyed those activities thoroughly and this tool made a significant impact on their understanding of VAWG and CEFM.
- In future, the scope of the programme should be extended to schools (primary and secondary, colleges) so that the concept of preventing VAWG is introduced at an early stage.
- Follow up on the IEC material distributed in schools should be held and learning should be gathered on its impact at the school level.
- Involving all the family members of the household in the project activities found most effective, as the whole family was sensitized and the outcomes were substantial.
- ITA needs to focus more on the continuation of the work by either scaling up or extending the project across the targeted UCs or exploring new business development opportunities as the problem of child marriage and VAWG is still prevalent in the two targeted provinces. For this, ITA should increase focus on educating beneficiaries that they should now be ready and should take ownership to continue the work.
- Introducing structured Action Plans with short-term, medium-term and long term objectives, outcomes and actions will certainly be helpful in ensuring that Women Leaders and WPF members, and youth groups will continue their work.
- Since COVID pushed for adapting to online mode overnight, there is a dire need identified that all the gaps in the online mode of trainings should be eliminated.
- Any such disaster or emergency increases the risk of VAWG, so as a lesson learnt, there is a need to invest in crisis management trainings with further mobilization of community institutions such as WPF and WLG in terms of how to act and respond in crisis situation where vulnerabilities at community level is on the increase. In this regard civil society and government stakeholders should be taken on board and proper SOPs and systems need to be developed for fostering better institutional support during crisis situation
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Pillar 2: Supporting women and girls who have experienced violence

- Financial independence model for WLG and WPF should be designed so that they remain proactive in responding to VAWG and identification of cases and could continue these volunteer services.
- More focus on strengthening the referral system and its knowledge dissemination in the community through reader friendly pictorial brochures/pamphlets will increase the accessibility of victims and survivors.
- Youth structures should be formally connected with WPA as DG WPA has expressed a strong desire and suggestion for the same. Also invest in legalization of youth entities, so that they can work more effectively even in shrinking civil society space
- There should be a proposal for community-based economic activities to discourage child marriage and encourage women's financial empowerment. Moreover, support for economic development opportunities for women survivors should be introduced so that it could help in their early rehabilitation and survival. Girls and women could be connected with vocational institutes, social protection schemes, or with traders for financial opportunities.
- Case reporting and referral mechanisms should be further strengthened through women protection forums and capacities of duty bearers should be built on reporting and compliant mechanisms.
- Few respondents viewed role of women protection committees as integral, hence they need to be further strengthened for fostering and enhancing case reporting mechanisms at community level.
- There is a dire need to support girls for their birth certificate registrations in Punjab as the legal age for marriage is 16 years. Since this is already a child's age, birth certificate facilitation will at least help save the girls of under 16 years from being victims of CEFM.

Pillar 3: Building Knowledge and capacity of institutions and alliances

- Coordination with Sindh Departments and Institutions should be further Strengthen. If they have reservations about documenting pieces of evidence of activities, their capacity needs to be built emphasizing the significance of transparency and record-keeping for any organized institution.
- Learning from effective coordination with the Punjab Women-focused department should be documented and used for other linkages in Punjab as well as in provinces.
- Work at the policy level with the departments should be added, which can help them in their continuing the mandate of the project beyond the project's life.
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- If designed externally, evaluation tools should be shared with OiP and implementing partners at the time of designing, for future evaluations, in order to capture their input and feedback so that the complete scope of the project could be covered in the evaluations.
- Connect Women Leaders with already existing networks and alliances, WPA, etc

- Continue support to women-focused departments, especially PANAHA for Psycho-social support initiatives.
 - Direct intervention of OiP in year 4 and beyond produced opportunities for OiP to be closer with government stakeholders. This strategy not only expedited the project it was also a new learning experience for the INGO. In future, right at the onset of any program, such partnership with the implementing partner should continue to keep the project on a faster track.
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