THE PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE

PRACTICE

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

The *Indashyikirwa* Programme, Rwanda

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

The *Indashyikirwa* programme aimed to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) and improve the wellbeing of survivors in selected communities in seven districts of Rwanda. It aimed to shift attitudes, behaviours and norms that support IPV among couples and wider communities. It had four key components

- Intensive participatory training with couples (Couples Curriculum).
- Community-based activism led by a subset of individuals that completed the couples' curriculum and received additional training.
- Direct support to survivors of IPV through women's safe spaces.
- Training and engagement of opinion leaders.

BACKGROUND

CARE has implemented Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) to support women's economic empowerment in Rwanda for many years. However, an assessment conducted by CARE Rwanda in 2012 found that many women were not fully benefiting from the programme due to household gender inequalities.

In many cases, men controlled the functioning of the VSLA groups even though they were not members. They often 'instructed' their wives about the use of loans and controlled decisions on assets purchased.[1] In other cases, women VSLA members suffered backlash—sometimes violent—from their husbands as they were seen to be challenging gender norms by engaging in income-generating activities outside the home.

In response, CARE Rwanda and partner organisations RWAMREC and Promundo developed Journeys of Transformation (JoT), a 17-session curriculum for males that aimed to foster men's support of their partners who were VSLA members.

Programme evaluations found a range of positive impacts of the VSLA+ JoT programme including reductions in household poverty, increased involvement of men in household domestic work and child-care activities, and reduced conflict between partners. Whilst the evaluations did not explicitly measure impact on intimate partner violence (IPV), the research team concluded that this kind of curriculum had potential to reduce IPV.[2] Furthermore, the couples involved requested more support for activism activities in their communities.

OVERVIEW

Building on this experience, the DFID-funded Indashyikirwa ("Agents of Change" in Kinywarwanda) programme was designed to explicitly reduce levels of IPV, as well as to improve the response to IPV survivors. During the one-year inception phase partners CARE Rwanda, Rwanda Men's Resource Center (RWAMREC) and Rwanda Women's Network (RWN) worked to design and refine the programme with four components, building on materials developed from other successful IPV prevention programs in the region.

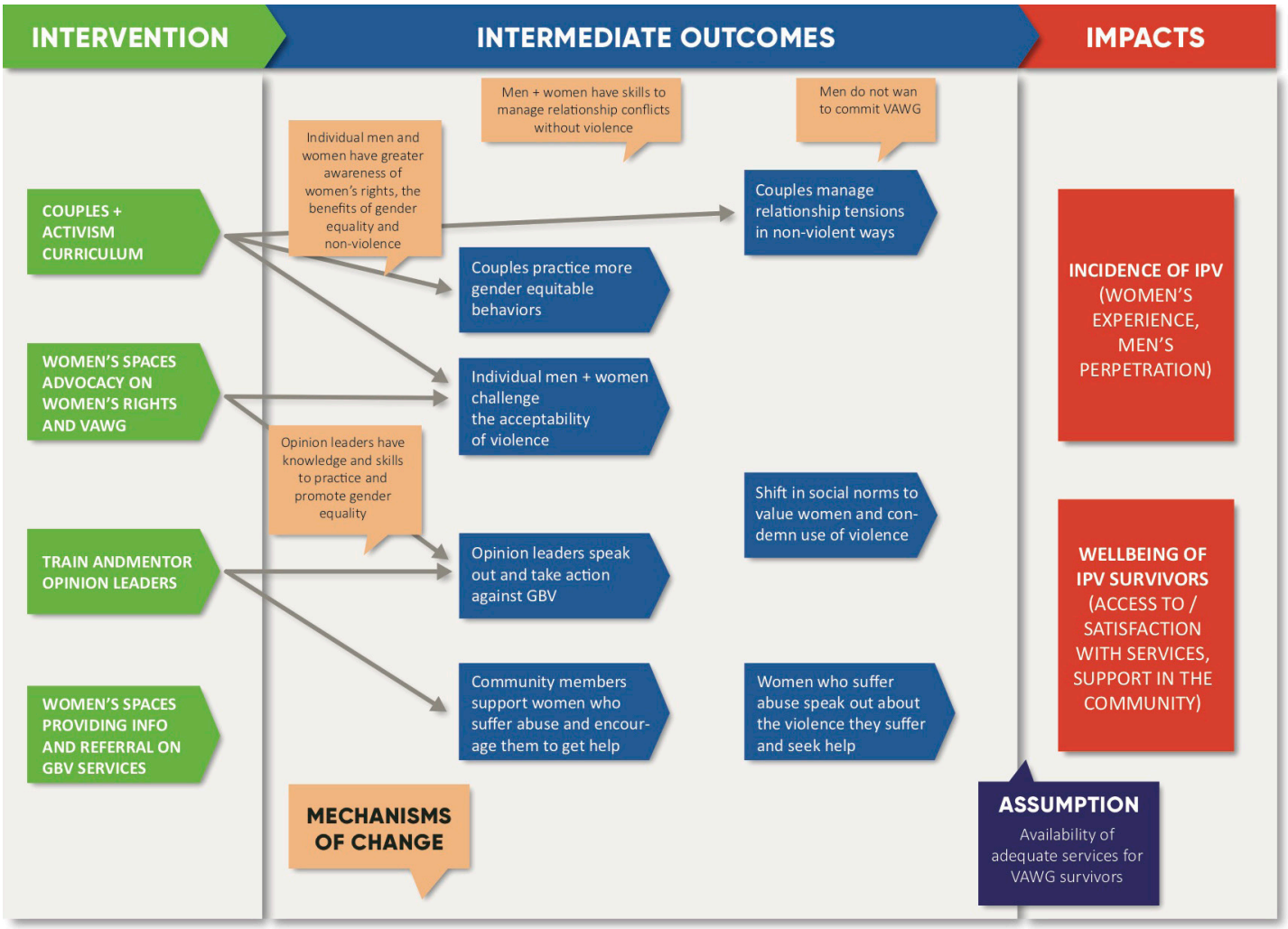
INDASHYIKIRWA: PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The programme aimed for two long-term impacts:

1. Reduced incidence of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), measured by:
   - Reduction in women's reported experience of IPV
   - Reduction in men's reported perpetration of IPV
   - Increased well-being of survivors, measured by:
2. Increased survivor access to and satisfaction with response services.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Theory of Change for the programme is premised on working to shift attitudes and behaviours at an individual and relationship level through building knowledge, confidence, and relationship skills, as well as shifting wider social norms that underpin gender inequalities and the use of violence. The anticipated pathways to change of the four combined components are shown in the diagram below.



PROGRAMME CONTEXT

The programme was implemented in fourteen sectors across seven districts in the Eastern, Northern and Western provinces of Rwanda, in predominantly rural, dispersed communities. The seven districts were chosen based on the highest rates of IPV according to the 2010 Rwandan Demographic and Health Survey.[3]

From these districts, CARE Rwanda identified 'clusters' comprised of at least three villages near each other, with at least one CARE Rwanda micro-finance village savings and loan associations (VSLA) per village, as VSLAs were the entry point to engage couples.

PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

1. COUPLES CURRICULUM

Aim:

- To support equitable, non-violent relationships.

Design:

Built on the JoT curriculum, drawing on SASA!, with its emphasis on building skills to manage IPV, address power inequities, the benefits of non-violence and gender equality, and moving from intensive self-reflection to community actions. Also addresses key triggers of IPV (i.e. jealousy, alcohol abuse, economic stress)1 as well as communication and conflict resolution skills.

Content:

- 21 weekly sessions over 5 months: foundational concepts of power and gender; rights; managing drivers of IPV; gender household roles; healthy relationships; gender and sexuality; introducing activism and providing empowering responses to those experiencing IPV.
- After each session, couples were given 'take home' activities to apply what was learned, and then reflected on these at the beginning of each session.

Eligibility:

- Couples had to be aged 18-49, married or living together for at least six months, and at least one partner (usually the woman) had to be an active CARE VSLA member. A lottery was used to select from interested couples.

Numbers:

- In each of 56 clusters, 15 adult heterosexual couples were trained (840 couples total) weekly from November 2015 to May 2016.

Facilitation:

- 2 RWAMREC facilitators (one male, one female) facilitated the curriculum, all had facilitation experience and completed a 2-week training prior to delivering this curriculum.

Retention:

- Each individual was given 2000 RWF (approximately 2.2 USD) per session to cover transport related costs.
- There was extremely high retention and regular attendance at all of the curriculum sessions, by 99% of participants.

A husband and wife who completed the Indashyikirwa couples curriculum.

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2. COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

Aim:

- Diffuse new skills, attitudes, behaviours to shift harmful social norms at community-level.

Design:

- 420 people from the trained couples were given further training to become community activists. RWAMREC staff gave a 10-day training in activism skills in July 2016 and offered three ref ivities and materials (Oct 2016, Oct 2017, Apr 2018) and psycho-social support skills

Content:

- *SASA* communication and activism materials including power posters, community posters, picture cards, dramas, community conversations, and quick chats were adapted for use in the Rwandan context. Prior to roll-out, staff tested appropriateness of adapted materials with 70 male and female community members across two intervention sectors. Activists used existing formalised groups in Rwanda to facilitate many activism sessions including VSLA meetings, parents evening forums, and local meetings.

Eligibility:

- Previous training on couples' curriculum +availability to conduct at least 3 activism activities per month + basic literacy.

Numbers:

- By the end of the programme, 586,962 community members had been reached with activism activities.

Mentoring:

- Throughout the activism, RWAMREC staff hosted monthly meetings with activists to report on activism activities, reflect on successes and address challenges.
- RWAMREC staff also conducted regular observations of activists conducting activism activities, to provide constructive feedback. There was roughly 1 RWAMREC staff member for every 40 activists.
- There were also quarterly meetings between community activists, opinion leaders and women's space facilitators to coordinate activism activities.

Retention/Follow up:

- Each activist was given 3000 RWF on a monthly basis to cover transport related costs.
- In 2017, RWAMREC staff offered the ten-day activist training to an additional 80 participants from the couples training who had shown ongoing dedication to the programme, in order to widen the available pool of activists.
- RWAMREC staff hosted 3 meetings per year for couples who did not become activists to support their ongoing engagement with Indashyikirwa

A community activist using an Indashyikirwa power poster to facilitate discussion.

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3. WOMEN'S SAFE SPACES

Aim:

- To offer dedicated support to women and men who report IPV, educate women about their rights, and refer / accompany individuals who wish to report abuse or seek services.

Design:

- 14 women's safe spaces established (1 per sector). At each safe space, 22 female community members were elected to act as women's safe-space facilitators.
- In Nov 2015, the facilitators completed a 2-week training, facilitated by RWN staff (all had facilitation experience, and did a 2-week training prior to delivering the safe space facilitator curriculum).
- The facilitators training included a condensed version of the Couples Curriculum content around power, gender and IPV, and dedicated modules on the WSF role, participatory facilitation, communication skills, foundations of advocacy and reporting skills.

Content:

- From March 2016-August 2018, the safe spaces were open three mornings a week for women or men to disclose GBV and receive confidential support from facilitators.
- Facilitators also offered referrals or accompaniment to other services as needed, including health, justice or social services.
- Attendees were asked to provide feedback on the quality of services accessed in order to identify areas that need improvement, through use of referral feedback forms.
- In the afternoons, facilitators conducted participatory dialogues around uses of power, gender equality, women's rights and IPV, using some of the adapted SASA! communication and activism materials. There were also collective income-generating activities, such as weaving or handicrafts.

  Facilitators also conducted community outreach activism activities and home visits to families experiencing conflict.

Numbers:

- In total, 1576 women and 398 men received counselling and support at the safe spaces. 107,630 women and 43,840 men participated in activities implemented at the safe spaces or led by safe space facilitators.

Mentoring:

- One RWN staff supported each safe space. They facilitated monthly meetings with facilitators to reflect on successes and challenges, and to give facilitators constructive feedback.

Retention:

- Facilitators operated the safe spaces on a rotating basis and were given a monthly travel stipend of 6000 RWF (approximately 7 USD per month) to support their engagement as volunteers. There was 96% retention of facilitators.

A woman's safe space facilitator with an attendee
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4. TRAINING AND ENGAGEMENT OF OPINION LEADERS

Aim:

- To ensure an enabling environment for the community activism and women's safe spaces,

Design:

- RWN staff recruited a diverse group of 42-44 opinion leaders per intervention sector (600 leaders in total). This included government officials, service providers, religious leaders, justice officials, and members of the National Women's Council.
- In November 2015, these leaders completed a 10-day curriculum, facilitated by RWN staff. Their training included a condensed version of the Couples' Curriculum content around gender, power and IPV, and had a dedicated session to encourage opinion leaders to identify their use of 'power over' in their work and relationships.

Content:

- Opinion leaders conducted informal discussions around GBV prevention and healthy relationships, including at schools, religious institutions, or government events. They also responded to requests for help in responding to GBV, including conducting home visits.
- Opinion leaders were not provided with SASA! activism tools or trained in their use; instead they were expected to integrate Indashyikirwa messaging into their ongoing activities (e.g. sermons, community meetings, etc). Their support proved critical to helping community activists and safe space facilitators gain access to settings to share their message.
- In Sept 2016, Indashyikirwa staff conducted a 1-day briefing to explain the programme to every village leader where activists and facilitators were working. This proved necessary to gain access to certain community forums.
- RWN and RWAMREC staff also facilitated a series of community outreach activities, with the involvement of CAs, WSF and opinion leaders. Outreach activities were intended for organised diffusion with wide audiences and included community debates, government level meetings, and national events to share learnings from the programme.

Mentoring:

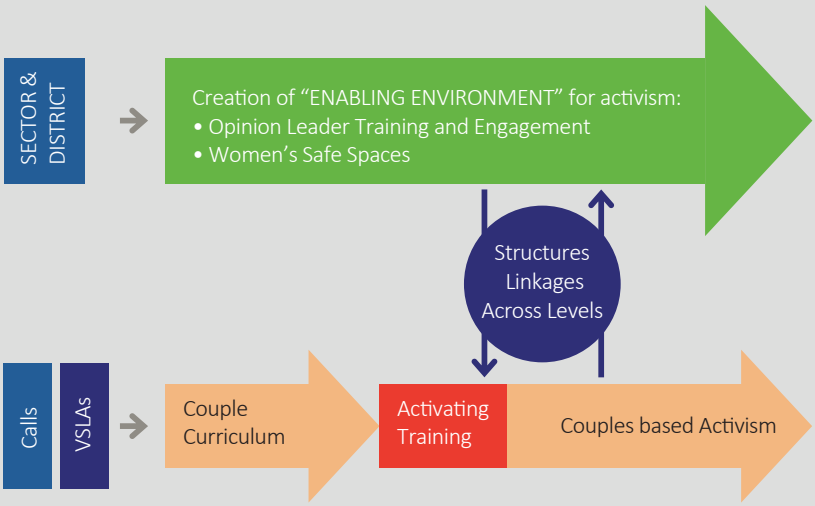
- From December 2016-June 2018, RWN staff hosted quarterly meetings with trained opinion leaders, to collectively identify opportunities for advancing programme goals and re-commit to more effective IPV prevention and response.
- RWN also offered refresher trainings with opinion leaders once a year based on the initial curriculum, and to engage newly elected leaders after local elections in mid-2016.

PROGRAMME TIME FRAME

Following a one-year inception phase, the programme was implemented between August 2015 and August 2018.

Couples were recruited in August 2015 and started the couples' curriculum in November 2015.

The activism was launched in August 2016.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This pilot programme was accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative impact evaluation as part of the DFID-funded What Works to Prevent VAWG Programme. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation approach was also employed, coordinated by CARE Rwanda:

- The couples, WSFs and opinion leaders curricula were monitored through attendance records, and observation forms for CARE, RWN and RWAMREC staff to monitor implementation, and provide feedback to facilitators.
- CARE and RWAMREC staff used an adapted version of SASA's monitoring and evaluation community activism report form to observe CAs facilitating activism activities. These forms capture the theme, facilitation skills of CAs, community comments raised, successes and challenges, and were used to provide feedback to CAs at monthly meetings. CAs also documented activist activities through community activist reporting templates, which noted the location, theme, activity, time, and attendance breakdown.
- A SASA! adapted outcome tracking tool was used once in July-September 2017 and again in May 2018 by CARE and senior RWAMREC staff, to assess community responsiveness to the activism and readiness for the next phase of messaging.
- Registers were used at the women's safe spaces to document whether it was a new or existing case, gender, age, if and where cases were referred (i.e. medical, legal services, police, local authorities). Monthly women's safe space planners captured the dialogue sessions conducted at the women's spaces and in communities, including themes of the activities and attendance breakdown.
- An Opinion Leader Commitment Form was used to monitor commitments on behalf of groups of opinion leaders (i.e. religious leaders, government leaders). These forms detailed advocacy issues, frequency of activities, successes and challenges.
- A local dialogue forum was held annually throughout the programme using community scorecards, where community members assessed whether opinion leaders' commitments were implemented.

PROGRAMMING LESSONS

- **Integrate adequate time for programme development and adaptation.** Indashyikirwa had a one-year inception phase, which was critical for developing an evidence-informed theory of change and the final programme design. This also allowed time to develop and pilot the curriculum. However, the adaptation and roll out of the community activism component would have benefitted from additional time. The Indashyikirwa variation of SASA! needed considerably more time for the activism phase, given the time required up front to revise, produce and pre-test both the SASA!-inspired materials and strategies to a new context.
- **Prioritise facilitator training and support.** The participatory approach of the Indashyikirwa trainings, which supported active engagement and the creation of a safe space, was invaluable. It was essential to have facilitators who were able to adapt to the programme's participatory facilitation style.
- **Build on the positive.** It was important for the curricula and activism materials to cover the benefits of positive alternatives to IPV, and to emphasise skills for building healthy, non-violent relationships.
- **Consider using the power paradigm.** The fundamental concept of positive types of power (power within, power to, power with) and negative types of power (power over) helped couples identify multiple forms of IPV and to move beyond the binary of men = perpetrators; women = victims of IPV. The concept of 'power within' was said to improve women's self-confidence, and the concepts of 'power with' and 'power to,' supported couples to work together to prevent and respond to IPV in their communities.
- **Formalise linkages between all programme components.** The linkages between the community, women's safe spaces, and opinion leaders were critical to support the work of community activists: the former for facilitating referral of victims and the latter for enhancing activists' credibility and supporting their access to venues. The quarterly meetings between community activists, women's safe space facilitators and opinion leaders were critical for fostering these linkages.

ENDNOTES

1 CARE (2012) "Mind the Gap: Exploring the Gender Dynamics of CARE Rwanda's Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Programming"
2 Slegh, H., Barker, G., Kimonyo, A., Ndolimana, P., & Bannerman, M. (2013) "'I can do women's work': Reflections on engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment in Rwanda." ***Gender and Developmen***t, 21(1), 15–30. doi: 1080/13552074.2013.767495.
3 National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (2011) ***2010 Rwandan Demographic and Health Survey.*** Kigali, Rwanda.

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This brief was written by Dr Erin Stern, Research Coordinator for the indashyikirwa impact evaluation.

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