

CHANNELS OF HOPE-GENDER GLOBAL SCALE-UP PROJECT



Millions of women around the world live in cultures where the balance of power between men and women lead to gender-based violence, female infanticide, trafficking, and other actions that fundamentally deny the God-given value of each woman and girl.

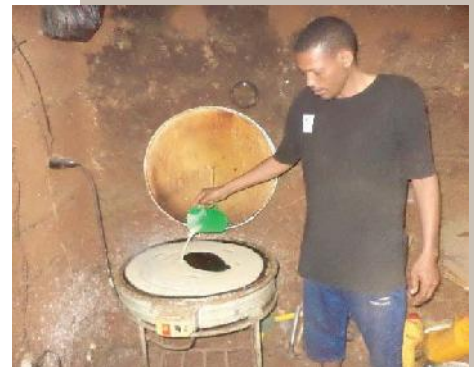
The Channels of Hope-Gender Scale-Up Project has a three-year vision to train thousands of new facilitators, equipping World Vision offices around the world to easily integrate Channels of Hope-Gender into ongoing development work in each community. By expanding the reach of a program that has been highly effective in changing deeply held cultural beliefs on gender roles and value, faith leaders around the world will be equipped as leaders in their communities to promote gender equity based on holy texts.

HEALING A PAINFUL CHILDHOOD LEADS TO TRANSFORMED GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

Ato Tafese Birhane, a 42-year-old school director, is the subject of much gossip in his town of Agena, Ethiopia. Some people despise and ridicule him. Some people just think he's weird. But others, including his wife and children, see him as a courageous model husband and father.

Ato's home life as a child was unhappy. "My dad used to beat all children and our mother," said Ato. His father could be cruel, buying meat at the market for dinner, and then "if any silly reason upset him, he would give the meat to dogs so that we wouldn't eat meat." For many years, Ato hesitated to start a family of his own because he associated family life with cruelty and fear.

But attending a workshop on Channels of Hope-Gender (CoH-Gender) and World Vision's parenting classes brought Ato healing from his past. The workshops guided him to reflect on his childhood, which made him especially sensitive to his mother's plight.



(Above) Ato Tafese Birhane makes injera, a traditional Ethiopian bread. (Below) Ato with his wife Michael, and children Nahom, Hanna, Zetseat (in Michael's lap) and Ermias.



“My mother was the most oppressed individual,” said Ato, “not only in the family, but also in the community.” In addition to the work she did inside the home (cooking, cleaning, caring for children) and outside (taking part in the farmwork and selling produce), she was regularly beaten by her husband.

As Channels of Hope opened his eyes to the unequal division of work dictated by Ethiopian tradition, Ato began to take on household tasks that are traditionally considered women’s duties—cooking, cleaning the home, and doing laundry. In Ethiopia, men are supposed to engage only in activities that visibly display their strength, wisdom, and social engagement.

His neighbors’ first reaction was disrespect because he’d made himself “weak” by taking on women’s work. Even Ato’s wife, Michael, wasn’t supportive of his changed behavior at first, pretending he wasn’t home if someone came to the door while he was engaged in cooking and cleaning.

But Ato was not discouraged. He boldly went into the community, talking to neighbors, friends, and colleagues about the importance of changing their attitudes about gender roles and responsibilities. His courage and resolute support for gender equity gradually won him the respect of his neighbors because of his strong convictions.

His wife, Michael, has also been transformed in her attitudes. She now works alongside Ato, promoting gender equity in the community and taking over the household financial management (traditionally a man’s role). Jointly, they have decided to reduce their children’s household responsibilities to allow them more time to study and excel in school.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Transformation like that experienced by Ato and Michael is the result of being guided by trained Channels of Hope-Gender facilitators to reflect on their traditional beliefs and what the Bible says about the equality of men and women. As Scripture’s truth is revealed, it becomes apparent how traditional gender roles can harm families and prevent both women and men from using their gifts to live out their full potential.

During the first half of FY15, 51 new facilitators were trained in the Latin America and South Pacific Island regions. This is 142 percent of the original goal for these regions. The training included participants from Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Timor Leste.

The average facilitator leads two or three workshops within a year of being trained. Through these workshops, each facilitator directly impacts between 60 and 100 faith and community leaders, who reach hundreds of people through the advocacy and care activities initiated in their communities.

An important part of the Channels of Hope-Gender Scale-Up Project is the partnership with the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University in South Africa to build evidence for the effectiveness of CoH-Gender. This is a necessary step to scale up the use of this program. By identifying and documenting the most valuable aspects of CoH-Gender, it will be able to be used even more effectively and more options for expanding program funding sources will be created.

During the first half of FY15, the research project’s kickoff and orientation were held. Awareness-building workshops for church leaders also were conducted in South Africa’s Atlantis community. During the second half of FY15, the project will

“As a young woman raised up in the Solomon Islands, I have always felt ... I would never be at a place of freedom to be the person who God wants me to be. My experience of Channels of Hope in a workshop about two years ago changed me. Now I have been empowered to engage in conversations about gender in an informed way.

—Yvonne Ono
World Vision
Solomon Islands
trained facilitator

hold awareness-building workshops for church leaders in Mbashe, South Africa, and workshops for church-based Hope Action Teams in Atlantis and Mbashe. The completion of these workshops will allow the university research team's data collection and interpretation process to begin.

REALIZING THE PROJECT'S VISION

The most exciting recent project results, however, are those that demonstrate that the project's vision to dramatically scale up use of CoH-Gender, which will improve the lives of significant numbers of women and girls, is being realized.

- In Latin America, facilitators training was accomplished entirely by local trainers, who had previously been trained by the core CoH-Gender program team. This means that World Vision's Latin America region has become self-sufficient in leading workshops so more and more church leaders can learn about Scripture's teaching on the equality of gender roles.
- In Papua New Guinea, World Vision's local office identified CoH-Gender as a key component in a program to mitigate gender-based violence, and obtained funding from the European Union to implement this program.
- In Vanuatu, World Vision's newly established office identified gender-based violence as one of the primary issues to be addressed, and is using the field guide (developed during the first year of the Channels of Hope-Gender Scale-Up Project) to implement this program.
- In Kenya, where CoH-Gender was implemented previously, church leaders who were inspired by the training have formed an association that continues to implement activities to promote gender equity in their communities without funding from World Vision.
- In the Solomon Islands, the percentage of men participating in CoH-Gender workshops is growing (59 percent in the training held the first half of the year). In the past, workshops on gender have traditionally drawn mostly female participants, as gender issues were considered a women's issue.

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Thank you for your vision and investment in this ambitious project. With your partnership, World Vision is building the foundation to transform the lives of women and men, girls and boys, in communities around the world.

Your faithful commitment is making it possible for girls and women to dream of a future in which they can live life in all its fullness. Thank you.



Pastor Alfred (striped shirt) leads an urban church in Cape Town, South Africa. After participating in the Channels of Hope-Gender awareness workshop, he said: "This is the first ever workshop where gender has been approached so sensitively and yet so soundly from the Scriptures. ... The way sessions are presented helped me to make my own personal reflections and make some important adjustments without feeling pushed. ... Personally, I have been changed, and I will teach the same message of Genesis' mandate in my home, church, and community."