

# Midterm Review of GEWEP III – Global Synthesis Report

## Management Response and Action Plan

**Evaluation title:** Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program (GEWEP) III midterm review

**Project Name:** Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program (GEWEP) III

**Evaluation Year:** 2023

### Overall response to the evaluation

CARE Norway is pleased to publish this report containing findings of an external midterm review of the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Program (GEWEP), phase III. This work was supported by Norad – the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

GEWEP is a multi-country development program implemented in Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Myanmar, Niger, Rwanda, Jordan, and Palestine<sup>1</sup>. The overall aim of the program is to strengthen gender equality and women's rights. This is achieved through five intervention strategies: Women's economic empowerment, engaging men and boys in transforming gender norms, strengthening civil society and women-led organizations, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, and building resilience in rural communities.

Due to the need to limit the scope of this mid-term review, the research focuses on two outcome areas of the program: Engaging men and boys (EMB) in gender equality and strengthening civil society (CSO) with a special focus on women-right and women led organizations.

CARE Norway thanks the research team for conducting this research and delivering this global synthesis report and the country study reports. We acknowledge the efforts that were made to investigate the research questions under challenging contexts across many of the study countries. The outcomes of this study offer interesting insights into the two thematic areas across the countries included in the study. It is an important contribution to reflecting on the GEWEP III to date and what to focus on as we proceed.

We would like to note some overarching points: (1) As highlighted in the limitations section of the report, some countries have experienced significant changes since the data collection and writing of this report. This impacts the relevance and applicability of some findings and recommendations in those countries. (2) The numbers presented in the report do not reflect weighting in terms of total study participant numbers per country. Some recommendations might therefore be more relevant for some than others. (3) For the strengthening civil society component of this study, the CSOs participating in this study represent a specific type of CSOs within the different countries, which needs to be considered when generalizing and applying these findings to other contexts and other types of civil society actors.

### Planned use of the evaluation

CARE Norway is committed to continuous learning and improving, including through external evaluations such as this one. The findings and recommendations of this research are important input to the design of future programs. We believe that the results this research offers will not only provide valuable insights for GEWEP and CARE Norway but also for other new or existing programs with relevant areas of activities. We also see this study contributing to the learning agenda for CARE International's Vision 2030.

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<sup>1</sup> Jordan and Palestine are part of the GEWEP, funded by the telethon TV fundraiser. Since the program scope for these two countries was slightly different and program length was shorter (2020-2023), they were not included in the mid-term review. The volatile security situation in Myanmar raised significant concerns around the feasibility of some of the data collection necessary for the MTR to be conducted. Based on this, Myanmar was not included in this mid-term study.

## Thematic Area: Engaging men and boys in gender equality

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Response and action	Timeline
<p><b>TREATMENT EFFECT</b></p> <p><b>Participation in GEWEP is associated with a 5.0% higher GEM Index score at a global level.</b> Especially in Burundi and DRC. Moderate impact on attitudes in Niger. Treatment effect not statistically significant in Mali, Rwanda, Afghanistan.</p> <p><b>Men who participate in GEWEP are 2.5 times more likely to take action</b> that reduces gender inequality within the household, the workplace, or the community.</p> <p><b>GEWEP creates incremental change.</b> GEM Index score difference between those with low and those with high program participation is .06.</p>	<p>Fund additional research into the stickiness of attitudes comparing women’s and men’s equality, value, and rights to one another as opposed to collaborative or additive attitude formulations.</p>	<p>We agree with this recommendation. The stickiness of attitudes is important to consider in future research. A systematic review of existing literature can be a good starting point.</p> <p>We are pleased about the study finding GEWEP creating incremental change in men’s and boy’s attitudes towards gender equality through EMB activities. Changing social norms and men’s attitudes and behavior is complex and requires efforts over time.</p> <p>We commit to continuing and strengthening our focus on changing men’s and boy’s attitudes towards gender norms in our program work. The study provides helpful insights in what implementation modalities and types of activities work to engage men and boys in social norm changes.</p>	<p>Continuous</p>

<p><b>FACTORS MEDIATING TREATMENT EFFECT</b></p> <p><b>Men who participated more often or in a wider range of GEWEP activities (greater treatment saturation) hold attitudes more supportive of GEWE and aligned with positive masculinities.</b></p> <p><b>Those with higher treatment saturation are 1.28 times more likely to take action.</b> Especially in Mali and Rwanda, but not in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is the only country where neither treatment versus control comparisons nor comparisons based on men’s level of participation revealed evidence of higher GEM Index scores.</p> <p><b>Direct equality between men and women represents a bound to changes in men’s attitudes.</b> Men struggle to accept beliefs and norms that situate women as equal to men.</p> <p><b>Peer pressure reduces the sustainability of positive changes in men’s attitudes and behaviors.</b> Alternatively, some fear judgment for lingering negative behaviors like physical violence.</p> <p><b>Political factors also play a large role in the longevity of behavioral change.</b> Repressive regimes constrain men’s ability to put new beliefs into practice. Elders and faith leaders play important role in reinforce positive behaviors.</p>	<p>Expand GEWEP activities to more communities. Consider joining together nearby communities during implementation to reinforce peer support across communities.</p> <p>Continue and expand upon the engagement of village elders and faith leaders as authority figures in their communities. Offer trainings to elders and faith leaders using sacred text to provide evidence they can draw on when advising other men and families. Encourage a formal or informal training-of-trainers model as appropriate in each context.</p> <p>Support continued research into the complexities of attitudes around masculinities, especially at points of contradiction, interpersonal and sexual violence, and involvement with armed actors.</p>	<p>We partially agree with the first recommendation and agree with the second and third recommendations.</p> <p>In terms of expanding program activities to more communities, we notice there is a tradeoff between expanding to new geographical areas and supporting existing groups for a longer time. As mentioned in the previous section, changing social norms takes time. A longer-term engagement is required to change attitudes on gender norms. If program activities can be expanded to additional areas, nearby communities should be prioritized.</p> <p>We agree that the engagement of village elders and faith leaders is important. It is one of the corner stones of the GEWEP III EMB programming. The trainers-of-trainers model is an interesting approach which could be considered in some of the countries involved in GEWEP, but it is very context dependent.</p> <p>We will explore existing research on the drivers of peer pressure and how to use these for positive change. The perceived expectations of peers can work both positively and negatively. Harnessing this in a positive way is an important element of programs aiming to change social norms.</p>	<p>Continuous, program development for next program phase</p>
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<p><b>GEWEP ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p><b>Program activities are localized to target different needs and results areas.</b> All countries implemented GEWE trainings sessions with male leaders and male community members, reflection sessions with community members, and men’s groups. Male champion groups were the least common intervention (delivered only in Afghanistan, Burundi, and Rwanda).</p> <p><b>Globally, most effective program activities are (1) interactive, collective sessions with a focus on male leaders and (2) couple or family-centric activities.</b> Training sessions on masculinities or gender equality/women’s rights targeting male leaders, and reflection sessions with leaders or community members are associated with more support for GEWE and greater alignment with positive masculinities in Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Mali, and Rwanda. Role model couple and couples counseling and family talks result in higher GEM Index scores in 80% of the countries where these program activities were implemented.</p>	<p>Explore ways to encourage greater collaboration between headquarters and country offices and between country offices implementing GEWE activities. This will eliminate confusion around intervention strategies, improve monitoring and reporting, and offer opportunities for cross-country sharing of best practices.</p>	<p>We partially agree with this recommendation. The discussion about related data and findings in the report is limited and does not provide information on what parts or types of collaboration require strengthening.</p> <p>We acknowledge that there is room to improve collaborations – between country offices and headquarters as well as among country offices on strategic approaches and building communities of practice to share and learn across country programs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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## Thematic Area: Strengthening civil society

Findings/Conclusions	Recommendations	Response and action	Timeline
<p><b>STATE OF THE CIVIC SPACE</b></p> <p><b>Sustainability of organizations is stable but consistently affected by (1) the requirement to register and (2) infringement on partnerships and coalitions.</b> CSOs often begin/ exist as informal, unregistered organizations. Forced registration creates financial and legal barriers. Infringement especially severe in Afghanistan, 87.5% report government interference and 93.8% report this interference has increased since 2020.</p> <p><b>Freedom of expression is weak and worsening.</b> 79.3% report encroachment on freedom of expression, 75.0% (63.4% without Afghanistan) reporting tighter restrictions since 2020. 45.9% report lacking protections for their right to speak freely about human rights, fundamental freedoms, and critically about the government. 51.9% note deteriorated since 2020. Advocacy and lobbying are restricted in 35.9% of cases. Permission to assemble, even for peaceful public demonstrations, is increasingly denied for 54.6% of CSOs.</p>	N/A	<p>These findings are aligned with and confirm trends described in other reports and our insights from the program.</p> <p>Many crucial components of freedoms of organizing, expression and information are increasingly restricted, all contributing to a concerning trend in the state of the civic space.</p> <p>The finding that the sustainability of organizations is stable is encouraging, yet it must be reflected on in the context of the negative trend described above.</p> <p>We commit to continuing to monitor the environment for civil society and adapting program activities where required.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (WROS) AND WOMEN-LED ORGANIZATIONS (WLOS)</b></p> <p><b>Women in civic spaces are often harassed and targeted by men in positions of authority, armed soldiers, and leaders of other CSOs.</b> Contributes to a sense of fear and vulnerability.</p> <p><b>WLOs are viewed with greater credibility as trusted allies assumed to seek social, rather than political or financial, benefits.</b> WLOs are important agents of change at the level of social relationships and as partners when negotiating</p>	<p>Offer training and initial core funding for women-led organizations to produce sustainable income-generating activities. Provide aid and technical expertise in the development of these alternative funding lines. This funding might also be used to support formal registration of WLOs and WROs. Organizations should prioritize their core activities, but income generation can be necessary as supplemental</p>	<p>We agree with the core issues that these recommendations try to address. These issues are all important to consider when designing programs including a strengthening civil society component.</p> <p>Financial aid, technical expertise and knowledge sharing are important aspects in strengthening civil society and</p>	Continuous, program development for next program phase

<p>with local governments.</p> <p><b>WLOs and WROs face challenges, but WLOs struggle more and more consistently.</b> True for inaccessible registration process, obstacles to legal assembly, and lower protections for speech and press freedoms. Unequal access to material and financial resources and persistent capacity gaps weaken WLOs. Networks with inclusive spaces are key coping strategy.</p>	<p>funding streams. WLOs and WROs struggle with the costs of formal registration, creating financial and legal barriers for existing organizations. Therefore, generating income can be a helpful way to support these organizations.</p> <p>Foster the continued creation of inclusive spaces (like consortiums, networks, and clusters) where women-led civil society organizations can share best practices, engage in joint programs, and learn from each other. These multi-actor partnerships have proven useful to more effectively adapt to changing circumstances and develop responses.</p> <p>Explore online campaigning and organizing with WLOs, WROs, and CSOs unable to gather in person. For security reasons, these efforts may need to be initiated out of country, but can be developed in collaboration prior to that point.</p>	<p>need to go hand-in-hand.</p> <p>While raising funds is crucial for organizations, doing so through Income Generating Activities can divert them from their primary mission and should be carefully considered among other approaches such as applying for grants or to entering partnerships.</p> <p>We have also identified the importance of inclusive spaces for WLOs among themselves and with other CSOs to create relations and share experiences.</p> <p>Digitalization can help expand general outreach, however, must be closely linked to in-person gatherings and relationship building to achieve the intended impact.</p> <p>We commit to continuing our focus on working and collaborating with WLOs and WROs. We will also aim to strengthen the support we provide across financial aid, technical expertise and facilitating knowledge sharing.</p>	
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<p><b>GEWEP'S ROLE</b></p> <p><b>GEWEP has worked to expand civic space, especially for WROs and WLOs, through:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving cooperation and communication between CSOs</li> <li>2. Facilitating capacity building for local groups</li> <li>3. Providing funding to enable CSOs to carry out their activities</li> <li>4. Establishing connections with microfinance institutions</li> <li>5. Co-creating coordination and decision-making spaces, including an innovation hub to address common problems</li> <li>6. Organizing public events for collective awareness raising.</li> </ol>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The list of activities represents the breath of activities GEWEP has worked on to strengthen civil society. It also validates the adaptations to local situations required to ensure the activities are appropriate in the different countries' context.</p> <p>One area for improvement is increasing flexibility and individualizing support we provide for different CSOs, allowing to respond to their specific needs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGIES</b></p> <p><b>Diverse approaches with some overlap</b> including building partnerships between organizations led by men and women, signing framework agreements with the government, capacity building of CSO staff, decentralization of activities, establishment of networks, adoption of digital solutions, implementation of income-generating activities, and the integration of positive masculinities into programs.</p> <p>Some success through the engagement of all stakeholders in program development, technical and material support for income-generating activities, strengthening local partners' capacities, and collaborative planning with beneficiaries.</p> <p><b>WLOs have used networks with inclusive spaces</b> where multiple civic organizations can build their capacity, expand their visibility, and providing mutual assistance.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The alternative methodologies are interesting and have been implemented in GEWEP III to a varying degree.</p> <p>We recognize the value of a longer-term perspective when starting collaboration agreements. These agreements need to be accompanied by a strategy and plan to operationalize the collaboration goals.</p> <p>Networks with inclusive spaces are very important, referring to previous findings. As shown in this finding, the purpose and value of inclusive spaces could go beyond what currently is implemented in GEWEP.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>