

Project Completion Report

Challenging: The social mindset

Focusing: On the critical enablers to participate, stimulate & connect

Creating: Ideas & alternatives for gender transformative behavior change



Cost of Violence against Women (COVAW) Initiative
September 2008 to September 2012
APS Number: M-OAA-EGAT-WID-07-248





A human chain formed in the occasion of Women Development Fair in Dinajpur



Formal launch of *Domestic Violence against Women: Cost to the Nation Report* after publication. In Photo: The Minister (MOWCA), USAID Mission Director, Renowned women activists, Country Director and Assistant Country Director

This report is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of CARE and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Table of Contents

| Description | Pages |
|--|-------|
| List of Acronyms | |
| List of Tables | |
| SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 6 |
| SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION | 8 |
| 2.1 Country context | 8 |
| 2.2 Background of COVAW | 8 |
| 2.3 Target population | 9 |
| 2.4 Project period | 9 |
| 2.5 Local NGO partners | 9 |
| 2.6 COVAW working areas, population coverage | 10 |
| 2.7 COVAW management structure | 11 |
| SECTION 3: KEY APPROACHES | 11 |
| 3.1 Use of CARE Bangladesh's existing community based platforms | 11 |
| 3.2 Engagement, participation, and connection of critical enablers | 12 |
| 3.3 A non-hierarchical partnership approach with local NGOs | 13 |
| 3.4 Engagement of gender equitable men as 'role models' | 14 |
| 3.5 Use of communication network and activism | 14 |
| 3.6 Extensive use of research for informing program design and intervention | 14 |
| 3.7 Participatory monitoring to support the development of action plans for specific cases | 15 |
| SECTION 4: DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES | 16 |
| 4.1 Objective 1 | 16 |
| 4.2 Objective 2 | 18 |
| 4.3 Objective 3 | 18 |
| 4.4 Objective 4 | 19 |
| SECTION 5: MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS, LESSONS LEARNED & CHALLENGES | 21 |
| 5.1 Major accomplishments | 21 |
| 5.2 Lessons learned | 23 |
| 5.3 Challenges | 24 |
| SECTION 6: RESEARCH FINDINGS & PROMISING PRACTICES | 24 |
| 6.1 Key research findings | 24 |
| 6.2 Promising practices | 26 |
| SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS | 28 |
| 7.1 Evaluation recommendations | 28 |
| 7.2 CARE's recommendations | 28 |

List of Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ARSHI | Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Initiative |
| BCC | Behavior Change Communication |
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CEDAW | Convention for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women |
| CiDV | Citizen's Initiative for Domestic Violence |
| CMSS | Community Management Support System |
| COVAW | Cost of Violence Against Women Initiative |
| DV | Domestic Violence |
| DWA | Department of Women Affairs |
| EKATA | Empowerment, Knowledge and Transformative Action |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| ICRW | International Center for Research on Women |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MOWCA | Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs |
| NGO | Non Government Organisation |
| NWDP | National Women Development Policy |
| OCC | One-stop Crisis Centre |
| PLA | Participatory Learning and Action |
| PROTIRODH | Promoting Rights of the Disadvantaged by Preventing Violence Against Women |
| SALT | Social Analysis and Learning Team |
| SAP | South Asia Partnership |
| VAW | Violence Against Women |
| VDC | Village Development Committee |

List of Tables

Table 1 Geographic coverage of COVAW

Table 2: Village & hamlet population profile

Table 3: Profile of households as per economic social status

Table 4: Types of community based platforms by implementation districts

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national policy environment of Bangladesh in relation to violence against women (VAW) provides a positive picture of women's rights. Bangladesh has made commitments for fulfilling different international instruments for promoting and safeguarding women's rights. The successive governments in Bangladesh have also kept the issue high on their agenda. National Women's Development Policy 2011 and Domestic Violence Against Women Act 2010 are some of the laws and policies enacted recently. However, despite the political priority and enactment of various laws and policies, women in Bangladesh continue to suffer a high degree of social oppression and gross violation of human rights.

The Cost of Violence against Women (COVAW) project as an innovative initiative funded by USAID is based on over two decades of CARE's experience in women's empowerment programming and 15 years of experience in GBV programming. It sought to address gender inequality and domestic violence and communicate economic and social costs of violence against women in the targeted communities for preventing violence against women. The primary target of the project was 50 community platforms while the project also targeted secondary stakeholders like *shalishkar*¹, religious leaders, school teachers and role models. The initiative initially started as a three year project (October 2008-September 2011), and later received a no cost extension through September 2012.

The project was implemented with three partner organizations. The Society for Uddyog worked in Dinajpur and Jaintya Chinomul Shongstha (Jashish) in Sunamganj, while CARE Bangladesh implemented the project directly in Tangail. Another partner, South Asia Partnership Bangladesh, replicated the COVAW toolkit in Rajshahi, Barishal, Potuakhali, Chittagong and Sairajganj in the third year of the project.

The project was provided strategic leadership by a part-time National Project Director, and a full-time team leader provided day to day management to the three project staff based in Dhaka and six field-based staff. COVAW implemented community level interventions in three districts. The project worked in four villages in Tangail, in twelve villages in Dinajpur and eight villages in Sunamganj.

COVAW applied several distinct approaches which were instrumental in achieving the outcomes. Key approaches included the use of community platforms from CARE's previous projects, engaging "critical enablers," employing a non-hierarchical approach to partnerships, engagement of gender equitable men as positive role models, use of activism and networks, extensive use of research findings and participatory monitoring. These approaches gave the project leverage and specific advantages for achieving transformative behavioral changes and helped to create an enabling environment for mobilizing actions of different actors for preventing violence against women.

COVAW conducted a detailed context analysis which provided insights into the local power dynamics and gender based violence. This analysis was used by the project to facilitate change processes in the communities. The project designed Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) exercises to help communities to understand the link between VAW and gender norms, and to increase their awareness. Interactive sessions were conducted with the communities using these PLA exercises. The project also engaged men in discussions of socialization of masculinity and its links to VAW to create a space for reflection and to nurture the idea of equitable relationships between men and women. Behavioral change communication (BCC) campaigns were organized using various media channels. Two studies, economic cost study and social cost study, were conceptualized, designed and conducted. The findings of the studies were widely disseminated.

¹ *Shalishkar* refers to local arbitrators

As a result of the activities implemented, COVAW has achieved impressive results in contributing to change in social norms and practices. According to the evaluation, the COVAW facilitators demonstrated a high level of awareness on social inequalities, the costs and consequences and root causes of violence against women. The costing approach helped to demonstrate to the community that domestic violence is not just a private matter, but rather has consequences for everyone. The project was able to help attain a new level of awareness in the communities by creating opportunities of reflection and analysis of costs. This critical reflection resulted in actions that resisted violence against women, as well as fed into the development of BCC and cost analysis toolkits. Through a strategic approach to engaging men, the project has been able to successfully galvanize more equitable behavior of men in the home, including men beginning to share household responsibilities with their female partners, and a reported reduction in violence against women at home.

The learning from the COVAW experience suggests that the project has transferred a complex idea of analyzing cost and consequences of violence against women into simple tools that communities can use to analyze information. The communities accepted these tools quite enthusiastically, indicating that community members may be more willing than expected to examine and discuss such sensitive issues as domestic violence. Men were also receptive, because the tools generated interest and helped them to visualize the effects of violence against women in a new way.

The project conducted two studies: *Domestic Violence against Women: Cost to the Nation* and *Seeking to Understand the Social Cost of Domestic Violence in Bangladesh*. The first study tried to assess the economic cost at family and state levels, while the second study was exploratory in nature to better understand the areas of social cost that were not captured in an economic costing analysis. The study findings of the social cost study are expected to contribute for further developing a methodology to assess social costs, and to help in identifying priorities of future research. The economic cost study found that 2.10% of GDP is wasted due to domestic violence. The social cost study also highlights impacts of violence on children's education, fear and psychosocial wellbeing of survivors, and participation in development activities as important areas of concern as prioritized by women themselves.

The evaluation has highlighted that COVAW can become a model in GBV programming and recommended that CARE Bangladesh test the model in different contexts and document the experience. Based on the experience of implementing this project, CARE Bangladesh feels that there is enormous potential of the model in reducing violence against women. To harness the full potential of such cost based approaches in contributing to prevention of violence against women, there is a need to extend the learning to a broader audience and promote the approach. In addition, more investment needs to be made in understanding the social costs of violence against women and broadening society's understanding of the social costs. COVAW has been particularly successful in engaging men. The experience of engaging men suggests that programs should create non-threatening spaces and reflective tools for effectively engaging men. One of the promising practices in COVAW was the couple's workshop designed to promote non-violent conflict resolution within couples. This has the potential of becoming an effective group counseling tool once the design of the workshop is strengthened.

SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION

2.1 Country Context

The national policy environment with regard to VAW gives a positive picture in support for women's rights in Bangladesh. The constitution of Bangladesh recognized that women have equal rights with men in all spheres of state and public life. In support of this, the Bangladesh Government has signed important documents, including CEDAW, MDG, Beijing PFA (platform of action), ICPD POA (program of action). The signing of the Declaration for the Elimination of Violence in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 acted as catalyst that brought the issue of VAW to the attention of the government with more focus. Bangladesh's 6th five year plan highlights a women's empowerment and gender equality goal as a priority.

The multi-sectoral program on VAW under the leadership of Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCA) has stepped into its third implementation phase. It has been continuing to oversee forensic laboratory service with DNA profiling, 24 hour telephone hotline, a package of support service under one stop crisis center situated in medical college hospitals with all professionals involved including doctors, nurses, psychological counselors, police, social service officers, and advocates. In addition, it also oversees other wards which attend VAW survivors, such as emergency, casualty, burn, gynecology, orthopedic, psychology, radiology forensic and other units. Important Ministries have joined in this initiative coordinated by MOWCA. These are Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Home, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Ministry of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, and Ministry of Education.

Moreover, Government of Bangladesh has also introduced important VAW related laws to improve legal protection of women in Bangladesh. Domestic Violence Act 2010 and National Women Development Policy (NWDP) for Women Advancement 2011 were two important legal documents passed from the cabinet. Alongside the government, a civil society network Citizen's Initiative for Domestic Violence (CiDV) had been working hand-in-hand with Government for finalizing the 'Nation Action Plan' and 'Rules of Procedure' for effective implementation of NWDP, and the DV Act 2010.

However, despite such efforts from a diverse range of stakeholders, women continue to suffer a high degree of social oppression, and gross violation of human rights. Regardless of the fact that there are specific laws and policies against VAW, these measures have limited impact in changing the entrenched mindset that accepts violence as a way of resolving conflicts. The latest Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey (2011) indicated 53% prevalence rates of domestic violence in Bangladesh.

2.2 Background of COVAW

Violence against women (VAW) is recognized as a major violation of human rights. As such preventing and ending VAW has been a key priority issue of successive governments in Bangladesh. In support of this, relevant laws, policies, signing of international treaties, and conventions have been put into place. Along with government, many international and national NGOs, civil society and private sectors have also been working to address DV.

However, Bangladesh continues to have one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the world. All field based reports and studies suggests that the situation is unlikely to change until the deeply entrenched social mindset that accepts violence against women is changed. Against this backdrop, COVAW as an innovative initiative of CARE Bangladesh based on over two decades of CARE experience in women's empowerment programming and 15 years of experience in addressing GBV, started to explore the following key questions:

- How to address two politically sensitive issues: a) Gender inequalities and b) domestic violence together in one discussion in a way that enables communities to see gender inequality as the root cause of domestic violence against women.
- How to communicate economic cost of violence with community member, who are neither trained, nor asked or encouraged to speak with the donor community and policy makers.
- How best to develop practical tools and inform key enablers to participate, stimulate and connect to give GBV sector a fresh impetus for prevention of domestic violence

2.3 Target Population

Primary Target Population

- COVAW covered 50 community based platforms (25 women's groups + 25 mixed sex groups with both men & women) with a range of 20 – 30 members in each group
- 48 Change Facilitators (paid volunteers from local areas) in three COVAW areas
- Three cultural folk groups, one in each COVAW area

Secondary Target Population:

- At local level: Local interest group (*Shalishkars*, religious leaders, and school teachers), and positive role models
- At national level: CiDV Network², representatives from MOWCA, media, academia and researchers

2.4 Project period

This initiative originally spanned over three years from October 2008 to September 2011. Later, a 'No Cost Extension' phase commenced from October 2011 to September 2012.

2.5 Local NGO partners

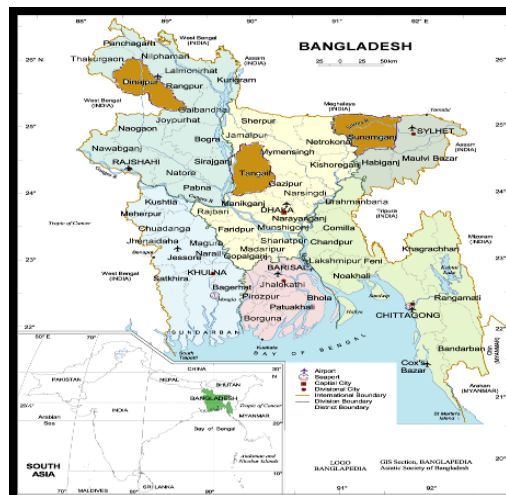
The implementing local partners of COVAW were: Society for Uddog, Jaintia Chinnomul Shongstha, and South Asia Partnership Bangladesh. Society for Uddog partnered in Dinajpur and Jaintia Chinnomul Shangstha (JASHIS) in Sunamganj. These two partners were involved since the inception of COVAW for the implementation of project activities in the respective two areas. South Asia Partnership Bangladesh (SAP) joined in third year to replicate COVAW cost analysis toolkit in their working areas, namely: Rajshahi, Barishal, Potuakhali, Chittagong, and Shirajgonj. CARE Bangladesh directly implemented the project activities in Tangail and therefore, there was no project partner for the area.

² Citizens Initiative for Domestic Violence is a platform of civil society members and organizations.

2.6 COVAW working areas and population coverage

2.6 Table 1: Geographic coverage of COVAW

| Division | District | Sub District | Union | Total Villages |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Rangpur | Dinajpur | Bochagonj | Nafanagar | 12 |
| Dhaka | Tangail | Bhuapur | Gabshara | 2 |
| | | | Nikrail | 2 |
| Sylhet | Shunamgonj | Derai | Derai | 8 |
| Total | 3 | 3 | 4 | 24 |
| Total population | 36941 | | | |



2.6 Table 2: Village & hamlet population profile

| Name of District | Name of Upazilla | Number of Union | Number of Village | Number of Hamlet (Para) | Number of Household | Population | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Male | Female | Total |
| Dinajpur | Bochagonj | 1 | 12 | 85 | 4071 (53%) | 9022 | 8731 | 17753 |
| Sunamganj | Derai | 1 | 8 | 58 | 2055 (27%) | 5980 | 5923 | 11897 |
| Tangail | Bhuapur | 2 | 4 | 20 | 1525 (20%) | 3761 | 3530 | 7291 |
| Total | | 4 | 24 | 163 | 7651 (100%) | 18763 | 18184 | 36941 |

2.6 Table 3: Profile of households as per economic social status

| Name of village | Extreme Poor | Poor | Lower Middle | Middle | Upper Middle | Rich | Total Household |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| Dinajpur | 1878 (46.1%) | 904 (22.2%) | 650 (16%) | 382 (9.4%) | 7 (0.2%) | 250 (6.1%) | 4071 (100%) |
| Sunamganj | 679 (33%) | 874 (42.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 345 (16.8%) | 0 (0%) | 157 (7.6%) | 2055 (100%) |
| Tangail | 96 (6.3%) | 870 (57%) | 62 (4.1%) | 355 (23.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 142 (9.3%) | 1525 (100%) |
| Total | 2699 (34.7%) | 2133 (34.6%) | 712 (9.3%) | 1597 (14.1%) | 7 (0.1%) | 503 (7.2%) | 7651 (100%) |

2.7 COVAW Management Structure

Project leadership was provided by a part-time Project Director. Day-to-day project management was ensured under the direction of a full time Team Leader. In addition, program management and administrative support was ensured from the Assistant Country Director of Program, CARE Bangladesh.

In addition to the Project Director and Team Leader, there were three staff members in the Dhaka office, who provided technical support to the ground level interventions and six field based staff were stationed in respective COVAW areas..

In addition to the above COVAW was supported by an Advisory Committee, composed of NGO and civil society representatives, who are influential leaders and pioneers in gender based violence work in Bangladesh.

COVAW had community level interventions in three Districts. The project was working in four villages (in two unions) in Tangail, in twelve villages in one union in Dinajpur and eight villages in one union in Sunamganj. The intervention in each District was built on village level platforms established by earlier CARE projects of CARE Bangladesh.

The project worked with local partners in two of the three Districts: the Society for UDDOG in Dinajpur and JASHIS in Sunamganj with direct implementation in Tangail. Partner staff in the District offices shared the same office space with CARE staff and took part in the same trainings. The partner staff was included as equal partners in decision making.

Regular project updates were reviewed through quarterly learning and progress review meetings at head office with the participation of the full COVAW team. Regular meeting took place with the Executive Directors of the local NGO partners.

SECTION 3: KEY APPROACHES

Several distinct approaches used in implementation of the COVAW project were instrumental in achieving project outcomes.

3.1 Use of CARE Bangladesh's established community based platforms

COVAW used the platforms that were developed by three CARE Bangladesh programs, PROTIRODH, ARSHI, and SHOUHARDO1, as the main platforms of the project. This approach provided several advantages in addressing sensitive issues like violence against women. First, CARE Bangladesh and the implementing partner NGOs had already established a long term and trusted relationship with the community platforms. Second, participants in each of these platforms had already been exposed to addressing issues like violence against women to some extent, and were motivated over the years on dealing with social issues to a varying extent.

Table 4: Types of community based platforms by implementation districts

| Dinajpur (12 villages) | Tangail (4 villages) | Sunamganj (8 villages) |
|--|---|--|
| Solidarity group (EKATA, mothers group): Women focused group Support group (VDC, VAW Forum, CMSS, CBO: (mixed group both men and women) | EKATA (women and adolescent girls focused group) VDC (mixed group both boys and girls) | Mothers group (women and adolescent girls focused group) CMSS (mixed group both boys and girls) CBO (mixed group both boys and girls) VDC (mixed group both boys and girls) |

COVAW covered two community platforms (one women’s solidarity group and one mixed sex group) in each village. In 24 total villages, 50 of these community based platforms worked to prevent violence against women. One village in Dinajpur district had a particularly large population size, and it required two extra groups.

On average, each platform consisted of 20 members comprising of 15 adult and five adolescents. These groups met fortnightly for two hours to discuss, learn, and reflect on COVAW tools - the BCC tool and cost analysis toolkit.

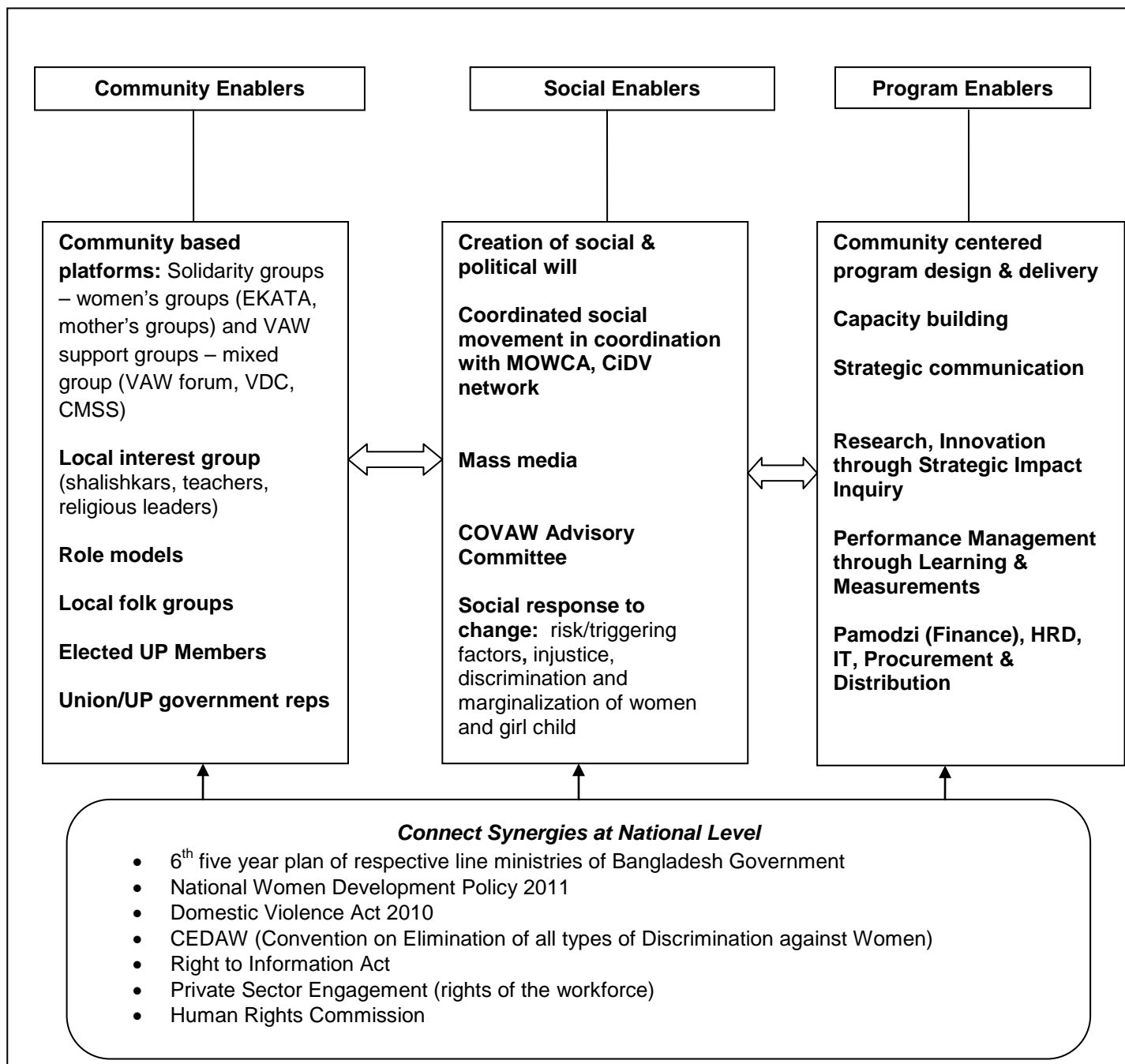
3.2 Engagement, participation, and connection of critical enablers

The findings from the COVAW context analysis revealed that obtaining social/legal justice is dependent on how different actors in specific contexts play a part. Therefore, the project took a focused approach for bringing together the perspectives of critical enablers ranging from community, larger society and program and program support people simultaneously to influence the social acceptance of violence to resolve conflicts. The community enablers included community platforms, opinion leaders, elected members and others, while social enablers included actors with greater power and influence over society. Both critical enablers as well as staff members, who are themselves a part of the same social context of traditional gender norms and practices, were led through a process of critical self-reflection on gender, violence, and power in their own lives. It is important to use the power and influence of all these actors to prevent violence against women and to shift their existing mindsets by engaging them in reflective practices and dialogues.

In the project, community enablers directly participated in developing, testing and disseminating the COVAW BCC tool and cost analysis toolkit that helped to understand and analyze inequitable relationships between men and women. Their understanding and participation contributed to triggering a shift in social norms with regard to traditional gender behavior and practice. Social enablers and program enablers played a supportive role by doing action research, generating information, ideas and feasible alternatives. All these actions provided essential infrastructure for capacity building, communication network and strategic alliance to bringing about a change in the structural and normative context of communities and institutions. This approach of involving critical enablers at multiple levels simultaneously forced COVAW to be more creative, responsive, and proactive so that the focused actions pursued for gender transformative behavior change were well connected and synchronized

with a forward-looking strategy for impacting community actions, and influencing implementation of national policies, laws, and services with regard to domestic violence.

Table 3.2: Critical enablers



3.3 A non-hierarchical partnership approach with local NGOs

COVAW has applied a non-hierarchical partnership approach between CARE Bangladesh and local NGO partners based on mutual trust and continuous learning for improvement. In this approach partner staff shared the same office space with CARE staff, attended the same trainings, participated in the same action research and briefing meetings etc. Area allocation and field based activities were distributed evenly between CARE and

partner colleagues. Partners were treated as equals for raising their voices and participating in decision-making processes.

3.4 Engagement of gender equitable men as ‘role models’

As part of the campaign on domestic violence and social mobilization activities, COVAW highlighted the qualities of non-violent husbands and men who were supportive to their wives and share household chores. The process of identifying positive role models started a process whereby women and communities had an opportunity to discuss these qualities amongst themselves and how men with such qualities can prevent violence against women. With this, a constructive dialogue began in the community that supported fresh views on men and boys sharing of household chores side-by-side with women and girls. This discussion opened a new space for breaking the traditional social mindset around “real men” and fixed gender roles and identities, and helped create a visible climate of social rejection of intimate partner violence. The positive role models also helped in disseminating messages to other men and actors in the communities. The engagement of positive role models helped the project to celebrate positive use of male power, and more equitable power sharing, which helped set examples to the community of equitable and caring relationship between partners. The use of positive role models also helped in countering negative labeling of men who started to change their practice by sharing household chores and not resorting to violence.

3.5 Use of communication network and activism (16 Days of Activism, celebration of other national/international days) to connect and stimulate critical enablers from grassroots to national level

This approach has helped to take the learning and evidence beyond the boundaries of the village platform based activities, to the community and larger society to connect and stimulate the discussion on gender transformative behavior change in favor of equitable relationships between men and women. COVAW used a wide range of communication tools, such as a signature campaign, rally, human-chain, village fair, participation of women in sports (for the first time in their lives), discussion meeting, seminar, performance of local folk group, and essay competition in schools. Community enablers like religious leaders, teachers, locally elected representatives, platform members and positive role models were invited to participate in the local events while social enablers like government representatives, civil society members, NGOs and activist participated in the upazilla, district and national level. As an immediate outcome of this approach, discussions related to economic and social costs and consequences of domestic violence received an increased level of attention and understanding.

3.6 Extensive use of research for informing program design and intervention

Unlike other development projects, COVAW relied heavily on using research and study findings to design program strategies and advocacy initiatives for preventing domestic violence.

Contextual Analysis: At the beginning of the project, the contextual analysis highlighted ways in which gender justice is affected within each community by the actions of different actors. This analysis helped to inform strategies of targeting different actors and to define program strategies for gender transformative behavioral change at the community level. The project also used findings of PLA exercises on masculinity in designing BCC tools and messages.

Economic Cost and Social Cost Reports: There were only a couple of initiatives in Bangladesh prior to COVAW that sought to quantifying costs of violence against women, and these studies were limited in scale and scope.³ The cost studies conducted by COVAW were unique in that the methodology was designed to assess the cost to a survivor’s family at micro level, and then at national level identified the cost to the government and

³ Missing Dynamics of Spousal Violence Discourse in Bangladesh: Measuring the economic costs (2010) by CPD and Estimating the Costs.

development actors. The findings opened up a new perspective of dialogue around the cost and consequences of domestic violence, which was still unknown to or unacknowledged by many policy actors. Similarly, the social cost study made an attempt to contribute to methodology development for future and used a combination of survey and case study methods. The study also for the first time examined the intensity of consequences of domestic violence in Bangladesh.

The study findings helped translate the consequences and costs of domestic violence in quantifiable terms, and demonstrated this use of this costing approach to other stakeholders addressing violence. Though this approach may be criticized as inadequate to quantify not all effects of violence, this approach has ability to demonstrate to the public and policy actors the magnitude of the impact of violence against women in society and therefore the importance of taking measures to prevent it. Further such analysis from other actors will help expand the discourse of discussions and programming from considering violence against women as solely a women's issue, to one that has costs to the family, society and nation.

To explore the costs related to DV that cannot be quantified or covered through the economic cost study, COVAW conducted a social cost study. However, this was challenging as there is no tested methodology and there is very little previous work from which to learn. Amidst these challenges, the project decided to conduct a study to contribute to the development of a methodology and provide an understanding of costs that cannot be measured in terms of monetary cost. Most importantly, the study design also aimed to look at women's perspectives of the effects and their priorities of the effects.

The economic cost study findings were used for advocacy purposes and the understanding on social cost was used for disseminating social messages.

3.7 Participatory monitoring to support the development of action plans for specific cases

COVAW introduced participatory monitoring by engaging platform members and local interest groups. Key indicators selected for monitoring were: total number of marriages that took place in one quarter; number of child marriages, marriages with dowry, and polygamous marriages; number of *Shalish*⁴ presiding over domestic violence cases; number of women taking part in the local *shalish* (arbitration) mechanism; number of cases that reached a verdict in favor of victim or survivor from the local *shalish* events.

By tallying raw data at community level, this approach created a practical way to probe case specific information and to prepare individual action plans for specific cases to take remedial actions. Through this approach, important opportunities were uncovered for delving into issues on deeper levels than would have been possible with merely information on general trends, which is a more commonly captured in a traditional monitoring system. This more thorough understanding was useful in informing existing service delivery/policy mechanisms to address under-reporting issues; overcoming particular challenges that the government and others face in preventing, investigating, prosecuting and detaining perpetrators; and taking measures for providing support, protection, assistance and redress to survivors at local level.

⁴ *Shalish* refers to local arbitration.

SECTION 4: DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Foundation work: COVAW inception workshop

COVAW started with an inception workshop, which was very comprehensive in nature. The preparatory process provided a good opportunity to involve program and program support personnel together to design the workshop content from cross programming perspectives. Good participation was ensured from local NGO partner organizations and respective programs/projects of CARE Bangladesh. It was a good example of thinking together in alignment with a gender equality goal. Since its inception, COVAW took a step-by-step approach, covering multiple levels of activities simultaneously, which gradually resulted in bringing innovation, learning and capacity building.

4.1 Objective 1: Increase understanding and analysis among communities, NGOs and government about the link between VAW and gender norms, practices and behaviors regarding marriage.

Activity 1.1: Conduct context analysis using power, gender and institutional analysis: Led by an international consultant, a context analysis was conducted in the three project intervention areas by a team of staff from COVAW and other CARE Bangladesh projects with expertise on violence against women and PLA analysis. A key objective of this study was to build capacity of COVAW staff to integrate key research methods into project activities. This gave an excellent scope for COVAW team to learn about PLA techniques and later use this learning in executing COVAW field based activities on the ground. This process produced a village-specific context analysis report.

Activity 1.2: Explore the link between VAW and gender norms, practices and behaviors regarding marriage using participatory analysis methods and tools: The context analysis study revealed the need to initiate discussion on gender transformative behavior change in the community for addressing the issues of “control and power practice” in formal and informal settings. There was lack of available materials or methods available that explicitly dealt with issues of control and power practice in Bangladesh. Based on the context analysis and PLA exercises on masculinity and in consultation with the education team and Gender Equity and Diversity Unit of CARE Bangladesh, several topics and tools were developed which were used in fortnightly sessions with the community platforms. The topics addressed through these sessions included violence against women and its root causes, traditional attitudes that promote domestic violence, socialization of masculinity, different costs associated with violence against women, and information from the Domestic Violence Act 2010. Each session was either aided by PLA exercises specifically designed to address the topic or by cost analysis tools. Examples of some of the tools used in the field included a 24-hour work analysis for recognition of division of household work and promoting sharing of household level work by men, and a tree exercise for identifying root causes of violence against women.

The sessions helped to gradually increase awareness by enabling the participants to identify different types of violence against women, analyze various causes such as gender discrimination, traditional masculinity, and costs associated with domestic violence. Based on these awareness raising activities, participants developed expectation tree collectively, which helped them to envision a society without violence against women and practical action plans for realizing the vision.

Activity 1.3: Conduct an inquiry to understand the prevalence of VAW: Prevalence has been difficult to assess due to cultural sensitivities and lack of systems to report it. COVAW has introduced a VAW case identification format to collect information on domestic violence cases on a monthly basis. The project also developed a simple MIS (Management Information System) that enables collection of data on VAW incidence

from household level at regular intervals and to enter this data into the VAW information tracking system, this making a link between villages and Union Council, sub district and district levels. Such an information collection at community level helped to break the 'culture of silence' around the prevalence of domestic violence, and helped inform planning of where communities' initiatives are carried out. Such information generation also helped address underreporting of VAW by linking village based data with the existing VAW support service system of the local government office.

The community facilitators were trained to take such information from the households. The facilitators informed the women about keeping the information confidential, and it was only shared with a small select group during collation. When the information was given to the sub district and district levels, the names of the survivors were not given. The information on the nature of violence and number of incidences helped the sub district or district level authorities to take proactive measures in the communities and request for increased allocation of services and support for the area. In the cases where women survivors formally came forward to report the case and sought services, the project and the community platform members supported the survivors in accessing services.

Activity 1.4: Map resources available for addressing VAW: Union-based available resources were mapped during contextual analysis, and this information was updated frequently. The resource mapping provided a picture of available services, resource organizations and local actors who could provide different support. In addition, village specific VAW resources were also identified. Through different initiatives, the project helped to strengthen the linkage between the resource institutions and community platforms. This was done to make the platforms aware of the available services and resources so that they could assist the survivors in seeking these services and resources.

Activity 1.5: Solidarity groups strengthened: In each village, one solidarity group was formed comprising of adult women and adolescent girls. A total of 26 such groups in three project sites were formed. Solidarity groups were strengthened throughout the COVAW period to act as change agents through activities such as interactive sessions and other campaign related activities. As a part of these sessions, the platforms developed action plans, identified VAW cases using case identification format and provided information on support services to VAW survivors and to their families. The involvement of the group members on one particular issue, and opportunities of working together in different project activities to address women's problem, helped to strengthen solidarity between group members. Success in implementing action plans and managing different cases encouraged and motivated groups to proactively work on the issue.

In addition, three-day refresher workshops were conducted on relevant topics annually. This helped to ensure informed participation of the solidarity group members to question, act and reflect in the fortnightly education sessions.

Solidarity group members were capacitated to engage in the collective empowerment process to stand up for achieving gender justice. Groups were engaged with local government offices throughout the project period with regular briefing meetings, capacity building, celebration of 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day contributing towards preventing violence against women and promoting women's rights. Three women members of COVAW community platforms were elected to local government positions, and acted as advocates to introduce COVAW training for other peer-elected members of the Union Council office. They also nominated other women platform members to be involved as legitimate members in different Union Council committees. The platform members also participated in a national annual gathering, "people's organization conventions," to share their work with other community organizations, platforms and groups.

Activity 1.6: Capacity of VDCs, VAW forums and CmSS strengthened to function as VAW support groups: The capacity of these platforms to analyze issues of violence against women, gender discrimination, masculinity and costs and consequences associated with violence against women was enhanced through the

use of BCC and cost analysis tools. Most importantly, members' capacity to take action was further reinforced by supporting them in developing and implementing action plans, imparting knowledge on safe data collection, and strengthening linkages with service providers.

While promoting these groups as important VAW support groups in the community, the project took conscious efforts to engage men and boys throughout project activities to address stereotypical thinking on traditional gender norms behavior and practices. Men and women platform members together learned and discussed the socialization of masculinity and its consequences for individuals, in the family and community. The exercises on redefining masculinity played an important role in fostering questions and reflection that helped men and boys to initiate differently thinking about gender norms and practices, and to nurture the alternative conceptions of "manhood" involving more equitable relationships between men and women. As part of the strategy for engaging men, group members participated in one exercise to describe and identify men who demonstrated positive, gender equitable behavior, such as helping their wives with household chores, and other behaviors and attitudes consistent with the project's anti-GBV messages. Later, through a selection process these men were identified from each village and formally titled as "role models". They were invited to join in COVAW capacity building workshops, campaigns and briefing meetings to present their views and champion the issues in different campaigns. Local resource groups were formed and trained on providing support to survivors and helping community platforms in seeking their services. Local resource groups were also provided information for referring survivors to different kinds of service providers locally and to one stop crisis centers.

4.2 Objective 2: Determine the social and economic cost of domestic violence to individuals, families, communities and state, and development.

Activity 2.1: Conduct cost analysis in consultation with communities, sociologists, economists, anthropologists and research institutes: Three consultative visits in the community were undertaken with the consultant to understand the areas requiring examination for understanding costs, such as tangible and intangible expenditures. The advisory board comprising of sociologists, economists and journalists contributed in the development of the methodology. The methodology was finalized after a consultation meeting on the proposed methodology of the study with economists, sociologists and anthropologists.

Activity 2.2: Cost analysis toolkit developed, tested and disseminated among selected networks in the three districts: The idea of having a cost analysis toolkit came from the fact that while platforms members were exposed on analyzing various issues related to gender norms and practices in the fortnightly education sessions, there was need to equip them with a tool to help them to keep the record of expenditures from incidents of violence. This cost information could be then used for creating compelling arguments in the community for preventing domestic violence and establishing gender justice. The cost analysis toolkit was printed and disseminated to NGOs, UN bodies, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and CIDV network members. The findings from different studies were summarized and packaged in a folder for dissemination at a regional seminar.

4.3 Objective 3: Use evidence on the social and economic cost of VAW to design a behavior and social change campaign, and influence national level policy-makers to build a more enabling environment to prevent VAW.

Activity 3.1: BCC campaign developed incorporating various media and community events: Various tools and media were used for implementing the BCC campaign. District based local folk groups were formed and trained for disseminating messages on cost and consequences of domestic violence. These groups performed in the communities on a regular basis and according to the project plans. These performances attracted large numbers of people of different age groups in the communities. The folk groups also developed and

conceptualized “Pot Shows” (a particular local form of popular folk song) to sensitize the communities on costs associated with VAW and positive messages around changing practices around violence against women and domestic violence in particular.

In addition, men's gatherings were organized, in which token prizes were awarded to positive role to influence and promote behavioral change among men in particular. Other programs on celebration days were used as opportunities to disseminate messages on cost and consequences of violence to promote an enabling environment that condemns violence. Video documentaries were also used to disseminate messages. The BCC toolkit designed in COVAW was transferred in a flip chart format and disseminated to various actors nationally including the CiDV network members. Some organizations have shown interest in using the flip chart in their field.

Activity 3.2: Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) on ‘masculinity’ and ‘positive’ role models for men and women conducted: Following the contextual analysis, a workshop was conducted to train facilitators and design tools to discuss issues of masculinity. The participants then conducted PLA exercises in the field that helped to understand issues of masculinity and ways in which men can be engaged. Based on the learning of this situation analysis exercise, the project designed tools and topics to engage men in interactive sessions for promoting transformative behavioral change. Based on this, the project developed a behavioral communication change toolkit in Bangla to hold discussions on masculinity and how it relates to violence against women in addition to other topics, such as root causes of violence against women, and ways in which gender discrimination affects women's choices, opportunities and positions. The contents of the BCC toolkit were later transferred and published in flip chart form. For deepening understanding of the issues on masculinity, two other studies⁵ were conducted, to understand the construction of masculinities and to explore the perception of men who changed their violent behavior towards women. The studies highlighted the challenges in changing men's behavior and subtle realities in using approaches such as positive role models.

Through a well thought-out process and extensive discussion on criteria of positive role models, male volunteers were selected as role models who then played different roles in promoting and influencing behavioral change.

Activity 3.3: Cross-visit within country: Community based women's groups organized a five-day cross visit at Khulna Rupantor to see their local governance program. This exchange provided insights into how women's groups were addressing governance issues and using different communication tools to promote messages within the community.

A three-day workshop was organized in Koitta for cross-learning, sharing ideas and challenges, and included participation from all Change Facilitators, representatives from interest groups, and folk team members from three COVAW areas, as well as the full COVAW team.

4.4 Objective 4: Social and economic costs of VAW influence national budgets and implementation/enactments of proposed Domestic Violence Bill.

Activity 4.1: Model developed for calculating national level costs: With the support of a national consultant, who is also a renowned female economist and member of the COVAW advisory group, a research framework and methodology was designed to assess the national level costs.

Activity 4.2: National cost analysis report produced: Two separate reports were produced on economic cost of VAW at individual, family and community level; and at macro level.

⁵ Blanchet, Thérèse. *Constructions of Masculinities and Violence against Women Study*, CARE Bangladesh; Dhingra, Jyoti. *Transforming Men-Shifting Gender Relations*, CARE Bangladesh 2011.

Activity 4.3: Cost analysis report disseminated to participating communities, partner NGOs, networks and Union Parishads: Cost analysis report was shared in the 24 COVAW operated villages, Union, sub districts, districts, and in partner NGO areas.

Activity 4.4: Cost analysis report disseminated at various levels, including district and national, through media, women's NGOs, universities, and civil society organizations: The national cost analysis report was disseminated through the following events to maximize its outreach and audience:

- Meeting with COVAW Advisory Committee
- 6 seminars at divisional level
- 4 episode TV talk show, TV broadcasting of COVAW community based program
- National level dialogue with key stakeholders
- 2 media seminar at national level
- Briefing meetings and presentation with CiDV (Alliance Members: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Campaign for Mass Primary Education, Mahila Parishad, Naripokkho, Ain O Salish Kendra, National Women Lawyer Association)
- Seminar with Dhaka University on the occasion of celebration of International Women's Day
- Briefing meeting with USAID local office, UN & relevant donors
- Meetings and presentation with various departments of Dhaka University and members of academia who actively work in this area

Activity 4.5: Presentations made to Parliament, Finance Ministry, Planning Commission, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, and affiliated agencies: A briefing meeting was held with the State Minister (MOWCA), Director General of DWA (Department of Women's Affairs) and representatives from the multi-sectoral program to discuss the incorporation of COVAW topics in the training curricula for DWA officials. A meeting was organized with One-stop Crisis Centre (OCC) on the economic cost analysis toolkit. A seminar was organized to disseminate the learning from COVAW and to learn from innovative approaches for violence prevention from South Asia. National actors, such as NGOs, academia and government officials participated in the seminar, as well as activists from South Asia. From the participants of South Asia, the national actors were able to learn about strategies that were effective in preventing violence against women and get a sense of promising future priorities. In the seminar, CARE Bangladesh took an additional opportunity to present the economic cost study findings in the presence of the Minister of Women and Children's Affairs and other officials. (Details of the seminar are given below on page 27).

Activity 4.6: Support advocacy coalition on prevention of domestic violence through the implementation of a proposed Domestic Violence Bill: COVAW worked intensively with CiDV network on developing "rules of procedures" to implement the bill, and in particular working out the use of COVAW cost analysis toolkit for claiming compensation for survivors in accordance with one of the clauses under the bill that provides survivors an entitlement to compensation.

Activity 4.7: Findings of cost analysis presented to Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper stakeholders:
Note: This activity did not take place by June 2012.

SECTION 5: MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

5.1 Major Accomplishments

Developing a new level of awareness

Usually advocates use normative arguments to deliver messages in programs for preventing and stopping VAW. The COVAW strengthened the normative arguments by adding a new dimension of cost and consequences of violence against women using simple tools. It designed well sequenced interactive sessions that helped participants analyze the causes of violence against women and the cost and consequences of VAW. The project achieved some astonishing results at the village level. According to the evaluation, the groups at the village level including the community facilitators demonstrated a high level of awareness on social inequalities between men and women and different types of gender based violence. Similarly, the members showed a high level of understanding on different types of costs resulting from VAW due to the analysis tools used in the community interventions. Members tried to influence other members of the community with the information they gained through such analysis.

The communities embraced the costing approach with much enthusiasm as it helped them to identify costs from relatable stories which they see around them and understand that costs are incurred at different levels. This broadened understanding significantly helps domestic violence to be viewed not as private, individual matter, but one that affects everyone. This finding acted as an important contribution in furthering the argument for why domestic violence should not be condoned in the community. The costing approach has proven an extremely powerful tool for normative change at the local level in rural Bangladesh. The evaluation report suggests that there may be a cultural aspect to the costing approach, making it particularly effective in the close-knit rural Bangladeshi communities.

Developed and tested innovative tools: An important contribution for furthering GBV programming

BCC tools: Reducing violence against women has been in the spotlight for several decades in the development sector. However, there are still lack of tools that systemically address gender inequalities, discrimination and violence against women and enables normal people to understand the root causes and effects of such discrimination. COVAW's BCC tools have been successful in using PLA exercises and cost analysis tools towards meeting that end. One of its unique features was that the tools created an easy and non-confrontational pathway to start discussions on masculinity and its link with VAW and domestic violence, which are sensitive issues for rural communities in Bangladesh. Recognizing the usefulness of the approach, the Department of Women Affair under MOWCA has incorporated a COVAW topic in their training curricula for the implementation of Domestic Violence Act 2010.

Cost analysis toolkit: Based on the project's experience, COVAW has developed a toolkit which will enable development actors to use the process and tools that were followed in COVAW for preventing violence against women. The cost analysis tools will help advocates, survivors and their families convincingly substantiate arguments about the loss and damage, either to sensitize people on costs and consequences of VAW or when claiming compensation according to the recently enacted DV Act 2010.

Political empowerment of grassroots women: Evidence in shifting from individual empowerment to collective empowerment

COVAW remained persistent, systematic and proactive in promoting women in solidarity groups (EKATA) and VAW support groups (mixed groups) in the political empowerment process. It encouraged some of the potential platform members to use their COVAW learning in every single opportunity in their interactions with the community. They raised their voice during 16 Days of Activism, interacted boldly with the audience after folk

performances and answered questions of their neighbors and peers with regard to the safety net entitlements.⁶ All these measures helped some members of the groups to compete and win in the last Union Council election. With this a visible breakthrough is achieved in the current functioning of the local governance system. The COVAW elected members demanded the introduction of COVAW training in the capacity building schedule of newly elected members in the Union Council office. These 'advocates' are active in creating a political space for women members to bring their voices to the table, who are otherwise marginalized by their male peers.

Development of database at local level

COVAW has developed a simple MIS (Management Information System) for recording data with regard to domestic violence cases. In this system it has incorporated a monthly VAW case identification format, and a measure to find out VAW cases from households of the catchments population, who otherwise do not report their experiences of violence.

COVAW solidarity (EKATA) group members were involved in filling out the VAW case identification format from neighboring households. Following that, the COVAW local resource group, comprising of service providers, opinion leaders and locally elected bodies, provided information about support services to the VAW survivors identified through this system. These cases were referred to the Union Council support system if local arbitration failed. This approach has laid a process of database management for strengthening the Union Council office VAW-related work by identifying VAW cases and linking them with the government-led VAW reporting and support system.

Transforming men shifting gender relationships: Contributions of COVAW

COVAW initiative made conscious efforts in bringing transformative behavioral change in men. With its campaign and mobilization activities and behavioral change tools, the project has been successful in becoming a catalyst for some men to change. The project might not always have been the key deciding factor for these men to change, but men reported that the process helped them to visualize the effects of VAW on the family level and the cost analysis tools triggered a reflection process for them. They claimed that the COVAW process has helped men to re-create the image of women as a productive and valuable half of the population.

The dramas conducted by COVAW were appreciated by all men. These were particularly helpful in assisting men to visualize the effects of violence at home. Men were able to relate these depicted scenarios to their own lives and situations. The identification with the events portrayed in the drama helped men relate to the situations and realize that they too can change and stop being violent towards their wives.

The availability of different groups in the community as a source of support for both men and women was reassuring. The EKATA groups, the COVAW committees were there to assist the community members. The involvement of the community in the personal lives of the community members is a positive development because domestic violence, till a few years ago, was viewed as an internal matter not to be discussed with outsiders; nor was outside intervention considered an option.

The activities conducted by COVAW and other relevant projects in the communities, have brought this sensitive topic into the public arena. As a result of this, there is increased risk of public embarrassment for the men who are violent towards their wives. The men in this study refer to the threat of public shame as a contributing factor to their need for change.

⁶ The government of Bangladesh provides different types of assistance in cash or kind as part of its safety net program to extremely poor families and marginalized women.

As a result of the activities, many men started to sharing responsibilities of household chores or reduced the practice of domestic violence at home, while another group of men with positive attitudes and behavior as positive role models continue to play a strong role in preventing violence against women and supporting their peers in their own positive changes. The combination of increased family pressure, the risk of public ridicule and increased confidence levels of women may be compelling factors for men to change. In some men the change is also a result of a desire to become better person. Combinations of interventions that include these factors are likely to be more effective than a single intervention.

5.2 Lessons Learned

Cost analysis approach: Though one or two studies on cost of VAW have been conducted in Bangladesh prior to implementation of the project, it was not known how convincing such costing approach would be to the communities. One of the key achievements of COVAW is that it successfully transferred a complex idea into simple tools that helped communities to understand the cost of domestic violence and make a convincing argument to the communities for actions in preventing VAW. The experience of COVAW suggests that community members even in rural context are eager to examine aspects of cost implications of violence against women, despite the fact that communities are often considered to lack will/interest in analyzing issues like VAW. There is a need to further explore why such an approach was so enthusiastically embraced in Bangladesh. It is, however, apparent that the tools were able to draw more interest of the community members, since the tools allowed them to take cases that are similar to their immediate environment or have occurred around them it and provide specific guidance on identifying costs. Aiding communities with such analytical tools for understanding the cost and consequences of VAW proved to be an effective way for preventing VAW.

Engaging men: Before the project, men in the target areas had never been exposed to such kinds of discussion, but they were receptive and responded well to the analysis of underlying causes of violence. Making sure that men were present in group discussions and education processes was initially a challenge. Facilitators tried to schedule sessions during the evening to increase men's attendance. However, the deciding factor for men's attendance was sparking their interest. The cost analysis tools and 24-hour work analysis tool helped to generate interest in men significantly and from then the dialogue in the interactive sessions helped them to continue. The role model concept, which is set to see more gender equitable men as a positive alternative shows promise to break the status quo and contribute in growing confidence among men on more shared and equal distribution of power.

Shifts in mindsets of staff and volunteers: Facilitation on the topic of violence requires specific skills and training in guiding participatory processes. The facilitator must be skilled in guiding this group analysis process to reveal gender inequalities. However, in order to equip them as effective facilitators, it is important to bring about a change in the mindset of staff and community volunteers on gender norms and practices. This was done with intensive efforts on staff capacity building using CARE's own training modules and staff reflections.

Discussions/information on the manifestation of gender discrimination is not enough: It became evident from the experience of COVAW that just providing information on forms of violence like early marriage and dowry and general communication campaigns calling upon people to take action is not enough to bring about a change in practice. Rather, more effective are processes like COVAW which combined analytical tools that enable people to understand the root causes and consequences of violence, coupled with behavioral change and community mobilization tools to influence practice.

Use of community platforms: When using community platforms as a vehicle, it is important to understand ways in which the membership base affects the participation and influence of the extreme poor. While there is a need to use the influence of economically better off groups for the benefit of the extreme poor, there is also a need to look at whether the extreme poor feel comfortable with their participation in the platforms. This comfort level

could act as a factor behind re-purposing economic or other kinds of community platforms with large power differentials among members for addressing sensitive issues like violence against women. Other factors, such as capacity of the platforms and the extent to which a shared vision of empowerment drives the platforms, also play an important role in whether or not a platform will be effective in preventing violence against women.

A frequent challenge of GBV programs is the need to build trust between the communities and staff in order to engage people on sensitive issues and to eventually begin confronting unequal relations in families and communities. Since COVAW platforms had already engaged on GBV and reproductive health issues through other projects of CARE Bangladesh, COVAW was able to leverage significant progress made within these projects to engage more deeply in social change.

More needs to be done to challenge false beliefs surrounding social institutions: The dominant view of marriage in Bangladesh is that it provides a necessary security for women, and that they are "oshohai" (disempowered) without a marriage. Men also strongly believe that women tolerate violence because they have nowhere to go if the marriage fails. There is a need to gradually challenge these notions and beliefs in the communities, which requires long-term interventions with innovative strategies and methods of communication for influencing such mindsets. In implementing such work, it is also important to discuss and reflect on the mindsets of the staff, as well as creating a collective space for women and men to analyze such issues and reinforce each other's changed or evolving perceptions.

5.3 Challenges

Engaging men can be a challenge: Men are away during the day and have little time to attend education sessions. Beyond these practical difficulties, engaging men in discussions on masculinity and inviting them to question ways to perform gender that lead to violence is not considered priority for many men. Moreover, men also lacked the skills to engage in open discussions of alternative ways of dealing with a problem with their partners, and feared stigma if they changed their practice and behavior towards women to be more egalitarian.

Positive role models: The implementation of the positive role model concept in a participatory way was challenging, as the selection process and criterion became dependent on level of awareness of the community members about the concept and individuals. It was found that they were either constrained due to lack of information about practices of men at home or they had little knowledge to analyze the broad gamut of issues that needed to be considered in identifying positive role models. The other set of challenges is that, though an individual's practice may seem like that of a positive role model, it is difficult to determine his actual behavior at home.

Underreporting of VAW cases: Domestic violence and any other form of violence against women are very sensitive issues within families and communities. People are usually only open to talking about early marriage and dowry and not any other issues, such as root causes of VAW. In the initial stages of the project, it became quite challenging to motivate men and women to talk about domestic violence in their lives.

SECTION 6: KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS AND PROMISING PRACTICES

6.1 Key Research Findings

Domestic Violence against Women: Cost to the Nation: The report *Domestic Violence against Women: Cost to the Nation* is based on two separate studies of COVAW initiative. The first was on the societal costs of domestic

violence at the individual and family levels, which included a household survey. The second was on the national cost of violence against women to state and non-state actors.

For the purpose of the study, a framework was developed that identified the social costs, intangible mental and physical health costs (meaning the costs besides going to the doctor, such as pain), time cost, and direct monetary costs that domestic violence has on four main levels of society: individual, family, community and to the state. This framework can be used to quantify the cost of domestic violence in any society using primary and secondary data.

The first study calculates the cost of domestic violence at family and individual level using data obtained through a household survey. The survey was conducted in three project intervention sites in Bangladesh: Sunamganj, Dinajpur, and Tangail. The target sample size was 500 families; however, only 483 responses could be included in the analysis. The second study served to obtain the expenditures by government and non-government organizations on addressing issues pertaining to violence against women.

The household survey indicated that domestic violence is a major expense to the natal parents. Over 80% of the survivors surveyed took shelter in the homes of their parents or other relatives after the attack in most instances the parents paid the direct costs associated with the domestic violence. The total expenses incurred by the families in relation to incidents of domestic violence for three districts in 2010 were Taka 57.8 lac, or an average cost of Taka 11,976 per family per year. Families spent an average of Taka 4,019 on direct medical costs related to treating domestic violence in just one year. The total direct cost of domestic violence believed to be borne by the perpetrator's family was over 50 lac, or an average of Tk.10,384 per family per year. These costs compare with an average income of an extreme poor household in Sunamganj⁷ is Tk.3,680, and Tk.2,875 in North-Western region.⁸

The total cost of domestic violence against women in Bangladesh was extrapolated by summing all of the costs identified in the study. This includes the amount of marital domestic violence at the individual and family levels, the expenditure on violence against women by the government and non-state actors. According to this calculation, the total national cost of domestic violence against women is at least Taka 14,358 crore, or 17.5 billion USD. This is about 12.54% of the government expenditure for year 2010, and 2.10% of GDP.

Study: Seeking to understand the social cost of domestic violence in Bangladesh: In studies usually direct costs of VAW are measured because only a few methodologies have been developed to address indirect costs. In doing so, two main types of indicators on violence against women are being developed: indicators that measure the extent of the phenomenon; and indicators that measure States' responses to the problem. But data are needed to assess the long-term psychosocial effects of domestic violence and to demonstrate more clearly the social impacts of this problem. Methods for collecting data about indirect or intangible costs of domestic violence, such as using in-depth interviews with survivors and service providers, are useful in this matter. The study entitled *Seeking to Understand Social Costs of Domestic Violence* conducted by COVAW is an attempt to gain insights on social costs of domestic violence that will contribute to developing future research agendas and areas that require greater attention or understanding for addressing GBV.

The methodology of this study used a combination of survey and case study analysis of reported cases. The study conducted a sample survey of 110 households and 20 case study analysis. Given the sensitive nature of asking survivors and their families about gender-based violence, the interview team consisted of field workers who have developed relationships and built confidence with the many families where violence against women had taken place. To the best of our knowledge, this household based study on social cost of violence against

⁷ CARE Bangladesh FSUP-H project baseline information, 2010.

⁸ CARE Bangladesh SETU project, which targets only the bottom of extreme poor household (Monitoring Information 2011).

women in Bangladesh was the first of its kind. The survey made an attempt to capture how frequently various social costs variables occurred and their intensity.

At an individual level, social costs included personal humiliation, fear, and self-respect, negative impact on self-confidence, physical injury and pain. At the community level, social costs included both physical and mental insecurity among women. At the societal level, social costs were in the form of increased vulnerability of women. At the level of the state, the social costs were mainly in the form of weakening of social institutions, lack of participation of women as equal citizens, and negative impacts on development of children.

A large proportion of female respondents identified the intensity of consequences of VAW, such as carelessness to self and children (65%), fear of death (26%), homicidal tendency (40%), self-blaming tendency (40%), depression and insomnia (46%), as severe. These areas need to be explored in more depth to understand far reaching consequences for the women, their families and society in order to understand the social costs better.

The small survey validates very strongly that domestic violence affects social and political participation of women. As a result of their experiences of violence, 84% of respondents feel shy to mix with their neighbors, 72% feel humiliated amongst other women, 69% feel disrespected, 54% get teased by others due to their experience of violence, and 50% reported a lack of interest in participating in social and development work.

Both the survey and case study analysis indicate severe effects on children of witnessing parental domestic violence. It also provides evidence that domestic violence affects children both physically and psychologically and has larger consequences on educational and developmental outcomes of the children. Seventeen percent of women respondents reported absenteeism of their children from school and 47% reported lack of attention to studies as a result of domestic violence in families. The case studies collected point out that domestic violence can create feelings of tremendous vulnerability for women, where mothers feel threatened and a lack of security for their daughters and opt for early marriage. However, such gendered impact of domestic violence on children has to be explored more which will help societies to understand longer term social and national costs of domestic violence.

6.2 Promising Practices

Couple's workshop: Introduction of a new topic in the capacity building component: There was a felt need to design an activity that can help couples who are in situations of domestic violence. However, addressing them alone through a specific activity ran the risk of exposing these couples to community criticisms or negative labeling. After several rounds of discussion, the team decided to hold couples workshop.

The goal of this workshop was to understand factors within couples that can contribute to non-violent or violent conflict resolution. The couple's workshop brought in a new dimension of capacity building in the area of addressing GBV. It invited both violent and non-violent men in couples to share their experiences, discuss roles, expectations, and promoted ways of resolving conflicts that did not entail violence. Both men and women remarked in a follow-up workshop that this event was the first of its kind in their lives. They feel closer to each other, as the workshop provided an opportunity to learn how to ask questions, reflect, and get to know each other better in a different environment, as these couples can hardly spend any time beyond their families/immediate environment.

According to the participants, they were able to discuss some of their problems jointly after the workshop, which they did not do before. Simple action points generated from the workshop, such as identifying a person with whom the husband can share issues that may trigger a violent action and help him think about consequences commitments about not punishing their wives, and sharing household chores, helped couples who were in abusive relationships move towards more equitable and caring relationships.

All reviews and evaluations pointed out that the couple's workshop was particularly effective in terms of changing behavior of men and reducing spousal violence amongst the couples who participated. A comprehensive design of such a process could be a useful group therapy tool for men for reducing spousal violence.

Blending Research and Action: The COVAW Initiative Itself: The design of the project combined research and field programs together, which helped to develop knowledge systematically and then use it for different programming practices. This kind of approach opened up many credible entry points with institutes, policy makers, law makers, practitioners and academia, which is now interested in using the data and experience generated from COVAW for achieving different purposes in preventing GBV. The activists and women's platforms felt that generation of such knowledge and evidence would help them in making convincing arguments for preventing VAW. The Ministry is trying to incorporate some of the training contents into their curricula for training officials and the cost tools for determining compensation packages for survivors. Other organizations are considering using the cost categories defined in the research for ascertaining the economic contribution of women in other areas, such as child care. The UN bodies have also shown interest in using the knowledge and experience in both their programming and advocacy work.

The initiative not only created many new advocacy entry points for preventing VAW, but also has another promising element around use of research-based knowledge. Research-generated knowledge usually becomes confined to very specific group of literate audience people. The COVAW initiative took a relevant research agenda and identified and understood costs directly from the community members. It also helped people to analyze the data to understand the consequences through a participatory process. Such practices bring the exploration and analysis of information in the public domain and helps in consuming information for development of social knowledge on issues.

Seminar on Preventing Violence Against Women: Lesson From Innovative Practices in South Asia: A seminar was organized in the last quarter of the no cost extension period of the project to disseminate learning from the COVAW initiative across various actors engaged in addressing violence against women, and to learn from various innovative approaches and tools for violence prevention practiced in Bangladesh and South Asia. Representative from government, academia, donors, women's platforms, civil society organizations and media participated in the event. The Minister for Women and Children's Affairs and the Mission Director of USAID Bangladesh participated as chief and special guests respectively. The first session was dedicated to discussions on social and economic costs of violence against women and COVAW's study findings. The women's platforms and the Minister appreciated the research findings, which they felt helped them to look at the issue from a different perspective. This session highlighted the need for more efforts to better understand the longer term social costs of violence against women. Many effects warrant further exploration, such as women's withdrawal from development programs and political participation due to domestic violence, the gendered cross-generational impacts on children of witnessing or experiencing domestic violence in the household, and long-term social impacts of psychological effects on women.

The second part of the seminar was dedicated to learning from both Bangladesh and other South Asian innovative programs on prevention of violence against women. Representatives from Centre for Health and Social Justice, Swyam and ICRW Asia regional office presented the learning from their innovative practices on working with men in preventing violence against women and working with communities to prevent violence against women. Two organizations from Bangladesh, Steps Towards Development and Institute for Cholera Diarrhoeal Research Bangladesh, presented their work with community volunteers and adolescents in preventing violence against women, respectively.

The session provided an overview of innovative work in the area of prevention, their challenges and learning from the initiatives. This provided an impetus to the thinking of current organizations working on prevention, as

prevention work is still not strongly grounded in Bangladesh and the work lacks of attention and resources. The discussions highlighted some of the evolving approaches in preventing VAW, including:

- Changing unequal power relations instead of individual practices
- Engaging men as partners, a shift from only considering women in programs
- Taking a gender-transformative approach (reaching men and boys, women and girls and transforming gender relations)

The session also highlighted the importance of primary prevention and the need for an integrated approach for preventing violence against women. The seminar provided a valuable space to discuss challenges and priorities for preventing VAW. Having participation from other countries helped the participants to understand that though the work around prevention is challenging, there are strategies that have proven to be effective to overcome challenges. The participants from other South Asian countries felt that there is a need to develop more knowledge around issues of economic and social cost, and showed keen interest in promoting the use of such tools for advocacy on prevention of violence against women. Most actors felt that more work needs to be done on ways in which we can use these kinds of tools through discussions of experts and activists on the ground.

SECTION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Evaluation Recommendations

- COVAW has yielded very impressive results as a model for prevention of domestic violence and more generally as an approach to triggering social change and shifting social norms. This is impressive for any programming initiative but especially commendable for a project that ran for only three years at the time of evaluation. It did this through innovation and by building on previous work and relationships. Since CARE Bangladesh has identified “reducing violence against women” as one of the key change domains necessary for the empowerment of women, the COVAW model could represent a flagship initiative to achieve this change. The evaluation recommends that the model be further tested beyond the operating areas and the learning from implementing the model should be documented for improving the model by adding components or strengthening existing components. The model should also be promoted to other actors beyond CARE.
- CARE Bangladesh should use the costing model developed under COVAW to influence the narrative, discourse, and policies around dealing with domestic violence at national, regional, district, and local levels. COVAW has laid strong foundations for an influential campaign, based on the costing data and COVAW implementation experience, to reduce domestic violence or increase resources to VAW programming.

7.2 CARE’s Recommendations

- **Scale up of the initiative:** The achievements of the COVAW initiative in a short period of time are very promising. After strengthening the participatory monitoring aspects of the design, scaling up the model in other contexts will spread the practice of effective prevention approaches for reducing violence against women in Bangladesh.

- **Advocacy on use of costing approach:** Using cost based approaches for advocacy in developed countries has become popular. However, such approach is not usually considered as a useful one for developing countries, as government spend less money on services to support survivors. The learning from COVAW suggests that even when expenditure by governments is low for survivor support, such cost based approaches are still useful for demonstrating the impact of violence against women in the society. Therefore, there is a need to advocate for the adoption of such cost based approaches as one useful entry point for making convincing arguments to different stakeholders for the prevention of violence against women.

To leverage the full potential of cost based approaches, more research is needed, such as tracking budget expenditure and allocation and coverage of the government services, to compare with the costs of violence, in order to strengthen a case for increased allocation of resources for prevention.

Developing knowledge on costs associated with violence in different developing countries will also contribute to a picture of global costs of violence, to push governments to allocate more resources to prevention and making changes in systems, laws and procedures through international instruments.

- **Extending the learning to a broader audience:** COVAW has been successful in many fronts using cost based approach at national and community levels, opening up space to talk about domestic violence in conservative rural areas of Bangladesh and addressing issues around masculinity and gender based violence. Understanding on the best ways to address these issues is still evolving, making it important that learning is shared broadly with other actors who are also working on these issues. More focus is needed on sharing of tools, innovations and challenges amongst actors and across geographical regions to strengthen the work around prevention. It would also be useful to organize broader sharing with experts and activists on the use of cost based approaches to better understand the full advocacy potential the cost based approach.
- **Enhanced understanding of social costs:** COVAW's experience suggests that communities do come to realize the costs of violence against women, and that understanding of social costs does make people feel motivated to take action on violence against women. However, understanding social costs has proven to be challenging and difficult due to lack of proven methods in understanding different aspects of social cost. More investment of effort and resources is needed to explore the social costs in-depth and to increase awareness of the society on social cost of violence against women. Enhanced and widespread understanding of various social costs of violence against women could galvanize individuals, families, communities and whole societies to take prevention more seriously and to prioritize actions around prevention.
- **Developing resource materials:** Currently there is a lack of resource materials on innovative tools and methodology for preventing violence against women from which organizations could learn from each other. It would be beneficial if a compendium of tools could be produced which highlights the tools and approaches used by different actors for prevention of violence against women and girls.
- **Engaging men:** The learning of COVAW suggests that engaging men is challenging but not impossible. Programs aiming to engage men need to be flexible in relation to practical issues such as time of group meetings. In many cases, COVAW meetings were held either in the evening or weekends. The tools used to engage men must be able to draw their attention and allow self-reflection. The cost analysis and other BCC tools of COVAW were particularly effective in engaging men, but most importantly programs need to create spaces where men and women alike feel comfortable in discussing sensitive issues like domestic violence.

- **Couple's workshops:** The couple's workshop was very effective in assisting couples to learn about different strategies of resolving conflicts in a non-violent way from another and to improve communication channels. The content of the workshop needs to be strengthened by incorporating more aspects of counseling, which will make it a more effective group therapy tool.