

Final report for DMCDD gender equality learning review 2019

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Abbreviations

AEBR	Association of Baptist Churches Rwanda
BUD	Baptist Union of Denmark
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CMM	Christian Mercy Ministries (CMM)
DMCDD	Danish Mission Council Development Department
ELCT	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
EUSEBU	Église de l'unité du Saint Esprit au Burundi
FAYOWODO	Faraja Young Women Development Organisation
FBO	Faith-Based organisations
GEP	Gender Equality Promotion Project
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
KIT	Kirkernes Integrations Tjeneste
KIWAKKUKI	Kikundi cha Wanawake Kilimanjaro Kupambana na UKIMWI
MO	Membership organisations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OAIC	Organization of African Instituted Churches
PLHA	People living with HIV/AIDS
RIPAT	Rural Initiative for Participatory Agricultural Transformation
RQs	Review Questions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendances
ToR	Terms of Reference
UEBB	Union des Eglises Baptistes Burundi/The Baptist Union of Churches of Burundi

Executive Summary

Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) is an umbrella organisation for Danish churches and Faith-Based Organisations (FBO) with the overall objective to improve the general living conditions of the least-favoured social groups in the developing countries in which DMCDD's Member Organisations (MO) work. There are currently 34 MOs of DMCDD, and they include a broad range of smaller and larger Christian organisations. DMCDD administers the so-called 'DMCDD Fund' on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 60% of MOs are currently receiving Danida funding through this Fund. In 2018, a total of 19.5 mill DKK was allocated for 23 grants between 200,000 and 1 mill. DKK.

DMCDD's core thematic areas concern four of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. The areas are defined as strengthening local communities, agriculture and food security, child protection, general protection measures, organisational development, strategic services and advocacy. Gender targeted interventions form part of the general protection measures and, moreover, gender equality is a cross-cutting perspective in all programmes funded by the DMCDD Fund. Prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are among the gender-targeted interventions, often implemented in conjunction with other focus areas such as literacy or Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH). Establishing Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) is a key strategy applied in several of the both gender-targeted and non-targeted projects and VSLAs are for instance also included in the Rural Initiative for Participatory Agricultural Transformation (RIPAT) interventions which are implemented in several countries across DMCDD's portfolio.

The overall objective of the gender review was “*to assess and document the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as the appropriateness of selected approaches and methodologies applied*” from a gender equality perspective. The Terms of Reference (ToR) requested a focus on VSLAs and economic empowerment, GBV and FGM as well as on female leadership in FBOs. The methodology of the review involved a desk review of 10 projects in East Africa and a field visit to Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya with more than 30 interviews with various stakeholders such as MO and partner staff, community and religious leaders, partnering CSOs and nine FGDs with beneficiaries. The approach has been based on participation and transparency where DMCDD, MOs and partners have been very involved in the field visit, including that DMCDD's learning consultant and several MOs took active part in the field visit allowing for good discussions and observations along the way. The information has been triangulated and the findings included in this report have been confirmed by minimum three different sources.

The review found that interventions in DMCDD's **portfolio** are generally *relevant* and within the strategic focus areas of DMCDD. The overall framework for DMCDD's intervention address SDG 1 and no poverty as well as SDG 2 on zero hunger. Especially the RIPAT interventions reflect these goals with focus on reducing poverty through enhanced sustainable agricultural production, increased income as well as access to basic services including financial services. SDG 5 on gender equality is addressed by the large portfolio of interventions to eliminate harmful practices such as FGM (5.3) and to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres (5.2) are properly addressed in the DMCDD's project portfolio.

The desk review shows shortcomings in the context analyses and there is no systematic gender analysis in both gender-targeted and non-gender targeted project applications. Most applications do discuss gender aspects but analyses rarely discuss into-depth how men and women are differently affected by various structural barriers. Furthermore, there is no systematic analysis of most vulnerable groups. Also, 'women' (or even broader 'community members') are defined as target groups without further detailing of sub-groups such as age, ethnicity, religion and socio-economic standing. While such broad target groups may prevent discrimination of the project beneficiaries, more well-defined target groups may ensure that the project targets the most critical beneficiaries. The lack of more specific identification of the members of the target group also contributes to weak M&E systems where basic data such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation is not systematically collected, and this hampers the tracking of progress and reporting on results.

Findings indicate that FBOs have an *added value* in terms of mobilizing communities and changing behaviour in households and communities. The behaviour change is closely linked to the powerful *effect* amongst Christians when religious leaders preach against domestic violence and FGM and for mutual respect in marriages, for example, as various stakeholders confirmed that people strive to follow the guidance of the church leaders. The successful results from preventing GBV in Burundi and FGM in Tanzania are but a few examples that churches can be powerful change agents in the prevention of GBV and FGM. It is notable that the forum is not necessarily the church service; VSLAs have proven to be an effective mechanism to address some of the root causes for violence – poverty and lack of opportunities for income generation - and a venue for strengthening social unity and discussion of very sensitive matters such as GBV. This review confirmed that the VSLAs provide important mechanism for saving and access to finance for the welfare of the household (e.g. for income generation or school fees) as well as for security in cases of emergency.

Church leaders are often the first point of contact for GBV survivors and while most churches encourage their members to seek medical treatment and report to the police, the review showed that some church leaders seek to find amicable solutions within the church. This was especially observed during the field visit in Burundi where there is very low trust in the police and the judiciary system, but it is rather unfortunate as the church efforts do not help survivors to get justice or contribute to reducing structural barriers for citizens to benefit from state institutions. Instead it appears to be more conducive for both the individual survivor and the wider community when church leaders support GBV survivors to report cases to the police and use their social position to put pressure on the police to better handle GBV cases.

In terms of **female leadership**, VSLAs can be a forum for women empowerment that enhances female participation in the decision making at the household level and in community settings. It is widely accepted that when women earn an income it increases their bargaining power in the household and this review showed that some women are also empowered to take on positions at the community level. That said, changing gender relations and positions is a long-term process and this review showed few results at community level, for example there were no examples of women holding the top position in the VSLAs and only few women presented achievements on behalf of the groups to the review team.

Within the church context, there is a growing acceptance of **female pastors** but women still only make up a fraction of the clergy. In Tanzania, the review team observed that while more churches, including at the diocesan level, are opening up for female pastors there are many obstacles for female pastors. Key challenges include sexual harassment by the pastors who approved the women to obtain admission in a theological college and low acceptance by

Christians of female priests as well as concerns that an ordained woman pastor would not be able to marry. There were no examples of non-married female ordained priests and it is not likely to occur in near future whereas it is not an obstacle for male ordained priests.

In regard to **advocacy**, the review showed that results are mainly achieved at the community level where engagement of religious and community leaders promote behaviour and attitude change. The review team identified that the advocacy efforts could be expanded at the national and regional level. In particular, one large intervention promotes social accountability across five East African countries and there is growing recognition amongst religious leaders of the need to address 'this worldly' concerns and for example include social accountability in the updating of the theological curriculum in certain theological colleges.

Based on these conclusions the following are recommended:

Recommendation 1: DMCDD supports MOs and partners to establish proper data collection systems in a similar manner as they are implementing data system for VSLA. Especially projects concerning GBV and FGM need further documentation and systematic data collection and DMCDD could support this process by developing a simple base- and endline survey for inspiration. In order to document progress and results DMCDD should support building capacity with MOs and partners to collect data across interventions in systematic manner.

Recommendation 2: DMCDD supports MOs and partners to enhance advocacy capacity and ally with strong advocacy organisations. There is a need for further strengthening the capacity of the MOs and their partners to expand their advocacy efforts to the regional and national level. One approach could be that MOs and partners form partnerships with strong advocacy organisations that can supplement FBOs' great outreach and mobilisation capacity.

Recommendation 3: DMCDD should support partners developing a contemporary and contextually relevant theological curriculum integrating social accountability paying heed to gender equality to ensure that future priests understand their role as preachers of the Bible *and* advocates for social accountability. While the East African partners are increasingly embracing the idea of supplementing preaching of the Bible with addressing social equalities and challenges at local, national and regional levels, there is a need to modify the current curriculum, which was developed during the colonial era. An up-to-date curriculum could pay attention to the promotion of gender equality in churches and FBOs and ensure long-term impact on the theological education as well as on church operation and church-based development projects.

Recommendation 4: DMCDD supports MOs and partners' internal structures and systems in order to develop more female pastors by developing a sexual harassment policy and integrating it in a revised gender policy. Key barriers for women's leadership in FBOs is the attitude towards women and gender relations and structural challenges to ensure women's inclusion. Prevention of sexual harassment is an obvious area to strengthen in order to clearly signal that FBOs are dedicated to further women's equal participation and promote female leadership in FBOs.

Recommendation 5: DMCDD should support and challenge MOs and partners to further elaborate advocacy through VSLAs

This review found VSLAs to be effective tools for the mobilisation of community members, change attitudes towards harmful practices, and create unity and courage amongst group

members to stand up together against harmful practices. Thus, VSLAs hold potential for further advocacy work such as change notion of women as leaders, including religious leaders, and for growing female leaders.

Recommendation 6: Encourage the establishment of farmers organisations in order to enhance advocacy, access to services, and sustainability

Besides the VSLAs, the RIPAT groups appeared to be platforms for change as most groups have learned new agriculture techniques and appreciated working as a group. Tangible next steps could well be to establish further farmers groups and to merge RIPAT groups into one organisation, which could greatly increase impact on community members' access to services such as agricultural support and form a conducive platform for advocacy work.

1 Introduction

Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) is an umbrella organisation for Danish churches and Faith-Based Organisations (FBO) with the overall objective to improve the general living conditions of the least-favoured social groups in the developing countries in which DMCDD's Member Organisations (MO) work. There are currently 34 MOs of DMCDD, and they include a broad range of smaller and larger Christian organisations. DMCDD administers the DMCDD Fund on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MOs can apply for these funds. Currently, 60% of MOs are funded through the Fund. In 2018, a total of 19.5 mill DKK was allocated for grants between 200,000 and 1 mill. DKK for 23 different projects.

DMCDD's core thematic areas are defined as strengthening local communities, agriculture and food security, child protection, general protection measures, organisational development, strategic services and advocacy.¹ The project portfolio mainly addresses Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Gender targeted interventions are specifically reflected under general protection measures, but gender equality is also a cross-cutting perspective. Targeted interventions include Gender-Based Violence (GBV) such as Female Genital Mutilations (FGM) and these interventions have constituted a rather large part of DMCDD's project portfolio. 20% of interventions in 2017 was allocated directly to SDG 5 on gender equality.² According to the results report from 2018, 70% of all of the completed interventions reported enhanced gender equality as a result of the interventions and 61% of new project allocations had a specific focus on gender equality.³

Establishing Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) is a key strategy applied in several DMCDD interventions for community mobilisation. VSLA is a group-based micro-finance mechanism targeting poor and marginalised people in rural areas where banks are inaccessible due to geographical, social and economic barriers. Previous reviews have assessed VSLA as a useful mechanism to mobilize communities⁴ in relation to economic empowerment and also in relation to the more sensitive GBV interventions. VSLA is not considered a stand-alone strategy but implemented in conjunction with other focus area such as literacy, FGM and agricultural production/food security. Several of the DMCDD funded agricultural interventions are based on the principles of Rural Initiative for Participatory Agricultural Transformation (RIPAT) that combines a group-based approach to agricultural extension and technologies with the aim of improving livelihood among rural small-scale farmers.

Apart from administering the Fund, a key priority of DMCDD's work is to be a centre for knowledge, learning and information sharing and it is in this perspective that this gender equality review is to be assessed. A gender policy was developed in 2007 and revisited in 2013 and complemented by tools such as a gender scorecard. The policy states that DMCDD wants to support partners in moving away from considering gender equality to be a women's issue where women are supported in navigating unequal structures to instead focus on changing the unjust structures that oppress women and hinder equal rights.⁵

¹ DMCDDs catalogue of standard indicators

² Dorthe Skovgaard Mortensen, SDG review, 2017

³ Draft results report, 2018 (not finally approved version)

⁴ Review of Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) Pooled Fund, September to December 2017, 2017

⁵ Gender Policy, DMCDD, 2007 with revisions in 2013.

The gender policy outlines a number of principles for DMCDD's gender approach. The principles comprise *dialogue, participation, mutuality and responsibility* and DMCDD members and partners *as role models*. The policy states that DMCDD, partners and members will ensure that both men and women are fully involved in projects and participate on equal terms. The principle referred to as 'dialogue' will focus on mutual understanding and respect for both genders. It is notable that the last principle of DMCDD members being role models does not only require to ensure gender equality in projects but also that the MOs apply the principles in their own organisations. This is a potential challenge in churches that are often founded on patriarchal structures. Nevertheless, it is considered key 'to practice as you preach' in order to achieve successful project implementation on gender equality.

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR), there is an impression from the 2018 applications to the DMCDD pool that whereas DMCDD member and partner organisations focus on gender equality as a specific objective with gender-targeted initiatives such as projects focusing on combating GBV and FGM, other member and partner organisations do not mainstream gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and there is limited use of the gender scorecard. This review has been commissioned to assess how DMCDD can improve its strategies and approaches to gender equality and support partners in mainstreaming gender in all projects in order to enhance DMCDD's project portfolio in this aspect.

The overall objective of the review is *"To assess and document the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as the appropriateness of selected approaches and methodologies applied."* Further four sub-objectives are included namely:

1. To assess the VSLA/economic empowerment work through the anti-FGM committees and recommend how this can be strengthened;
2. To assess initiatives which promote women as leaders in CSOs as well as in local, regional and national bodies, in civil society, private sector and the state
3. To assess the awareness raising and capacity building of e.g. CSOs and the possibility to improve advocacy work in collaboration with partners or other implementing organisations and the opportunities to strengthen that work by collaborating with different stakeholders, e.g. religious leaders and networks. Where relevant, it would be good to look at interventions strengthening Freedom of Religion and Belief.
4. To recommend on areas where the selected approaches and method can be improved and suggest ways to strengthen documentation, e.g. a guide to DMCDD recommended gender equality approaches

The review focuses on assessing the overall project portfolio – both gender-targeted and non-gender-targeted projects - in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and the review provides recommendations for enhancement of gender equality and mainstreaming in both types of projects. The review analyses the development strategies and methodologies applied by DMCDD, members and partners namely i) VSLA and economic empowerment, ii) advocacy to address unjust structures that oppress women and iii) promotion of female leadership in CSOs, including in member and partner organisations as well as in private sector and the state.

1.1 Overview of the report

After this Introduction, Chapter 2 will explain the methodology and data collection. Chapter 3 presents findings. It begins with an assessment of the various interventions and the level of gender analyses conducted in the applications; it turns focus to an assessment of the

effectiveness and impact of VSLA and economic empowerment as strategies for promoting gender equality; and it moves on to a discussion of the added value of churches and FBOs in interventions concerning GBV and FGM before turning to the results concerning female leadership and advocacy. Chapter 4, presents conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

2 Methodology

The methodology has been based on a participatory and transparent approach where DMCDD, MOs and partners have been fully involved in the field visit and data collection. Several MOs participated in the field visit allowing for ongoing discussions of observation. This has been essential to ensure triangulation of observations and receiving their initial feedback and reaction to concrete interviews and meetings with partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Triangulation of findings has been a key concern for the review and therefore observations have been confirmed by several sources before being accepted as a finding.

2.1 Review matrix

The methodology has been built around a Review Matrix that outlines key Review Questions (RQs) linked to each of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability). The RQs are formulated around the main and sub-objectives of the ToR as listed above. The matrix is included in Annex 1. Apart from overall RQs the Matrix includes sub questions/issues, judgement criteria, and means/source of verification linked to each RQ, and it provides the overall framework for the review and the data collection tools.

2.2 Data collection

The first work task was to undertake a *desk review* of selected projects, both gender-targeted interventions such as projects directly targeting women's economic empowerment and leadership and GBV, and non-gender-targeted interventions. The non-gender-targeted interventions included projects targeting children's rights, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) but with no specific focus on women or girls as the main target group. However, according to DMCDD's guidelines, all projects are encouraged to mainstream gender equality and the formats for applying for project funds request applicants (MOs and their partners) to reflect on how gender is considered. The desk review was conducted of the interventions also visited on the field visit (refer Table 1 below).

A *mapping* of DMCDD's project portfolio based on project objectives confirmed that **VSLA** and economic empowerment is a common strategy applied in DMCDD's projects. Development projects also include an element of **advocacy** which is well in line with the application of a human rights-based approach (HRBA) where focus is both on empowering rights-holders (beneficiaries) and on targeting duty-bearers to live up to their responsibility to protect rights-holders. **Promotion of female leadership** is however not explicit in the project objectives and only few projects addresses this explicitly.

A *field visit to East Africa* (Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya) was undertaken and a number of pre-selected projects (10) was visited to supplement the desk review and allow for a comparison of the findings from the desk review with implementation in practice. Key stakeholders included beneficiaries of VSLA and economic empowerment, beneficiaries of services, training, female leaders etc., partners and MOs, religious leaders and networks, traditional and community leaders, local authorities etc. Around 33 interviews were conducted with

stakeholders including partner and MO staff, religious and community leaders, local authorities etc. and nine Focus Group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with beneficiaries.

Two key instruments for data collection were applied:

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with internal and external stakeholders to obtain information on fundamental review issues. The interviews were an extended one-on-one exchange with individuals in a unique and strategic positions in relation to the projects. Semi-structured interview guides, linked to the Review Matrix, were used to guide the interviews, in order to make sure that information was gathered in a consistent manner, covering all relevant review areas (see interview guides in Annex 2).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were another key instrument in the qualitative data collection. The FGDs were used to capture views and opinions from a larger group of beneficiaries on this assignment, in particular during the field visit to Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya. The FGDs were also used to detect any unintended results from the project activities, which may not have been captured by the desk review. Table 1 shows the projects visited during the field visit, implementing partner and Danish MOs as well as their objective/purposes and key activities for overview.

Table 1. Projects visited during the field visit

Country	Project	Objective/purpose	MO	Partner	Key activities
Tanzania	Anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) project in Arusha and Manyara region	The objective is to eradicate FGM practise and women rights violations by capacity building the community to fight FGM, collaboration with local authorities and advocacy.	PULS	Faraja Young Women Development Organisation (FAYOWODO)	VSLA/skills training/FGM
	Empowerment and livelihood to PLHAs and their communities	The poor and HIV/AIDS affected communities in Mamsera-Rombo have by 2018 developed socially and economically sustainable livelihoods, which will uphold their living.	PULS	KIWAKKUKI/REC ODA	VSLA/RIPAT
	Making leeward green again: Mobilising Community in Likamba Area for livelihood Improvement and Resilience	The poor communities from the drought-ridden Leeward side of Mount Meru, Arusha District, have by 2025 developed socially and economically sustainable livelihoods, which will uphold their living.	PULS	RECODA	VSLA/RIPAT
	ShauKu		Danmission	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)	VSLA/GBV
Burundi	Women Empowerment for Gender Equality Promotion Project (GEP)	Eradicate all sorts of GBV and discrimination and women's living conditions are improved in communities in the North-Eastern part of Burundi	Baptist Union of Denmark (BUD)	The Baptist Union of Churches of Burundi (UEBB)	VSLA/literacy
	GBV prevention, family planning and financial inclusion through VSLA	Breaking the silence of any form of Gender and domestic based violence, promoting family planning and social/financial empowerment of especially women through VSLA in four provinces in Burundi	BUD	Dutabarane	VSLA/GBV
Rwanda	Project Timothy – leadership training in Baptist Churches		BUD	Association of Baptist Churches Rwanda (AEBR)	Leadership
	Community development in Ntende	To ensure that all children in Ntende village have completed primary	Churches Integration	Christian Mercy Ministries (CMM)	Pre-school/VSLA

	Village. Rwanda, through child education and village saving loans association	school and are prepared for secondary education	Mission (Kirkerne Integrations Tjeneste) (KIT)		
	Terimbere Project 2	The overall goal is to improve local farmer's livelihood and organisation in terms of nutrition, food security and community managed micro-finance institutions for the people in Nyamagabe district, to make them more shock resilient and empower them to have dialogues with the authorities in the area as well as capacity build the local authorities to deliver extension services.	BUD	Association of Baptist Churches Rwanda (AEBR)	RIPAT/VSLA
Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda	Listening to God in society. Churches and FBOs promoting social accountability in Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and <i>Uganda**</i>	The purpose of the project is to enable the church related networks – whose capacity has been built - to influence decision-makers and hold them to account in relation to the way they deliver services and consequently poverty reduction for poorest.	DMCDD	Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), UEBB, Dutabarane, AEBR	Advocacy at regional, national and local level

* Danmission (member organisation of DMCDD) is partnering with ELCT on various projects and promote inter-faith dialogue. Danmission/ELCT are not funded under the social accountability project but DMCDD and Danmission are collaborating in a partnership to increase social accountability.

** Uganda was not visited but partners in the other countries were consulted

3 Findings

This chapter presents the findings from this review. The first section explores the relevance of projects and the level of gender analyses conducted in the project applications. The following three sections (3.2-3.4) focus on the effectiveness and impact of 1) the VSLAs and economic empowerment; 2) the FBOs working on the prevention of GBV and 3) the promotion of leadership development of women in FBOs. The next two sections (3.5-3.6) attend to respectively the effectiveness and impact of advocacy by the FBOs and identification of the potentials and challenges for achieving sustainable impact.

3.1 Promoting gender equality within Faith-Based Organisations

Application stage:

The project application format requests applicants to carry out a problem analysis about the relevance of the project in its given social, economic and political context. Applicants must describe the main development problems and the root causes of these problems including causes such as climate change, human rights and gender related aspects. The applications show a great variety in the quality of the project analysis especially in relation to the most vulnerable people, gender aspects, youth, and sector analysis.

Many applications did not reflect on the **most vulnerable people** although this is part of the application and applying a HRBA to development. While it is not a requirement to target the most vulnerable groups, the project analysis should reflect on the existence of such groups to acknowledge that there might be more vulnerable groups than the ones targeted by the

intervention. **Gender aspects** are reflected upon in most applications but not mainstreamed throughout the project analysis. For instance, different challenges meeting girls and boys, men and women are not systematically included in the analyses and instead analyses tend to deal with target groups as a homogeneous group. In this sense there is no reflection of differences between girls and women, married or single, women from different ethnicities or religions.

For example, the application for the Women Empowerment for Gender Equality Promotion Project (GEP) in Burundi presents an analysis of women's challenges and it acknowledges the need to involve men but not in any detail. The same application mentions **Youth** as a target group but there is limited analysis of the specific challenges for respectively girls and boys. In general, the **sector analyses** (e.g. justice and health sectors) are too basic to support project decisions and although some **root causes** are identified the application does not reflect sufficient analysis on how to address them. The application of the GEP project in Burundi does not present a differentiation amongst "women" including standard factors such as ethnicity, age, and marital status. Instead there seems to be an assumption that 'women' are 'married women'. Since the interventions are implemented by a church that values marriage highly, there is a risk of primarily involving married women and thereby excluding single women and widowers. In practice, however, a variation of the various sub-groups of women seem to be involved in the intervention but this is difficult to verify due to lack of systematic data collection by the project.

While it is a concern for DMCDD that the church partners target 'the community' and not only their own members, some church leaders raised concerns that recruitment of beneficiaries at the community level is misinterpreted by other churches as a way of recruiting new church members (UEBB staff member, Burundi). Besides attending to the inter-church dynamics in any location, project managers must ensure that no discrimination on the basis of ethnicity in the recruitment of project beneficiaries occurs. This is especially an issue in urban settings with diversity of ethnic groups. The field visit to rural Makamba however illustrated a diverse group of beneficiaries in practice. Majority of beneficiaries was Hutus reflecting the rural setting with majority population being Hutus, a few Twas and no Tutsi in the groups. In terms of religion, eight members in one group were from the Catholic Church, four evangelists and eight Baptists so a rather diverse group in terms of religion and ethnicity. This indicates good practice, but it could be better explained at the application stage.

As indicated in the introduction, **VSLA** is a common strategy in the DMCDD funded interventions. Targets for VSLA often specifies percentages of men and women and a key requirement is that poor people are targeted. However, it is often not further defined who are poor and how to select the beneficiaries. In some of the interventions, criteria such as economically vulnerability and illiteracy are established but in some contexts like the Burundian where 65% of the population are living below the national poverty line and 32% of adult women are illiterate and therefore eligible to be included in the project, further specifications are needed to enable a proper selection process. Also, it would be relevant to aggregate the target group in terms of other vulnerability criteria such as i.e. level of poverty, ethnicity, marital status, religion, sexuality etc. and use the analysis to present a clear argument for the selection of the target group. In practice, church partners seem to select participants carefully and there were no concrete examples of non-eligible beneficiaries, but selection criteria should be more explicitly reflected in the applications.

Case box 1 provides a *best practice* example of the inclusion of a vulnerable group at both application stage and in practice. The project titled "Empowerment and livelihood to PLHAs and

their communities” in Moshi Tanzania targets one third of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) and work deliberately to ensure that PLHAs volunteer for the project.

Case box 1. Best practice example of selecting participants for interventions

In the empowerment and livelihood to PLHAs intervention in Tanzania, the local partner KIWAKKUKI prepared and encouraged PLHAs to volunteer for the intervention in advance of the general community information session in order to ensure that PLHAs would constitute one third of the selected beneficiaries. The strategy of the intervention was to ensure that PLHAs are mixed with other community members in order to integrate a discriminated and marginalized group into the broader community. The selection process was done by community leaders but the pre-preparation of PLHAs ensured that PLHAs volunteered to participate and the target of one-third PLHAs were achieved. This is considered a best practice approach when dealing with marginalized groups who might shy away due to self-discrimination or fear of not being able to conduct hard physical work.

While most interventions applying VSLA have targeted more women than men and women constitute around 60-80% of VSLAs in the visited projects, a few interventions target only women to become part of VSLAs. One example is the anti-FGM project among Maasais in Manyara, Tanzania, which seeks to involve Ngaribas i.e. women who performs the circumcision of girls, and traditional birth attendances (TBA) in the FGM committees, because these women are key stakeholders upholding the harmful practices and essential to involve in order to prevent FGM. They are also involved in the VSLA groups and entrepreneurship trainings in order to encourage them to find alternative income source to FGM. The field visit confirmed findings from previous reviews that VSLA is a relevant and useful tool for community mobilisation. Stakeholders highlighted VSLA as a key reason for beneficiaries to join the different interventions. For example, in Manyara, Tanzania, VSLA provided a platform for discussing sensitive issues such as FGM and been essential for mobilizing participants for the anti-FGM intervention. Both the Ngaribas and TBAs who participated in a FGD made clear statements that they had no intention of conducting FGM anymore.

Another example of selection of beneficiaries for VSLAs is from Gatsibo District in Rwanda. The Ntende community project is implemented by the MO KIT and the partner CMM and it aims to ensure completion of primary education for children in the village by providing a pre-school for vulnerable children from HIV/AIDS affected families (60% girls and 40% boys), which will prepare the children for primary school and increase their chances to complete primary education and enter secondary school. While the parents pay a school fee (15.000 RWF every third month) to cover the running of the school such as teachers' salary and school meals, KIT provides scholastic material and with the intention that parents gradually start providing these materials. The role of the initiated VSLA is to allow parents to save for school fees, health insurances, and scholastic materials. Hence, the theory of change links the parents from the pre-school with VSLA. In practice, however, there seems to be a missing link between the parents of the pre-school and the members of the VSLA as the latter are mostly adults who do not have children at the school. The VSLA members expressed interest to have their children attend the pre-school but they lacked the financial to enrolling their children. Although, it is likely that increased income from VSLA will allow more parents to send their children to the pre-school, the project implementation did not create a link between the VSLAs and parents of children in the pre-school.

3.2 VSLA and economic empowerment as a useful strategy to promoting gender equality?

Findings from the desk review and the field visit indicate that VSLA and economic empowerment of men and women is an effective way of improving living conditions for poor families and promoting gender equality. Economic empowerment interventions include primarily the agricultural extension programme RIPAT (refer Table 1 for overview) that address SDG 2.3 striving to improve income of small-scale food producers but also 2.4 targeting sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices. Further, skills development such as pastry making and handicrafts are promoted in the anti-FGM project in Tanzania. There is clear evidence of changes at both the household and community level and this section first presents the findings at the household and then at the community level.

3.2.1 Changes at the household level

Case box 2 presents some of the *changes at the household level* that beneficiaries have experienced after joining the different interventions. As indicated in the quotes, there has been a positive change towards women generating their own income and thereby becoming more capable of providing for their own and children needs. In some instances, this has had an impact on the division of chores within the household. For example, the pastor in Likamba, Tanzania, who are quoted in the case box, has observed that the better income generation has led to change in gender roles. The RIPAT project in Likamba has had an impact on this change as it provides a means of income for both men and women, improve agricultural practices and thereby family income. This can lead to husbands being more willing to take part in household chores and take women's opinion into consideration. As the first quote express, this change has, however, not occurred over night and still challenges prevail. But the pastor is also reflecting a general attitude change in the society towards girls and women leading to girls being sent to school. This further strengthens girls' ability to decide for themselves in terms of resisting FGM and deciding on their future spouse. Hence, families are put under pressure from several sides to end harmful practices and promote girls' rights and the changes are therefore a result of complimenting interventions and societal changes.

Case box 2. Changing gender roles in the household

“My husband did not listen to me. But when he saw the profit from chickens, he gave me some land to practice” (Maasai lady, Likamba, Tanzania).

“Now women are better off than before. Girls are educated as boys. Before girls were not taken to school... Women are free to choose whom they want to marry. Before a husband was chosen for her... Shared responsibility between men and women (i.e. collection of firewood and water). Before if a woman did not prepare food, the husband would beat her. Men and women are participating more equal but not everywhere though” (Pastor, Likamba, Tanzania).

“There are many good things to say about VSLA. It opened our mind on how to use our money. When you save well you reach more important things. If we continue to work in VSLA we can even get our children to this school” (FGD with beneficiaries, Ntende village, Rwanda).

“We didn't know many things before but now there is a difference. Sometimes our husbands do not buy things for us but now we don't have to ask our husbands to give us money” (FGD with female beneficiaries, Makamba, Burundi).

“I did not know how to write and read since I didn't go to school. Before we had no clothes and my children could not get school fees and exercise books. I can go to hospital. I became wiser and I was so proud to get

200,000 BIF (from savings) and I now bought land' (FGD with female beneficiaries, Makamba, Burundi).

VSLA teaches community members to save money and provides access to financial services. Several beneficiaries shared that they had not saved money before the VSLA was introduced and the experience of actually being able to save a larger amount is a great achievement. This is also expressed in the last quote where a female beneficiary shares how proud she was to complete a cycle of VSLA and receive a larger amount when the group savings was divided. Further, the access to small loans makes women more independent of their husbands and they can to a larger extent provide for themselves and their children without involving their husbands. In Burundi, several stakeholders including implementing partners, police, CSOs confirmed that neglect of women and children is a common problem derived from the traditional gender roles where men provide income and women are supported by their men but take care of household chores. Without access to money women completely depend on their husbands and have to involve them in even smaller purchases. Men also expressed feeling lonely when they were the only providers in the families and therefore the entire responsibility was on their shoulders. By involving women in VSLA and income generating activities the responsibility is shared in the couple to the benefit of both.

Gender relations and access to land

Women's equal participation in e.g. RIPAT interventions are challenged by lack of access to land and this was confirmed by stakeholders to apply to Kenya, Burundi and Tanzania. As expressed by a RECODA staff member in Tanzania:

"Land access is a big challenge. This is Maasai area and women do not own the land... There are laws but they are not enforced".

Although, the legal framework in Tanzania equalises men and women in terms of inheritance, in practice only sons inherit land from their parents. This applies to majority of rural women in Tanzania but for Maasai women it is even more difficult due to the cultural and traditional structures and norms with clear gender roles and rules governing relationships within the age set, between age sets, and between the genders.

The lack of access to own land means that women rely on the husband and his family's permission to cultivate family land. This can be a challenge when new agricultural techniques are introduced. Several beneficiaries in Moshi and Likamba shared that community members and their families had initially put them under pressure when they saw them preparing the ground for e.g. banana trees since RIPAT is promoting quite different methods than traditional applied methods. There were examples of women dropping out of the RIPAT interventions due to such pressure from community and family members. Although, implementing partners such as RECODA and KIWAKKUKI tried to minimize this risk by requesting women to agree with their families to be allowed to cultivate the land before volunteering to the projects, it is still an ongoing challenge. KIWAKKUKI has also allied with community leaders to mediate in family conflicts when land challenges occur, and this has been effective. Nevertheless, as long as women do not have access to land it will remain a challenge for women's equal participation, hence land rights is a relevant structural change to address in advocacy. Equal access to land is also an explicit target of SDG 2.3 and therefore a very relevant advocacy area to further develop.

Women's participation in VSLA can also increase the levels of conflict in the household since not all men are willing to accept the changing gender roles. There have been examples of

increased level of domestic violence when women acquire own income and challenges the man's position as the provider. When women bring home savings and want to also take part in decision making on how to use the saving, this can lead to conflict. Therefore, the Ntende project in Rwanda has introduced a training session on conflict management.

Case box 3. Best practice on conflict management

In Rwanda, the Community development project in Ntende Village has introduced a conflict management training session realising the potentials for conflict mediation within the household and community when gender roles are being challenged. Initially, there were many conflicts in the groups and examples of community leaders who tried to take advantage of their community status to access larger loans than the VSLA methodology allows. There were examples of household conflicts leading to domestic violence when women had to ask men for money to provide for the family. At the same time conflicts increased with women's access to money in the VSLAs since men wanted a share. To mitigate the level of conflicts, training sessions on conflict management were introduced with success. As one beneficiary explained: "*Women learned how to be smart, they did not pretend to be the big one in the house. Women share and involve the men to avoid conflict. We received training on conflict management*" (FGD with beneficiaries, Ntende village, Rwanda). This has minimized the level of conflicts in the households and in the VSLAs and the experience from Ntende village is that conflicts decrease with the maturity of the VSLA groups and when women are strategic about involving men in decisions on how to spend money from the VSLAs.

3.2.2 Changes at the Community Level

Moving on to the changes at *community level*, the findings focus on women's role in the community and show that while women are increasingly claiming leadership in the community, there is still room for improvement. Case box 4 below presents some changes occurring at the community level.

Case box 4. Changing gender roles in the community

"Now we speak out. Before we were not confident. All women had to kneel down when speaking to not curse men to die" (FGD with Ngaribas and birth attendances, Manyara, Tanzania).

"Before we were not speaking in public but now we feel they will listen. So why not? We will start now and feel more confident" (Maasai lady, Likamba, Tanzania).

"Health is changing. Before we (PLHA) were weak but now they see us being active. There has been a big change. From poor and sick to now realising we can do things. Our farms look better than healthy farmers' farms. It is not easy to stigmatize us now when we are strong and our children go to school" (Female PLHA, Moshi, Tanzania).

"The life in the group is the most important. In the beginning it was all about the savings and loans. In coming together, we understood how to work together and manage groups" (FGD with beneficiaries, Ntende village, Rwanda).

The women's increased ability to generate income to their families and their increased involvement in decision making also have an impact on women's role in the community. The increased confidence acquired from the household is used at the community level to increasingly express themselves in public. The first two quotes from Tanzania express that tradition and culture in the Maasai community in Manyara in Tanzania has prevented women from speaking in public and that now the women are ready to start speaking in public at community meetings, for example. The third quote, also from Tanzania, is by a female beneficiary living with HIV/AIDS who explained how her role in the community had changed significantly due to her participation in the agriculture project and that she had improved her farm considerably with great effect on her income, health and her family's well-being; she made the process from being a passive, marginalized and sick receiver of aid donations to a successful farmer who are now an integrated member of the community who can afford sending her children to school.

The fourth quotation speaks to VSLAs as platform for grooming female leadership. Moving beyond women's participation as members, **female leadership** in VSLAs is promoted across the projects and although most of them have female members in their committees as secretaries and treasurers, no examples of female presidents were observed. It was also notable that there were only few examples of female VSLA members speaking on behalf of the group and presenting group achievements. Interestingly, at the market day in Moshi where four RIPAT groups had finalised their training and were ready to receive certificates, no group was represented by female leaders and only few women were tasked with presenting the agricultural productions. **This indicates that whereas men and women are becoming more equal at home there are less visible changes at the community level.** That said, VSLAs provide a forum for community members to collaborate and support each other in economic aspects as well as socially. In several FGDs with VSLA members across the countries, the members highlighted the group support before mentioning access to saving and loans. While members support one another, they discuss issues such as harmful cultural traditions and group members can support decisions to go against the stream such as decisions not take a child to undergo FGM.

Turning to unintended results and spill-over effect of VSLAs being replicated outside the intervention in the same communities and in nearby communities who come to learn about it, case box 5 below concerns a project in Tanzania where men who were not included in the VSLAs decided to start up their own VSLAs after seeing the benefits from the VSLAs in the FGM committees. It is notable that beneficiaries from GEP in Burundi shared how people has come from far to learn from their projects and the VSLA methodologies.

Case box 5. Unexpected results of FGM interventions in Manyara

In Manyara, Tanzania, anti-FGM committees were established involving Ngaribas, local and religious leaders and Traditional Birth Attends. The committees are for women only and they are trained in VSLA methodologies as well as in the harmful effects of FGM and in advocacy towards the community leaders. It was an interesting unintended effect that in all three villages visited within the project area men established VSLAs after seeing the effect of the women's groups.

Spill-over effect and spreading mechanism are integrated into the RIPAT methodology. Direct beneficiaries of the RIPAT intervention commits to further distribute off-spring of farm animals to other groups members or community members to ensure that the intervention has an outreach beyond direct beneficiaries. When a farmer receives quality seed, they are committed

to further distribute three time as many. The same goes for distribution of cassava roots so if a farmer receives 20 roots, he/she has to further distribute 60 (AEBR staff, Rwanda). At the same time lead farmers are responsible for teaching minimum three other farmers agriculture techniques. This ensures further outreach of the interventions, but as will be discussed under sustainability in 3.6, the good intentions are at times challenging in practice.

In Ntende village in Rwanda there were examples that the VSLA groups had supported more vulnerable community members through their savings and the social fund. The social fund was established to support VSLA members in emergency situations such as funerals, illness or other acute challenges. Case box 6 presents an example of social funds being used for community members outside the VSLAs. This indicates the potential impact VSLAs can have on a community.

Case box 6. VSLA impact on larger community

“On the international Women’s Day, we built a house for a widower. She used to be in a group, but she did not manage... We also used the social fund to support refugees returning from Tanzania. We bought roof sheets, hygiene products, built a house and collected 100 kg of corn. We also built toilets for the poor here” (FGD with beneficiaries, Ntende village, Rwanda).

3.3 Preventing gender-based violence and female genital mutilation

Observations from the field visit and interviews with various stakeholders confirmed that churches have a great influence on their communities. Religious leaders have a strong voice and position in the church as well as in the local communities. Churches are the centre of many communities and words spoken from the pulpit are often considered law. As a staff member in Action Aid Burundi said:

“Churches are the best to change mindsets. There are no influencers as preachers. When announced in church it is key... Positive influence can quickly be done but the same applies to negative aspects.”

In Burundi, churches are essential to changing behaviour and preventing GBV and can influence changes in a rather short time. The visit to the GBV prevention project in Makambe Province implemented by the Baptist Union of Denmark in collaboration with Dutabarane confirmed the potential of churches in GBV interventions. This is reflected in case box 7 below.

Case box 7. GBV in Burundi

In Burundi, several stakeholders confirmed that GBV is a common phenomenon and that both traditionally and culturally women are considered to be inferior of men. Women were often described as men’s tool and property and that women agree to full submission to the husband. However, domestic violence was described as a huge problem and a taboo. Besides cultural and traditional gender norms, and a post-conflict context, polygamy was identified as a root cause of domestic violence.

The visit to the Morengeza Church, the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship in Africa, Makambe, illustrated the powerful position churches can have to promote behaviour change. In a completely packed church, several couples shared that violence and disrespect used to be part of their everyday life. Women and children were suffering from neglect and men would do as they pleased without consulting their wives. The intervention by Dutabarane promoted strong marriages with mutual respect between husband and wife and it has

been effective in terms of breaking the taboo around domestic violence and changing attitude and behaviour.

“I kicked her with my foot. I wanted to buy a new wife. I was on her back but now I decided to come down from her back. Now I ask her when I want to do anything” (Husband from first couple).

“Before Dutabarane came, I had many problems. No food for the children and I was beaten by my husband. He would not buy me clothes. There have been big changes in my house” (Wife from second couple). The husband hugged her in front of the entire church.

“I used to become pregnant every year. Now I told my husband I don’t want another child. Now we use condoms” (Wife).

Considering the taboo around domestic violence it was impressive that couples openly shared their life stories and even showed affection in public. This is most uncommon in a Burundian context. Family planning has long been tabooed in Burundi but as the last quote shows, one of the women openly shared that they now use contraception.

While the intervention by Dutabarane has achieved great results and GBV has reduced in the community, challenges prevail. One female beneficiary shared that she was struggling with her husband because she only gave birth to girls. She explained that *“when you only have girls you don’t have children”*. He used to beat her a lot and only give her little money to feed the children; he has improved and give her more money but the beating still takes place.

Since marriage and family life are core focus in the church, religious leaders have great power to influence change within marital relations. However, some religious leaders do not use their power to promote positive change, but for example discourage women from reporting GBV cases to police. Taking examples of such difficulties in Burundi, case box 8 presents statements by religious leaders and other stakeholders.

Case box 8. Churches as a barrier to reporting GBV cases to the police

“If a community member is the perpetrator, we do not send them to outside the church, e.g. to the police... The first time a woman is mistreated by her husband she cannot go to the police. Even if she fears for her life she cannot go to the police. Fear is not a good quality of a Christian. The wife has the right to pray for him. We punish him and denies him to take part in the Lord’s Supper during a 3-6 months period. If he is a choir singer, he will not sing... We seek amicable solution. If it happens again we pray for him. If the perpetrator repeatedly refuses to follow our instructions, the woman can be allowed to go to the police. We cannot allow divorce. If they divorce both are kicked out of the church.... The most important is to change the sinner, not to punish him” (Pastor, EUSEBU, Burundi).

“Reporting is difficult for churches. They emphasize giving advice. Some cases should be reported to the police, but they solve them amicable in their churches” (Police officer, Burundi).

“Churches keep silent and cope with violence internally. They prefer reconciliation. It is not a bad thing but victims do not get justice” (Action Aid Burundi).

“Church leaders encourage victims and perpetrators to sit together. They have their own way of punishing perpetrators... But police is corrupt and perpetrators are released” (UEBB staff member).

The first quote from the pastor of the Pentecostal Church EUSEBU reflects a conservative attitude to marriage and family life and the church as a community that seeks to keep problematic issues from the surrounding society. Police is part of the “outside” community and the church prefers to deal internally with challenges such as domestic violence. According to some churches, divorce is not an option and if the church punishment is not effective, the woman

has nowhere to turn unless she is willing to risk being excluded from the church. Reporting to police rarely occurs and only with the acceptance of religious leaders. A lack of reporting to police is confirmed by several stakeholders and is also related to perception of the police and other state institutions as corrupt in Burundi, and experience that cases reported to the police are seldomly completed. There are many examples of police accepting bribe to stall or to close a case. This obviously affects community members when deciding who to turn to in cases of GBV and therefore the tendency is instead to seek help from churches rather than police. While Dutabarane had few success cases of violence being reported to the police and actually reaching settlement in court, one example is illustrative for the barriers meeting GBV survivors.

Case box 9. Case of GBV

Within the project area of Dutabarane, an 8-year-old girl was raped, and the parents took her to a health clinic to secure evidence. The nurse at the health clinic was bribed to say that the girl was not raped. Dutabarane took the girl to another health clinic for a second opinion and this clinic concluded that she had been raped. The perpetrator tried to intimidate the girl's father to withdraw the case but without success and the perpetrator is in prison until the case will be settled in court. If found guilty, the perpetrator can be given a sentence of 30 years.

As this case indicates GBV survivors and their families face corruption and community pressure when deciding how to deal with rape and sexual abuse. From a parental perspective, sexual abuse is associated with stigma to the extent that it may lower a girl's chance of getting married, and so families must balance between the quest for justice and long-term impact on the girls' life. Also, the lack of trust in police has an impact on parents' decision on whom to report to and as indicated above trust in churches is often higher and therefore survivors and their families often choose this option. Therefore, interventions in Burundi need to balance the contextual reality with an aim to also improve structural barriers for using state institutions such as the police. **A concrete way of doing this is by involving religious leaders to support survivors reporting cases to the police.** By setting up systems and steps for reporting religious leaders can use their position in society to put pressure on the police to actually handle GBV cases, instead of accepting bribery for stalling them, and at the same time help survivors get justice. There is no quick fix for such a change and it will require time and patience as well as advocacy towards the government to make sure that police officers are paid a salary that allows them to resist bribery from perpetrators.

Dutabarane aims at supporting GBV survivors reporting cases to police and increase the reporting rate with 20%. This seems to be a commendable and realistic target but the application lacks an analysis of the challenges in the justice sector including the police and it is assumed that training and workshops on GBV will be sufficient to improving police's knowledge on GBV and thereby reporting is more likely. While this might enhance understanding there are many other root causes creating barriers to police not handling GBV cases sufficiently and salary as indicated above could be one of them. Hence, there seem to be a need for a more holistic approach to dealing with GBV cases in a complex context like Burundi. Also, **while the intervention by Dutabarane is important to break the taboo of rape, the organisation had a somewhat limited data collection system in place and without baseline figures, it is difficult to assess progress and concrete results. More solid data will also be needed if they are to do advocacy towards the government and thereby address structural barriers.**

Turning to FGM, cultural norms and community pressure are also key barriers for reducing FGM. Case box 10 below presents that beliefs in what will happen if a girl is not circumcised include different vaginal diseases, curses upon the family, lower possibility of getting married, and an understanding that uncircumcised women have higher risk of becoming prostitutes.

Case box 10. Cultural notions about FGM

“FGM is still there but at a lower rate. We told them in church that it is a sin. They are doing it but secretly when the child is 1 month old. They don’t want to stop because it is a curse not to do it... Children know it is a curse and in the church we teach against that” (Pastor, Likamba, Tanzania).

“FGM prevents prostitution. It is a treatment against a disease in the vagina. If a girl is not circumcised when she gets pregnant, it is a curse and can cause the entire family to die.. She is chased away..” (FGD with Ngariba (women performing FGM) and birth attendances, Sinonik village, Manyara, Tanzania).

“FGM is done for marriage purpose. If a Maasai is not circumcised she can be a prostitute. FGM is done to prevent disease in the vagina” (FGD with 2 female Maasai, Ngoswak village, Manyara, Tanzania).

While the cultural beliefs and understandings around female circumcision are deep-seated, community members know that female circumcision enhances a woman’s suffering during childbirth, but they interpret it as a destined incident rather than attribute it to the FGM. Furthermore, the fear of being excluded from the local community often weighs heavier than health considerations. Christian leaders have played a key role in supporting those who want to challenge norms and provided a Christian argument for opposing the practice. However, as the first quote by a pastor in Likamba, Tanzania, indicates, it is a long process to change such deep-seated notions and Christian families may continue the practice in secret. Christians attributed to the church playing a crucial role in creating more respect in the family and reducing violence including FGM. These are reflected in case box 11 below.

Case box 11. Role of churches in preventing FGM

“The church has played a big role in families in terms of respect. The father listen to the children and the children listen to the parents. Violence has reduced due to the church. Now I believe in God and not witchcraft. Churches are preaching against FGM” (FGD with Ngariba and birth attendances, Sinonik village, Manyara, Tanzania)

“The community has received the message so people hate FGM. We will not do a traditional ceremony but instead only have the communion” (FGD with religious and community leaders, Mundara village, Manyara, Tanzania).

The Christians credit the church for changes in family life and reduced domestic violence. At the same time, they reflect an adoption of a Christian argument to oppose the Maasai culture and use of confirmation as a Christian rite of passage to replace FGM. Puls and FAYOWODO, the implementing partner, are promoting an alternative rite of passage to substitute the current FGM ceremony without eradicating other parts of the tradition. The intention is to keep the ceremony with the dancing, singing, eating and drinking but without the actual circumcision. FAYOWODO staff shared that they plan to do an alternative rite of passage ceremony in December 2019 with a highly ranked family to use it as a best-case example for other community members to replicate. Although, FAYOWODO is yet to introduce the first ceremony (the intervention was initiated in start 2019), female beneficiaries were able to mention four examples of families introducing the alternative rite of passage indicating the potential impact of the awareness raising of the intervention. The four girls had gone through the

alternative ceremonies with varied response from the communities; some community members appreciated the alternative ceremony while especially relatives from afar were grappling to understand it and the implications for the future of the girls. Female beneficiaries in Ngoswak village had heard about the alternative rite and were interested in learning more and looked forward to these ceremonies (FGD in Ngoswak village).

Apart from getting anti-FGM messages from the project, girls also learn in schools that it is illegal, and the Tanzanian government has started to enforce the anti-FGM legislation, so community members are fearing getting punished. Community leaders in Mundara village explained that they are now getting the message of anti-FGM message from several sources (also confirmed by the other FGDs in Manyara) and they understand that it is illegal but only FAYOWODO has managed to explain *why* FGM is illegal and *why* it should be eradicated. This new understanding of FGM as a harmful practice has led the leaders in Mundara village to promote Christian confirmation instead of the traditional Maasai rite of passage. Community leaders are advocating for eradicating the traditional ceremony altogether since they are fearing that community members will do the actual cutting secretly after the ceremony.

Similar to Dutabarane, FAYOWODO lacks a systematic collection of data and does not have baseline data established. It is therefore essential to develop a M&E system that can track basic data such as age, gender, occupation (e.g. Ngaribas included in the committees), church, civic status etc. in order to understand who is reached by the intervention and also the number of girls exempted from FGM. This is crucial in order to demonstrate results and as a starting point, data needs to be collected on FGM-committee members and their families including children being exempted from FGM. Also, the FGM-committees could be tasked with keeping track of examples of community members (also outside the FGM-committees) deciding to do the alternative rite of passage or the Christian confirmation.

3.4 Promoting female leadership in faith-based organisations and their development work

Female leadership in VSLAs have been discussed under 3.2. and the overall finding is that VSLAs and economic empowerment are effective tools to promote gender equality at the household level and to some extent at the community level because the women get moral, psychological and financial support from participating in such groups. Women can achieve leadership positions in the VSLAs which is an important first step but as mentioned above there were no examples of female presidents in the VSLAs. This indicates that it is a long process to grow acceptance of female leadership in male dominated societies.

This finding also applies to many FBOs where female leadership is less common. There are female pastors leading women's and youth departments but few present FBOs in top management. Women's organisations such as KIWAKKUKI and FAYOWODO in Tanzania are led by women but none of the churches visited were directed by women. Female pastors are few across the countries visited and although changes are recognized in this aspect, they are more often the result of an outside pressure than deriving from within the churches. Some of the challenges are reflected in case box 12 below.

Case box 12. Barriers for promoting female pastors in churches

Female pastors are few in the churches visited in Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya and barriers for female pastors are many. Yet progress has been achieved and in the ELCT Bible

College in Mwanza, Tanzania female students from Mara and Tabora Dioceses have for the first time entered the college. To enter this college, female students are appointed by churches who agree to ordain them as pastors afterwards. Whether this will be realized in practice remains to be seen but it is encouraging that more dioceses are appointing female students and ordaining female pastors and only few dioceses are continuously refusing to do so (i.e. Shinyanga and Morogoro).

In 2016, ELCT celebrated 25-year anniversary for including female pastors and today women pastors are more than 10% of the pastors. This is a notable achievement compared to other churches but challenges prevail concerning gender equality. The best performing diocese is Iringa Diocese where 70 female pastors have been ordained since the first female pastor was ordained in 1990. So far there are five female pastors in Mwanza since the first pastors ordained in 2011.

All 11 female students from the Bible College in Mwanza who took part in the FGD were sponsored by foreign development partners such as Danmission who have pushed for inclusion of females and plays a key role in the progress. However, there are also examples of ELCT promoting gender equality in the church by establishing quotas for males, females and youth in governing bodies such as the Church Elders where 40% must be male, 40% must be female, and 20% must be youth.

Stakeholders at ELCT shared another three main barriers for female pastors. First of all, many community members – both men and women – do not consider women as suitable preachers. Families fear that women pastors may not get married and therefore request them to marry before going for theological education. Second, a different attitude towards male and female pastors in case of divorce. A female pastor explained: *“In the church, if a male pastor is divorced it is not a big thing but for a lady this would prevent her from being ordained or not given a parish.”* This was also confirmed by female pastors in Burundi and Kenya who argued that only married women would be ordained. Thirdly, different selection criteria apply for a female to be accepted since her entire family would be scrutinized whereas this is not the case for male students. In addition, some female students had experienced sexual harassment from pastors who requested sexual services in exchange for being appointed to go to college.

The women theological students are under pressure to perform to convince community members, fellow students, pastors etc. that they are capable to do the work of a pastor. At the college, there were examples of harassment from male students who argued that female students were only at the college due to stipendiaries and not as a result of their qualifications and at times unequal treatment of female and male students.

As reflected in the case box, ELCT has established quotas for female and youth participation in the Church Elders. Quotas is a first step towards equal participation between genders, but it is not the end of the story and it is key to also consider the qualitative participation of women. Several stakeholders have emphasized that empowerment of female pastors to actively participate is essential to ensure that they can use the manoeuvre room given to them by the quotas but as reflected in case box 12 there are several obstacles for them to fully make effective use of this room. The attitude towards female pastors is one part of the problem. The pastor in Mwanza shared how a complaint by several bishops' wives were raised at a large meeting involving church leaders and staff members. The wives were frustrated with female students who were going out with their husbands and the message was therefore to request students to dress more conservatively. The pastor shared that she had raised her hand and asked, *“why are we not asking the bishops to control themselves?”*. This example shows that the immediate reaction in

the church would be to blame the female students instead of considering the role of the bishops and this attitude is common.

In the Baptist Church in Rwanda, 12 female pastors will be ordained for the first time in October 2019. Several other churches already have female pastors but the decision to ordain female pastors in the Baptist church is new and a response to the government who is putting pressure on churches to improve gender equality. A female pastor shared that there is a high risk of being transferred from one church to another and that she considered it to be a risk for female pastors to be harassed if they wish to avoid transferral. She explained that “*my family is my first church*” and therefore she would struggle to deal with a transferral. She also confirmed that there is risk of sexual harassment when churches in the future are in charge of appointing female students to join theological studies as the case from case box from Tanzania also reflects. In Burundi, there are currently 20 female pastors compared to 500 male pastors in the Free Methodist Church but only few churches in Burundi allow females to be pastors. Hence, in all countries there is still a long way to go and the main challenges seem to come from within the church system.

As case box 11 reflects female students also experience resistance from community members who are reluctant to accept female pastors. While it is very likely that some communities will resist and put severe pressure on female pastors, the FGDs conducted with beneficiaries indicated that some community members are willing to welcome female pastors. Considering the churches’ powerful position in the communities it is likely that if the church promotes the message of gender equality and supports female pastors in their engagement with community members, communities will gradually accept female pastors. It is very much in line with what pastors have been preaching in terms of equal rights and worth between men and women in relation to development interventions such as FGM and GBV. Therefore, it is considered a key area for the church to engage in to actually lead by example. **Sexual harassment and improving working conditions for female pastors would be a concrete area to focus on in order to promote gender equality.** This also fits perfectly well with churches becoming more socially accountable which is discussed under 3.5 advocacy.

3.5 Advocacy

Advocacy is mainly conducted at the *local level* with promotion of bylaws and engagement of local and religious leaders in changing behaviour such as reducing GBV. As mentioned above churches have a key role to play in terms of changing attitude, behaviour etc. and churches can therefore play an essential role in sensitization, awareness raising and not least in advocacy work. Several projects are advocating for inclusion of different topics such as grassing areas for cattle in Masaai areas, prevention of FGM etc. in community bylaws, and results have been achieved in this regard in several places (i.e. in Likamba Tanzania). However, implementation of bylaws is a bigger hurdle. In practice, bylaws are difficult to implement as it can lead to conflicts in the community when bylaws are enforced. In Likamba, Tanzania, one out of four villages is actually enforcing their bylaws. One of the challenges in the other villages, is that farm owners are not willing to testify against e.g. a relative which is often the case in smaller communities and therefore it is difficult to enforce bylaws (RECODA staff member/beneficiaries). In one of the villages a community leader had his house burned down because he insisted on enforcing bylaws so it is not without complications to be frontrunner in terms of enforcement. He had to be transferred to another place due to security issues and such examples illustrate the difficulties of enforcing by-laws in practice.

In Manyara in Tanzania, community leaders were very keen on preventing FGM in the community and had several ideas for how to do so. They allied with health clinics for checking children for FGM and they suggested to go from house to house to check whether a child had been circumcised. There is no doubt that they supported the case and as mentioned above they were willing to compromise their Masai culture in order to prevent FGM. Methods could however be questioned in terms of ensuring children's rights, but the commitment was there, and they are likely to succeed in implementing the bylaws.

In Burundi, the GEP is addressing illiteracy and supporting community members to learn how to read and write. While this is very relevant and much needed in a post-conflict context as the Burundian where many, especially women, did not go to school, it is also considered a lost opportunity that little advocacy has been conducted to ensure budget resources to adult education in Burundi. As also reflected in the evaluation report⁶ and confirmed by the Department of Literacy, the Government of Burundi has initiated a campaign against illiteracy and according to several stakeholders this is a key priority of the government. However, very minimal financial means have been provided to achieve this goal. Development partners have been invited to support implementation of the policy and in this sense the GEP intervention is very relevant. Nevertheless, if BUD/UEBB is not advocating for more resources to be allocated to adult education combating illiteracy, they are merely gap fillers and are not sufficiently addressing the structural changes required to meet this challenge. Considering the very good relationship with the Department of Literacy who is also eager to attract more resources it should be realistic to collaborate to attract more resources. However, it was also clear from the discussion with the Department that a collaboration like that had not been discussed before.

GEP has established local committees called advocacy groups consisting of local, social and religious leaders who are trained in gender equality, women's rights and protection, sexual reproductive health and rights, family planning and GBV. These committees are in charge of further training community members and encouraging them to report GBV cases and mediate in the communities. According to the external evaluation⁷ these committees were not fully aware of what gender equality meant and advocacy ability was limited. However, according to FGDs with beneficiaries they still play a key role in handling individual cases of GBV and ensuring cases are handled in the community and at times reported to the police. This has had an impact on gender roles in the community in terms of handling cases and also attitude towards women. A concrete example of change was provided: "*Now women speak up, before it was only men. Before women were sitting on the floor while men were on chairs*" (FGD with female beneficiaries, Makamba, Burundi).

As indicated above, mainly advocacy results are found at the community level and this is also confirmed by previous reviews and evaluations. Advocacy is a fairly new area for FBOs, and their strengths have traditionally been within service delivery and mobilising and conducting outreach activities. In order to enhance advocacy in the interventions and further lift it above community level, it is suggested that FBOs ally with partners with more specific experience in conducting advocacy at the regional and national level. In Burundi, the review team conducted meetings with other CSOs together with UEBB and Dutabarane and there was great interest in collaborating with FBOs. CSOs understood the important role FBOs can play in outreach and mobilisation of community members. On the other hand, an organisation as Action Aid Burundi has specialized in conducting advocacy but lack the larger outreach capacity at

⁶ Final External Evaluation on Gender Equality Promotion Project in Rutana, Bubanza and Makamba provinces, Justine Elakano, JE Consulting, 2019.

⁷ Final External Evaluation on Gender Equality Promotion Project in Rutana, Bubanza and Makamba provinces, Justine Elakano, JE Consulting, 2019.

community level and thereby the two supplements each other perfectly. Action Aid Burundi is also engaged in GBV interventions and since this is considered to be an a-political subject there are potentials for holding duty bearers responsible for ensuring the rights of survivors of violence in a difficult context as the Burundian where advocacy work can be a dangerous thing.

Family planning

The potential role of churches and FBOs are acknowledged by external stakeholders as mentioned above. Churches both have great influence and are providing valuable health services, so they are a key stakeholder to ally with in health interventions. *“We saw that churches have big influence. They do not only represent the community level but also runs health clinics. 10-15% of clinics are run by churches... Challenges are related to belief which you will not be able to change... Family planning will take 100 years to explain.. Family planning to a priest is like having a cemetery in your womb. So, I will tell the priest to advice on natural family planning and then refer the ones who want modern methods to me. It starts by accepting what they are and then progress slowly”* (Pathfinder, Burundi). Family planning is a difficult topic in churches as also discussed above and as the quote expresses religious leaders can be used to some extent to promote the message as long as you accept that there are limitations to what you can ask a priest to do. Burundi has one of the highest population density in the world (the 14th highest) and population growth has been above 3% annually (at 3.2% in 2019).⁸ This is increasingly being acknowledged as a problem by different stakeholders including the churches who have started to break the taboo around family planning.

Family planning is also an issue in Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya and this is reflected by several stakeholders in the different countries. Teenage pregnancies are a huge problem in all the countries and therefore several partners are addressing sexual reproductive health and rights in their advocacy work and when working with social accountability. This issue was expressed by stakeholders in all the countries and in Ntende village in Rwanda a female VSLA beneficiary explained: *“A new challenge we have here is girls getting pregnant. It is a challenging issue. We will tell them not to have sex before marriage but now we have to open up and think about how to address it. We try to approach active girls and share about protection”*. The issue of teenage pregnancies was also mentioned by the Bishop in Mwanza as presented in case box 12 and FBOs in Kenya; hence it is a problem across countries.

The regional project “Listening to God in society. Churches and FBOs promoting social accountability in Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda” is DMCDD’s main advocacy project at the national and regional level. It is implemented by OAIC located in Kenya and in collaboration with FBOs organised in clusters in all the five countries. The overall purpose of the project is to *“enable church related networks to influence decision-makers and hold them to account in relation to the way they deliver services and consequently poverty reduction for poorest.”*⁹ Hence, the intention is to support churches and FBOs in promoting social accountability and use this to advocate for better service provision towards duty-bearers. This is done by training religious leaders in the need for the church to broaden its mandate to not only preaching the words of the bible but also advocating for better and just services for church members and the populations as such. Following the training, clusters have developed advocacy plans and several of these have focused on sexual reproductive health and rights including family planning, FGM etc. Case box 13 illustrates how religious leaders have realized that pastors need to address social

⁸ World Population Review. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/burundi-population/>

⁹ Application for: “Listening to God in society. Churches and faith-based organisation promoting social accountability – a learning trajectory

aspects of community members lives and not only preaching the “good news” but also facing realities in their communities.

Case box 13. Religious leaders on social accountability

“We preach no sex before 18 years old. We are not ready to face reality... Our homework is to consider what to do about reality. Maybe we need to change the system to meet the reality?” (Bishop, ELCT, Mwanza, Tanzania).

“Pastors used to only talk about the Bible. Social accountability was not included before. Teaching the good news is great but there is also a need for addressing social aspects” (Female Pastor, Free Methodist Church, Bujumbura, Burundi).

The social accountability project is ambitious and is considered very relevant in terms of enhancing the advocacy work of DMCDD, MOs and partners above community level. There is a common ground and very concrete topics to collaborate on across clusters and countries. Results from last round of the project included a national conference on peace building in Burundi and youth in Nakuru Kenya holding duty-bearers accountable by monitoring county budget.¹⁰ The new phase of the project was initiated in January 2018 and the project is now half-way. Results have materialized on the cluster level but collaboration on national advocacy is still limited.

On the regional level, the work around updating theological curricula applied at colleges to educate future priests has been initiated and there is agreement on the importance of this work. There is a strong motivation among East African partners to focus on inclusion of social accountability in theological curricula while at the same time revising them. Several of the curricula applied are outdated and developed during colonialism and in neither country does a unified version exist at national level. There is a clear need to unify and update a theological curriculum to a contemporary African context. ELCT in Mwanza Tanzania has taken steps to revise the curriculum with the ambition to have it officially certified as an acknowledged educational curriculum in Tanzania. In the future, the idea is to have others “buy” access to apply the certified curriculum and eventually lay the foundation for a national unified curriculum. It does, however, require a larger budget to have the curriculum updated and the process is therefore stalled in considerations of how to fund such a revision. At the same time OAIC is considering how to revise the curriculum and is in process of formulating a concept note. ELCT and OAIC are collaborating on this and at the same time addressing the issue in their own contexts. This is a very good example of how the social accountability project can bring together key religious stakeholders across East Africa to conduct advocacy work in a much needed area. Social accountability is a key advocacy area to focus on in terms of promoting gender equality in churches and FBOs. Developing a revised curriculum with social accountability included will ensure a continued focus on social accountability in theological education of new priests and hence a potential long-term impact. This will have an impact on churches’ own development projects in terms of an enhanced focus on advocacy and the churches’ potential in this aspect but also ensure a focus on internal church mechanisms and structures which is well needed. It is a great opportunity for DMCDD and partners to acquire advocacy

¹⁰ Review of OAIC-DMCDD learning trajectory on social accountability for the project “forming faith-based networks for social accountability, Burundi, Kenya and Tanzania Clusters, September 2017.

results at higher levels than community level which is needed to supplement DMCDD's interventions on the community level.

3.6 Sustainability of results

Spreading mechanisms is a well-considered aspect of the RIPAT methodology with good intentions to reach more beneficiaries. These include commitment of the so-called lead or super farmers - farmers who have proven well capable during training sessions - to train others (min. three), further distribution of quality seed, off-spring of livestock, roots etc. Whereas the commitment to distribute off-spring, seeds and roots seems to be well-functioning there are in practice some challenges related to lead farmers and the sustainability of their achievements/results. It can be a challenge to recruit lead farmers who are properly capable of explaining the techniques to sceptical farmers and answering the questions as to why these new technologies are better than traditional techniques (AEBR staff, Rwanda; RECODA staff, Tanzania).

Previous reviews of DMCDD's portfolio¹¹ has questioned sustainability of the RIPAT interventions because the methodology says little about how farmers should organize above the group level and how to create a link to government extension services. The link to government extension services has somewhat been addressed by RECODA in Likamba and Moshi Tanzania. Here RECODA has conducted Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with government extension services to support the RIPAT groups. This set-up is working well with project staff, however when it comes to lead/super farmers there have been some challenges. These include lack of respect from government extension officers who do not value lead/super farmers to the same extent as project staff and therefore do not attend sessions in the villages as agreed. They have agreed to support RIPAT groups but in practice they do not prioritise the groups managed by lead/super farmers that are often rurally located and therefore requires transportation. They expect to be paid for showing up and when this is not materialized, they are less motivated to support the groups. RECODA has tried to address this challenge by conducting quarterly meetings and this has improved the situation, but challenges prevail which is likely to affect sustainability of the interventions.

The lacking structures above group level as mentioned in the Danida review is being addressed by establishing farmers organisations consisting of several RIPAT groups. One farmers organisation with four different RIPAT groups had just been established in Moshi Tanzania when the field visit was conducted. This will enhance sustainability of the interventions in Moshi and also provide a platform for advocacy towards government services such as extension services. In Burundi and Rwanda the RIPAT interventions are also in process of establishing farmers organisations as a further development of the group dynamics already established during the RIPAT/VSLA work but they are yet to finally register. In Ntende village in Rwanda, steps have also been taken to initiate a community-based organisation (CBO) and here the idea is that the CBO should work as a bank since experience with local banks has shown that they charge high interests. The CBO is yet to be formally registered (FGD with VSLA beneficiaries).

Expectations of small payments or gifts as gratitude to have government officials support a project or outright bribery to stall a case are central barriers to sustainability of results. In Burundi there were several accounts on cases never being handled by police and health clinics due to perpetrators bribing them to keep silent or witnessing in favour of them. As discussed

¹¹ Review of Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) Pooled Fund, September to December 2017, 2017

above, this has the impact on communities that they are hesitant to go to the police in the first place. Instead they opt for local community and religious leaders to solve and mediate in concrete cases. This indicates the important role leaders and in particular religious leaders play and the relevance of involving them and implementing development projects through church structures, but at the same time a competing parallel system is a reality. In order to ensure sustainability, it is important that FBOs promote use of state structures and institutions such as the police and capacitate these institutions to address the challenges as they appear instead of supporting community members in applying non-formal structures.

As discussed under advocacy a missed opportunity is BUD/UEBB's lack of advocacy to address the unrealistic funding of the illiteracy campaign in Burundi. The Department of Literacy shared that teachers are poorly skilled and paid almost no salaries at the 642 public literacy centres and results are poor. Every year 15.000 students enter the centres and 10.000 graduates and graduations include students from private schools who also do the test at the centres. This means that drop-out rate in public institutions is very high. The government is funding the Department of Literacy to monitor the centres but funding for monitoring is poor and the Department is dependent on getting transportation from private actors to even reach the different locations. Monitoring of public centres is therefore likely to be very rare. The lack of salaries to teachers means that teachers will have to survive from small payments they can get from their students and the corruption risk is therefore very high and it is unlikely that teachers would even volunteer if they were not supported with small contributions from students. This situation is by no means sustainable and requires private actors to step in with funds and in this sense filling the gaps. Churches have a key role to play in addressing this situation as a powerful stakeholder as well as service provider and advocate for a more sustainable set-up.

Attitude changes towards gender roles and GBV is likely to be sustainable and continue to further improve. Such changes are not done overnight and there is still a long way to go. However, as women's position in the household improves it is likely that women will start demanding a better position in the community and consequently also engage in community leadership. A process has therefore been initiated and established FGM/GBV/advocacy committees can support this process by continuing to advocate against harmful practices and for better opportunities for girls and women. Girls' better access to education and their empowerment to resist such harmful practices increases the sustainability of achieved results within this area. This is also supported by government policies, legislation and increased focus on enforcement in e.g. Tanzania.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations for Strengthening Gender Equality

Interventions in DMCDD's portfolio are generally considered *relevant* and within the strategic focus areas of DMCDD. The overall framework for DMCDD's intervention address SDG 1 and no poverty as well as SDG 2 on zero hunger. Especially the RIPAT interventions reflect these goals with focus on reducing poverty through enhanced agricultural production and increased income as well as access to basic services as well as financial services. Hence, projects reviewed fall under SDG 2.3 (indicator 2.3.2) addressing income of small-scale food producers but also 2.4 targeting sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices (indicator 2.4.1 on production of agricultural area). SDG 5 on gender equality is addressed by the large portfolio of interventions to eliminate harmful practices such as FGM (5.3) and to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres (5.2.) are

properly addressed in the DMCDD's project portfolio and here FBOs have an added value in terms of mobilizing communities and changing attitudes.

Interventions address enhanced service delivery in the health and education sectors, agriculture programmes and women's protection in terms of preventing GBV, FGM and addressing sexual reproductive health and rights such as family planning. Churches and FBOs have traditionally been key actors in service provision in rural areas and their great outreach to marginalised areas is considered an added value. Churches and FBOs are building on this long-term experience and their powerful position in the society to reach poor and marginalised populations with services. Apart from actual service provision the interventions also include advocacy towards local leaders in communities and government officials as well as awareness raising towards community members.

The interventions target poor and marginalised groups and applications include context analyses and to varying degree gender analyses. These are however not conducted systematically in neither gender-targeted nor non-gender-targeted interventions and analysis of most vulnerable groups are also not systematically conducted. Instead target groups are often defined as "women" or even broader "community members" in a specific location with no further mentioning of sub-groups such as age, ethnicity, religion etc. Most applications indicate that a non-discriminatory approach is applied in selecting beneficiaries and in practice beneficiaries include both church members, members of other churches and religions such as Muslims, community members and both men and women. However, there seems to be a prioritization of married women in the selection process but several of the intervention lack systematic data collection and therefore it is not possible to verify quantitatively. There are also examples where selection of beneficiaries does not fully support intervention's theory of change such as in Ntende village in Rwanda.

VSLA and economic empowerment are *effective* strategies to improve gender equality and enhance women's position in the household as well as in the community, although to a lesser extent. Especially, at the household level VSLA and agricultural training has yielded promising results. Women are increasingly generating income by introducing new agriculture techniques from the RIPAT interventions. There are some challenges for women to equally participate due to lack of access to land but when they have been allowed to cultivate family land results are often convincing. The VSLA interventions allow both men and women to save money and access loan to apply for income generating activities. Savings are often used for house improvements, school fees and investment in businesses. Women gain access to money and become less dependent on their husbands which reduces the frustration in the households. At the same time, gender roles are challenged, and conflicts can increase due to these changing roles. There are positive examples of husbands supporting their wives in household chores when realising that she can support income generation in the household and some male beneficiaries expressed a relief that they were no longer sole responsible for providing for the family. However, conflicts can arise when women are challenging gender roles in the household and at the community level. A best practice example is derived from Ntende community development intervention who introduced a conflict management training to meet such challenges.

At the community level women's leadership is improving but there is still a long way to go. There were examples of women taking part in the leadership of VSLA groups but in no groups were women constituted as presidents. There were also few examples of women presenting results on behalf of the groups. **Female leadership in FBOs is challenged by various obstacles from within the church and lack of acceptance of female pastors.** There

are several churches introducing female pastors and development in Tanzania has been an increasing number of Dioceses opening up for female pastors. Today only few Dioceses are resisting to introduce female pastors, but progress is occurring slowly and there are still many obstacles for female pastors. **Sexual harassment was identified as a main challenge when female students want to go to theological college since they need to be appointed by pastors to be accepted.** At the same time, they are not always accepted by the communities who are not comfortable with female priests and families fear they will not be accepted and therefore not be able to marry as priests. It is unlikely that females will be ordained if they are not married and if they get a divorce along the way they will most likely not be able to preach. Same obstacles do not exist for men. Few churches have prioritized gender equality and when they do it is often derived by a push from outside such as development partners in Tanzania or the government in Rwanda.

FBOs have an essential role to play in terms of GBV and FGM and have achieved substantial results within this area. Churches have an added value in terms of outreach and mobilisation and community members listen when messages are delivered from the pulpit. Witnesses of behaviour change presented in the church is a forceful way of communicating the message and although behaviour change does not occur over night impressive results have been achieved. It should however be noted that lack of systematic data collection is a challenge in terms of providing quantitative evidence for these changes and ensuring *efficiency* of the interventions. This is a key area to be addressed by MOs, partners and DMCDD.

The powerful position of the church can also hamper development. This is reflected in the case from the conservative EUSEBU church in Burundi where cases of GBV such as rape are not systematically reported to the police. Instead religious leaders are actually opposing women to seek justice by going to “outsiders” such as the police and they seek to solve cases amicable within the church. This is closely linked with the experience that police in Burundi is corrupt and will not solve the case anyways. Therefore, interventions in Burundi need to balance the contextual reality with an aim to also improve structural barriers for using state institutions such as the police. **A concrete way of doing this is by involving religious leaders to support survivors reporting cases to the police.** By setting up systems and steps for reporting, religious leaders can use their position in society to put pressure on the police to actually handle GBV cases, instead of accepting bribery for stalling them, and at the same time help survivors get justice.

An overall conclusion in terms of advocacy, is that results are mainly achieved at the community level with engagement of religious and community leaders in advocating for behaviour and attitude change. Progress has been achieved in terms of preventing GBV and FGM and churches are powerful “convincers” when they preach the message from the pulpit. However, this position can be further applied at the national and regional level where results are still limited. Social accountability is promoted across five East African countries in a large intervention and religious leaders are increasingly understanding the need to also discuss realities in the communities in the church to supplement the message of the bible. **There are potentials for achieving results at the national and regional level with the joined keenness of revising the outdated theological curriculum to also include social accountability. The intention is to update the curriculum to a current African context and to integrate social accountability to ensure that future priests understand their role as preachers of the bible and advocates for social accountability. Various actors have started working on this at country level and with some discussion across countries but there are challenges in terms of finding funds for realising this revision and so far, concrete results are yet to materialize.**

Results achieved with economic empowerment of women in terms of enhanced agriculture skills and VSLA mechanisms are likely to be *sustainable*. These skills will not disappear, but they obviously require that women have access to land and the VSLA groups continue to function. VSLAs still continuing after end support is however not tracked and no quantitative data exist on this aspect. This is however being addressed by the establishment of the joint data collection system for VSLA. Nevertheless, considering beneficiaries' pronounced benefit from the VSLAs in terms of access to savings and loans, the group unity and the possibility of being registered as a farmers organisation and thereby accessing governmental support increases the likeliness of results to be sustainable.

4.1 Recommendations

Based on this conclusion, the following recommendations are provided:

Recommendation 1: DMCDD supports MOs and partners to establish proper data collection systems in a similar manner as they are implementing data system for VSLA. Especially projects concerning GBV and FGM need further documentation and systematic data collection and DMCDD could support this process by developing a simple base- and endline survey for inspiration. Several of the interventions lack proper systems for data collection linked to their M&E framework. There are few baseline figures established and the context analysis often lack a proper in-depth analysis of the gaps and challenges men and women are facing within specific sectors which challenges tracking of progress. This is indeed a pity since there are many results to be tracked. This is also essential in terms of generating data to be applied more actively in advocacy. DMCDD's standard indicators provide a useful framework for unifying indicators and quantitative data on how many women have undergone FGM or are survivors of other harmful practices. These indicators could be supplemented by tracking of cases reported to the committees/implementing partners, police, referrals to health or other services combined with tracking of the outcome of these reporting/referrals. Successes of the relatively small projects in DMCDD portfolio should then be evaluated on the level of follow-up and not on the level of violence cases in the area (numbers of reported cases). This could also support partners' understanding of where the challenges in the reporting chain lies.

Measuring changes in knowledge, attitude and perception in the entire communities quantitatively require more resources but as a minimum a simple survey containing basis data as age, gender, ethnicity, church membership, whether participants and their children have been circumcised or experienced other forms of GBV among direct beneficiaries should be conducted in the beginning of all projects. Such a survey could be repeated by end of project to assess how many participants dropped out of the projects, whether there are examples of participants refraining to circumcise their daughters, reduced level of violence in the group etc. DMCDD could support development of a simple base- and endline survey.

Recommendation 2: DMCDD supports MOs and partners to enhance advocacy capacity and ally with strong advocacy organisations. The review showed that the effects of advocacy on behaviour change in relation to gender roles, FGM and GBV are mostly visible at the community level where MOs and partners have engaged with community and religious leaders. The review also identified a number of further areas for advocacy in relation to gender equality, especially women's land rights, capacity building of police, engagement with government extension services, and resource allocation for education in Burundi. There is a need for

further strengthening the capacity of the MOs and their partners to expand their advocacy efforts. A concrete option for MOs and partners to enhance advocacy results is to form partnerships with strong advocacy organisations. In Burundi this could be Action Aid Burundi who is already engaged in GBV advocacy campaigning at the national level. Partner organisations such as Dutabarane can bring great outreach and mobilisation capacity to the table and thereby the two organisations can both benefit substantially from such a partnership.

Recommendation 3: DMCDD should support partners developing a contemporary and contextually relevant theological curriculum integrating social accountability paying heed to gender equality to ensure that future priests understand their role as preachers of the Bible *and* advocates for social accountability.

While the East African partners are increasingly embracing the idea of supplementing preaching of the Bible with addressing social inequalities and challenges at local, national and regional levels, there is a need to modify and unify the current curriculum, which was developed during the colonial era. An up-to-date curriculum that integrates social accountability could pay attention to the promotion of gender equality in churches and FBOs and ensure long-term impact on the theological education of priests as well as on church operation and church-based development projects. DMCDD should therefore further explore how they can facilitate the collaboration of partners in this process and investigate whether additional funds can be allocated. In Tanzania, a national consultant is already supporting implementation of the social accountability project and a mapping of the challenges concerning theological education and application of curricula has been conducted. Therefore, it is recommended to prioritize consultancy input to support a revision of the curriculum and thereby do a pilot curriculum for inspiration of other partners in East Africa. This process should be conducted in close collaboration with OAIC and partners in the region to ensure full ownership and buy-in. DMCDD should ensure in this process that gender equality is explicitly included in such a curriculum.

Recommendation 4: DMCDD supports MOs and partners' internal structures and systems in order to develop more female pastors by developing a sexual harassment policy and integrating it in a revised gender policy.

key barrier for women's leadership in FBOs is understanding of and attitude towards women and several challenges prevail to ensure women's inclusion. Prevention of sexual harassment is an obvious area to strengthen in order to clearly signal that FBOs are dedicated to combat obstacles for women's equal participation and promoting female leadership in FBOs. There need to be a critical mass of female pastors in order to even have candidates for leadership positions. DMCDD is currently developing a sexual harassment policy outlining preventive mechanisms, reporting channels, case handling and sanctions and this is an opportunity for advocating for increased focus on internal structures and systems also with MOs and partners. It is recommended to integrate these procedures into the gender policy and at the same time review the gender policy. In this process it should be considered to broaden the current binary language of the policy and instead of only including men and women it should also include other genders. Further there is a need to clearly specify who the policy applies to and how it will be enforced.

Recommendation 5: DMCDD should support and challenge MOs and partners to further elaboration of advocacy through VSLAs

This review found VSLAs to be effective tools for mobilising community members and outreach activities and the group unity gives group members a foundation for challenging harmful practices. VSLAs therefore hold potential for further advocacy activities and this channel to communities should be further explored and taken advantage of by partners. Whereas some VSLAs are already linked to advocacy such as the FGM committees this does not apply to all

and there is therefore room for further advocacy work through VSLAs. DMCDD should support and challenge MOs and partners to further elaborate advocacy through VSLAs.

Recommendation 6: Encourage partners to establish farmers organisations in order to enhance advocacy, access to services, and sustainability

Besides the VSLAs, the RIPAT groups appeared to be platforms for change as most groups have learned new agriculture techniques and appreciated working as a group. Tangible next steps could well be to establish further farmers groups and to merge RIPAT groups into one organisation, which could greatly increase impact on community members' access to services such as agricultural support and form a conducive platform for advocacy work.

Annexes

Annex 1: Review matrix

Review Question (RQ)	Sub-questions/issues	Judgement criteria	Means of verification	OECD/DAC Criteria
RQ1: To what extent has selected projects and methodologies been relevant for SDG 5 and SDG 16.10?	To what extent were partners involved in the design phase in order to ensure contextual coherence? To what extent was gender analyses conducted? To what extent has strategies for reaching girls and boys, men and women been relevant and was anyone left out? Have there been important aspects that the project did not consider/address in its design?	Mapping of overall project portfolio in terms of SDGs and strategies applied Assessment of selected gender-targeted project interventions' results frameworks Assessment of target groups, both women and men, and strategies for reaching them	Desk review of project documents and results frameworks Interviews with partners of selected projects Interviews with beneficiaries Interviews with external stakeholders (religious leaders, community leaders, local authorities, service providers)	Relevance
RQ2: To what extent has gender equality been mainstreamed into non-gender targeted projects?	To what extent were partners involved in the design phase in order to ensure contextual coherence? To what extent was gender analyses conducted? To what extent has strategies for reaching girls and boys, men and women been relevant and was anyone left out? Have there been important aspects that the project did not consider/address in its design?	Assessment of selected non-gender-targeted project interventions' results frameworks Assessment of target groups, both women and men, and strategies for reaching them	Desk review of project documents and results frameworks Interviews with partners of selected projects Interviews with beneficiaries Interviews with external stakeholders (religious leaders, community leaders, local authorities, service providers)	Relevance
RQ3: To what extent has economic empowerment through VSLA been effective and efficient in achieving desired results?	What are the results in gender-targeted and non-gender-targeted interventions? Have any of the key assumptions concerning VSLA constituted bottlenecks? What were the challenges/obstacles implementing VSLA? To what extent has implementing partners sufficient capacity to deal with challenges? To what extent are results likely to have a long-term impact? To what extent has DMCCDD and partners used their comparative advantages to promote VSLA?	Assessment of selected VSLA project interventions (both gender-targeted and non-gender targeted) Assessment of different types of VSLAs (church- or community based, interreligious VSLAs)	Interviews with partners of selected projects Interviews with beneficiaries (men, women, girls and boys) Interviews with external stakeholders (community and religious leaders, Interviews with selected VSLAs (preferable different types)	Effectiveness, Efficiency, impact
RQ4: To what extent has women as leaders been promoted?	What achievements in terms of women's role in the CSOs have been realised? How has the role of women been changed? In which areas are they gaining influence? What has been achieved concerning women as leaders at local, regional and national bodies? What were the challenges/obstacles promoting women as leaders? To what extent are achievements likely to have a long-term impact? To what extent has DMCCDD and partners used their comparative advantages to promote female leadership?	Assessment of selected project interventions promoting women as leaders at different levels and in different bodies incl. partner CSOs, churches etc.	Desk review of project documents Interviews with partners of selected projects Interviews with beneficiaries Interviews with external stakeholders Interviews with selected women leaders	Effectiveness, Efficiency, impact

<p>RQ5: To what extent has advocacy results been achieved at local and district levels?</p>	<p>At what level has results been achieved? What strategies have been most effective claiming right-holders rights? How has collaboration with duty-bearers been promoted? What stakeholders have been crucial for advocacy work? Which faith-based alliances and churches such as pastors' fellowships, inter-religious councils etc. have been crucial for advocacy work? What were the challenges/obstacles conducting advocacy? To what extent are results likely to have a long-term impact? To what extent has DMCCDD and partners used their comparative advantages to conduct advocacy?</p>	<p>Assessment of results with awareness raising, capacity building of CSOs Assessment of engagement with stakeholders such as religious leaders, community leaders, local authorities, service providers</p>	<p>Interviews with stakeholders incl. religious leaders, local authorities etc. at local, regional and national level Interviews with partners of selected projects</p>	<p>Effectiveness, Efficiency, impact</p>
<p>RQ6: To what extent are results sustainable?</p>	<p>To what extent will VSLA groups be able to continue after project end? Have links to SACCOs/micro finance institutions been provided? What are the potentials for sustaining results concerning promoting female leaders? What are the potentials for sustaining advocacy results at various levels (local, regional and national level)?</p>	<p>Assessment of strategies to ensure sustainability</p>	<p>Interviews with partners of selected projects Interviews with beneficiaries (men, women, girls and boys) Interviews with external stakeholders (community and religious leaders, local authorities)</p>	<p>Sustainability</p>
<p>RQ7: What are key lessons learned and recommendations for strengthening gender equality?</p>	<p>Key lessons and recommendations concerning VSLA Key lessons and recommendations concerning women's leadership Key lessons and recommendations concerning advocacy work</p>	<p>Assessment of how to optimize strategies, methodologies in terms of gender equality Recommendations on how to strengthen future documentation</p>	<p>Based on the analysis of the review questions lessons learned and recommendations for strengthening will be provided</p>	<p>Lessons learned/recommendations</p>

Annex 2: List of people met

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Where</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Kristine Kaaber Pors	Project consultant, Knowledge and Learning	DMCDD	Several dates incl. 23/9-5/10/2019	Denmark/field visit	
Tove and Jens Holm	Board members	Puls	24-28/9/2019	Moshi, Arusha, Likambo and Manyara	
Adela	Managing Director	KIWAKKUKI	24-25/9/2019	Moshi, Tanzania	
Joseph Musiba	In charge of social accountability project	Singida Town Centre Church	26/9/2019	Mwanza, Tanzania	
Njoroge Kimani	Consultant on Social Accountability project	DMCDD	26/9/2019	Mwanza, Tanzania	
Rev. Mimii Brown	Director of Christian and Secular Education	Bible college, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), East of Lake Victoria Diocese	26/9/2019 27/9/2019	Mwanza, Tanzania	
Bishop Andrew Petro Gulle	Bishop	ELCT, East of Lake Victoria Diocese	26/9/2019	Mwanza, Tanzania	
FGD with beneficiaries of advocacy group		Danmission project	26/9/2019	Mwanza, Tanzania	
Janet and Tharmo		RECODA	27/9/2019	Likamba, Tanzania	
7 female masai beneficiaries, Imibiya, Likamba	Female farmers		27/9/2019	Likamba, Tanzania	
Pastor Elehenima			27/9/2019	Likamba, Tanzania	
Sambeke Melubo	Project coordinator	FAYOWODO	28/9/2019	Manyara, Tanzania	
FGD with female Ngaribas (6) and birth attendances (11)		Sinonik village	28/9/2019	Manyara, Tanzania	
Group presentation and FGD	VSLA secretary and VSLA member	Ngoswak village	28/9/2019	Manyara, Tanzania	

with 2 female VSLA members					
FGD with community and religious leaders (9 males)	Member of village committee, pastor of Voice of Victory Church, another pastor, 2 village chairpersons, chair of sub-village, village members	Mundara village	28/9/2019	Manyara, Tanzania	5 from another village joined late in the meeting
Annmarie Mavinjina	Lawyer and gender rights consultant		28/9/2019	Arusha, Tanzania	
Morten Kjær Kofoed and Jonas Norgaard Mortensen	Programme Coordinator Development consultant	Baptist Union of Denmark	30/9/2019-2/10/2019	Burundi	
Nkunda Vicomte	National Director	Dutabarane	30/9/2019	Burundi	
Nizeyimana Claudine	GBV Program manager	Dutabarane	30/9/2019	Burundi	
	Assistant administrator	Social Council, Rugazi, Bubanza Collene	30/9/2019	Burundi	
	President	Tribune of the Commune	30/9/2019	Burundi	
Jean Baptiste	Police officer	Police Station, Bubanza, Rugazi	30/9/2019	Burundi	
FGD with female beneficiaries		Baptiste Church in Makamba	30/9/2019	Burundi	
Zakeri		UEBB	30/9/2019	Burundi	
FGD with 9 female beneficiaries		Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship in Africa (PEFA)	30/9/2019	Burundi	
Espece	Assistant Director	Department of Literacy	1/10/2019	Burundi	
Almamo N.K Barrow	Interim Country Director	Action Aid, Burundi	1/10/2019	Burundi	
Inamahoro Chantal	Burundi and Sud Kivi Country Director	Pathfinder International	1/10/2019	Burundi	
Lucy	Consultant/Technical Advisor on BRAVI project	Engender Health	1/10/2019	Burundi	

Pastor Venant	Secretary General	EUSEBU, Église de l'unité du Saint Esprit au Burundi	2/10/2019	Burundi	
Francois	Youth trained in economic empowerment and social accountability		2/10/2019	Burundi	
Pastor Christine	Director of Development Mobilisation	Free Methodist Church	2/10/2019	Burundi	
Jacky Iradukunda		AEBR	3/10/2019	Kigali, Rwanda	
Rev. Ndagi-jimanana Emmanuel	Legal Representative	AEBR	3/10/2019	Kigali, Rwanda	
Pastor Latifik ??	Director of Women's Department	AEBR	3/10/2019	Kigali, Rwanda	
Jackiline Hansen		KIT	3/10/2019	Kigali, Rwanda	
Oliver Umwali, Chantal	Project coordinator, Administrator	CMM	3/10/2019	Kigali, Rwanda	
FGD with VSLA beneficiaries and local leaders		3 VSLA groups: 1) we are united; 2) Amanisa	3/10/2019	Ntende village, Rwanda	Initially only 3 women joined but more came and up to 30 people joined
FGD with VSLA beneficiaries (3 females, 1 male)		Leaders from 4 different groups	3/10/2019	Ntende village, Rwanda	
Nicta M. Lubaale, Alice Wainaina, Allan Kamnde, Phyllis Byrd, Bernhard Mwinzi	General Secretary, M&E advisor, Reverent, Finance & Administrative Officer	OAIC	4/10/2019	Nairobi, Kenya	
Odukula		FPPK, Nakuro	4/10/2019	Nairobi, Kenya	

Annex 3: List of documents consulted

Applications for DMCDD:

- All of us for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Rural Communities of North-Eastern of Burundi, 15 February 2019.
- Anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) project in Arusha and Manyara region, 2018
- Community development in Ntende Village. Rwanda, through child education and village saving loans association
- Empowerment and livelihood to PLHAs and their communities, 14 February 2017.
- GBV prevention, family planning and financial inclusion through VSLA, 10 November 2017.
- GBV prevention, family planning and financial inclusion through VSLA
- Listening to God in society. Churches and faith-based organisation promoting social accountability – a learning trajectory, 2018.
- Making leeward green again: Mobilising Community in Likamba Area for livelihood Improvement and Resilience, 15 August 2017.
- Women Empowerment for Gender Equality Promotion Project (GEP), 30 October 2015.

External reviews and evaluations of interventions:

- Evaluation Report of Empowerment and livelihood to PLHAs and their communities project, East Old Moshi and Kimochi Wards, Kilimanjaro Region, September 2017.
- Evaluation Report of Empowerment and livelihood to PLHAs and their communities project, Donald Kasongi, April 2019.
- Final External Evaluation on Gender Equality Promotion Project in Rutana, Bubanza and Makamba provinces, Justine Elakano, JE Consulting, 2019.
- Gender Policy Review, final draft report, Dorthe Skovgaard Mortensen, 2013.
- Learning Review Report of the Anti-FGM project in Arusha, Annmarie Mavenjina, March 2018.
- Review of Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) Pooled Fund, September to December 2017, Danida, 2017
- Review of OAIC-DMCDD learning trajectory on social accountability for the project “forming faith-based networks for social accountability, Burundi, Kenya and Tanzania Clusters, September 2017.
- SDG Review, Dorthe Skovgaard Mortensen, 2017.

Annual and progress reports:

- Quarterly progress Report Likamba, Making leeward green again: Mobilising Community in Likamba Area for livelihood Improvement and Resilience, March to June 2019.
- Results report, draft, 2018 (not finally approved version)
- Results report, 2017
- Social Accountability financial report, June to August 2019.

Background literature:

- Avoiding some deadly sins, Oxfam learnings and analysis about religion, culture, diversity, and development, Casandra Balchin, August 2011.
- Kvinder, Kultur og Kirke. Om rettigheder og kultur i Tanzania, Kristine Kaaber Pors, DMRU, 2015.

- Lobbying for Faith and Family, a Study of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, Norad, 2013.
- Realizing the Faith Dividend: Religion, Gender, Peace and Security in Agenda 2030, UNFPA, 2016.
- Religion and Gender Equality, UNWOMEN
- Religion and the Sustainable Development Goals, Emma Tomalin, Jörg Haustein & Shaabana Kidy, 2019.
- Who told women to keep silent? January 2019.
- World Population Review. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/burundi-population/>

DMCDD policy and guideline documents:

- Advocacy Policy, 2017
- Application format A for larger projects
- Application format B for smaller projects
- DMCDDs catalogue of standard indicators
- DMCDD Strategy, 2017
- Gender Policy, DMCDD, 2008
- Gender Policy, DMCDD, 2017
- Partnership Policy, 2017
- Position Paper on RBA
- Results Framework

Other:

- Families for Life, A marriage Training Manual for Couples, World Relief, 2013.

Annex 4: Interview guides

Interviewguide for partners and member organisations

RQ1 + RQ2 - relevance

Can you please tell me about the project? What are the key objectives and targets?

Who is your main target group (probe for men, women, girls and boys)

What was the background for working with this specific target group? Why is it relevant in this context? Are you reaching the most vulnerable groups or are some groups left out? What are the challenges with reaching this specific group? How do you ensure that this group is actually being reached?

How was the project developed (probe who, division of labour among DMCDD, member and partner organisations)?

What kind of analysis did you do as part of the preparation (gender analysis)?

Have there been important aspects that the project did not address/consider in the design? Have you adjusted anything along the way?

RQ3+RQ 7: VSLA and economic empowerment (effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)

Explain a bit about the VSLA groups. Who and how many are involved? Are there different types of groups?

What are the achievements from VSLA? Any examples?

What have been the challenges? Did anything unexpected occur?

Have any negative effects occurred (probe conflicts in the group, lack of repayments)? How does the group tackle situations like that?

What is the next step for the VSLA? How do you see the potentials for the VSLA to continue after end of project?

Did you feel sufficiently capable to support the groups? Did you experience shortcomings?

What were the advantages/disadvantages of your organisation to implement VSLA? How do you see your advantages in terms of outreach/network/connections?

How do you document achievements? What are the data you collect from VSLAs? (gender-disaggregated?)

What are the main lessons learned on VSLA? How would you like to work with VSLA in the future? What is needed to enhance the work?

RQ4+ RQ6+RQ 7: Women as leaders in your organisation/projects and sustainability

How many male/female staff are there in your organisation? Is diversity important for the organisation? How has this changed over the years? Why? Can you provide examples of how this has changed? In which areas of your organisation/your projects have changes occurred? How do you see this change in the future?

What has been done to promote women as leaders in your organisation? Have you set-out specific targets for m/f staff members?

What have been the challenges?

What were the advantages/disadvantages of your organisation to promote women as leaders? How do you see your advantages in terms of outreach/network/connections?

Have you done any advocacy to promote women as leaders outside your organisation? Examples?

Are achievements likely to continue after end project?

What are the main lessons learned? How would you like to work to promote female leaders in the future? What is needed to enhance the work?

How do you document achievements? What are the data you collect? (gender-disaggregated?)

RQ5+RQ6+RQ7: advocacy and sustainability

Tell me about your advocacy work? (probe community, regional, national level, target groups/stakeholders). How was gender equality considered in this work?

What are the achievements from this work?

What strategies have been useful? What alliances have you formed? Who have you partnered with? (probe pastors' fellowship, churches, inter-religious councils?)

What were challenges?

What were the advantages/disadvantages of your organisation to do advocacy work? How do you see your advantages in terms of outreach/network/connections?

Are achievements likely to continue after end project?

What are the main lessons learned? How would you improve advocacy in the future? What is needed to enhance the work?

Interviewguide for beneficiaries

RQ1 + RQ2 - relevance

Can you please tell me about the project and the activities you have been doing?

Who is involved in the project (probe for men, women, girls and boys)? How are they selected?

Are there others who would like to join but who couldn't? How could they be better reached?

How did the project meet your needs and wishes? Where you asked about your needs/wishes?

Have there been important aspects that the project did not address/consider in the design? Have the project been adjusted along the way?

RQ3+RQ 7: VSLA and economic empowerment (effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)

What are the achievements from VSLA (probe income/network/linkage to SACCOs)? Any examples?

Who decides on behalf of the VSLA? How is the group organised? What about a social fund to support members deal with unforeseen challenges?

What have been the challenges? (probe conflicts in the group, lack of repayments)? How does the group tackle situations like that?

What is the next step for the VSLA? How do you see the potentials for the VSLA to continue after end of project?

Did you get sufficient support from impl. partners? Did you experience shortcomings? Any areas that could have been better?

What were the advantages/disadvantages of impl. partners to implement VSLA?

What are the main lessons learned on VSLA? How do you see the potentials for VSLA in the future? What is needed to enhance the work?

RQ4+ RQ6+RQ 7: Women as leaders

How does the impl. Partner consider the role of men and women? Has anything changed lately?

How is men, boys, girls and women considered in the churches? What roles are expected from them? What is the church's view on GBV/FGM/HIV/female leaders?

Are there female priests? How is your church different than others in this regard?

What are the challenges/obstacles promoting women as leaders? How do you see this in the future?

RQ5+RQ6+RQ7: advocacy and sustainability

Tell me about the advocacy work of the project? How has the impl. partner tried to address stakeholders (service providers, local authorities, community leaders, other stakeholders) to change practices/unjust structures? How was gender equality considered in this work?

What are the achievements from this work? Who were the key stakeholders? At what level (local, district, regional, national)?

What were the challenges?

How could this work be improved in the future? Any stakeholders who need to be involved?

Interview guide for local authorities and other external stakeholders

RQ1 + RQ2 - relevance

Can you please tell me about the project? Who are the main target groups, main activities etc?

What do people say about the project?

What activities have you been involved in? What have been your engagement with impl. partners?

What are the challenges you face here in this area? What gender challenges exist? How do you think the project is addressing these challenges?

What are the main achievements?

Have there been important aspects that the project did not address?

How do you see the added value of the impl. partner? What is the organisation's/church's role in this area?

What approaches have worked well and what worked less well? What else could be done to increase impact?

Probe to specific areas as relevant: VSLA, economic empowerment, women as leaders, advocacy.

How do you see potentials for future collaboration?

Interview guide for religious leaders

RQ1 + RQ2 - relevance

Can you please tell me about the project and what activities have you been involved in?
Who are the main target groups, main activities etc? What was the background for working with this specific target group? What are the challenges with reaching this specific group?
What do people say about the project?
What have been your engagement with impl. partners? Why is it relevant in this context?
Where you involved in developing the project? Were you consulted?
Have there been important aspects that the project did not address/consider in the design? Was anything adjusted along the way?
Apart from this specific project, what is the church's role in this area?
What activities do you do and for who?

If relevant: RQ3+RQ 7: VSLA and economic empowerment (effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability)

Explain a bit about the VSLA groups. Who and how many are involved? Are there different types of groups (church members, inter-religious, community members)?
What are the achievements from VSLA? Any examples?
What have been the challenges? Did anything unexpected occur?
Have any negative effects occurred (probe conflicts in the group, lack of repayments)? How does the group tackle situations like that?
What is the next step for the VSLA? How do you see the potentials for the VSLA to continue after end of project?
Did you feel sufficiently capable to support the groups? Did you experience shortcomings?
What are the main lessons learned on VSLA? How would you like to work with VSLA in the future?

RQ4+ RQ6+RQ 7: Women as leaders

How does the church and you as leader consider the role of men and women? Has anything changed lately? What about boys and girls? How do you work with youth?
What is the church's view on GBV/FGM/HIV/female leaders?
Are there female priests? How is your church different than others in this regard?
What are the challenges/obstacles promoting women as leaders? How do you see this in the future?

RQ5+RQ6+RQ7: advocacy

Tell me about the advocacy work of the project? How have you been involved change practices/unjust structures? How was gender equality considered in this work?
Who are the stakeholders you have collaborated with? (probe service providers, local authorities, community leaders, other stakeholders). At what level (local, district, regional, national)?
Which faith-based alliances and churches such as pastors' fellowships, inter-religious councils etc. have been crucial for advocacy work?
What are the achievements from this work?
What were the challenges?
How could this work be improved in the future? Any stakeholders who need to be involved?

Annex 5: Terms of Reference for DMCDD gender equality learning review 2019

Background

In 2007 Danish Mission Council Development Department (DMCDD) developed its first gender policy (annex 1), and this policy was re-visited in 2013 (see summary annex 2), and complemented with some relevant tools, i.e. the gender score card (annex 3). As a follow-up to the 2013 review, the DMCDD RBA Position Paper was completed in 2017, situating the gender issue along with other issues into a general Rights Based Approach seen from a faith-based perspective (annex 4). Building on that, DMCDD also in 2017, had a Sustainable Development Goal Review looking into which SDGs that were most prevalent in the projects of the DMCDD pool by November 2017, and to what extent members and partners wished to engage in the SDGs as a part of their partnership. It turned out, that most projects reflected the issues of one or more of SDG 1 End Poverty, 2 Stop Hunger, 4 Quality Education, 5 Gender Equality, 10 Reduce Inequality, 16 Strong Institutions and Peace-Building, particularly Child Protection and Freedom of Religion and Belief¹², out of which DMCDD members and partners gave far most priority to the importance of SDG 5 Gender Equality.

This corresponds with what UNFPA sees as the particular strength of Faith Based Organisations: These issues are: governance and democratization; gender equality and women's empowerment; and conflict, peace and security¹³. However, UNFPA also points to the challenges inherent in faith-based organisations and churches, when it comes to working for gender equality, such as the strong localized religious groups being unequipped to work with larger international organisations, and the uneasiness going about the human rights rhetoric as this might be perceived as foreign and secular. Over the years, DMCDD has worked to translate what might be termed the "human rights discourse" into "Christian values" with various policies and lately the RBA position paper¹⁴. Needless to say, gender equality is also a key priority for DANIDA's World 2030, the Civil Society Policy¹⁵.

Lack of gender analysis in general applications yet strong gender equality in targeted gender equality interventions?

When looking at the actually formulated and granted DMCDD supported projects, it is the impression from the 2018 applications to the DMCDD pool that when it comes to projects where gender equality is a specific objective and females a clear target group, as in anti-Gender Based Violence (GBV) interventions and gender empowerment projects, there is a very clear understanding of the issues¹⁶. However, when it comes to main-streaming, gender equality is not getting a primary attention by DMCDD member and partner organisations, and part of the explanation might be that the 2013 gender score card tool¹⁷ was never promoted to the members and partners to a large extent, and that gender issues might not get the attention they should even in the consultancy and granting of DMCDD.

¹² DMCDD and Skovgaard Mortensen: SDG Review 2017

¹³ UNFPA and Digni: Realizing the Faith Dividend: Religion, Gender, Peace and Security in Agenda 2030. 2016:9

¹⁴ E.g. DMCDD: Advocacy policy 2009, RBA Position Paper 2013

¹⁵ reference

¹⁶ such as the anti-Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) interventions in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia e.g. 2017-A-15 Promissio-Mekane Yesu, 2018-A-05 IAS/FPFK Langa Langa, 2018-A-7 PULS/FAYOWODU aiming to empower Pastoral women and men in civil society groups to get a better livelihood and to advocate for their rights in constructive dialogue with local and regional authorities. Focus is on health and economic empowerment through a human rights based approach.

¹⁷ Developed in 2013

Are the DMCDD partners using their comparative advantage?

Churches and church-based organisations partners are acknowledged to be able to make a big difference in terms of combating Gender Based Violence¹⁸, and also in terms of women empowerment through VSLA and other group approaches, and a few examples of nurturing women entrepreneurs such as Assist/EPTF in Kenya¹⁹. There are also examples of engagement with particularly vulnerable groups such as trafficked women, also working more in-depth advocacy such as the pilot by KIT and MeCAHT in Nigeria²⁰, and the more consolidated work with abused children such as VIVA in the Philippines and Honduras and Assist/LEADS in Sri Lanka²¹. **Youth..**

Focus on methodology and relevance in terms of SDG 5 – a new lens

Since the Gender Policy of 2008 and the follow-up with the Position Paper on Rights-Based Approaches already state the broader principles, DMCDD would with this review like to focus on mapping the successful approaches and methodologies through another lens, and provide recommendations for less successful ones, aiming to develop a practical guide for promoting successful gender equality in the line of relevant SDGs, e.g.:

SDG 5.3 eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations,

SDG 5.5 ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life,

SDG 5.6 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences,

SDG 5.a undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws.

SDG 16.10 ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements, *as seen from a gender perspective*

In what way does that promote equality and collaboration with men? Do some gender interventions actually marginalize men and male concerns? In what way can women leadership be nurtured?

The review should assess a range of project approaches and methods with an eye to the relevant SDGs, their targets and indicators.

Furthermore, DMCDD is interested to get an external input in terms of the selected project methodology's relevance, outcome, appropriateness to the context etc.

Thinking in terms of the civil society policy, it should also be assessed to what extent advocacy is included, meaning that local government at village and ward level are involved in the activities. It is however, at bit unclear, how far the advocacy work has come in terms of level (village-ward-district), and outreach, as stated in the indicators. It will be useful to have an external perspective on the civil society mobilisation work and the opportunities for strengthening the advocacy work of CSOs promoting gender rights by involving religious leaders and

¹⁸ UNFPA and Digni 2016, Reference review, ambassaden Tanz.

¹⁹ E.g. 18-A-10 KIT-CMM and 18-A-17 BUD-AEBR (and others) for empowerment through VSLA. E.g. 17-A-03 Assist-EPTF for more far-reaching economic empowerment.

²⁰ 18-A-06 KIT-Nigeria, continuation of

²¹ 15-A-09 Philippines, Viva-Denmark, and 18-A-08 most recent phase Sri Lanka Assist-Leads

network. In the MENA region particularly, the gender norms have hardened, and gender equality is under pressure.

Furthermore, it would be good to assess the project methodologies in terms of their appropriateness to local culture and the participation of women and men.

Objectives

- ④ **Overall:** To assess and document the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as the appropriateness of selected approaches and methodologies applied.
- ④ **Economic empowerment:** To assess the VSLA/economic empowerment work through the anti-FGM committees and recommend how this can be strengthened
- ④ **Leadership development:** To assess initiatives which promote women as leaders in CSOs as well as in local, regional and national bodies, in civil society, private sector and the state
- ④ **Advocacy:** assess the awareness raising and capacity building of e.g. CSOs and the possibility to improve advocacy work in collaboration with partners or other implementing organisations and the opportunities to strengthen that work by collaborating with different stakeholders, e.g. religious leaders and networks. Where relevant, it would be good to look at interventions strengthening Freedom of Religion and Belief.
- ④ To recommend on areas where the selected approaches and method can be improved and suggest ways to strengthen documentation, e.g. a guide to DMCDD recommended gender equality approaches

Scope of Work

The assignment will include, but not be limited to the following tasks. This will be finally decided with the Danish reference group of member orgs:

1. Desk study of 10 selected projects incl. Honduras, Philippines, Palestine
2. Learning visit to 8 projects Burundi, FPFK Kenya, Tanzania
3. Assess strategic relevance of the above mentioned methodologies, and the impact which this approach has contributed to, looking at the above mentioned SDG 5 indicators, e.g. economic empowerment.
4. To assess to what extent the advocacy prompted by the selected projects e.g. through informal advocacy with CSO and church groups, has influenced decisions and changes at local and district levels.
5. To recommend methodologies to improve future documentation
6. To recommend on future avenues to pursue including whether it would be relevant/possible to focus more on youth as a target group

Method of Work

The review will use triangulation as a key methodology for validation of information and evidence. It will follow a participatory and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the process and consider both primary and secondary data sources, including field staff. Data collection will take place through a combination of document review, individual interviews with key stakeholders (including authorities at various levels and other CSOs) and when appropriate focus group discussions, e.g. beneficiaries in different groups, networks, village/ward/district leaders and other local informal leaders, field staff.)

The review team will give a debriefing to the selected DMCDD partners by end of their stay in the project area. A more elaborate debriefing will be held as part of a strategy workshop with DMCDD November 2019.

Outputs

- ☺ A brief inception report describing in more detail the methodology to be applied, the time schedule for the review and the report outline. Deadline: 1 July
- ☺ Field work late September. A debriefing note with main conclusions and findings to be presented to DMCDD members' partners prior to the departure of the review team;
- ☺ A draft learning review report in English to be submitted not later than 15 October
- ☺ A final review report to be submitted immediately after feedback has been received from DMCDD. The report will include an executive summary and reflect the scope of work of the TOR with recommendations. It will be clear and concise and not exceed 30 pages excluding annexes. The report will be used as a basis for a strategy workshop with member organisations.
- ☺ A guide of recommended approaches/methodologies for gender equality. E.g. strategies to nurture female leadership in community, church and society

Composition of team

The review will be carried out by an independent reviewer Louise Smed, NCG, in collaboration with Kristine Kaaber Pors

Total number of working days: 23

Background information

- Project documents of selected projects
- DMCDD Gender policy, Review of Gender Policy, DMCDD Position Paper on Rights-Based Approaches, Gender Score Card
- Danida review of DMCDD Pool, 2017
- Background reports on gender rights and civil society issues in Tanzania e.g. Action Aid, Human Development Reports,
- UNFPA and Digni: Unleashing the potential..

- DFID, GTZ, James on churches and development

Consultant
11 July 2019