

MEN'S ENGAGEMENT FOR IMPROVING MOTHER AND CHILD NUTRITION SILA PROVINCE, CHAD

M'pia Nzombo, J. Program Manager, Concern Worldwide, Chad
Pazare, F. Assistant Health, Nutrition and Gender, Concern Worldwide, Chad
Ndolimana, P. Area Coordinator, Concern Worldwide, Chad
Bousquet, C. Health Adviser, Concern Worldwide, Dublin

CONTEXT: In 2016, Concern Worldwide conducted an assessment to understand the social determinants and nutritional barriers to maternal and child health. Key findings:

- Difficult for mothers to have a balanced and regular diet
- Precarious living conditions and multiple workload for women
- Restrictions on their access to resources
- Limited decision-making on their health and that of their children
- Control of husbands over finance and essential goods.

Household work burden prevents women from fulfilling their potential and affects their well-being and that of their children.

DESIGN: As part of a **5-year multisector project funded by Irish Aid** in Sila Province, Concern committed to improve health and nutrition outcomes. The project has embraced a **gender transformative** approach aimed at **engaging men as equitable and supportive partners, fathers and caregivers.**

Main objectives :

- Improve nutritional status of women and children through active promotion of **gender equality** within the household
- Increase **men's understanding** on the negative impact of gender inequality
- Involve them in domestic task-sharing to **alleviate women's suffering**
- Promote **joint-decision-making and management of household resources**

RESULTS:

- **Increased community awareness** relating to the conditions of women and girls
- **Growing interest** of men to take part in household activities
- **Commitments** to improve women's conditions
- More men **accompanying women & children to the health centre**

Women over time are **increasingly consulted** in household decisions for health-related spending (Graph 1).

IMPLEMENTATION:

In order to provoke reflection and encourage change, female **Care Group Volunteers (CGVs)** and **their male partners** participated together in gender transformative dialogue sessions :

- Each CGV visits women in their homes **with gender-transformative nutrition messages**
- Men who are selected as **agents of change** are trained in the use of context-specific images to sensitize groups of men at community level
- The sessions include **12 context-specific thematic modules** focusing on gender transformation over a 12-month period
- **10 couples** per village are trained
- Led by Concern Worldwide animators, the 3-4 hour session can be **all male/all female or mixed**

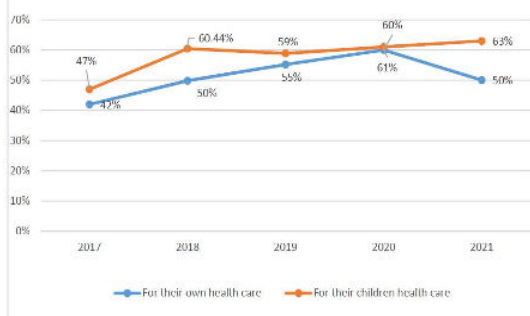
Our observations:

- **Acceptance** of gender transformative approach by the community leaders
- Appreciation of the themes developed through **pictures & images**
- Women & men are **comfortable discussing gender issues** together
- **Active involvement & coaching** by the Provincial Delegation of Women and Family during mass sensitisation helped build synergies and improved coverage of the approach in the project area

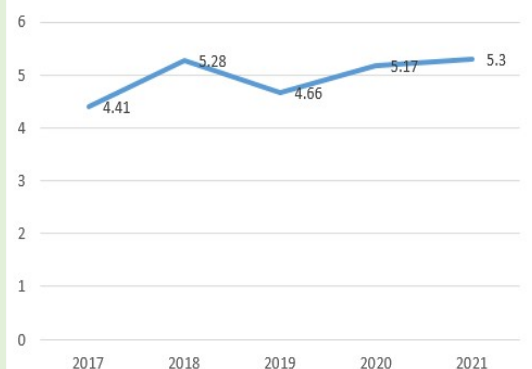


Men attending session with a father looking after his child, Kadjaske village, 11 Oct 2022, photo taken by J. M'pia, Concern Worldwide

Graph 1. Decision-making on spending household resources (source: Endline survey, October 2021)



Graph 2: Attitudes related to gender roles (source: endline survey, Oct 2021)



LESSONS LEARNED:

Attitudes related to gender roles improved overtime, with the **Women Decision Making score increasing** (Graph 2)

WAY FORWARD:

The promotion of **gender equality** remains one of **Concern Worldwide Chad's main priorities**. Promoting **male engagement** and supporting behavioural change in favour of **positive masculinity** are important elements **for advocacy**.



Session for men engaged in gender transformative, Doroti village, Photo : Concern Worldwide, May 2022