



AMPLIFYCHANGE

Advocacy Works: Securing positive change in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) policies, laws and practices

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Executive Summary

AmplifyChange has been funding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advocacy for over five years. This Evidence Brief adds to the body of evidence (Aston 2019, Forti 2012, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation 2017, Jones 2011, Tsui 2014) on how advocacy works and how to measure its impact. We present analysis of AmplifyChange grantee data which clearly shows that AmplifyChange grantees have secured positive changes in policies and laws, even in the most repressive of environments and the most challenging of issues.

Almost one-third (300 grants) of the overall AmplifyChange grantee portfolio focuses specifically on advocacy to change policies and laws. Many more grantees receive AmplifyChange support and work through other strategies to indirectly improve SRHR laws and policies. In Section 1, we map the strategies grantees have used to secure policy and law change against an existing advocacy framework. Section 2 illustrates how AmplifyChange grants in the most challenging contexts and issues (abortion, and LGBTI stigma/discrimination), and how grantees have managed to secure change despite these difficult circumstances. Section 3 maps the positive changes in policies and laws against AmplifyChange theme and Section 4 concludes with insights from our work and presents some selected stories of success from grantees.

AmplifyChange grantees have contributed to more than **30** significant policy and law changes, across **24** countries plus the SADC region.*

Our analysis leads us to some broader insights on how advocacy has worked successfully at AmplifyChange:

- 1. Supporting local grassroots organisations works** - AmplifyChange has demonstrated that it is feasible and effective, as well as desirable, to provide direct support to local civil society groups that understand and work within national policy and law contexts to bring about change. Local groups are also best placed to reflect and course-modify when needed, and to formulate their specific measures of success.

*This statistic will evolve as circumstances change in countries where grantees work. The current analysis covers from the start of AmplifyChange's grant making in early 2015 until early 2020 due to Covid-19 disruptions.

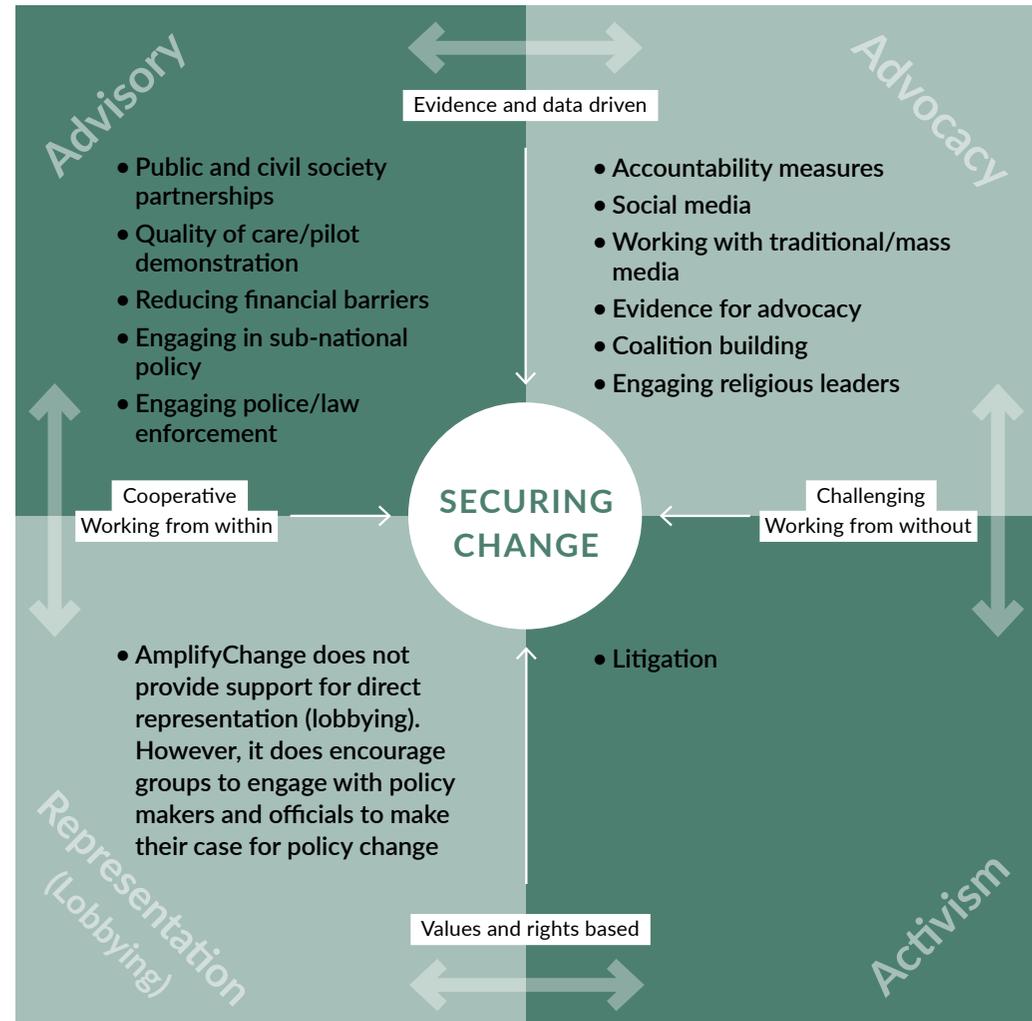
- 2. Progress is possible within regressive policy environments** - the experience of AmplifyChange and grantees demonstrates that change can be made even in the most challenging of circumstances. Essential to the success of this approach is having partners truly rooted in their communities.
- 3. There is strength in numbers** - support for networks and coalitions able to work cooperatively and bring complementary skills and competencies to bear is more likely to yield results.
- 4. Positive policy and law change is only a start** - implementation of these policies and laws must follow.
- 5. Organisational strengthening is key to policy impact** - for AmplifyChange this has meant a specific commitment to organisational strengthening as a core element within its grant funding.

1. Strategies for influencing SRHR policies and laws

AmplifyChange supports civil society organisations to advocate for SRHR. An important outcome (as per the [AmplifyChange Theory of Change](#)) is for grantees to engage with, influence and secure positive changes in policies and laws. The Theory of Change outcomes are closely connected and inter-dependent: (i) raising individual awareness of SRHR as human rights; (ii) increasing access to SRHR resources, information and services; (iii) transforming social norms that impact SRHR; (iv) changes in and implementation of policies and laws.

Grantees who advocate for change/implementation in SRHR policies and laws have pursued a range of influencing strategies. Whilst some groups have focused on particular strategies for influencing change, such as litigation, others have pursued a mix of approaches - for example, evidence gathering, social media campaigns and supporting policy development - focused on achieving change and impact.¹ Some have worked as part of wider coalitions, making best use of the comparative advantages, skills and know-how of partner advocates. Figure 1 uses an adapted framework from Start and Hovland (2004) on tools for policy impact to map AmplifyChange grantee strategies to influence change in SRHR policies and laws.

Figure 1: Strategies supported by AmplifyChange to secure change in policies and laws on SRHR



Adapted from Start and Hovland (2004)

¹AmplifyChange supports a mix of advocacy strategies to influence policies and laws but does not provide support for lobbying.

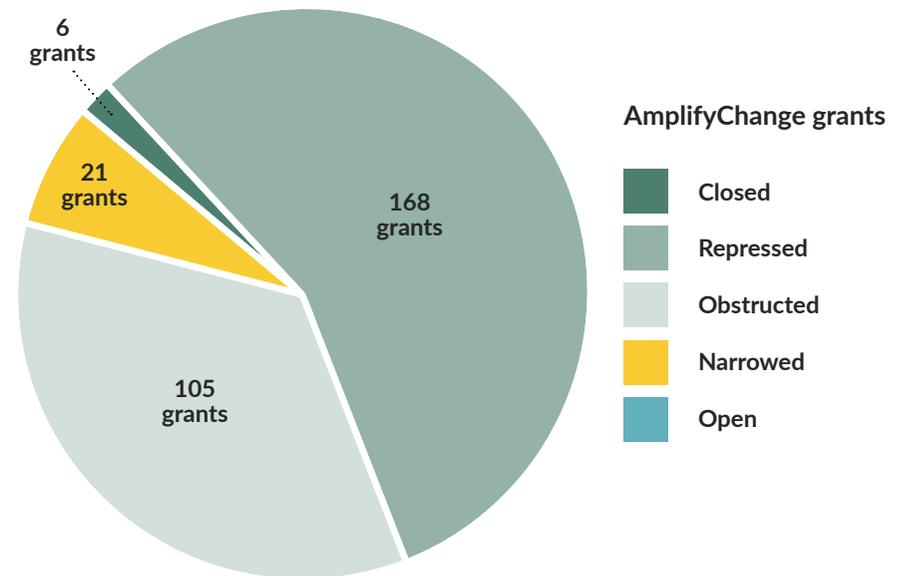
2. Supporting advocacy on neglected SRHR issues in challenging contexts

Policy and legal environments, civic space and the scope for civil society engagement vary hugely across the range of countries where AmplifyChange supports local SRHR advocates. Whilst AmplifyChange works as a challenge fund (meaning it offers grant funding on a competitive basis) it has focused support towards groups working in countries most off-track in terms of progress on SRHR. AmplifyChange has identified a number of not to be missed countries to help guide grant support allocation. Not to be missed countries are classified as those with the worst SRHR and civic space indicators. In this section, we map the AmplifyChange grants according to three important criteria that illustrate the most restrictive elements for SRHR – broad civic space, constrained abortion settings, and stigma/discrimination against the LGBTI community.

2.1 Challenging contexts

AmplifyChange support is particularly important in countries where there are restrictions on democratic freedoms and civic expression. Figure 2 (right) maps AmplifyChange grant allocation according to the Civicus Civic Space Monitor (2020). **It clearly shows that the majority of grants are to advocates working in closed, repressed or obstructed country civic space contexts.** No AmplifyChange grantees work in an Open civic space. Covid-19 has meant that civic spaces are even more restricted in many of these countries.

Figure 2: AmplifyChange support for advocates engaging with SRHR policies and laws according to the status of civic space



The Civicus Civic Space Monitor provides a snapshot of the state of civic space across countries according to evidence and data that encompass and reflect democratic freedoms, exclusion, respects for human rights and other essential aspects that reflect fairness and inclusion.

(See <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2020>)

Adapted from the Civicus State of Civil Society Report 2020

2.2 Abortion

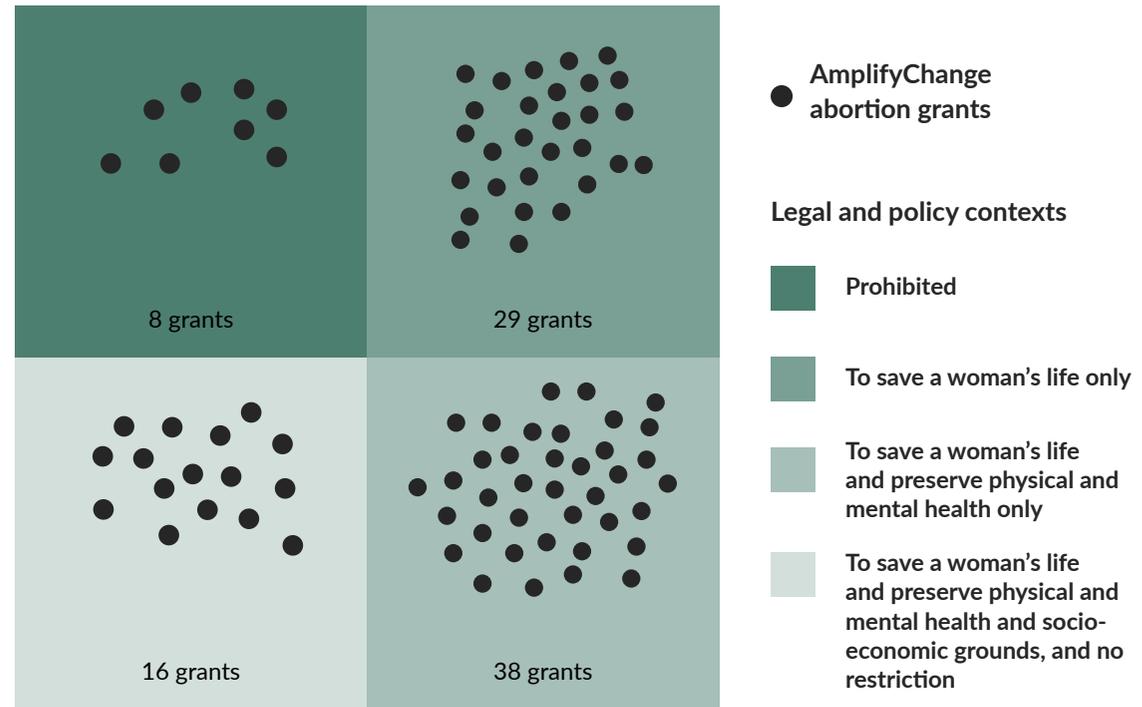
Abortion continues to be a highly contested SRHR issue in many countries, where legal restrictions and limited access to abortion care impact on the lives and human rights of millions of women. 30% (91) of the 300 grants focusing on securing change in policies and laws did so to improve a woman's access to safe abortion.

AmplifyChange aims to ensure that support for advocacy on abortion is provided to groups working in settings where change is most needed to secure SRHR and improve women's health and rights. Some grantees work on de-stigmatisation or implementation in a more open policy context.

Many work in more restrictive settings. Figure 3 (right) maps AmplifyChange support for advocacy on abortion policies and laws according to prevailing abortion legislative contexts; it is adapted from the Guttmacher Institute's worldwide survey (2018).

It illustrates how most grant support is directed to advocacy groups in countries where a women's access to safe abortion is significantly restricted by prevailing legislative contexts.

Figure 3: AmplifyChange support for more positive policies and laws on abortion (by legislative context)



Adapted from Abortion Worldwide 2017, Guttmacher Institute, 2018

Despite working in restrictive settings, grantees have made progress in shifting policies and laws and in implementing measures to put changes into practice. Figure 4 (below) summarises significant changes in abortion-related policies and laws to which AmplifyChange grantees have contributed. Grantees have contributed to changes including legal rulings which broaden the scope of safe abortion services as well as the adoption of national standards and guidelines for provision of care in line with liberalised abortion law.

Figure 4: Change secured in abortion policies and laws by groups supported by AmplifyChange (by legislative context)



Adapted from Abortion Worldwide 2017, Guttmacher Institute, 2018

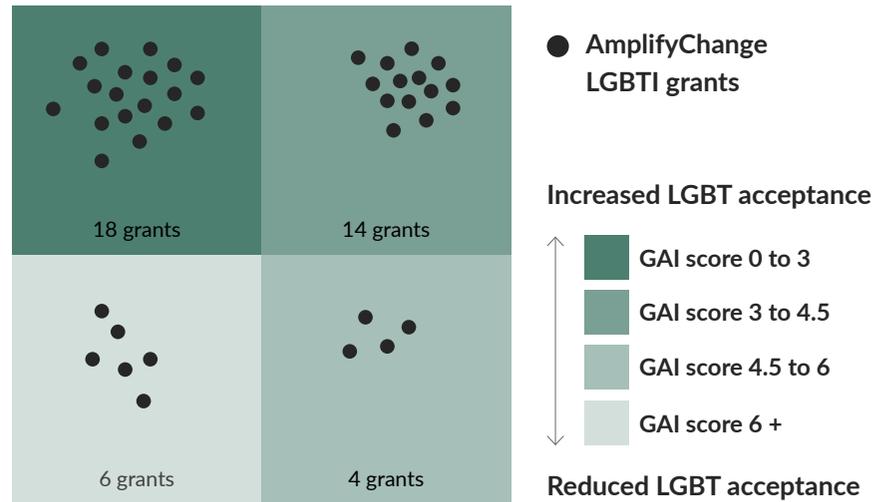
2.3 Stigma and discrimination

About 25% of AmplifyChange support has been directed to groups advocating to challenge stigma and discrimination on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, caste, or HIV status. The human rights of LGBTI people remain sharply contested in many countries, and therefore support for advocacy on LGBTI rights has been a significant element in the funding directed to challenging stigma and discrimination.

AmplifyChange has supported LGBTI advocacy groups across a wide range of countries, including where the social acceptance of LGBTI people remains especially challenging. Figure 5 maps grant allocation to support advocacy on LGBTI policies and laws according to country contexts based on the LGBT Global Acceptance Index (GAI)* (Flores, 2019). It illustrates how the majority of AmplifyChange grants on LGBTI work is directed to advocates working in the most challenging social settings.

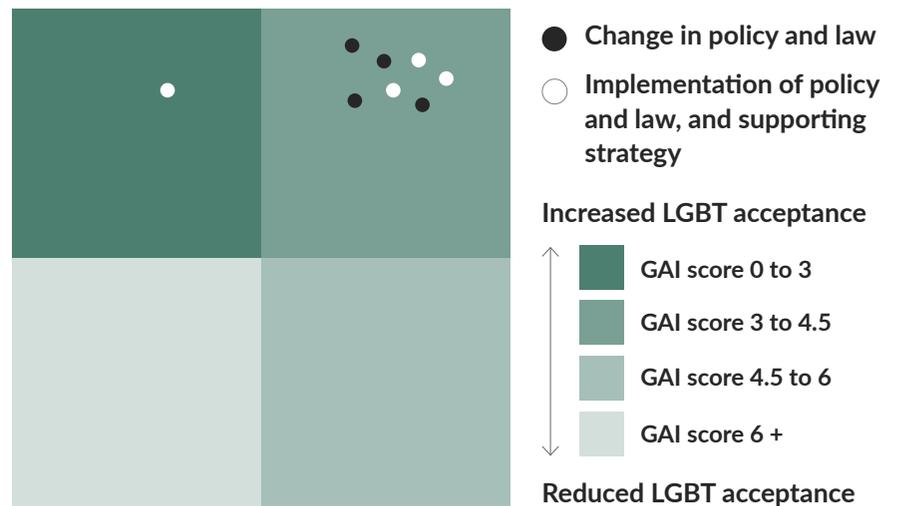
Progress has been made in influencing policies and laws relating to LGBTI people in a number of countries (ranked according to the GAI) where groups supported by AmplifyChange have been active in bringing about change. Again, the GAI index has been used. Figure 6 summarises this.

Figure 5: AmplifyChange support for more positive policies and laws for LGBTI people



Adapted from Social Acceptance of LGBT People in 174 Countries, 1981 to 2017, A R Flores, 2019

Figure 6: Change secured in policies and laws affecting LGBTI people by groups supported by AmplifyChange



*The LGBT Global Acceptance Index (GAI) ranks countries according to progress in the social acceptance of LGBT people. The index has a range from 0 to 10, with a low score indicating reduced acceptance, and a higher score indicating increased acceptance. The diagrams illustrate AmplifyChange grant support for groups championing LGBT rights in countries grouped according to their GAI scores and ranking for 2014-2017. (See <https://globalphilanthropyproject.org/2018/06/13/new-global-acceptance-index-gai-reports/>)

3. Significant changes in policies and laws

AmplifyChange grantees have contributed to more than **30** significant policies and laws changes, across **24** countries plus the SADC region, from the start of grant-making in early 2015 to the start of 2020.

AmplifyChange support falls under five broad themes: eliminating gender-based violence; removing barriers to safe abortion; challenging stigma and discrimination; improving sexual health of young people and increasing access to comprehensive reproductive health. Figure 7 summarises significant changes in policies and laws to which AmplifyChange grantees have contributed according to SRHR priority theme and influencing strategies pursued.

Figure 7: Significant changes in policies and laws and their implementation to which groups supported by AmplifyChange have contributed

Strategies \ SRHR priorities	Eliminating gender-based violence	Removing barriers to safe abortion	Challenging stigma and discrimination	Improving sexual health of young people	Increasing access to comprehensive reproductive health
Advisory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public and civil society partnerships Quality of care/pilot demonstration Reducing financial barriers Engaging in sub-national policy Engaging police 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cote d'Ivoire - Abortion law reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya (Kisumu): <u>LGBT needs included in healthcare strategy</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya: <u>SRHR in national education guidelines</u> Madagascar: <u>Sexuality in national education curriculum</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya (Kisumu): <u>Sub-national SRHR strategy</u> Niger: <u>Inclusion of SRHR in local health budgets</u> Sierra Leone: <u>Budget allocations for SRHR commodities</u>
Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability measures Social media Working with traditional/mass media Evidence for advocacy Coalition building Engaging religious leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eswatini: Domestic violence law Mauritius: Increasing legal age of marriage Mozambique: Law preventing child marriage Pakistan: Supporting Child Marriage Restraint Act Pakistan (Sindh): <u>District level oversight of Child Marriage Restraint Act</u> Somalia: Supporting Sexual Offences Bill Tanzania: Amending Marriage Act to encompass GBV Uganda: National GBV policy approve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DR Congo: Adoption Maputo Protocol DR Congo: <u>Adoption of national guidelines for comprehensive abortion care</u> Mozambique: <u>Supporting use of new MOH abortion guidelines</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India (Gujarat): <u>Transgender welfare board established</u> Nigeria (Lagos State): <u>Implementation of Special People's Law</u> Pakistan (Khyber): <u>Transgender people covered by Provincial health care</u> Uganda: <u>Inclusion of key groups in national HIV strategic plan</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesotho, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe: Menstrual health (removal of VAT on sanitary pads) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Burkina Faso: Free contraception Malawi: Menstrual health products for female prisoners Nepal: Inclusion of marginalised groups in SRHR Act SADC: Adoption of regional SRHR strategy by SADC ministries of health
Activism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litigation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India: Expanding safe abortion Kenya: Litigation to release abortion guidelines Rwanda: Legal reform reducing restrictions to abortion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Botswana: Decriminalisation of same sex laws India: Decriminalisation of same sex penal code Kenya (Kisumu): Local LGBT law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sierra Leone: Overturn on ban on pregnant girls in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India: Ending targeted sterilisation camps

• Change in policy law

• Implementation of policy law, and supporting strategy

4. Insights from AmplifyChange SRHR advocacy

Five key insights have emerged.

4.1 Supporting local grassroots organisations works.

AmplifyChange has demonstrated that it is feasible and effective, as well as desirable, to provide direct support to the local civil society groups that understand and work within national policy and law contexts to bring about change. Responding to and supporting the priorities identified by local civil society groups themselves is essential in pursuing policy engagement and influencing opportunities that can help bring about change. For AmplifyChange this means continuing to seek out and support groups that have not previously been able to secure donor funding for their advocacy work.

4.2 Progress is possible within regressive policy environments.

The experience of AmplifyChange and grantees demonstrates that change can be made even in the most challenging of circumstances. In these settings just maintaining existing policies and laws may be considered an achievement and the start of a dialogue may be as important as the seal of approval on a newly written policy. In other settings, windows of opportunity for influencing may arise, and groups need to be positioned to seize them. Essential to the success of this approach is having partners truly rooted in their communities who are best placed to reflect and course-modify when needed, and to formulate their specific measures of success.

4.3 There is strength in numbers. Support for networks and coalitions able to work cooperatively and bring complementary skills and competencies to bear is more likely to yield results. Nurturing connectivity across groups and providing a platform for them to exchange and share ideas and learn from each other can add value and help strengthen movement building.

4.4 Positive policy and law are only a start to change;

implementation must follow. Support for advocacy to ensure policy and law are put into practice, whether through national planning and budgeting processes, accountability measures or preparation of guidelines and standards for service providers, is therefore also very important.

4.5 Organisational strengthening is key to policy impact.

The capacities of civil society vary considerably and play a key role in determining effectiveness and scope for making an influencing impact. In the same way that policy change may take sustained and concerted effort, strengthening the capacity and capability of promising groups for the longer term demands a more responsive and predictable approach to grant funding. For AmplifyChange this has meant a specific commitment to capacity strengthening as a core element within its grant funding as well as a preparedness to offer support on a more flexible basis consistent with the increasing ability of groups to manage and effectively use additional resources.

Ensuring policy and law are put into practice to increase access to safe abortion in Mozambique



The AMMCJ (Associação Moçambicana das Mulheres de Carreira Jurídica/Mozambican Association of Women Lawyers) use legal and advocacy approaches to promote and secure the rights of women and girls.

In 2016, they received AmplifyChange funding through a Network Grant to support the work of the Rede para os direitos sexuais e reprodutivos (the Coalition for the Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights) to create the enabling environment for the roll out of services under the revised Penal Code in Mozambique.

The Rede para os direitos sexuais e reprodutivos has been instrumental in facilitating implementation of the existing law. They have worked to finalise the Clinical Standards and Guidelines on Safe Abortion and Post-Abortion Care, based on recommendations from the World Health Organisation (2016) as well as a Ministerial decree to release them (2017). These lay out how the Penal Code will be operationalised by providing safe abortion services within the public sector.

Internal figures produced by the Ministry of Health reveal that in Provinces where Rede para os direitos sexuais e

reprodutivos had been working, the rate of increase of safe abortions recorded was double that of provinces where they were not.

AMMCJ continues to be supported by AmplifyChange with a Strengthening Grant to sustain their work with policy makers, health professionals and the media to maintain an enabling environment for increased provision of safe abortion services and to ensuring high-quality abortion care is accessible nationwide.

Lessons

AMMCJ experience highlights the importance of sustained and constructive engagement with policy makers, health professionals and the media to:

- Ensure there is a clear understanding of the legal situation and of obligations to provide safe abortion services
- Tackle discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards abortion

Case Study

Promoting legal and social acceptance of LGBTI communities in India



The Humsafar Trust strengthened the advocacy, research and communication capacities of community-based LGBTI organisations in India to respond to violations of health, human and legal rights.

They supported the Integrated Network of Sexual Minorities (INFOSEM) to work with parliamentarians, policy makers, police, the judiciary and health officials at national and community levels to overturn the archaic Section 377 of the Penal Code criminalising homosexuality. They also helped improve the health and human rights of sexual minorities and increase social acceptance of LGBTI communities. Their comprehensive data analysis was filed in the Supreme Court of India highlighting human rights violations.

Following their successes in supporting the decriminalising of same sex sexual relationships in India by the Supreme Court in 2018, INFOSEM has been rolling out a community awareness campaign about the changes. This includes a national level public forum to disseminate the findings of Supreme Court judgement and take community inputs on the way forward for LGBTI communities.



Lessons

- Sustained support enables AmplifyChange grantees to achieve policy gains and then continue to ensure practical implementation
- Sustained capacity building of civil society groups enhanced their skills enabling them to take ownership and increase their work. This resulted in high impact activities leading to positive outcomes
- Strengthening coalitions builds the resilience of small civil society groups which enables them to better respond to any setbacks on the way to achieving success



Case Study

Securing better menstrual health for women in prison in Malawi

In 2019, The Centre for Human Rights Education Advice and Assistance, Malawi (CHREAA) began advocating for the inclusion of menstrual health packages in the Malawi Prison health budget for women and girls in detention. Prisons in Malawi hold over 300 female inmates, most of whom cannot afford to buy sanitary pads. As a result, they end up using small pieces of clothes or old pieces of blankets which are a health hazard and result in most inmates contracting chlamydia.

CHREAA worked with the Budget Director, Gender Officer, members of the Women's Caucus Committee and Social Protection Committee to increase the Malawi Prison Service Health budget by K30million/EUR36,000 specifically for menstrual health pads for women and girls in detention.

In under six months, CHREAA's advocacy resulted in parliament increasing the budget. This is an example of a successful, well-timed and targeted project yielding results in a short space of time.

Lessons

- Focused engagement with the media served as an effective advocacy strategy. CHREAA produced a documentary depicting the challenges faced by women in prisons during menstrual periods. Media coverage brought the issue to the notice not only of female MPs who were initially critical of the increased budget allocation but also to other partners who began working directly with the prisoners on menstrual health issues
- In addition to the specific budgetary outcome, this small one-year project also catalysed new national and international partnerships to expand CHREAA's work around menstrual health in prisons and police stations. It serves to demonstrate the catalytic impact of a relatively small initiative in building a wider movement for change

Engaging marginalised groups to promote their voice and SRHR in Pakistan



Awaz Foundation Pakistan works with local communities to support and help catalyse community responses and action on health and rights for marginalised groups. Awaz received support from AmplifyChange to implement the Ujala Network initiative that brings together 48 local community groups working across 44 districts and four provinces of Pakistan help secure the right of communities to SRHR.

Ujala brings together a varied and diverse group of organisations that with its support have the potential to influence decision-making. For example, 5% of groups in the Ujala Network are transgender-led, 5% are disability-led, 23% are women-led and 16% are youth-led.

The Ujala Network encompasses some of the most difficult to reach areas where considerable challenges exist in gaining support on SRHR issues, such as interior Sindh; Balochistan and remote districts of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa.

For many of its partners, Ujala is the first opportunity they have had to participate in processes to help influence policies. It does this through gathering evidence for advocacy and engaging with policy makers at provincial and district levels to make the case and secure change.

Significant results for Awaz and Ujala include:

- A resolution tabled in the Senate of Pakistan on the empowerment of girls and the Child Marriage Restraint Act
- In Sindh, rules of business for the implementation of Child Marriage Restraint Act 2016 have been passed and district level implementation committees have been formed. Members of the Ujala Network are following up the implementation and some are also part of district level implementation committees

Lessons

Awaz attributes their successes to date through the Ujala Network to:

- The meaningful involvement of grassroots organisations and civil society members from among the most disadvantaged and excluded groups
- The breadth of stakeholder participation in District and Provincial Advisory Panels – particularly from government
- Linking district and provincial issues to national and international policy frameworks and the commitments that Pakistan has made
- Their role as a trusted, national partner to develop grassroots organisations supporting policy change and civil society development

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AmplifyChange launched in 2014 as a fund managed by MannionDaniels and the African Women's Development Fund and the Global Fund for Women. In 2020 AmplifyChange registered as an independent organisation. In 2021 (when this Evidence Brief has been written) the original consortium remains responsible for managing the grants made under the initial agreements with donors. At the same time during this transition year, the independent AmplifyChange will take off fully.

