



Photo by Troupe des Personnes Handicapées Twuzuzanye

Highlights from Illuminating Impact: Insights and Outcomes from Grantee Partners



AMPLIFYCHANGE

Introduction

In early 2023, AmplifyChange commissioned Gender Equality Solutions to conduct a review of grant reports, as a contribution toward better understanding the impacts its grantees are having, from their own perspectives. While not a comprehensive assessment of the impact of AmplifyChange’s decade of grantmaking to date, the review captures important outcomes and impacts reported at a moment in time (from 2022-2023) by some of the dozens of grassroots and community-based organisations (CBOs) supported by AmplifyChange.

This brief, which includes some highlights of the review’s findings, demonstrates that important changes toward the goal of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) can be achieved when donors support those organisations closest to, and often most knowledgeable about their respective local contexts.

The review included sixty annual or semi-annual reports submitted to AmplifyChange grantees from 2022 to early 2023. Grant sizes ranged from £45,455 to £1.5 million and covered work in forty-six countries, and on all five of the AmplifyChange thematic focus areas.

AmplifyChange SRHR Focus Areas

- Gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation/cutting, domestic and sexual violence.
- Safe abortion choices
- Challenging stigma and discrimination, including for LGBTI groups.
- Better sexual health for young people.
- Access to SRHR services for poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups including persons living with disabilities or with HIV/AIDS.



Findings

Through its grants, AmplifyChange has enabled many dozens of grassroots and CBOs to advance innovative work on oft neglected and controversial issues, and in contexts where it is the most challenging. At both local levels and as a whole, grantees are making important contributions toward the achievement of universal access to SRHR, particularly for the most marginalised, remote, and otherwise underserved communities.

Among others, the report provides numerous examples that demonstrate how AmplifyChange grantees are:

Identifying and meeting the needs of marginalised and underserved individuals

AmplifyChange grants are filling funding gaps for some of the most neglected regions, issues, and abuses in the world. Among those served by grantees are perinatally infected HIV-positive adolescents in Ethiopia; incarcerated LGBTIQI individuals in Cameroon; sex workers in India; young women who have experienced sexual violence in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and persons with disabilities in Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Rwanda.

This work has resulted in improved respect for the rights of transgender individuals, curtailed behaviours that stigmatise sex workers, expanded access by deaf women and young people to SRHR information and services, and contributed to a greater sense of agency among female survivors of gender-based violence.

Finding ways to effectively expand awareness of and access to safe abortion

Despite stringent restrictions to safe abortion in the majority of countries in which AmplifyChange supports grantees, many are working on the topic, and many are making progress. Numerous grantees working in diverse contexts report changes in the attitudes and behaviours of community leaders regarding abortion. Grantees report that health care facilities, including faith-based ones, are newly providing more compassionate care, including safe abortion and post-abortion care, for survivors of rape in the DRC. A body of religious leaders trained in advocacy are actively calling on the government of Malawi to liberalise abortion laws in the country. And much needed funds are getting into the hands of small, nimble, organisations that are working to advance abortion rights and access across eastern, western, and southern Africa.

Using pleasure-based approaches to sex and sexuality to shift attitudes and behaviours

Numerous grantees report that their introduction of sex-positive, pleasure-based approaches to sexual health has contributed to more positive attitudes and healthier behaviours about sex and sexuality, consent, bodily autonomy, GBV, and couple communications. These grants have not only improved the wellbeing of the individuals they target, but have also had ripple effects on families and communities, as well as on other programs and donors. Grantees in India, Rwanda, and Tanzania report examples of improved marital relationships, adolescents who have been able to prevent sexual abuse and coercion, sex workers who have shifted their approach to ensure safer sex with clients, and health care providers who feel better equipped to promote healthy behaviours, all as a result of focusing on pleasure principles.



Photo by Young and Alive

Employing gender transformative approaches, including male engagement, to boost success

Gender transformative approaches, which “seek to challenge gender inequality by transforming harmful gender norms, roles, and relations, while working towards redistributing power, resources, and services more equally,” are increasingly seen as critical to the achievement of universal access to SRHR, but are not universally utilized. Further, male engagement is a particularly neglected area of gender transformative SRHR programming.

The review demonstrated that many AmplifyChange grantees understand that gender transformative approaches and the meaningful and positive engagement of men and boys is critical to achieve success, whether in relation to GBV, abortion, youth SRHR, or other programming. As a result of such approaches, AmplifyChange grantees in Cameroon, Malawi, and India, among others report “remarkable improvement” in the attitudes of men and boys regarding SRHR, as well as men who have “turned into responsible partners” who are contributing more equally to child care, household chores, and SRH decision making. Many of these men are now promoting the benefits of shifting gender norms across their respective communities.

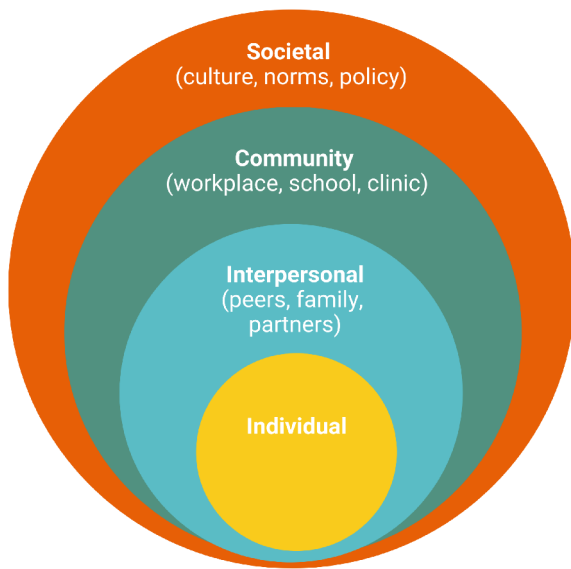


“Men are ready to leave the patriarchal privileges they were getting and turned into responsible partners.”

Implementing multi-level interventions to spur lasting impact

The majority of grantees implement interventions that work at all levels of the socioecological framework. On their own or in partnership with others, grantees engage at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels. Grantees recognize that, to ensure sustained impact, their work must go beyond supporting individuals to also engaging with families and community leaders to shift norms and behaviours, and with health care leaders and policymakers to

improve health systems, access, and policy, for example. Working across levels has resulted in health care providers in Zimbabwe who are more confident in their ability to perform safe abortions, even as they work alongside a growing national movement to liberalize abortion laws. Advocacy by a grantee in Uganda emphasizes the importance of integrating SRHR from laws and policies at the national level, to local-level service delivery, to individual self-care. While the intended outcome of this grant is better quality SRH services, the grantee's work has spurred parents to advocate for girls' schooling; supported students to produce sanitary pads; and encouraged the government to improve roads, which have enhanced women's ability to reach health centres. These results align with an understanding that many grantees have that SRHR cannot be improved through a narrow, single issue approach, but must be addressed in the holistic, comprehensive way that individuals experience it.



The socio-ecological framework
(Adapted from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecological-model.html>)

Advocacy and Norm Change at Scale

AmplifyChange has an overt emphasis on advocacy, and for many of the grantees, this is a priority strategy. Indeed, there are many advocacy-centric grants, and numerous advocacy successes – from the local to national levels. Many of these successes arise because the grantees understand what is most needed within their communities, and are able to communicate these needs with credibility and authority. They know who to

target to create change, and they have concrete “asks” that are undergirded by real world data and evidence.

Grantees reach hundreds of decision makers and thousands of individuals through their advocacy and outreach on a range of SRHR issues. This type of reach, along with the right set of context-specific strategies, is likely an essential component of shifting social norms.

While many others do not achieve such scale in their work, their work is also critical. Grantees that provide direct services and case management to individuals, particularly those most marginalised, may be contributing directly to life-altering or even life-saving effects for individuals. Their reach may total just dozens, or perhaps hundreds of individuals. But the impact is no less important for those 32 LGBTQI incarcerated Cameroonians visited in jail by an organisation that supports their rights in a country that does not, and that will help them reintegrate into society when they are released; for those 45 transgender individuals in India who now have access to government social support schemes due to the advocacy a grantee engaged in on their behalf; for the female student in Rwanda who stopped having sex with her boyfriend because she now understands the importance of consent and feels empowered to say “no” as a result of the training she participated in; and for the young LGBTQI person in East Africa who, due to awareness raising activities, now knows they are not a criminal, all because of the support of AmplifyChange grants.

Grants help CBOs in the context of displacement, insecurity, inflation, and other challenges

Grantees have conducted their work of the wake of the health and economic consequences of COVID-19, cholera outbreaks, inflation, armed conflict, displacement, and other forms of insecurity. Some - particularly those working on safe abortion or the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals, transgender women, or sex workers, for example - have been faced with additional targeted security concerns.

Grantees greatly appreciate the flexible and responsive grants and the respectful support of AmplifyChange, which have helped them face these challenges. They report being able to focus on the issues and areas they prioritise, strengthen the capacities of their organisations in ways they identify as most essential, and have “the breathing room” to learn and grow.