

## 5 Minutes of Inspiration: How Campaigning Can Shift Social Norms

CARE Nederland's [Every Voice Counts](#) (EVC) programme<sup>1</sup> has found that certain harmful social norms are barriers to the inclusion of women and youth in governance decision-making. In order to shift these harmful social norms, CARE Nederland partnered with [RNW/RNTC](#) to train and coach our country teams in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan on traditional and digital media campaigning.

### What have we accomplished?

- **Expanded spaces for dialogue through events** by bringing people together to discuss social norms and their impact on women's public and political participation. In Somalia, the events brought women leaders and clan elders together encouraging them to discuss women's political participation. Theatre proved to be an effective medium to facilitate discussions about sensitive topics in Rwanda and Burundi. Social media created a new online space for dialogue and dissent in Burundi and Somalia through Facebook pages.
- **Signs of changing attitudes at the household level** among target audiences due to the campaigns. Men in Rwanda and Burundi began sharing household chores (like cooking, cleaning, child-care) and financial decision-making to exercise their commitment to supporting women's rights and equality. Some men also openly supported women's participation in the public and political sphere. In Sudan, 11 parents allowed their daughters to continue education and many others committed to refrain from marrying their daughters off early.
- **Engaged powerholders influencing community members and catalysing change.** In Sudan, religious leaders agreed to include the importance of addressing negative social norms in their sermon during Friday prayers. In support of Sudan's campaign, a headmaster of a girls' school also expressed ardent support against early marriage and committed to organise sessions with parents to discuss the importance of girl's education. Additionally, in Burundi, a commune administrator decided to personally lead the offline campaign activities and abolished the fees for marriage registration, which enables more women to register their marriages and be qualified to participate as candidates in the local elections.



### How did we do it?

- **Utilised persuasive storytelling for campaigning**, where positive narratives were tailored for specific target groups. To design these campaigns, a specific social norm (e.g., women should stay at home to manage domestic responsibilities) and the social actor(s) (e.g., husbands, clan elders, young women) maintaining such norms were identified in each country. CARE's [Social Norms Analysis Plot](#) (SNAP), was used to identify key components of a specific, pre-identified social norm to measure changes over time.
- **Leveraged existing changes in local contexts**, such as the increase of Somali women in political positions in Puntland, Burundi's upcoming 2020 elections, and Sudan's revolution in 2019 where women played leadership roles publicly. These events opened the door for our campaigns and paved the way for more public discussions about women's political participation.
- **Used multiple mediums to facilitate dialogue amongst diverse groups** through radio, social media, and events. Offline and online events were strategically linked to expand and sustain the dissemination of key messages. Radio had wide reach especially in rural areas in Burundi, Rwanda, and Sudan and helped in making private and sensitive issues become public. Social media in Burundi and Somalia helped spread the campaign messages to a larger audience across the country, especially to young, educated men in urban areas.
- **Collaborated with local partners to widen reach** by leveraging their networks to reach more diverse groups of people in the communities. This also increased the capacity of local partners to implement campaigns. For example, in Somalia, local partner MUDAN publicised their accountability forums online to encourage engagement from a wider audience online. Also, the campaigns in Burundi and Sudan introduced the discussion of sensitive social norms publicly by local radio for the first time in these countries. In Burundi, two radio stations have continued their radio programming on gender norms due to its popularity.

### Want to learn more?

Read our [report](#) or contact Lori Cajegas, EVC Programme Manager ([cajegas@carenederland.org](mailto:cajegas@carenederland.org)).

<sup>1</sup> EVC is a strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the Dissent and Dialogue Policy Framework. The programme aims to contribute to effective and inclusive governance processes in Afghanistan, Burundi, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan