



### World Renew's Gender Working Group:

The purpose of the Gender Working Group is to advance organizational learning and best practices related to gender mainstreaming and gender programming among World Renew's organizational culture, programs, partners and constituents. This will be done by looking for and sharing resources, identifying and sharing best practices, and providing technical support within policy guidelines related to gender mainstreaming at all levels within the organization.

#### The GWG members are:

- Carol Bremer-Bennett
- Ida Mutoigo
- Irene Zepeda Murillo
- Joe Oh
- Kristen deRoo VanderBerg
- Nema Aluku
- Rolando Pinzon
- Samantha Keddy
- Stephanie Sackett

## A New Gender Working Group Mandate



World Renew's gender mainstreaming and gender justice work extends back to the early 1980's. In 2001, World Renew added a formal Gender Working Group to its organizational structure. This Working Group's mandate was to develop to develop and support an organization-wide gender policy:

*The Gender Working Group maintains awareness throughout World Renew of our commitment to work for gender equality in all aspects of organizational culture and through all our relief and development programs and provides feedback and encouragement at all levels towards the achievement of this goal. The GWG creates the organization-wide gender plan and reports on it annually in Newdea under World Renew.*

Recently, the Gender Working Group met to revisit this mandate. Given the broad adoption of the World Renew gender policy and the work that teams have done to mainstream gender into all of their programs, plans and activities, the Gender Working Group updated its mandate to shift the focus more towards knowledge sharing:

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This semester, Olivia Schultz, a student intern is helping the Gender Working Group conduct a formal literature review of the gender-related resources available on The Commons. Olivia is also searching out case studies and best practices that can be shared in this Gender Working Group newsletter.

The Gender Working Group also hopes to invite each ministry team to attend a future Gender Working Group meeting and to share some best practices with others. If you have a case study or best practice to share, please e-mail [kvanderberg@worldrenew.net](mailto:kvanderberg@worldrenew.net).



## Adolescent Program In Nigeria and Senegal Changes Culture For Young Boys and Girls

By Olivia Schultz, World Renew Intern

Working with young men and women is a critical component of World Renew's commitment to achieving lasting gender equality in communities around the world. Through World Renew programs, both young men and young women are being equipped to make healthy choices and fulfill their God-given potential in all spheres of life—in the community, at home, at work, and in the church.

World Renew's "Protecting Adolescent Health and Rights" program in Nigeria and Senegal is a powerful example of greater equality taking root through economic, political, and social achievements.

In January 2013, World Renew and its local partner, Beacon of Hope, began a four-year Adolescent Health and Rights Program in Nigeria and Senegal, which is funded by Global Affairs Canada. After three years of running the program, there has been positive cultural transformation within communities through local ownership of the program.

In Cross River State, Nigeria, 100 Adolescent Health Rights Groups have emerged since 2013. In addition to this, there are now a total of 8,586 students in Nigeria and Senegal participating in the health and rights programming.

Many students learn about the program at school through school programming. Others, who are no longer in school, hear about it from friends, Youth Action Groups, dramas, or parent groups. Once they decide to join the program, participants receive a shirt that reads,



"Act Justly: Promote Adolescent Health and Rights" as well as a workbook with learning material.

Over the course of many lessons and activities, young men and women are taught about many aspects related to their health rights, including the role of abstinence in preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. In a culture where early marriage and transactional sex are prevalent, a key part of the teaching is emphasizing that men and women have a right to say no to sex or refuse an arranged marriage, despite cultural pressure. Interwoven into the program, there are opportunities for girls to learn and obtain skills related to literacy, numeracy, and a vocation such as sewing, hairdressing, or computer skills.

The program has been well received by the students and participants are beginning to change the way they act. As a result, cultural norms are changing.

In the town of Zul in Bauchi state, Nigeria, for example, girls now feel safer from the advances of men. "A rule has been made that a boy cannot touch a girl," explained one female participant, "The boys are obeying the rule and the girls appreciate this".

Similarly, in Anglo Jos, Nigeria, boys who participated in the programs have stated that they have stopped treating girls in ways that disrespect their health and rights, and they also expressed their happiness over the changes in behavior.

The impact of this program has also extended outside of the school and youth environment. When kids bring their booklets home, they often share what they are learning with their friends and family. After learning of the program, parents have been encouraging their children to abstain from sex, and to take control of their health and rights. Many parents have also joined 'parent groups'



seeking ways to expand it into new communities all on their own. They are seeking out new young people who can join, talking with other parents and in Cross River State, Nigeria, they have even volunteered to help get the teaching material to rural communities where they feel “it is very much needed”.

World Renew and Beacon of Hope are deeply encouraged by the level of local ownership and community empowerment taking place as result of the Adolescent Health and Rights program in Nigeria and Senegal. Please continue to pray that the program would grow through the empowerment of these students, teachers, and volunteers as they work together to help each other realize and live out their potential as men and women loved and created by God.



where they receive information and suggestions for how they can better support their child.

Ami Diop is a girl who lives in Dakar, Senegal. When she began the Adolescent Health and Rights Program, she started to share what she was learning with her father. Ami said that this has not only changed her life but it has improved her family’s relationships, “Thanks be to God...Through our conversations and the discussion that followed, my father realized that I have rights and responsibilities and he has learned that forced and early marriage has consequences. My father is now my best friend.”

As a second stage of the project, parents and adolescents have joined together to make Youth Action Groups. These volunteer groups

bring the program to the community through street theatre and drama.

The Bauchi Youth Action Group, for example, has created a 34-minute street theatre production about how daughters and sons have the right to choose who to marry, as opposed to being forced into an arranged marriage.

These dramas have been fundamental in changing cultural and community norms and allowing this program to spread. Community members are excited to volunteer their time and hard work to help these groups empower men and women to know their rights.

Perhaps the greatest indicator of success from the program, however, is the fact that parents and community members are



## For Your Gender Toolbox

Asia Ministry Team Leader, Tom Post, has been spending some time doing personal reflection on the Biblical basis for right relationships. His exploration has led him to several resources on “The Commons” including devotions prepared by Leanne Talen Geisterfer. He also discovered two books that he suggests you read: *“Gender & Grace”* by Mary Stewart VanLeewen and *“Exclusion and Embrace”* by Miroslav Volf. Tom’s notes from these books as well as a few discussion starts have been placed on the Commons for you.



## Team Gender Champions

Have a question or a concern about gender on your team? Contact your team's gender champion.



### Asia:

Kohima Daring

### East Africa:

Nema Aluku

### CORE:

Kristen deRoo VanderBerg  
or Joe Oh

### Latin America:

Leanne Geisterfer, Irene  
Zepeda-Murillo, or  
Rolando Pinzon

### Delta:

Susan Van Lopik or  
Stephanie Sackett

### Southern Africa:

### Disaster Response:

Samantha Keddy

### Systems:

Ida Kaastra-Mutoigo

### West Africa:

Mary Crickmore,  
David Tyokighir,  
or Marie Harouna



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