

عوانین زبیر اش مسلم قوانین
Women Living Under Muslim Laws
النساء فی ظل قوانین المسلمین
Femmes sous lois musulmanes

International Solidarity Network

WLUML 2015 Annual Report



LAHORE, PUNJAB, PAKISTAN - 2014/09/29: Large numbers of members of Pakistani Working Women raise slogans and banners during a rally against "torture on women", organized by Shirkat Gah and the Women's Resource Center in Lahore. (Photo by Rana Sajid Hussain/Pacific Press/LightRocket via Getty Images)

About WLUML

Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) was established in 1984. It was formed in response to three urgent cases of women being denied rights, under laws said to be 'Muslim'. Today, the network spreads to over 70 countries.

WLUML was founded and is led by women's groups and individuals with mainly Muslim backgrounds in the Global South. Our purpose is to strengthen women's struggles for equality and to increase access to their rights, especially within Muslim contexts. It has played a critical role for women who either lack information regarding their official legal rights (e.g., those derived from personal status laws and civil codes), or have limited access to information that would let them challenge such laws. Deliberate policies of misinformation, exacerbated by existing monopolies over matters relating to Islam, leads to a knowledge gap that is often not only re-enforced but also widened. Under the rising threat posed by politico-religious fundamentalists, WLUML's support for women who resist gender inequality has become increasingly crucial.

We are a transnational network for information, solidarity and support. WLUML has nearly three decades of experience in bringing together women's collective strength and voices, and we continue to gather different analyses and strategies to advance gender equality within Muslim contexts. WLUML serves as a solidarity network, a think tank, and a campaign and a lobbying force for activists around the world.

Activities and Areas of work in 2015

Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratisation

In 2015, the Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratisation (WELDD) programme (2012-2015) reached its final year and we completed an Impact evaluation on the programme. To re-cap - over a three-year activity period WLUML WELDD leadership programme, capacity built and trained over a 1000 women from 27 countries over eight global south regions. Nine sub-grants of approximately €10,000 each were awarded to eight local partners. The funded projects mainly worked on capacity building and advocacy activities to combat Cultural Violence Against Women (CVAW). The projects were led and carried out by local feminist organisations, in Nigeria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Senegal, Indonesia and one other country. WLUML additionally developed and delivered an extensive programme of feminist leadership workshops focusing on political participation. Nine regional feminist leadership workshops, of 5 – 7 days duration, took place in Senegal, Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon and Gambia, bringing together a total of 177 participants, 45 trainers and support staff from 27 countries in Africa and Asia. The vast majority of participants were new contacts for WLUML, largely from organisations we had not been in contact with before, and brought new young activists and potential leaders into the WLUML network.

The Impact evaluation process began in October 2014 and completed in 2015. The evaluation looked at participant feedback pre and post workshops, participant narratives on websites, stories of activism post-programme participation, and collected 76 narratives of change from participants in over 20 countries. Many of these narratives of change were collected through interviews, in what was a comprehensive exercise. The evaluation found that the programme contributed to significant and positive changes in people's thinking, knowledge and actions, and because of the work carried out in the programme there were a few policy and law changes in Afghanistan, Iraq and Indonesia. The samples showed strong impact across all domains: increased knowledge/ awareness, changes in individual actions, network formation and solidarity, changes in policy or practice in geographical regions, but particularly higher levels in increased knowledge, awareness raising and individual actions & networking. See Appendix A: Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratisation (WELDD) Impact Evaluation-abridged version.

Websites: WLUML, VNC & WELDD

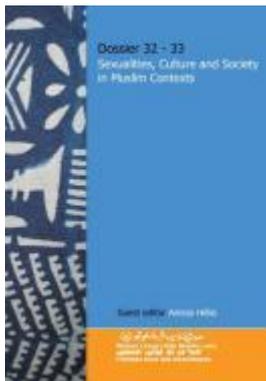
WLUML website www.wluml.org and the Violence is not our Culture (VNC) www.violenceisnotourculture.org websites are updated regularly with news, publications and resources, adding to WLUML substantial archive and knowledge base on women's rights (especially within Muslim contexts). These websites jointly received over 20 million website hits in 2015.

The WELDD portal, the programme website, www.weldd.org dedicated to women's leadership, continued to build on its feminist leadership resources, and in 2015 received around 40,000 hits.

16 Days of Activism

In 2015 WLUML took part again in the 16 Days of Activism against gender based Violence as part of a collective action co-ordinated by Rutgers University (New Jersey, USA) – Thirteen WELDD resources were tweeted out repeatedly, in relation to Cultural Violence Against Women, these tweets reached over 20,580 people.

Publications



WLUML has produced regular collections of critical analyses in the form of dossiers, articles, Occasional Papers, and books on specific topics since 1986. In 2015 we began work to translate the most recent WLUML dossiers (which were published 2014) into French and Arabic: Dossier 30-31: The Struggle for Secularism in Europe and North America – Women from migrant descent facing the rise of fundamentalism and Dossier 32-33: Sexuality, Culture and Society in Muslim Contexts. These translations will be due for e-publication in early Spring 2016.

On-line Office

After lengthy discussions taking place over the last few years, a decision was reached to move from a substantial London office base towards a 'virtual office', it was felt that the online office structure would suit the needs of the international network more effectively. The migration from office IT systems to online office completed in September 2015. WLUML was able to downscale its' International Coordination Office and retain a small office base in London. A part of the process of migration and downscaling the administrative part of WLUML, and the search for a new host to which WLUML could entrust its valuable and comprehensive feminist library collection. A unique collection of books, journals, articles, reports, dossiers, case files, many of them unpublished or out of print, resources around the topics of women's rights, feminism and activism, religions, fundamentalisms, laws etc. A new host for the collection was found and in July, the library was sent to the Gender Department at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The department will be launching the WLUML library collection (as a special collection) at the opening of the newly extended library in 2016.

Strategic development process

A strategic development process began in October 2014, with a two day strategic meeting with 16 participants - networkers and board members, who either attended in person or on skype. After this a first draft strategic plan was completed at the end of 2015. The draft 2016-2019 plan identified the following priority issues:

1. The continuing rise in fundamentalism and armed conflicts as offshoots of their increasing threats.

2. Unabated cultural justifications for gender discrimination and control of women's bodies and their sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)
3. Women's political participation through access to power structures and law-making processes, removing barriers to women's empowerment.
4. Women taking the lead in the growing resistance against fundamentalisms and other disempowering forces.
5. Rethinking Transformative Feminist Leadership Institute in such a way that more young networkers could access it.

Board members met in Lahore in December 2015 to review the draft Strategic Plan and agreed that it should be tested at a transnational young networker event in Spring 2016. Once finalised through this process, the plan will guide the development of WLUML's new work and fundraising strategy.

Finance and Funding

Please see Audited Accounts on WLUML website. www.wluml.org

Appendix A

Impact evaluation - Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratisation.

This impact evaluation covered **Culturally justified Violence Against Women (CVAW) campaigns, Political Participation, and CVAW workshops** carried out as part of the **WLUML WELDD** programme. *Abridged version with Participants Narratives*

The Women's Empowerment and Leadership Development for Democratisation (WELDD) Programme 2012 to 2015, was developed by consortia partners Shirkat Gah (SG), Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML), and the Institute of Women's Empowerment (IWE) to address gender inequality.

The consortium stated **'Structural poverty cannot be reduced without women's sustained leadership to challenge inequitable structures and overcome gender-based violence; their increased access to and control over economic resources; and eventual break down of barriers that exclude them from public life and from participation in peace-building processes'**.

The overarching goal of WELDD was **'to build women's leadership by advancing equal rights and opportunities for women and girls'**. WLUML - WELDD worked towards the goal through the delivery of activities under two thematic areas:

- (1) Political participation (PP)
- (2) Rejection of Culturally justified Violence Against Women (CVAW)

The conceptual framework of leadership which WLUML used for this programme was built on WLUML's experience as a transnational movement over nearly three decades, and its work on women's leadership, including publications on *Feminism in the Muslim World: Leadership Institutes (2000)* and *Electoral Politics (2011)*, and training modules of the Feminist Leadership Institute. The framework is of leadership as part of a transformative process that does not operate in a linear fashion. For leadership to be sustainable, women leaders must be able to mobilise others to take action, and be supported to maintain and develop their own activity at local, national and international levels.

This iterative process was visualised as the interrelationship between:

- **Agency** – women undertaking autonomous initiatives
- **Empowerment** – taking actions that challenge power structures
- **Leadership** – capacity to mobilise others to join or initiate collective actions to build gender-equitable futures

Broad theories of change were articulated to clarify how the activities were expected to contribute to the agreed programme Outcomes:

A) By 2015, at least 1500 strengthened women leaders advocating gender-equitable, pluralistic societies and States in at least 12 DAC (Development Assistance Committee list) countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East with reinforced

alliances and networks within and across national borders reach at least 100,000 people (Outcome 1 main WELDD – for the whole WELDD programme)

From WLUML theory of change:

- Workshops lead to learning, skills and confidence for individuals
- Workshops lead to networking and solidarity between participants
- Learning, skills, confidence, networking and solidarity lead to more effective action
- Action leads to change – **strengthened women leaders, alliances and networks**

B) By 2015, at least 100 women in 7 WELDD countries assume leadership to reject cultural justifications for VAW in at least 100 local to international initiatives (Outcome 3 main WELDD – Whole WELDD programme)

From WLUML theory of change:

- Training and information campaigns lead to awareness, skills and confidence for individuals
- Greater awareness leads to networking and community mobilisation
- Awareness, skills, confidence, networking and community mobilisation lead to more effective action (from local to international)
- Action leads to change – **rejection of cultural justifications for violence against women**

C) By 2015, at least an additional 25 women leaders and 10 women's organisations in at least three new DAC Africa countries engaging in the public sphere women's political and public participation and at least 75 women in 14 DAC countries (7 new) assuming leadership to reject cultural justifications for VAW, amplifying national initiatives advocating gender-equitable, pluralistic societies and States with reinforced alliances and networks within and across national borders (Outcome 2 WELDD Extension - WLUML)

From WLUML theory of change:

- Workshops lead to learning, skills and confidence for individuals
- Workshops lead to networking and solidarity between participants
- Learning, skills, confidence, networking and solidarity lead to more effective action
- Action leads to change – **rejection of cultural justifications for violence against women**

Four domains were developed in which change might be expected to be achieved due to the impact of the WELDD programme:

1. Awareness/Knowledge increased – including changes in headspace (how people perceive and think of things)
2. Changes in individual actions - Individual women's leadership actions (or men's leadership towards gender-equitable futures for some of the projects)
3. Network formation and solidarity – local, national and transnational

4. Changes in policy or practice
 - a. Civil society participation and campaigns
 - b. Legal and governmental changes achieved / Discrimination-Inequality-Backlash resisted

The **Agency-Empowerment-Leadership** framework was used to organise the evidence for the evaluation. This included monitoring data, evidence on process, and evidence on impact. The primary focus for the evaluation was on the impact of WLUML’s WELDD programme on women’s **leadership** to achieve change in the four identified domains. In addition to the information on impact received during the course of the programme, and particularly via the networks developed, a systematic evaluation exercise using Most Significant Change (MSC) technique was carried out to generate evidence on impact under the four domains. http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guides/most_significant_change.

MSC narratives from workshop participants were collected primarily in English and French, reflecting the languages used in the workshops, but a few narratives were provided in other languages; and all were translated into English for this evaluation.

A) Outcome 1 – Political Participation – Main WELDD

This outcome (for the whole WELDD programme) was intended to support and develop women’s leadership in a wide range of countries in three regions by means of providing training to individual women, and supporting them to disseminate their knowledge, and continue to develop their own leadership, via stronger alliances and networks. The WLUML activities towards achieving this were four regional workshops held in North (serving MENA participants) and West Africa (serving sub-Sahara Africa participants - Franco-phone & Anglo-phone workshops) in 2013-14 on the theme of Political Participation, and a workshop in Geneva in 2014 for more established women leaders (including WLUML-CVAW project partner leads) on using UN mechanisms for women’s empowerment.

Example Workshop Programme – Political Participation

Day 1 Getting to know each other and our contexts
Session 1: Introductions. WLUML and WELDD Introduction Session 2: Cross the Line/Power Walk Session 3: Leadership and Feminism Session 4: Self Reflection- Rising to the Challenge
Day 2 Women’s Movements in Africa and West Asia
Session 5: Women’s Movement Building in West Africa : Senegal and Mali Session 6: Women’s movement in Iran Session 7: Women’s movement in Afghanistan
Day 3 Women and the Law
Session 8: Women and Law Session 9: Women and Constitution Building Session 10: Regional developments and women's legal status Session 11: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
Day 4 Human Rights, Women’s Rights and Political Islam
Session 12: Human Rights and Culture Session 13: How does Human Rights Law affect us at the community level? Session 14: Political Islam

Day 5 Advocacy – what it is and how to make it work for you
Sessions 15 & 16: Effective advocacy and mobilisation Session 17: Sustaining activists and activism: Focusing on wellness and self-care
Day 6 Movement Building
Session 18: Movement Building Session 19: Global Stop Stoning Campaign Session 20: WELDD Web Portal Session 21: Group Work – Discussion and Presentation of Campaign Plans
Day 7 Wrap Up, Plans for Networking and visits to Local Women’s NGOs

B) Outcome 3 rejection of Cultural Violence Against Women – main WELDD

This outcome was intended to support and develop women’s leadership via projects led by partner agencies which were established WLUML partners or had been represented at the Geneva training in Outcome 1. Recognising how violence against women, and its justification within cultures, reduces women’s life chances and potential, the focus was on leadership to reject cultural justifications for violence against women and girls. The activities to achieve this were nine projects in seven countries, with locally-determined activities and intended outcomes. These projects were developed based on initial situational analyses carried out in the seven countries in 2012-13, which identified issues related to specific practices of culturally-justified violence against women (especially stoning and child and forced marriages) and the capacity-building needs to address these issues.

In brief summary, the projects were:

Country	Issue	Partner agency	Project	Summary
Afghanistan	Forced / child marriage	FOSJ/FSJO - now called Federation for Peace and Justice	Training of trainers on Child and Forced Marriage	Workshops, training and addressing cases of forced/child marriage
Afghanistan	CVAW	RIWPS - Research Institute for Women Peace & Security	Awareness Raising among women’s organisations on religiously justified VAW	Handbook on women's rights and Islamic perspectives, training and seminars
Indonesia (Aceh)	CVAW / Stoning	Institute for Women’s Empowerment/ Solidaritas Perempuan	Women’s leadership to resist discriminatory policies arising from the politicisation of religion	Study report, awareness raising and advocacy to address codification of criminal law based on certain interpretations of Islam

Country	Issue	Partner agency	Project	Summary
Iran (and diaspora)	CVAW / Forced Marriage	JFI - Justice For Iran	Leaders for Change	Training (online and in Istanbul), campaigning and reports to the UN on child marriage
Iraq (Kurdistan)	CVAW	WARVIN Foundation for Women's Issues (WFWI)	Strengthening capacity of women leaders to protect survivors of gender-based and domestic violence in public shelters	Interviews and advocacy report, alliance building with women's organisations, conference to improve shelter management, standards and services
Nigeria	Forced / child marriage	BAOBAB	Ending Child Marriage in Nigeria	Training, campaigning and advocacy booklet on child marriage and girls' education
Senegal	Forced / child marriage	GREFELS - Groupe de recherche sur les femmes et les lois au Senegal	Strengthening young women to end child marriage in the province of Velingara, South Senegal	Training, community campaigning and advocacy on child marriage
Sudan	Forced / child marriage	Salmmah Women's Resource Centre	Forced Marriage in Khartoum state	Training, campaign and advocacy to build the leadership and management capacity of women to combat forced/child marriage

C) WELDD extension – political participation training and leadership to challenge violence against women

This was an extension grant intended to deepen the impact of the two main WELDD outcomes by extending both the breadth (new countries) and the depth of the programme (building the capacity of individual women). This was done through providing training to individual women, enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of their activism; and supporting them to disseminate their knowledge and continue to develop their own leadership, via stronger alliances and networks. The activities to achieve this were a further Political Participation workshop held in 2014 in a different country in Africa (Gambia), and a workshop in 2014 in each region (Asia - Indonesia, Africa – Senegal, and the Middle East - Lebanon) on challenging Culturally justified Violence Against Women.

Example Workshop Programme – Culturally-justified Violence Against Women

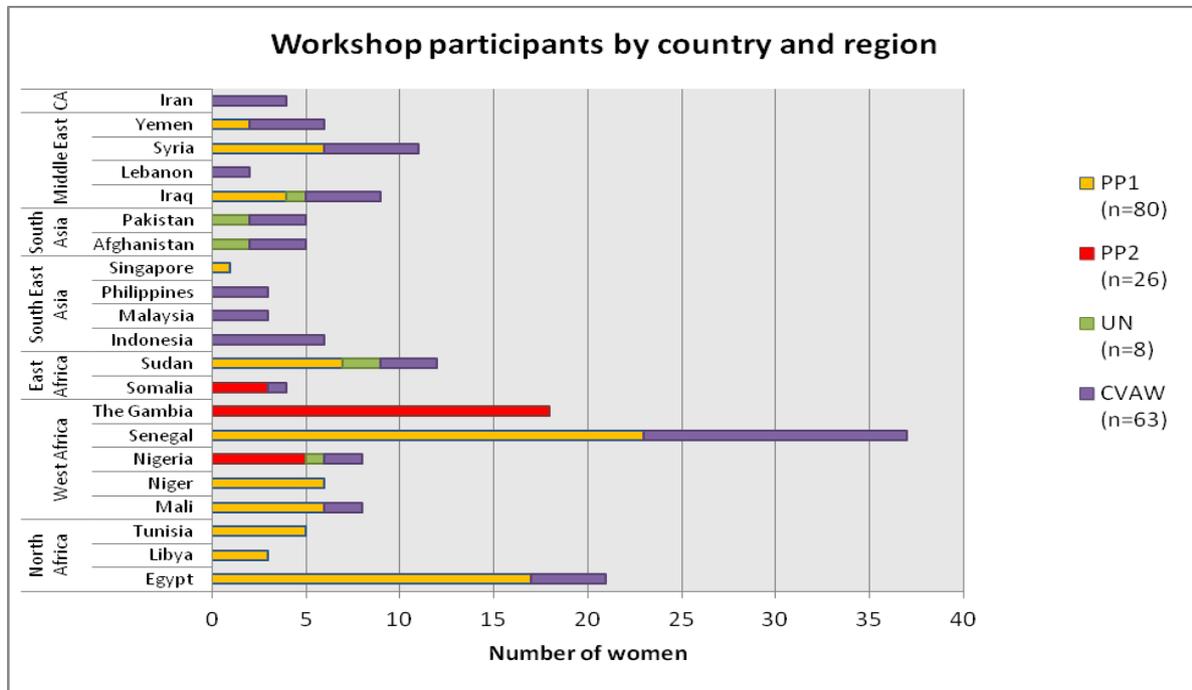
<p>Day 1</p> <p>Session 1: Introductions Session 2: Culture, Tradition, religions, rights discourses Session 3: Exploring Culturally –justified Violence Against Women (CVAW) Session 4: Islam, Muslims, Women’s rights / feminisms</p>
<p>Day 2</p> <p>Session 5: Cultural justifications and women’s rights discourses Session 6: Strategies for addressing CVAW (part 1 – strategies in use) Session 7 & 8: Sustaining activism – self care Evening Session: Self care</p>
<p>Day 3</p> <p>Session 9: Strategies for addressing CVAW (part 2 – power, resistance, transformation) Session 10 & 11: Strategies for addressing CVAW (parts 3 & 4 – Strategizing our resistance against CVAW) Session 12: Integrated security</p>
<p>Day 4</p> <p>Session 13 & 14: Digital Security Evening Session: Digital security Clinics</p>
<p>Day 5</p> <p>Session 15: Integrated security within organisations and movements Session 16: Building transformative, feminist and sustainable (TFS) leadership Session 17: Action planning and sharing / Wrap up</p>

Key aspects of monitoring data outlined here are an indication of the baselines and context from which to identify the most significant changes achieved by the work. In terms of the workshops, the first key aspect is transnational participation: the numbers of women involved, and the regions and countries they come from. The second key aspect is the development and strengthening of sustainable alliances and networks by the involvement of women who are a potential new generation of leaders, and new to WLUML and associated networks. The third key aspect for the training, but especially for the CVAW workshops, is a ‘ground-up approach’ whereby workshops are produced for *and* by those already at the forefront of resisting CVAW in their communities can speak to activists’ specific contexts, and have the potential for immediate effects. The fourth key aspect – particularly for the projects – was capacity-building: that the activities carried out during the timeframe of the projects should be developed with the longer-term in mind.

a. Transnational Participation

The WLUML Political Participation workshops carried out towards Outcome 1 in the main WELDD programme were intended to involve women from “at least 12 DAC countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East”. The PP workshop towards the WELDD extension Outcome 2 was intended to reach “at least an additional 25 women leaders and 10 women’s organisations in at least 3 new DAC Africa countries” and the CVAW workshops to reach “at least 75 women in 14 DAC countries (7 new). There were 80 participants from 11 countries in the first four PP workshops (PPI), and a further 26 participants (from 15

organisations) from 3 new countries at the extension PP workshop (PP2). The CVAW workshops were attended by 63 participants from 16 countries, including 7 countries which were not included in the PP workshops. In addition, there were a further 8 participants from 5 countries in the UN training in Geneva, taking the total countries up to 13 in Outcome 1. The graph shows the participation by country, region and type of workshop training.



b. A new generation

In order for WLUML to develop its network and to ensure the sustainability of the WELDD actions, it was intended that the primary participants of the workshops would be young women (activists and/or feminists) up to the age of 35. They would also be women who are based at the community level, either as independent activists or involved in local organisations, but have the potential to operate transnationally. The intention behind this was that the training would be reaching a potential new generation of women leaders, and women new to WLUML and associated networks. Evidence for this was collected under the framework heading of Agency, including women’s CVs and applications to take part in the training, and the organisations and activism that they were already involved in, as well as the details of the women who attended the workshops.

Across all the workshops, the vast majority of participants were new contacts for WLUML, and largely from new organisational contacts. In general, more than half of the organisational contacts were new, for example 9 out of the 14 organisations of the total of 18 participants at the CVAW workshop in Indonesia in August 2014. Overall, the 114 participants in the PP workshops came from 66 organisations, and the 63 participants in the CVAW workshops came from 40 organisations. In addition, most workshops included participants who identified as being independent activists, rather than from an organisation, for example 7 out of the 24 participants at the PP workshop in Cairo in December 2013, and 5 out of the 23 participants in the CVAW workshop in Beirut in June 2014. Of those participants whose age was recorded, the range was 19 to 64, but the majority were under 35 and the median age was 30, with the average (mean) being 31.7. The three main routes for continuing the connections made at the workshops have

been by the majority of participants joining the WLUML Rise Up list (the Listserv for networkers), the closed Facebook Group for workshop participants; and by some contributing to the Public Square blogging platform on the WELDD Portal (since the September 2014 launch).

c. Ground-up approach

WLUML’s understanding of empowerment is of a ‘ground-up approach’, whereby workshops are produced for *and* by activists, is related to the challenge – at times – of defining who is a ‘participant’ and who is a ‘trainer’ in the workshops. In addition to the 177 women who are recorded as participants in the training, there are 45 women who also participated – as trainers, resource people and support people. For example, the total of 63 participants recorded in the CVAW workshops is less than the original target of 75 under Outcome 2 WELDD extension. However, each workshop included from 6 to 8 additional women who participated; as trainers and resource people – specifically involved because of their own activism and leadership. Such women can draw on their own lived experience of activism to train others in recognising, minimising and negotiating the risk and challenges in sustainable activism and leadership for women. Feedback at the end of the workshops included comments like (from Beirut in June 2014) that the “synergy of trainers and resource persons worked well”.

d. Capacity building for the longer term

The CVAW projects were developed out of initial situational analyses carried out in the seven countries which identified both specific issues on violence against women; and the capacity-building needs to address these issues.

The projects were therefore designed to build up longer term capacity in each context, as well as to achieve specific outputs within the timeframe and budget of the project.

Country	Partner agency	Key capacity-building initiatives achieved
Afghanistan	FOSJ/FSJO - FPJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 workshops trained 65 community leaders and during 2014, 33 cases of child marriage, forced marriage, rape and domestic violence were reported by the leaders and tackled directly by leaders (14) or through Elimination of Violence Against Women Attorney Office (19) • Provincial departments of Ministry of Women Affairs requested training for new staff on child and forced marriage; and agreed to update FSJO in monitoring cases
Afghanistan	RIWPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook on women’s rights and Islamic perspectives developed with Kateb University and used in two training seminars with 33 female and male activists, women leaders and students • Kabul-based participants are supported via RIWPS youth groups and Community Dialogues: with telephone follow-up provided for provincial participants

Country	Partner agency	Key capacity-building initiatives achieved
Indonesia (Aceh)	IWE/SP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network established of 6 organisations which established an advocacy strategy in November 2014 and carried out local, province-level and national activities including meeting with the Unit for Women’s Empowerment and the Protection of Children in Aceh • Study report on discrimination in law used in training of activists (66), students (75) and 24 community women in 4 villages
Iran (and diaspora)	JFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report "IRAN: Gender Discrimination at Its Worst" submitted in March 2014 for the UN Universal Periodic Review of Iran- achieved 6 states making recommendations at the UPR; and Deputy President on Women and Family Affairs called marriages under age 13 “unacceptable” • Report "Forced Marriages: the death of one's reality" campaign included 5,491 Facebook members joining and more than 150 women wrote about their personal experiences
Iraq (Kurdistan)	WARVIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed capacity and techniques to interview women survivors in shelters and stakeholders to identify issues beyond the daily demands • Outcomes of the interviews presented at a conference including 50 stakeholders and decision-makers, which set a network of 10 key women leaders to take forward recommendations on shelter management – including meeting with Ministers of Justice and of Social Affairs
Nigeria	BAOBAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder meetings in February 2014 including religious and community leaders followed up by training in May 2014 for a hundred participants – including stakeholders as guest speakers • Advocacy booklet distributed to 6 schools, 6 media outlets, and other stakeholders as part of ongoing campaign
Senegal	GREFELS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network set up following training of 30 girls and 6 boys; and a further 15 girls and 5 boys joined after International Women’s Day events • Declaration by Head of Velingara Provincial Government to end child marriages; and ongoing campaign including radio talks, partnership with women’s organisations, healthcare communicator, traditional birth attendants and Youth Club for Leadership and Citizenship

Country	Partner agency	Key capacity-building initiatives achieved
Sudan	Salmmah FM [Forced Marriage project]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two training workshops took place on building the leadership and management capacity of 29 women to combat forced/child marriage; and on Training of Trainers • Participants were linked with legal aid to help them with their own issues of child/forced marriage, and other harmful practices (FGM) <p>Salmmah was forced by Sudanese regime to close down on the 24th June 2014</p>
Sudan	Salmmah PC [Adultery and the penal code project]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation meeting of 9 participants from 3 women's human rights organisations identified the issues and challenges as female lawyers and on sexual violence cases • Training workshop in April-May 2014 for lawyers, activists and survivors (15 women and 5 men) developed legal knowledge and advocacy skills <p>Salmmah was forced to close down on the 24th June 2014</p>

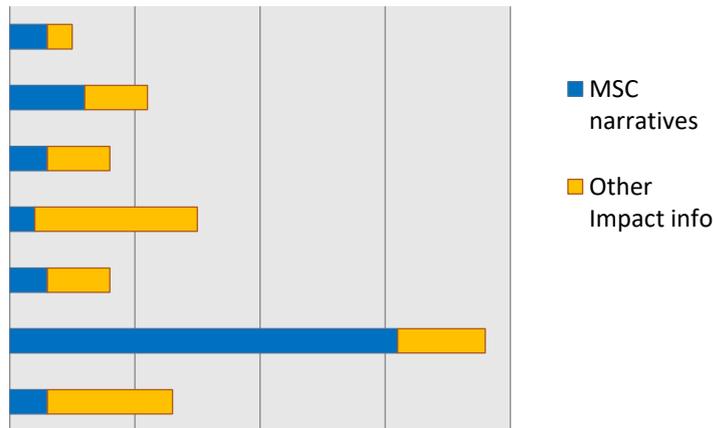
Narratives of Change under four domains

Outcomes and impact can be achieved within the exercise of **agency** and the experience of **empowerment**; as well as in the impact of WLUML's WELDD programme on women's **leadership** to achieve change. Within the framework of Agency is the impact of selecting projects and workshop participants which are already engaged in activities defending women's rights and gender equality at the grassroots level, and which have the potential to increase their capacity, and their reach. Within the framework of Empowerment is the impact of the processes of bringing together participants and material resources in the projects and workshops, to develop learning, skills, confidence and solidarity. Information on impact was therefore received during the course of the programme, and particularly via the networks developed; and this was built upon by a systematic evaluation exercise using Most Significant Change (MSC) technique. Only some of the actual MSC narratives can be included in this report, although the whole body of narratives has been retained as the evidence base.

Most Significant Changes from the Workshops

In total, 51 MSC narratives were provided by workshop participants; and this included participants from all 9 workshops. The response rate was overall just under a third of all participants.

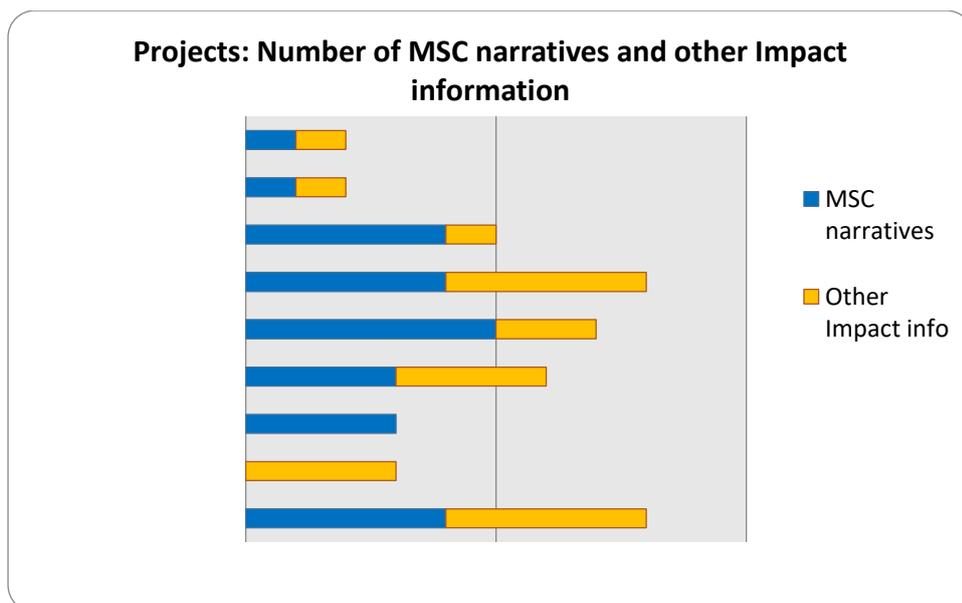
Workshops: Number of MSC narratives and examples of other Impact information



Such coverage of workshops and regions via a systematic method provides a strong evidence base for evaluation of the impact of the WLUML workshop programme. It should also be noted that participants were required to select only one narrative each – the most significant from their perspective – and to identify for themselves in which domain the change had occurred. Quite frequently, women underplayed the change achieved, such as identifying their actions as simply awareness, or their creation of groups and networks as more isolated actions. The largest category of change was in individual knowledge and awareness, as would be expected for a training programme; but over half was in actions, networks or changes in civil society, legal or government. Participants from both types of workshop identified significant change in all domains, but participants in the CVAW workshops provided a higher proportion of narratives on individual awareness, reflecting the focus on sustainable activism and self-care; in comparison to a greater emphasis on networks and policy and practice changes for the participants in the Political Participation training.

Most Significant Changes from Projects

Feedback on the impact of their project was received from all 8 project partners, covering the 9 projects in 7 countries. In total, 25 MSC narratives were provided and combined with other specific feedback on project impact (not monitoring) to provide coverage across all projects, as shown in the graph.



Impact was identified under all domains across the projects, with different projects focusing their impact in different domains, depending on the specific activities carried out. For example, the Salmmah project on adultery laws in Sudan focused on developing a coalition to campaign on reforming the Penal Code and was intended to have an impact on the law and government; in contrast to, for example, the FOSJ project which raised awareness amongst individuals to become leaders in reporting and tackling forced marriage.

Most Significant Changes – From Government, Society and Networks to Individuals - Narratives

Legal and Government – domain 4.b)

Changes in legal or government as a result of the WLUML WELDD programme were identified by three workshop participants – all from West Africa.

Though the Salmmah Women’s Resource Centre in Khartoum was closed by the authorities in June 2014, bringing the project on the Sudanese adultery laws to an end; in February 2015 Sudan changed the law on rape. Previously, when a woman in Sudan reported rape it was often seen as an admission of *zina* – the crime of sex outside marriage. The new law introduces a precise definition of rape as a penetrative sexual act involving physical or psychological force. Hikma Ahmed, a lawyer involved in WLUML, said ***"In the past the law was confusing and very problematic. In most cases when a woman complained she had been raped she would be tried for adultery. This amendment is very helpful for rape victims or survivors seeking justice, and it is also helpful for us lawyers who are supporting these women in court."***

Fahima highlighted how the Salmmah project had involved lawyers working together with women accused of adultery – ***"We examined the laws. This is the first time that laws are being studied with a feminist approach. Also we gather there women (lawyers but also women accused of adultery). Lawyers also face troubles because of harassment when they manage***

to save their client. Adultery women who were present saw themselves as agents of change and it really empowered them.”

Maha Babeker, who was Salmmah’s Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, blogged about the Centre’s closure – **“The Ministry of Justice cancelled our registration license, leading to Salmmah’s immediate closure. There was no due process given to cancelling the license, no protocol suggesting how we might be able to appeal the decision. Our director was simply handed a decree revoking Salmmah’s registration license as a non-profit company, outlining its immediate liquidation, and the appointment of a committee to oversee its dissolution. Special Forces invaded our office, threatened our staff, and seized our property. This was accompanied by unlawful detention of members of staff, and the seizure of all our funds.**

On a personal level, I still cannot comprehend the closure of Salmmah, even when I talk about it. But even though our centre has been closed, I still believe that where there is a will there is a way.”

Mabinta in Senegal identified that before the workshop her work with her organisation (ASDES) was just about supporting women around issues of indebtedness, but after the workshop “we have decided it was also necessary to do social animation” and to “enlarge the range of actions”. She said “We also understood that it was necessary to engage with the authorities and we have understood how to proceed. After the workshop, my organisation has sent a delegation to the local authorities and the mayor in particular. We called to have an appointment and they have listened to us. We explained that we wanted to create a collective field and mixed group to allow women to have access to the land. He said he was going to support us and he send [specialists] to delineate the ground. We were supposed to receive interim certificates but all of this was decided during the election period. Now there are new persons. We have their support in principle to carry on the project and for the delivery of the certificates.” Overall she says that “Through sensitization campaign led towards the authorities, women have now rights on some lands that will be then used as collective fields.”

Underpinning this change in land rights, Mabinta also detailed a more general increase in women’s autonomy, and their say in decision-making in the rural area. “In rural zone, women did not have the right to give their point of view during family gathering or the village meeting and they has no access rights to the land. In these zones, we have implemented what we call « calabash » for solidarity that allows men and women to gather once a week and to do some kind of anonymously donation (a sort of volunteer and anonymous contribution). The collected money is then used to buy good of first necessity. So everyone, men and women, give their point of view on what to buy.”¹

Assan M’baye was active in the group «Pivot droit et citoyenneté des femmes GP/DCF» in Mali before the workshop, but said that “My abilities have been reinforced thanks to the workshop. On my return, I used this new expertise for my group”. The most significant change she identified was that after the workshop her group created a “women vigil plateforme for elections without violence. This plateforme is used to train and inform women. This plateforme has massively contributed to the easing of the election in Mali through sensitization campaign and awareness amongst young and women who composed the most important part of the electors. The plateforme has also received different guarantees coming from the highest authorities that they will take gender into account in their actions. This is how in 2013, Mali has managed to organize peaceful election.” She said “It is significant in the sense that its success was of high importance for the future of our country and women have played a very big part in this success story. In Mali, a lot of the women especially those who are illiterate suffer from a

misinformation which makes them easy to manipulate. The group Pivot droit et citoyenneté des femmes has addressed this issue by organizing information campaign in their national language”

Three of the CVAW projects also provided information on changes in this domain of policy or practice of law or government.

Lanja Abdulla is the Executive Director of WARVIN (WFWI) and explains how the evidence from the interviews with survivors of gender-based violence is being used to change the legal basis of the system of shelters, to become an independent entity; and thereby improving the lives of the women and girls living in the shelters. She says “ We are all now working with shelters and the KR-I’s Parliament women’s committee, to develop an independent system for the shelters to be under the supervising of the ministry of interior”.

JFI reports, including the report "IRAN: Gender Discrimination at Its Worst" submitted to the October 2014 UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Iran, contributed to pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran to address gender inequality and the rights of sexual minorities. In March 2015 the Islamic Republic accepted many of the recommendations of the Human Rights Council, and for the first time acknowledged ill-treatment and torture of the LGBT community. Shadi Sadr, the Executive Director of JFI, said: “*We call on the members of civil society to follow up on recommendations as made by Ireland, Denmark and the Netherlands that Iran has partially supported. In addition, we call on all international organisations to press Iran to accept the remaining 102 recommendations, all of which reflect fundamental rights of Iranians.*”

Salmah Women’s Resource Centre was closed down by the authorities in June 2014, despite the authorities action, Salmah had the satisfaction of knowing that their work, in collaboration with sister organisations and activists in Sudan, contributed to change in the law on rape, described earlier in this report. “*In the past the law was confusing and very problematic. In most cases when a woman complained she had been raped she would be tried for adultery. This amendment is very helpful for rape victims or survivors seeking justice, and it is also helpful for us lawyers who are supporting these women in court.*”

Civil Society – domain 4.a)

Changes in civil society as a result of the WLUML WELDD programme were identified by a few workshop participants in their MSC narratives – from Afghanistan and Senegal, and from participants through blogs/ testimonies.

A participant from Senegal:

“During the General Assembly for young volunteers for environment [international NGO active in Senegal since two or three years which organise different activities such as cleaning, fight against deforestation, ...] - a man stood up during this Assembly to criticize women within the organisation. Basically for him, women’s rights was of no relevancy in the environment issue. I stood up as well to tell him that it was useless to criticize women. I actually to stand in front of the whole Assembly to defend women and their role in environment. I said it was unfair to minimize women. We are half of the population and we should be encouraged to get more involved instead of being criticize all the time. I was always the first in my class so I know I can do as much as them. This day I felt proud to be a woman.” This public action led to changes in the NGO and its work in civil society – “*Because it is from this moment that the NGO has been sensitized on the topic of women’s rights. There are also trainings now on gender and*

environment that are organised in schools. It is because I dared to stand up that now I have the privilege to act for the women's cause." Without the workshop and the exchanges with the other women there, she said "I would not have the courage to move forward or to be in prepared with the verbal attacks coming from the society."

From Afghanistan:

My friends called me and we decided to go pay a visit to this woman's family. The next morning, we went to their house. Inside, there was a room was full of people, including three women: the victim's mother and two sisters. Her sister hugged me and started crying, "They killed her, they killed my sister." I started crying too. We all sat with them for hours until they brought Farkhunda's body in an ambulance. We told the men that we wanted to carry her coffin. They agreed, but told us we could do that only from the ambulance to the yard; people outside shouldn't see that women carried her coffin.

We brought her to the yard, and everyone was screaming. One of her sisters fainted. Women from the neighbourhood were gathered at the house. It was time to take her to the graveyard. We placed her coffin back inside the ambulance and started driving. Thirty minutes later, we arrived at the cemetery, where we carried Farkhunda's coffin to a corner of the cemetery, where mourners said the *Salat al-Janazah* funeral prayer for her. After the prayer, we went around the coffin, held hands and insisted that we will pick her up and bury her. Her father agreed, and we carried her to the grave, buried her and promised her that we will advocate for her until the murderers are punished.

[Blog post by Nargis Azaryun from Afghanistan]

From the child marriage project in Senegal there was a narrative from a teacher explaining how he had been able to extend the WLUML WELDD project via other civil society organisations to reach more schools across the Velingara area – *"When I realized that the project had very good impact, I decided to extend it to other schools located in the zone. I have implemented the same activities in other area of Velingara so we could get a wider result in the all Velingara territory. I have been able to collect some money and I have focused on 6 schools: Primary and high schools. So the project has targeted students from the age of 7 to 18 years old. The age of those people are a bit wider than for the [WELDD] project.*

There as well, we have used the inclusive approach promoted by the project of APAM. In each school, the whole pedagogical team is involved and lead activities with the students. Parents and women's organisation were also involved. We have lead activities to sensitize on the consequences of early marriage and on the laws prohibiting it but also on children's rights.

Children put their problems into a play (theatre) and then perform it in front of the parents and community." He said "we must consider children as actors and that if they are trained and supported, they are capable to bring changes. We can see it now with girls daring to call the police when their parents wish to marry them."

Networks – Domain 3.

There were numerous narratives of changes in networks, with eight workshop participants highlighting this as the most significant impact for them. There are MSC examples across all regions except in the countries of South East Asia (where other information of networking impact has been received), particularly emphasising the opportunity for learning from others by being involved in networks and alliances from the local to the transnational scale.

In the workshop, Sediqa from Afghanistan “became familiar with importance of culture values that should be considered in leadership development process. This concept helped me to include it within several leadership-training programs that I have conducted them in different provinces of Afghanistan. This concept assisted me to create four women’s leadership networks in four provinces (Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Herat, and Jalalabad). These active Networks established a strong experience sharing channel helping each other in different related areas.” She emphasised the value of the WLUML model of training – “The interesting point needs to be mentioned that most of the participants were actual leaders in their society and brought very significant role in women development of their country”, and she added that “I would suggest for the future workshop including of other neighbour countries to the like Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, which are neighbours of Afghanistan, because we have common culture and history and we have influence to each other. It would be very useful if there would be opportunity to help strengthening of each other.”

There were many examples of participants emphasising the networks formed or strengthened at the workshops, and through ongoing communication and solidarity in difficult times. An example from Sudan was the support from the WLUML network – the “workshop taught me about solidarity between the people in the network. When Salmah was shut down by the authority, I decided to contact the people from the network like ‘A’ from Brazil. We talked through skype and then she shared it on her network. I also contacted ‘S’ from South Africa. It helped me a lot because I was less afraid knowing I was not alone and that a network was behind me. They advised me and support me and this is very important. Without my participation at the network it would not have been possible.”

Jihan in Iraq is a lawyer helping Yazidi people (Sinjare IDPs), especially women, with legal aid. She said “Thanks a lot it was very important for me to be part of the program to learn from comparative experiences [from other countries] so to advocate for issues we work on in our country.”

Another example of transnational networking is Maimouna from Senegal – “I would like to thank WLUML and WELDD because in addition to what I have done, I also had the opportunity to meet other African women (Niger and Mali). We are working together on an action plan with some of them.”

Sokhna from Senegal explained how the networking of the workshop inspired her to fight (and win) her case at the fish market. “Thanks to the workshop, I learned that it was important to mobilize women’s resources. I have met sisters who were in a country at war. I realized there was also worst somewhere else and it gave me courage to carry on. Thanks to this I was able to help those women and to learn to fight for my own rights. I even have won my cases against the town hall for abusive sacking.”

“The administration of the fish market depends on the town hall. It is the mayor who presided over the administration of the market with the local councillors. The vendors have to rent some spaces in the market and must also pay a tax to the town hall. I was in charge of the tax recovery. I was therefore directly in contact with the vendors. It is how I discovered how women were facing great difficulties to pay the tax. They arrive at 7 AM and at 11 AM they still don’t have enough to provide for their own needs. The women, mostly mothers, are more often in the retail sale while men are often wholesalers. Women need to go to the men to get the goods. Those men are often part of their family such as uncle, brother, father sometimes even husband or partner. But men sell them goods way too expensive. Moreover women are literally used by men to serve their own interest. I understood that these women were isolated and were not defending their own interest. I suggested then that they gather into a group. I knew now that it was necessary to use the Senegalese laws and that I should do more about it. I have convened six of those women in my office to say that instead of lobbying for the men interest, they should get together with the help of local NGO. They understood but told me that the so-called NGO offer help and then ask them for money. I gave them some contacts of some NGO reassuring them that they will not ask for money. I gave two train tickets to two of these women so they can go to the organization ASPDES (association sénégalaise pour un développement équitable et soldiaire). This association works mostly on environmental, citizenship

education, entrepreneurship, topic ... They went. The association has helped them to organize each other into a group, to train each other and exchange with other associations. Today those women are financially auto-sufficient and have more earning."

There was also other information on networking impact received, with examples here from Gambia, Syria and Indonesia.

Haddy from Gambia is on the Think Young Women Executive and co-founder of Leadership Development for Young Women. She wrote in a blog *"I represented Think Young Women with a colleague at WLUML –WELDD's Feminist Leadership Workshop and as cheesy as it may sound, it opened my eyes and marked the beginning of a journey that I have no regrets pursuing thus far."* In January 2015 she sent the first issue of 'The Calabash: Ending FGM in A Generation' which reported on the network which *"mobilised and engaged young men and boys who are now encouraged to join the campaign for the acceleration of the abandonment of FGM in The Gambia. The involvement of youth, especially boys and young men, in the campaign to end FGM in a generation is crucial, given the need for a collaborative approach to achieve this goal."*

After attending the workshop, Amira from Syria went on to co-found Radio Souriat radio campaign to raise awareness on UN Resolution 1325 on gender equality during and after wars. She wrote *"The idea arose from the need to empower women, make them aware of their rights, and promote the concepts behind Resolution 1325, in light of the ongoing conflict in Syria, whereby those concepts emphasized the special status of women, and the need to include them in peacekeeping and peace-building operations while remaining sensitive to peacekeeping forces, police and judicial authorities about the specificity of women in the conflict, the need to take measures to guarantee their protection and undertake to preserve the rights of women and girls. The campaign also served as a means to pressure the government into adopting a national plan for the proper implementation of the resolution."*

In addition, in April 2015, networking between women who met at the CVAW workshop in Indonesia (in August 2014) was part of transnational advocacy against the threatened execution in Indonesia of Mary Jan Veloso, a Filipina woman who was temporarily reprieved to be able to act as a witness against her traffickers. Fatima blogged *"Donna [another participant] and your networks are all amazing"*

From the CVAW projects there were narratives of local, national, virtual and transnational networking, including these examples of finding ways to network within Iran, and of the benefit of transnational network connections to a local project in Iraqi Kurdistan.

An activist in Iran explained how attending the workshop organised by JFI inspired her, and helped her make connections with other women, to take forward her ideas of providing women in Iran with accurate information on sexual and reproductive issues. She said *"Women's rights activists have been trying to stop the new policies which deprive women, especially the poorest ones, from contraceptives. For me, this issue has a personal aspect as well. I had an illegal abortion about one year ago which was one of the most painful and humiliating experiences of my life. During that period, I had the chance to hear many other women's terrific stories. After that experience, I had always thought of doing something for women like myself. But until the Istanbul workshop, I did not have a clear idea of how to make my idea become reality. In the workshop, I learned how to make an action plan for my idea and our upcoming web site started to be created. Moving from an idea of months to an action plan which will definitely bring changes to at least some women's lives was the most significant result of the workshop to*

me.” She formed a group with other women to create a website “which will provide information on reproductive rights and health to ordinary women which will soon be illegal like abortion.”

Shadi Sadr, an Iranian activist in the diaspora, reflects that “JFI started this project at a time where it was very difficult for women’s activism. Now it is better. We can see the difference. Women are more brave to take some action. The first group in 2012 were so afraid. The project is not just about political change. It goes beyond because it gave courage. It contributed to some transformation. In the second workshop it was more concrete plan of action. People are less afraid of talking about action.”

Individual Actions – domain 2

There is a particular focus in the WLUML WELDD programme on women assuming leadership in a range of contexts, and on existing women leaders being strengthened by their participation in the programme. There is considerable evidence of this being achieved, including sixteen workshop participants choosing the domain of individual actions as the most significant change for their narratives.

Pendo from Senegal also challenged stereotypes – “Two months ago, I stood up in front of my University (Bambay) teacher (bio-engineer). I am studying sustainable development. Our professor told us in class that it was good for women to study but that we women really needed to get married and get children. Because it was important, I said no in front of the whole class. I explained that there are a few women who just do not want that because the life purpose for a woman it is not about getting married. The other students (men and women) did not so much agree with me. I also said that before marriage was mostly motivated for economical reasons but that now it was less justified since a woman could live without a man.” She said the workshop made her able to do this – “before I only had common sense argumentation. Now thanks to the workshop, I now also have religious argumentation. I have met women coming from other countries who made me understand that Quran was interpreted to manipulate people. There is a patriarchal interpretation of the Quran to control and dominate others. It is the workshop that made me understand this.”

Sophie from Senegal said – “In my school, students were surprised to see me talk to 4 men about feminism since I was the only woman. I told them it was not a bad thing to be a feminist because it is about social justice. When you think that when I was on my last year at school, I could not even imagine myself talking in public...”

Self care for sustainable activism was a focus of the workshops, and frequently highlighted by the participants.

Suha from Yemen said, “The teacher in the workshop were great. She taught us that we should pay more attention to our self care but that it actually was more than an advice but an obligation. Otherwise we wouldn’t be very useful to advocate if we were exhausted. In the last two years, the situation in Yemen has been very hard. I also have two children and I work as freelance consultant in women’s issue. Before I would feel so guilty if I took some time for myself. Now I just do it. I go to the beautician, hairdresser, I don’t answer my e-mails for two days because I can switch it off, I can leave work at work, I go out and visit some friends.”

Marianna from Syria was inspired by the workshop to speak out about strong women and women leaders – *“Now I’m more sensitive about women’s issues. I am active in a group about infography. They asked me to do a topic. I decided to do a topic on women. I have shown strong feminist women because Syria does not know about them. We need to spotlight their work. I did not want to go on stereotypes about women refugee or women victims of violence. No there are other women there. Now I say it out loud and I advocate for women rights in every conference and meeting I attend, I say that we need to change the reality and it’s not acceptable anymore.”* To title her narrative she quoted one of the workshop trainers - *“we need one of our women to be out there”*

Matida from Gambia was also inspired by the workshop – *“With the different presentations and hearing from different people from different parts of Africa, and the interesting exercises given to us during the training, I learnt to push myself and become more courageous in pursuing my career as a young feminist.”* She said *“I applied for a job in one organisation as the Gender Specialist; in my introduction during the interview, I talked about who I am, my values and beliefs as a feminist and what I can do to contribute to addressing the challenges encountered by women in the male dominated projects in Africa. All the interviewers were men and they were all surprised with what I was saying. One of them told me they don’t need feminist in the project since all feminists are radical and bring confusion to the world. I took my time to sensitize them and cleared out their misconceptions in how they perceive feminists and feminist ideas. I never thought I would be appointed in that position...yet am determine to make them understand that I am proud feminist and I will do all it takes to contribute to the uplifting of women and girls in Africa and beyond. Thank Allah I was appointed and today they are proud of my contributions and courage.”*

Some of the most high profile leadership actions by workshop participants were not presented as MSC narratives, but other information was received about their activism; with examples here from participants from Tunisia and the Philippines.

Aya Chebbi from Tunisia became an active WLUML networker after participating in the PP workshop in Cairo in December 2013. She has been profiled as a ‘global activist’ and gave a speech at the UN Women’s event on 10th March 2015 for the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Conference – ‘Planet 50-50 by 2030’ in which she said *“Article 46 of Tunisia’s Constitution stands as an embodiment of the gains we have attained as women through civil action. We have conquered repressive laws and set our country upon the transformative values of equality and dignity.*

Our generation of feminist movements in Africa and the Middle East, in conflict zones, and all parts of the world going through hard times, shall continue to be in the frontline. Even when we are set backward... even when many of our counterparts have fallen... we must set our countries upon a constitutional path of maturation and societal awareness of gender equality. Let’s continue the flight. Shukran. Thank you.”

Zahria Muti-Mapandi, a Maranao woman from the Philippines who participated in the CVAW workshop in Indonesia, also gave a high profile speech. At an event in Bangkok, Thailand on 20th January 2015 to launch an Oxfam report ‘Asia at a Crossroads: Why the region must address inequality now’ she said, *“Some of the participants from the Philippines with us today, especially non-Muslims, may be surprised that early marriage, divorce and polygamy is allowed in their own country when majority of the Filipinos are not allowed to do this. This is because it is allowed by the Philippine law through the Code of Muslim Personal Laws that Muslims-Filipinos can do these legally. Perhaps they call this religious tolerance and respect for differences. I call it culturally-justified violence committed not only by Muslim and government leaders in our country. This is another form of inequality both for the Muslims and non-Muslims in our country.*

My prayer is, I see the roadmap towards this change begin taking shape in my lifetime, that my daughters and son get to experience a world where equality is not a dream but a reality, and that my grandchildren get to have a life where inequality is just a word of their elders.

Wassalam and Thank you.”

The CVAW projects provided numerous narratives of leadership actions, including these examples from Nigeria, Afghanistan, Senegal and Sudan on forced or child marriage.

Rabiatu Aliyu is an Islamic scholar who runs a private Islamic school for married women in Anka, Zamfara State, Nigeria. Since she attended the training by BAOBAB Outreach Team on child marriage, she has expanded the mission of the school to include health education – encouraging the girls and women who are pregnant to attend ante-natal clinic and sharing other useful health information with them - Women’s human rights and leadership education – knowledge of the basic human rights and leadership skills. The school has forty students in attendance, and they are very happy at this opportunity; and Rabiatu gained support from the community and religious leaders. The leaders help restrained husbands from taking their wives out of the school by talking to the men to support their wives and encouraging the women to attend the school with their babies.

Another participant titled her story “*Girls should be a tool to become*”, explaining how she persuaded a father keep his daughter Bilkisu in education rather than marry her off at age 12. She said, “*I used the knowledge I acquired from the workshop to help someone and continue to encourage individual support for keeping girls in school as an alternative for child marriage.*”

The FOSJ project on child marriage in Afghanistan trained participants to report and intervene in cases. For example, Ms. Shaima, one of the trainees of the organization in Parwan province reported to the organization that Parwana a 13 years old girl was forced engaged to a widower man who was 35 years old. She was not in her legal age to be engaged and she was quite unhappy. Ms. Shaima came to know about this case through Parwana’s mother and she went to talk with Parwana’s Father; but he didn’t listen to her. He was saying that he has the full right of his daughter and he knows what is good and what is bad for her. Then Ms. Shaima coordinated this with other community elders and Mullahs, and by intervention of these community elders and Mullahs, the father was convinced and he cancelled the engagement of his daughter.

The International Women’s Day celebrations in 2014 in Velingara as part of the GREFELS project were remarkable enough, as March 8th had not been celebrated in that region before. However, Codou Bop also explains that “*women from surrounding villages who had heard about the event decided to protest, every first Saturday of the following months. These protesters have been attracted by this initiative because they understood and then grasped the opportunity given by the event. They were able to secure the establishment of gender focal points in some jurisdictions for the management of some of their material needs. We never thought that this initiative would have such an impact even outside the village, because women belong to particularly conservative ethnic groups. This region of Senegal is very particular since it’s very patriarchal and women are really oppressed, women does not go to school and political participation is extremely low. So if women dare going out into the streets to demonstrate, this is simply extraordinary.*”

Amadou, who escaped forced marriage, is involved in the project and said *“This is the first time that girls who are victims of early marriages are trained and made aware so they can have the courage to say no. Previously, groups or organizations that fought against the early marriage tended to work alone without involving other actors. With this project, everyone is involved, it is a very inclusive project. In our project, teachers, school management committee, parents, women's groups and youth organizations are involved.”*

For the Salmah project on forced marriage in Sudan, Fahima says *“it really transformed some people life. So the project took place in a remote area with 30 women to foster their building capacity and make them become the advocate of tomorrow so they can help with further campaign. The project was closed down. But we did the training. Those 30 women have been trained to become leader. They are students/teacher and also girls who got married at the age of 10 years old. One of the 10 years old girl was pregnant. We did a film with her. She was there mostly as an observer rather than a participant. But it helped her because she understood the importance of education and well being. She committed before two suicide attempt. Now she is like a role model for other girls in her situation. She is the face of those child mother or child wife. At the beginning of the training she would not dare speaking and after she was suggesting strategies!”* Fahima emphasises the transformation – *“The pregnant girl became an agent. She was more confident and offered strategies. That is significant.”*

The SP/IWE project in Aceh (Indonesia) and the RIWPS project in Afghanistan documented the impact of their training and awareness-raising work in women’s knowledge and using that knowledge in actions.

In the RIWPS training, Ms Azada *“learned about women’s right from Islamic prospective. It is very essential for Muslim communities to be aware of their rights from Islamic prospective. I believe that this training has truly impacted my life. At the end of training, my cousin came to me and asked what I have learned during this training session, since he is also studying in university. I gave 5 copies of the Booklet (Women rights from Islamic Prospective). After studying the contents of the booklet, he said “this training session was really effective, because due to not having Islamic knowledge we are facing these issues (especially Violence against women). He promised that he will start sharing with his friends from what he learnt from the booklet. He also requested, if certain training session could be conducted in future for men as well in other provinces.”*

Individual awareness – domain I.

All the women talked about how the workshops had increased their knowledge, their awareness, and helped them develop their thinking. There were over twenty different narratives of such significant changes for individuals from the workshops, of which only a selection can be included in this report. Many of the women underplayed their leadership actions and their courage – many of these narratives actually reflect much more than modest claims of increased awareness. In evaluating the impact of the WLUML WELDD programme it is therefore important to hear how women underplay their own achievements, and are often reluctant to claim credit for their own contributions and actions.

There were many narratives about an increased understanding of Islam and religious texts, as well as narratives of putting that understanding into action:

“The workshop taught me how to read between the lines when I read Quranic text and text in the government law. As well as expanded my perception in dealing with some data in response to the cultural and political changing in my country. The program offers me another dimension in how to analysis some of the current practices and how to aim to develop policies and programs of law to reduce these wrong practices.” [Amal from Iraq]

“I was not aware that there were so many stereotypes. People interprets religion for their own purposes. I became more curious thanks to the workshop about discrimination women suffer in the name of religion.” [Aissata from Mali]

“Before participating to the workshops I have never had any relationship with people who profess other religions, but now I have changed my mind and my housemate is Catholic, something that would have been impossible before the workshop.” [Khoudia from Senegal]

*“Before it was commonly accepted that if you want to work within women’s right you had to adopt a secularism approach. But now it is obvious that we can actually use religion in order to work on equality. We have new arguments. With our association, we have been able to bring an issue that is very taboo within the Egyptian society. Indeed, we are actually challenging polygamy right. Before the workshop, our association would mostly concentrate on the wives’ rights. Now we are actually saying that polygamy as intended today in Egyptian society is not **a right**. It is very taboo to challenge polygamy itself. Now, our association talks about it in some open space or during conferences. The opponents or supporter of Egyptian Constitution are very shocked but I have been able to use arguments coming from Islam itself! It is a very important issue to talk about marriage changes. After the workshop, we have been able to approach this topic in a way that was never used before. [Egypt]*

“Before I thought I knew the Quran but actually I was only following and I did not know much. Now I know that I must get the information myself. Since the workshop I changed school. With my colleague, we run a gender cell inside the school. The aim of this structure is to offer a trust space for the students. They can come and talk to us about their problems (with family, professors, student). The problems can be very of different nature. It goes from fear of wedding, harassment, sometimes even from teachers to homosexuality. Thanks to this I was able to help a lesbian student who was rejected by other students. I told her not to be afraid and that I was not going to judge her. [Senegal]

“I also was motivated to read the religious texts with the intention to understand it better but I also found out that still I am more interested to fight through conventional instruments as Prof. Fatou Sow has advised because the contradictions are still glaring in the religious texts. I basically tell about this story just to inspire each other that information is power; that women are subdued when they cease seeking for enlightening knowledge for mental liberation” [Amie from Gambia]

Self care for sustainable activism was important to many participants:

“After the Coup d’Etat in Mali, I have created a facebook group to denounce the actions of the soldiers. My family and friends were very worried because it is very dangerous. I would not take it really into account. But after the workshop, I have managed to convince them that I was not alone and that if something must have happened, there would be people to help me. Now they are supporting me and

even my mother is less worried. They know that there are people who would do anything to help me.”
[Nathalie from Mali]

“I decided to include daily physical exercise as art of taking care of myself. I have been able to achieve this. I set a minimum of 30mins for physical exercise. This also affect my entire family as other people joins me during this exercise. It has been a great time with my family. It also improve my physical alertness.” [Catherine from Nigeria]

Several participants had used learning from the workshop to run training and discussions themselves:

“I and my colleagues who attended the workshop conducted an open space discussion on the topic Feminist Leadership in our office. The open space discussion helps my officemates to deconstruct, revisit and review what is feminist and the leadership itself. Our discussion went broad and this was a good platform to share ideas on the feminism and leadership especially when we manage to invite some senior leader to share their knowledge and also to listen to new young feminist too. I feel good about sharing knowledge that I had from the workshop with my officemates.” [Adila from Malaysia]

“Many of the participants discussed during the workshop how best they dealt with issues such as HIV/AIDS and FGM in their countries and I was able to learn of new ways to take back with me. When I got back to Somalia one of the changes I was able to make was provide awareness on issues affecting women to men. The men only awareness sessions I felt was significant as I realised that we had to discuss these issues with those who basically were the decision makers and perpetrators on issues that affected women. These awareness sessions have thus far had significant effect on men and many of those who have attended have either made vows to help combat these issues for the betterment of their community and that is a huge thing.” [Sagal from Somalia]

All the CVAW projects also provided examples of changes of understanding and awareness, for both men and women who were involved.

The FOSJ project trained men and women to work voluntarily against child and forced marriages in Parwan and Kabul provinces, and they provided narratives of particular threatened marriages that had been prevented by the volunteers. Mr Abdul Bashir explained that – *“Personally, before the training I didn’t believe that force & child marriages are a bad practice. But after attending the training and understanding the negative outcomes of it my attitudes got changed. And now I feel an inner satisfaction while working against child & forced marriages voluntarily. As a human being and community elder and after understanding about the negative outcomes of the child & forced marriages I feel responsible for fighting against this bad practice which exists in my community.”*

Mr. Haji Latif, a community elder and volunteer advocate of the organization *“has been involved in solving the issues of community members for years through informal gathering of the community elders, but he has never given importance to the issue of child and forced marriages, after attending this capacity building program now he is very much interested in advocating toward elimination of child and forced marriages.”*

Ms. Patoni intervened in a forced engagement - “Ms. Samira a 16 years old girl was forced by her family members to marry a boy as ‘Badal’ (Her brother was engaged with a girl and Samira was forced to get engaged with the brother of that girl as an exchange). After contacting Ms. Patoni, she was encouraged by her not to sacrifice herself and she must stand for her rights. Ms. Patoni contacted the community elders who were also involved in the project of WELDD, the community elders met with the both families and made them not to force Samira into forced engagement/marriage. Now Samira is attending her school and she is quite happy for getting rid of the forced engagement. Ms. Patoni says, Samira is like her sister, they are from the same province, and she can’t let someone to ruin the future of a girl. And after attending the workshop she feel herself responsible to work for her people.”

The WARVIN project in Iraqi Kurdistan focused on interviewing women in shelters to hear their experiences and insights, and use that information to improve the shelter management. It is therefore appropriate to end this section on the impact of the WLUML WELDD programme with the voices of four women survivors of gender-based violence:

“I realized that we as GBV survivors should not stay silent because of what happened to us. We need to be active and proactive and start over again. I truly want to get my issue solved, rehabilitated and reintegrated into society again. I do not want to lead my life passively.”

We All Deserve a Second Chance *"I want to say that I was so quiet, I couldn't speak because I thought that as a punishment for what I have done I had to not speak. But I don't want to not speak anymore because I want to Start all over again, and solve my problems with my family. Every one of us can make a mistake and we all deserve a second chance."*

There is always hope *"I was living a desperate life in the shelter, but as the result of this project I have learned to not lose hope, and always hope for better for there are people out there who are helping and supporting us in solving our problems. This project had successfully drove me out of my depression, and now I have hope for a better future where I can go out to the community and build a new life. I am hoping that I could go back to the society and find a job to cover the expense of my child's education and raise them in a way that stories like mine wouldn't repeat. I am also so grateful from what I have learned from this project that I can help other women in my society who have similar stories as mine."*

Evaluation – Conclusions

The WLUML WELDD programme involved hundreds of participants from 27 countries over 8 regions for 3 years from 2012 to 2015. It is significant in its breadth and depth, and has been a complex challenge to evaluate in terms of its impact. The conclusions are under those three themes: **breadth**, **depth** and **impact**.

Breadth

The programme achieved breadth in terms of both transnational participation and reaching a new generation. Nine workshops were held across five countries, bringing together a total of 177 participants and 45 trainers, resource and support staff from 27 countries around the themes of Political Participation, and challenging Culturally-justified Violence Against Women. The vast majority of participants were new contacts for WLUML, and largely from new organisational contacts, bringing new activists and potential leaders into the networks. The majority of workshop participants were also young women – with a median age of 30 – and the majority joined the WLUML Rise Up (Listserv) list, with some quickly becoming active networkers.

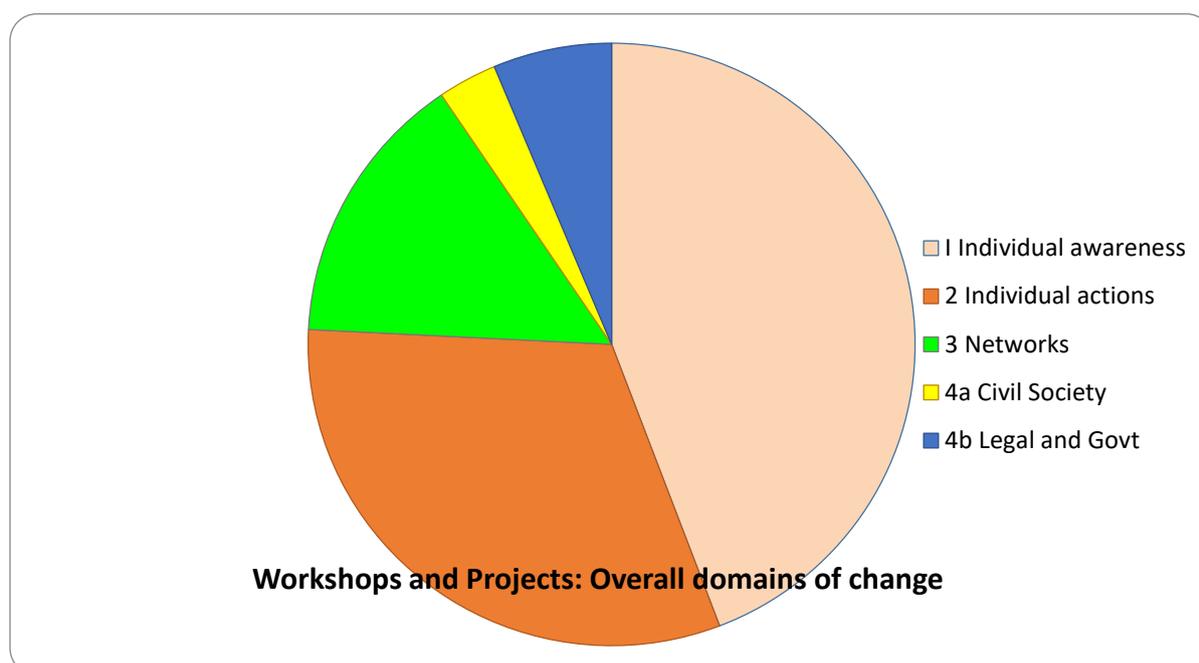
Depth

The programme achieved depth in terms of its ground-up (rather than top-down) approach, and its focus on capacity-building for the future. WLUML's 'ground-up approach' to both workshops and projects positions activists as trainers and trainers as activists, and draws on, for example, the expertise of women and girls who have experienced forced marriage, or other forms of violence, to be part of advising decision-makers or advocating for change. Such an approach builds capacity from the ground up, as more sustainable in the longer term. Not all the original output targets were fully met, particularly in some of the projects; and changes in the context of operation meant that some aspects, such as locations of workshops and project plans, had to be revised. However, the combination of the theoretical and the practical throughout WLUML's programme provided the work with roots so that it bore fruit across all aspects.

Impact

The programme achieved impact in terms of contributing to significant change as identified by a range of evidence, and especially participants' narratives generated by a systematic process of evaluation.

Using the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, evaluation evidence was generated from all the workshops and projects, and covering all geographical regions. Impact was identified across all four domains of change, as shown in the combined chart.



Achievements at the Legal and Government level were understandably few, but notable. Participants in the workshops cited that the training had given them knowledge and understanding of how to engage the authorities; giving examples of achieving land rights for women in an area in Senegal, and the process of a violence-free election in Mali. This domain included recognition that it might be a success to resist a backlash, rather than be able to achieve positive change. However, the Salmmah Women's Resource Centre in Sudan in some ways experienced both: being closed down by the authorities in 2014, yet seeing a positive change in the law on rape in 2015.

Achievements at the civil society level built on more individual leadership and collective action. Examples included an individual woman taking a stand in an environmental conference in Senegal, which led to a shift in the priorities and activities of the NGO; and a woman providing legal support to individual prisoners in Afghanistan shifting to building their capacity to work together for change in civil society and legal rights.

Achievements in networks emphasised the virtuous circle in how networks nurture solidarity and solidarity nurtures networks. Women brought together in the workshops continued to operate transnationally, with examples such as women from Iran and Iraq embracing, and thinking differently about the divides of war; and the example of the network support received in Sudan when Salmmah was closed down. Maimouna from Senegal planned work with women from Niger and Mali that she met at the workshop; and Sediqa took her learning from the workshop back to set up four women's leadership networks in provinces in Afghanistan.

Achievements of individuals' leadership actions were diverse and many, but there are some particular themes to highlight. Whether they had carried out high profile leadership activism, or more local acts of courage and resistance, women emphasised that the training in the workshops and projects had given them the knowledge, the tools, the confidence, and the support. Knowledge included religious knowledge and evidence of national and international law; and the tools included being able to sustain an argument and deal with challenges and responses. Sustainability was also highlighted in how the training developed women's confidence, as well as their recognition of the need for self-care to be able to continue longer-term struggles. And that self-care also included support structures, both locally and on-line; including for the projects such as FOSJ and RIWPS in Afghanistan continuing to act as a support hub for the people they had trained.

Achievements in thinking and awareness underpinned actions in the other domains, as well as being transformational in their own right. Some participants in the workshops said that they had felt too young to be able to do anything, but now saw that they had the confidence and network support to build up their knowledge and take action. More established activists said that the programme rekindled their energy to continue in often-difficult times. Many emphasised their increased understanding of Islam, their increased open-mindedness to minorities, and the inspiration of meeting with other potential activists and leaders.

Repeatedly the message was – *there is always hope.*



[Photograph courtesy of Nargis Azaryun, a participant from Afghanistan]