



CREATIVE

Expertise



# Gender in Development

Holistic development outcomes through gender transformative change

## Quick Facts

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Creative's programs address gender barriers holistically, across four key domains and from the individual to the systems level.

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In Pakistan and Afghanistan, Creative works with governments to create gender-inclusive policies promoting equal access to quality education.

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In Central America, where young men are at higher risk for taking part in violence, Creative supports targeted prevention efforts.

Resilient and thriving communities depend on women, men, girls and boys having equal opportunity and access to education, economic advancement and decision-making roles. Only then can a community holistically and sustainably address its development challenges.

Creative defines the process of overcoming gender barriers as gender transformative change. This process requires the positive change of systems, communities and individuals.

This approach addresses inequalities in four core domains: access, control, participation and protection. When a community achieves positive change in all these

domains, it experiences more equitable systems, greater resilience and empowered individual agents of change.

Across its programs—from reducing youth risk for gang-related violence in Honduras to boosting literacy skills for learners in remote regions of Pakistan—Creative analyzes and addresses the unique challenges and dynamics affecting women, men, girls and boys. With that understanding, it designs programs that strategically address those needs, promoting inclusion, equality and, ultimately, sustainable development.

## Four critical domains for progress

First of all, equitable access to resources, services, information and opportunity is an essential component of gender transformative change. This includes access to education, justice, safety, finance, workforce development and technology, among other sectors. In all these areas, the goal is to transform inequitable systems, norms, policies, practices and perceptions.

In northern Nigeria, for example, more than 1 million school-aged children have been forced to flee their homes. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable, as targeted attacks on girls' schools coupled with pressures to stay home and support household duties restrict their access to education.

To respond, Creative's Nigeria Education Crisis Response project, funded by USAID, joined forces with community members to mobilize support for girls' education and establish Adolescent Girls Program Centers. These safe and protective learning spaces, staffed by female learning facilitators, provided core academic education alongside wraparound services like social emotional support, life skills and market-oriented skills training. More than 4,200 girls were able to continue supporting family income while getting an education.

A second key domain of gender transformative change is equitable control of material, human, economic, physical and

social resources and productive assets. This requires balanced roles in decision-making and distribution of benefits at the individual, household, community and systems levels.

In Afghanistan, for example, where gender norms tend to result in fewer women in the workforce, particularly in managerial roles, Creative's Afghanistan Workforce Development Program, funded by USAID, is helping to propel women both into careers and up the professional ladder. Through its demand-driven trainings, Creative has placed more than 8,000 Afghan women into skilled positions where they are managing projects and teams, boosting sales and generating income.

Thirdly, women, men, girls and boys must also be able to equitably participate in society for lasting, inclusive development to take root. Creative supports women's meaningful and equitable participation in society, including in positions of influence and leadership.

Recognizing that women have influence through nongovernmental channels or informal organizations, Creative seeks to nurture a healthy and engaged civil society and build the capacity of institutions and systems, including women's organizations.

In Somaliland for example, Creative's Bringing Unity, Integrity, and Legitimacy to Democracy project, funded by USAID, worked with local women's organizations to raise the participation of women voters,

poll workers and party agents in the 2017 presidential election. Ensuring women have an active voice and role in political processes is critical to achieving gender equality.

Lastly, gender transformative change requires that males and females are equally protected from gender-based violence and harmful socio-cultural practices. This requires a transformation of gender relations and a re-examination of gender norms.

Individuals and communities cannot thrive unless they are free from a culture of violence and threats to safety and security. Creative advocates for the prevention of and effective response to sexual and gender-based violence.

In Honduras, with USAID funding, Creative addresses this domain in several ways. Family-based counseling works to reduce risk factors for violence, including domestic violence among youth, strengthening family relations and establishing positive behaviors. In addition, masculinity trainings have helped Honduran adolescent girls and boys examine and discuss harmful stereotypes of masculinity that contribute to gender-based violence and violence in the community at large.

### Change from the individual to the system

To achieve holistic development across these four domains requires systems change at the individual, household, com-

## Creative's Gender Transformative Outcomes



munity and institutional levels, including policy and legislative measures.

Creative's approach recognizes that development outcomes are shaped in part by individual behavior, as well as wider structures, systems and environments in which women, men, girls and boys live and make choices.

Its programs seek to promote individual voice and collective action and establish an enabling environment to advance the meaningful participation of all citizens with assurances of equal protection and security for everyone. This increased agency and reduced vulnerability of women, men, girls and boys results in stronger, more resilient communities.

Creative addresses each of these domains across its programs through the following: empowering boys and girls equally with life skills and literacy; addressing challenges at the family level that may contribute to youth risk factors for violence; building community consensus and support for equal participation in schools, workplaces and political offices; and working with governments to create and enforce gender-inclusive policies.

Only when positive change toward gender equality occurs across the domains of access, control, participation and protection and at the individual, household, community and systems levels can all members of a community reach their potential.



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