

July 2017



Using research evidence to support change: the case of V4C landmark research on men and masculinities

Summary

V4C is a ground-breaking, innovative programme that seeks to push the boundaries of debate and work in new and different ways, and we have sought to use those principles in our research and evidence work. V4C believes that the supply and demand of research-based evidence can play a critical role in challenging negative social norms around gender – and for this evidence to have impact it must be understood and used by the people who have the power to make the change.

Over the past four years, V4C has embarked on an ambitious programme of research to ensure high-quality, relevant evidence on how to improve the enabling environment for gender equality was produced, well packaged and communicated in a targeted way to development practitioners, researchers and policymakers. In working with these stakeholders seeking to improve the enabling environment for adolescent girls and women, the aim was to support social change around gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Rather than adding another large volume of research to an already overwhelmed sector, V4C has popularised its research and ensured that the messages emerging from it have been used by policymakers, practitioners and the general public alike.

As such, our first piece of research was on the theme of masculinity, where we sought to explode myths around perceived roles and responsibilities of men and women and stimulate an open dialogue and mass conversation on a scale that has never been seen before in Nigeria. To date, we have produced five quality-assured, peer-reviewed research reports on the theme of gender and

masculinity: the V4C Landmark Research Report *Being a Man in Nigeria: Perceptions and Realities*, Sept. 2015; *Nigeria Men and Gender Equality Survey NiMAGES*, Sept. 2015; *Masculinities and Religion in Nigeria*, August 2015; *Media and Masculinities Report*, July 2015; and the *Masculinities, Conflict and Violence Report*, March 2016.¹

Over 20,000 copies of the *Being a Man in Nigeria* report were downloaded and distributed; over forty newspaper/magazine articles and media commentaries were produced on the reports; 1,955,434 people re-tweeted messages from *Being a Man*, and 5,600,358 impressions on Twitter were made during the week of the official report launch. This significant uptake is an illustration of the success of the research process we undertook.

A range of activities have been implemented to help facilitate stakeholders' ability and capacity to access and use the research evidence available.

- **Targeted audience identification:** strategic audience identification was key to our success. From the outset, we identified and clustered our audiences to ensure we were reaching the most relevant individuals and groups.
- **Ensuring local ownership:** making space for co-creating knowledge and ensuring diverse voices are heard as research developed was fundamental to our approach. We established a Research Advisory Group comprising expert religious and traditional leaders, academics, policymakers and civil society actors actively working and engaging in the world we wanted to influence.

- **Embedding the research findings:** getting messages out as soon as findings emerged and supporting targeted stakeholders to find ways to use them is critical to research uptake. Rather than waiting until the final report had been produced and signed off, V4C selected key statistics, messages and findings as they emerged to share with audiences primed for immediate use. These were used for a variety of activities including: training of young women and men, working with religious and traditional leaders, facilitating strategic conversations with radio producers, informing radio programme storylines, and engaging with key bloggers and celebrities to use messages and statistics to stimulate a wide-ranging national conversation. This proved to be one of the most significant and successful strategies for ensuring research use and uptake.
- **Evidence mining:** we held a series of workshops to mine the evidence providing the space and support for individuals and groups to take a 'deep dive' into the research findings and draw out what was relevant for them and their organisations. These workshops were organised for stakeholders from religious and traditional institutions, the media (traditional and social media), academia, government institutions, civil society, young people and the legislative aides and clerks of the national assembly. This initiative facilitated the collaborative mining of findings and better use of relevant statistical data, quotes and insights by participants from various sectors, enabling them to select key messages from the reports that would aid them in their professional settings.
- **Innovative use of communications and social media:** the use of mobile, web and social media have been central to V4C's approach and this was no different in our research uptake strategy. We ensured that the research findings were communicated through a variety of interactive platforms – such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs and chat shows – before, during and after the official launch of the report. By placing 'teaser' information on social media prior to the launch of the findings, we were able to create a sense of anticipation and demand for the findings.

Recommendations

Low-intensity approaches to improve research uptake:

- Engage potential audiences once at the beginning of the research process to inform them of the theme and give them the opportunity to inform and shape the research as it progresses, and then again at the end through sharing of the report and discussing the findings.
- Produce one or two summary briefs on key emerging themes identified from the research that could aid potential stakeholders to digest the information.

If programmes have moderate funds to spend on research uptake and getting evidence into policy and practice but do not have the time or resources to work intensively with targeted audiences they can:

- Prioritise a smaller number of key stakeholders to work with intensively on evidence mining and message development;
- Opt to have smaller, targeted dissemination meetings rather than large-scale, mass participation;
- Organise at least one meeting with targeted stakeholders to review the findings (the fully integrated approach involved up to three meetings with key stakeholders);
- Produce a few summary briefs that have been developed based on some of the priorities of the stakeholders.

The fully integrated approach ensures the active involvement of priority audiences throughout the research cycle. This is reasonably time-intensive, as it requires key staff to meet with stakeholders, build their capacity and commitment to use the research, and update them on emerging findings.

- Organise evidence mining workshops facilitated by research leads to guide research users through the research and ensure time is available to pull out and synthesise relevant material;
- Hold a number of different size-sharing events with a wide range of stakeholders in different locations to ensure you are reaching out to a varied audience;
- Engage media – social and traditional – from before the reports are finalised. Peak their interest and have them start conversations that everyone can feed into.



1 Key elements of the approach

Central to V4C's programme was its focus on quality research and research uptake. Over the past decade, there has been increasing international focus and recognition of the importance of research uptake as a critical part of the research process. DFID has been instrumental in leading the way with their first communication strategy launched in 2000, and following that, the introduction of a rule that 10 per cent of research funding should be used for communications.² Recognising that research uptake requires both supply of and demand for the research, V4C set out to ensure that rigorous, relevant evidence on how to improve the enabling environment for gender equality was produced, well packaged and communicated in a targeted way to development practitioners, researchers and policymakers, with the aim of supporting social change around gender equality and women's empowerment.

V4C's first research product was *Being a Man in Nigeria: Perceptions and Realities*, a synthesis of four separate research studies. This research produced high-quality evidence that has proven to be influential in shaping current debates around gender equality and women's empowerment.

V4C recognised early on the critical role evidence can play in challenging negative social norms

and behaviours – and tied to this, the important role of facilitated research uptake to engage with stakeholders to 'support the usage of research by building the capacity and commitment of research users to access, evaluate, synthesise and use research evidence', as highlighted in a guide produced for DFID research programmes.³ V4C's approach has been to go beyond traditional capacity-building approaches and work with a smaller group of highly strategic stakeholders and support them over a period of time to understand, extract and make use of the key findings and messages from our research. We brought our potential researcher users along the journey with us, capturing their imagination and commitment to the research from early on, in a kind of 'brokering of information' role. This approach is in line with findings from the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme run by ODI; 'While research and evidence can play an important role in policy processes, this is unlikely to happen without systematic and strategic engagement. Our studies have shown that research programmes where the initial agenda has been set in collaboration between researchers, policymakers and practitioners leads to greater uptake of results and better outcomes for the world's poorest.'⁴ V4C's experience speaks to that learning.

The following key principles have been central to our approach to ensuring sustainable uptake of our research:



1.1 Inclusiveness and local ownership

It is important to make space for co-creating knowledge, involving the right stakeholders, and ensuring diverse voices are heard as research is developed. V4C views this as key to ensuring the quality and authenticity of the research, thus facilitating wider uptake. With each piece of research, we consulted and involved a wide group of people from different age groups, gender, religions, location, socioeconomic groups, professions – government agencies, policy and research institutions and the media, to ensure that their experiences and expertise were brought to bear on the research process and findings, and capture their attention and interest early on. To ensure that the research was grounded in the lived realities of Nigerian men and women, V4C consulted with potential research users and created a Research Advisory Group (RAG) – a group of experts from among religious and traditional leaders, policymakers, legislative officers, academics and civil society advocates and lobbyists, many of whom sit outside the traditional target group for research, but who were strategically selected for their role in GEWE. Their role was to contribute to the prioritisation and framing of research themes, participate in validation, quality assurance and peer review, as well as provide endorsements and opportunities for dissemination and uptake among their colleagues and peers. We also ensured that the tone of the research was positive and optimistic – not an easy task when presenting quite challenging findings. However, adopting this positive tone ensured that the research had broad appeal and everyone could identify with something in the research.

1.2 Gender and religious sensitivity and responsiveness

Research methods were carefully designed with sensitivity and appropriateness in mind for the different categories of individuals; that is, the differing needs of girls, women, boys and men were considered at every stage. Aspects of our research included questions of a sensitive and personal nature, and as such we ensured that data collectors only collected data from respondents of the same sex. All enumerators were trained in gender-sensitive interviewing and child protection. It was important also to ensure we adhered to religious sensibility, as some of our research explored complex beliefs and culture from among Nigeria's two main religions. For example, V4C partnered with both Christian Aid and Islamic Relief to conduct the study on masculinity and religion in order to leverage their experience and expertise in working with religious groups. Religious institutions and scholars were engaged in the research process, which added to the acceptance and credibility of the research.

1.3 Promoting a culture of research use

This was one of the key elements of our approach that led to the widespread uptake of our research. V4C generated excitement around the research from the outset by engaging stakeholders in reviewing and debating the research questions and themes before the research was commissioned. We also promoted and shared the findings intensively before and after the official national and state launches of our first landmark report *Being a Man in Nigeria*, using a combination of traditional and online communication tools, and focused 'evidence mining' workshops with key stakeholders. On the day of the launch, the report was the second highest topic to 'trend' on social media in Nigeria.

1.4 Innovative and bold

V4C is an innovative programme that seeks to push the boundaries of debate and work in new and different ways, and we have sought to use those principles in our research and evidence work. As such, our first piece of research was on the theme of masculinity, where we sought to explode myths around perceived roles and responsibilities of men and women, and stimulate an open dialogue and mass conversation on a scale that has never been seen before in Nigeria.

2 Putting the approach into practice

Over the course of 2014–15, V4C set out on an ambitious programme of research to look at what influences perceptions and realities of masculinity among Nigerians. A suite of four independent studies were commissioned around different aspects of masculinity (religion, media, conflict and a large-scale quantitative study based on the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)), all of which were combined into one Landmark Research Report – *Being a Man in Nigeria: Perceptions and Realities*, in September 2015.

For V4C, a Landmark Research Report is one that is considered to be:

- Breaking new ground;
- Discussing issues in a new way;
- Adding to the evidence base, where there is a demand for the research evidence;
- A 'hot' topic with wide appeal (for example, from government ministries, decision-makers and agencies (MDAs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), institutions and citizens).

Key to our success were:

2.1 Identifying a theme that has wide relevance and interest

By making research and research uptake a core component of the programme, and embedding that into programme delivery, V4C was able to ensure that the research questions were directly relevant to other aspects of the programme, making it easier to feed the findings back into the programme design and implementation.

We needed to select a theme for our research that would support our programme aims and objectives and feed into our own ongoing programme delivery, but which would also stimulate a national conversation about girls' and women's empowerment, and contribute something new and fresh to the debate. Identifying gaps in the existing evidence base was central to this:

- Little work had been done on profiling 'positive deviants' supporting a reduction of violence against women and promoting women's leadership and decision-making;
- Less was known about the effect of women's empowerment on men's behaviour;
- How did the notion of masculinity impact policies that affect women and girls?
- There was a desire to follow up the highly successful report on Gender in Nigeria produced by the British Council. This report created a real buzz that engaged a wider range of stakeholders, and V4C wanted to continue this work of galvanising the gender community in Nigeria through engaging, topical and challenging research reports.

After much internal reflection and consultation, the overarching theme of masculinity was selected. Once that was decided, the theme needed to be validated with an external audience to check our assumptions.

We did not consult with external stakeholders prior to identifying the theme, as it was critical that the research theme we selected would produce evidence that would feed directly in the programme, and therefore the needs of the programme were prioritised in the first instance. This decision was strategic and we engaged the external stakeholders soon after that to galvanise their support and bring them on the journey with us. Stakeholders recognised that the theme was in the first instance relevant for V4C's programme but this did not take away from their excitement and interest in the topic.

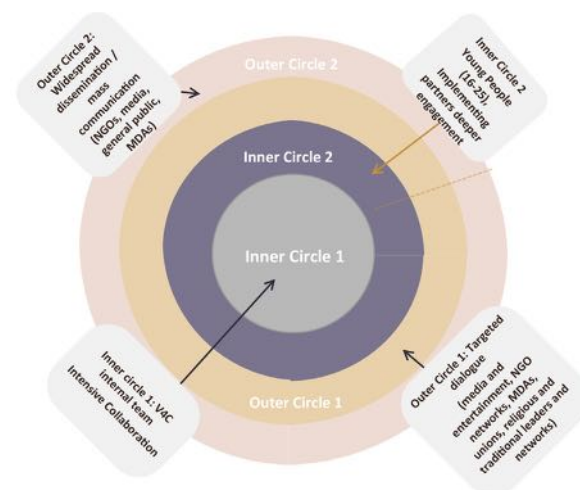
2.2 Strategy development and stakeholder identification

It is important to have the right stakeholders involved from early on, and ensure a communications strategy is adequately budgeted for to include innovative communication channels.

Early in the research cycle we developed a research communication and uptake strategy. This was to ensure that our approach and ambitious plans were relevant and grounded in a practical document, the details of which could be shared and communicated widely, in different forms, further increasing buy-in and ownership of the forthcoming research. Key parts of the strategy were a stakeholder/audience mapping and a dissemination plan, which were adapted and refined as the research evolved and in response to changing stakeholder groups.

Key audiences were clustered according to how we prioritised them and in what ways we would target them with our findings (see Figure 1). Each cluster was identified and a detailed plan developed, laying out how the findings could be used (for example, in campaigns, radio programmes, talk shows, policy revisions and training); when crucial moments were planned; how we could share the messages and findings with them (for example, supporting message development for lifestyle programmes, developing training modules, identifying 'killer' statistics or infographics, etc.); and ensuring someone was responsible for taking this forward.

Figure 1 Audience clusters for V4C research communication and uptake



Source: Voices for Change

Over the course of the research process, different individuals and organisations emerged and we had to adapt our stakeholder mapping accordingly, demonstrating both a proactive approach and a flexible, adaptive management response, which enabled us to react to opportunities.

As part of strategy development, we budgeted for certain activities that did not come to fruition, for example we planned to produce an animated video of the research findings to aid dissemination. However, we looked into this and soon realised that we did not have adequate budget so were unable to pursue this. In future, it is worth ensuring sufficient budget is earmarked for more innovative ways of popularising the findings for different audiences, and donors need to be prepared to pay for innovative and new ways to share research findings.

2.3 Embedding the research findings

Actively sharing findings as they emerged with our identified audiences, and supporting them practically to use the findings, proved to be one of the most significant and successful strategies for ensuring research use and uptake. Ensuring a thorough analysis of the different levels of engagement required for different stakeholders is done at the beginning made this approach more manageable, and represented good value for money.

2.3.1 Key messages

From the beginning, our strategy was to actively share key messages and findings over a period of time in the run-up to the 'big launch', rather than wait until all the different research products were complete. By doing so, we could strike with our findings while they were fresh and 'hot off the press', thereby sparking interest in and curiosity about the full report. As one colleague put it, 'we should light a number of little fires over a period of time and watch them burn'.

This strategy was also pragmatic; many of the opportunities that were identified during the strategy development phase could not wait for a finished, published report but needed data to be integrated into programme activities along the way to ensure we were reaching our target audience, of young women 16–25 years old, as well as other key stakeholders. For example, the Purple Brand Ambassadors' training manual was being revised and our findings were used in the revised version and in the training, for the dual purpose of both illustrating the learning objectives for the training, but also to share the findings of our research with this target group. Findings were also used in the development of the Purple Tinz radio programme, helping to influence the choice of theme and content for the programmes and further disseminating the messages to young women and men.

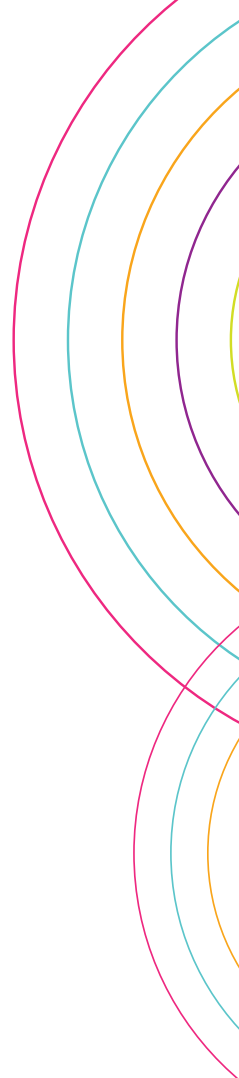
We developed key messages as preliminary data emerged from the Nigerian Men and Gender Equality Survey (NiMAGES) and were sharing quotations and statistics, which could be used by different audiences from the outset. It is worth noting the risks involved in using data before it has been finalised. As long as you are clear of the limitations and clearly present it as 'preliminary findings', the benefits of getting the data out there outweighed any of the potential reputational risks that could have arisen if the data had changed fundamentally. In the case of V4C, the findings remained in line with the preliminary data.

The process of embedding the findings was time- and resource- (staff) intensive. Internal meetings and workshops were held during the analysis of preliminary data to ensure findings were incorporated into the entry points identified during the strategy development stage (see bullet points). This was not without its challenges as many of the teams were already under enormous work pressure and did not have the time to absorb this new research. We therefore needed to do the digesting for them. We developed short internal thematic summaries, highlighting key findings that they could select which had the most relevance for them. Some examples of how the findings were used internally include the following:

- Findings supported the theme development for the Purple radio programme;
- Key messages and statistics were used to update the manual for Purple Ambassadors and in training for religious and traditional leaders;
- Meetings were held with selected social media influencers to seek their support to start using the findings and insights, and to create awareness about the report; for example, using their #hashtags;
- Meetings with editors and reporters from the national print and electronic media were held to share key findings and solicit their support in getting some of the messages out early;
- Findings were presented at various conferences, both national and international including the religious and traditional leaders' conference, the Men's conference, the Nigerian Anthropological and Sociological Practitioners' Association (NASA) conference, the National Youth Service Corp orientation camps, and the Young Lives conference, in Oxford UK, in September 2016.

2.3.2 Events to launch the report

V4C stands out through its use of media. The use and engagement of social media before, during and after the events was critical in popularising the messages and contributing to the national conversation.



Once the Landmark Research Report was finalised, large state and national launches were held in all of the four V4C priority states. These events targeted stakeholders in the outer circle of Figure 1 – the general population, wider NGO sector, and mass media. As such we wanted to popularise the messages while appealing to different groups in appropriate ways. High-profile panel members from different sectors (politician, religious leaders, traditional rulers, academics and celebrities) were brought in. They provided wide-ranging appeal to the different priority audiences identified, including young women and men, policymakers and practitioners of different age, gender, sexuality, profession/sector and religion. Along with the panel members, a wider variety of stakeholders were invited to participate in the event, ranging from market women, school and university students, politicians and NGO practitioners, highlighting the relevance of the research findings across generations, gender, education, socioeconomic situation and sectoral experience.

Participants at these events found resonance in the report. It spoke to everyone among this heterogeneous group of individuals. As with the report, the tone of the launch was overwhelmingly optimistic for a changing Nigerian society. Different groups and individuals came together – women and men, young and old, Muslim and Christian – on stage, or in the audience, united for a common cause. This sentiment was in part what led to Being a Man going viral and being the second highest topic trending on social media at the time. V4C engaged key media and social media personalities for the launch. We were able to maximise the relationships developed through other aspects of the V4C programme to support our widespread communication and sharing of the findings. For instance, because V4C has partner radio stations in the four states it operates in, it was easy to have access to them during the launch, and because they had all been trained by V4C on gender issues, they were able to cover the findings from the report sensitively and accurately.

Participants changed at these events from being passive observers to committed activists pledging to take action on a personal and professional level in their everyday lives. Concrete commitments were made by 2,203 people to further disseminate and use the report. Some of these commitments were subsequently followed up.

2.4 Increasing audience engagement

V4C provided a supportive and collaborative space for key stakeholders to develop messages and strategies for using the research findings. Providing this space, outside of their workplace, increased the chance that the findings would actually be used.

Successful research uptake requires handholding. Rather than sharing an eighty-page report

and expecting (hoping) readers to make use of it themselves, V4C set out to support key organisations and stakeholders to use the research findings. A series of 'evidence mining' workshops were held with targeted clusters of stakeholders (for example, academia, media, programme implementers, policymakers and activists). These workshops provided the space and support for individuals and groups to take a deep dive into the research findings and draw out what was relevant for them and their organisations. Many of the groups identified ways they could incorporate the findings into their work; for example, writing a press briefing, selecting passages and quotations to include in a lecture series or weaving findings into training workshops with men and women. While building the capacity of potential research users to use research findings is an approach widely recognised as key to supporting research uptake, it is not often done and not with such intensity. By working in this way with policymakers, programme designers and implementers, we were able to identify key ways they could use the research findings to influence their policy and practice and give them the space to work through this for themselves, increasing ownership and commitment along the way.

2.5 Evidence tracker

The use of an 'evidence tracker' enabled us to follow up with individuals who had made commitments around using research findings, and to take stock of how the findings were being used both personally and professionally. It also provided useful evidence to showcase how we were doing against our research uptake targets.

We did not want to produce research that sat on a shelf, we wanted to know how it was being used and by whom. In order to understand this, we developed a 'use of evidence tracker'. This tracker was available in two forms – one as an online form, available to complete on the V4C website or GenderHub website.⁵ Paper copies were also distributed at the state launches, and post-launch activities. The tracker was designed to find out how the findings from the research had been used. It asked the respondent what they found interesting about the reports, how they have applied the findings and whether they need any further support from V4C in using the research.

After the national and state launches, post-launch activities were organised at national level and in all four states where V4C works to get feedback on how people had kept or fulfilled their commitments to further share and promote the report findings to improve their relationships and work. The feedback was revealing – participants reported that they had changed their beliefs about gender roles, many had stopped their violent behaviour towards their partner, and a number of them had begun to advocate against violence against women and girls.

I have engaged with important stakeholders in my school on gender issues. In my department (Sociology), Bayero University, Kano [BUK], I advocated for more women's participation in the affairs of the departmental association as the speaker of the Student Representative Assembly. At present, we have started making history by having females serving as the Deputy Speaker, Chief Clerk and a senator in the Student Representative Assembly. I also encouraged the participation of females in the [Students' Union Government] SUG elections and a female senator (who is the fourth in the history of BUK) to come out for the post of parliamentary secretary. Of recent, I also engaged with some religious leaders for them to understand the vision and mission of the Voices for Change.

(Female, Kaduna)

It helped me to reach out to men and boys and encourage them to change their perceptions on gender equality. It made me to be more understanding and improve my relationship with my wife and children and be positive and supportive to women and girls generally.

(Male, Enugu)

Personally, I got home and started using the finding on my husband. Then I noticed things I had taken for granted (pretending all is okay just to save face). The report helped me to understand the silent part and friction reduced. On the last international women's day, I shared the report on a radio chat with the general public.

(Female, Kaduna)

The report has been shared by many on social media and other traditional platforms, and several others have used the report as an advocacy tool for girls' education and women's leadership.

Eighty-two per cent of respondents to the tracker (106 people) answered 'yes' to having applied the findings from the report to their work. Common areas where the findings have been embedded were:

- Personal/individual changes;
- Changes in professional life;
- Attitudes towards women's leadership;
- Confronting stereotypes.

3 Recommendations for different levels of action to integrate research uptake strategies

Embarking on a large programme of research is a significant undertaking. Add to that the need to ensure meaningful and sustainable research uptake and the task becomes an even greater challenge.

Research uptake can be achieved to differing degrees with different levels of intensity depending on the timeframe, budget and available resources.

For projects/programmes that have minimal resources available and therefore need to employ a lower intensity approach to improve research uptake, the following are some ideas for how to enhance uptake of your research:

- Engage potential audiences once at the beginning of the research process to inform them of the theme and give them the opportunity to inform and shape the research as it progresses, and then again at the end through sharing of the report and discussing the findings.

- Produce one or two summary briefs on key emerging themes identified from the research that could aid potential stakeholders to digest the information.

If programmes have moderate funds to spend on research uptake and getting evidence into policy and practice, but do not have the time or resources to work intensively with targeted audiences they can:

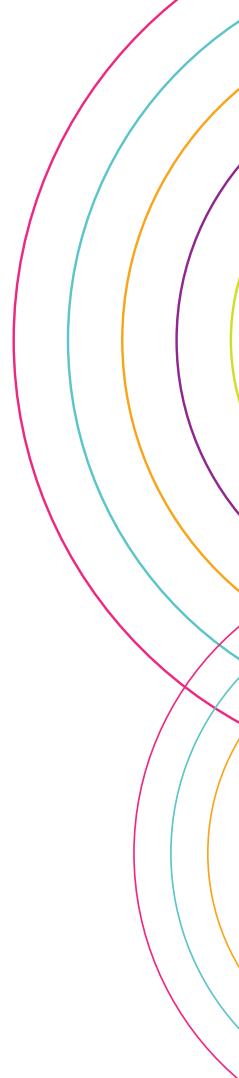
- Prioritise a smaller number of key stakeholders to work with intensively on evidence mining and message development;
- Opt to have smaller, targeted dissemination meetings rather than large-scale, mass participation;
- Organise at least one meeting with targeted stakeholders to review the findings (the fully integrated approach involved up to three meetings with key stakeholders);
- Produce a few summary briefs that have been developed based on some of the priorities of the stakeholders.

The fully integrated approach for those organisations that have research uptake as a significant priority in their project/programmes and therefore have allocated significant resources to this work, should aim to ensure the active involvement of priority audiences throughout the research cycle. This is reasonably time-intensive, as it requires key staff to meet with stakeholders, build their capacity and commitment to use the research, and update them on emerging findings.

- Ensure targeted stakeholders are brought on board at the early stages of the research design process, allow them the opportunity to feed into research questions and methodologies from the outset. This will ensure they are brought into the findings from the very beginning.
- Periodic, ongoing communication and updates with these stakeholders is key to keeping them engaged. Holding validation meetings at different stages of the research process is a good way to do this.
- Organise evidence mining workshops facilitated by research leads to guide research users through the research and ensure time is available to pull out and synthesise relevant material.
- Hold a number of different size-sharing events with a wide range of stakeholders in different locations to ensure you are reaching out to a varied audience.
- Engage media – social and traditional – from before the reports are finalised. Peak their interest and have them start conversations that everyone can feed into.

End notes

- 1 See www.v4c-nigeria.com/resources/researchreports/
- 2 Summary Report on Exploratory Workshop, 16 December 2014, Wellcome Trust.
- 3 Research Uptake. A Guide for DFID-Funded Research Programmes, April 2016.
- 4 <https://www.odi.org/our-work/programmes/research-and-policy-development/evidence-creation-research-communications>
- 5 <http://www.v4c-nigeria.com/v4cs-approach/use-of-evidence-tracker/>



About V4C

Voices for Change (V4C) is a £29 million programme funded by UK Aid, working to strengthen the enabling environment for gender equality in Nigeria. The programme targets young women and men aged 16–25 years old. It operates in four states in Nigeria: Enugu, Kaduna, Kano and Lagos and for some activities, at federal level. V4C is a unique example of a programme applying social norms theory at scale and is addressing the structural barriers to gender equality; in particular, discriminatory and harmful attitudes, behaviours and social norms. The three normative areas that V4C seeks to change are women's voice and leadership, women's role in decision-making and violence against women and girls.

V4C recognises that for young women to be better supported, change needs to happen at scale – not only at the individual level but also within wider society.

- At the individual level, V4C works with adolescent women and girls to provide them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to challenge, together with men, boys, religious leaders, traditional leaders and networks of men and women, discriminatory social norms, and create change in their colleges, homes, workplaces and communities;
- At the community level, V4C works with men and boys, religious and traditional leaders, and networks of women and girls to create a critical mass of support for gender equality, accelerating change and shifting negative norms;
- At the social-structural level, V4C works to change discriminatory laws, create better policies, and direct assets towards women and girls, sending a message about changed social norms through political and legal structures.

Conceived as the pilot stage of a twenty-year vision, V4C began implementation in October 2013 and will end in September 2017.

Credits

This paper is one in a series of V4C legacy papers that have been written to share practical guidance and learning on the different approaches and strategies used by the programme. For more information, visit www.v4c-nigeria.com.

This summary has been written by Jo Feather with Patience Ekeoba. Readers are encouraged to quote and reproduce material from this summary in their own publications. In return, V4C requests due acknowledgement and quotes to be referenced as above.

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