VOICES4CHANGE
EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND WOMEN IN NIGERIA

Extent of convergence of micro-communities into a Purple Movement: case study from Enugu State

Introduction

In 2015, at the mid-term of the programme, V4C reviewed its Theory of Change. At this review, it became clear that for wider social norm change to occur, V4C needed to facilitate the coming together of individuals and groups who would combine their efforts to form a movement for change. This led to V4C articulating a new outcome-level indicator in 2016:

Logframe indicator O.2 – Society: extent of convergence of micro-communities into a Purple Movement, engaging on V4C's agenda across the four states targeted by V4C

In the final year of the first phase of the programme, our ambition was to document at least one example of this taking place, and to draw lessons for the extension of the programme. Insights were intended to inform activities expected to be supported under a planned programme extension.

Later on in 2016, therefore, big questions remained about this area of our work. First, what is a 'Purple Movement'? What is the role of Purple to the movement? What role will or should V4C and its partners have in the movement? Is youth leadership central and, if so, which young people? What should be the role of men and boys?

Second, we debated the definition of a micro-community: is it geographically defined, i.e. all student groups on one campus? Or is it defined as a group of connected individuals in one group, i.e. a student group, a group of religious and traditional leaders, etc.?

Given that social movements are by definition fluid, we knew that at this early stage in the programme's exploration of social movement building, the answers to these questions may not be clear, but could nonetheless inform how V4C could further contribute to building a movement in later phases of the programme.
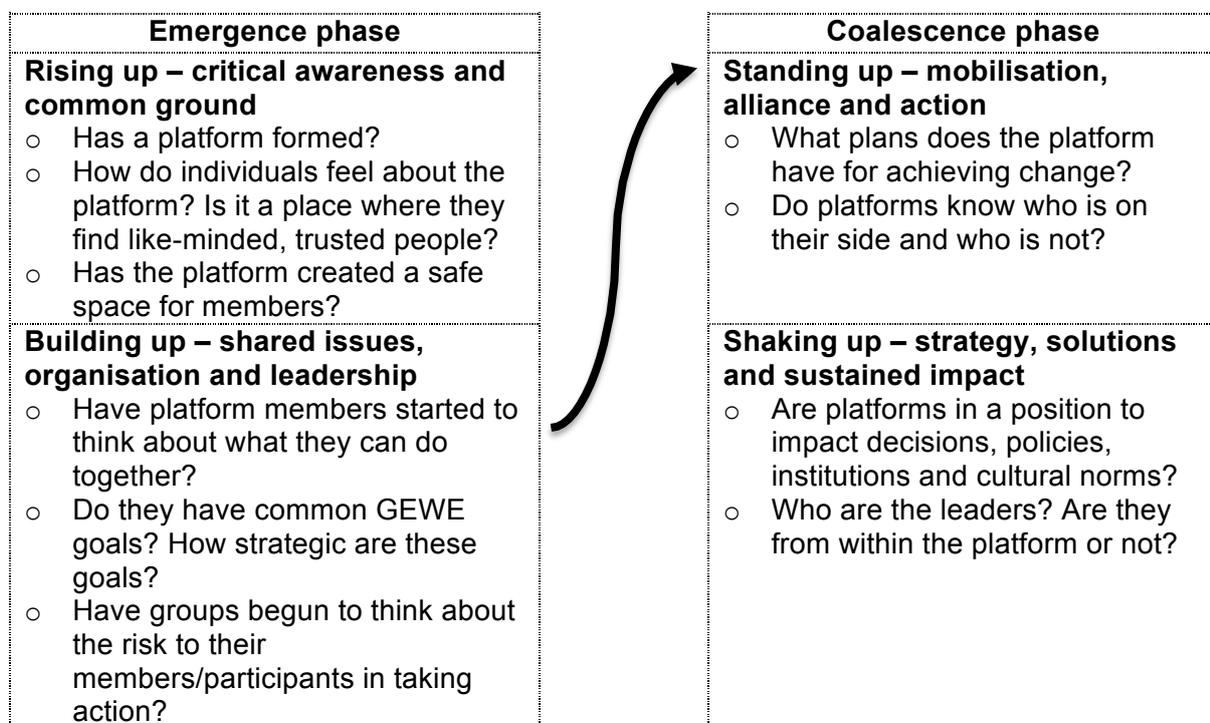
For the purposes of this study, we have defined a micro-community as a group, such as a students' club or women lawyers' association, formally or informally constituted, and with some prior experience of working with V4C. Further, we allowed for a loose definition of a 'platform', where these micro-communities meet and plan to work together, as an emerging movement. These platforms were not formed explicitly as a 'Purple Movement', so this investigation reveals less about what a Purple Movement is *per se* and if such a movement will enable greater action for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). This

study presents a case study, based on interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) in Enugu, of one instance of convergence of micro-communities on a platform through the V4C programme.

DFID's decision in mid-2017 not to extend the V4C programme limited the extent to which V4C was able to invest in work to deepen our understanding of the role and opportunities within movement building. We hope, nonetheless, that this case study sheds light on future work on social movement building within a social norms programme: both what role this can play in social change and how it can be supported and built.

The Social Movement Framework

As a framework for inquiry, the study uses the We Rise Framework for movement building, developed by Just Associates (JASS). This framework lays out the key stages and factors that demonstrate movement development. The study uses these to explore where on the spectrum of movement building V4C's work is in Enugu State, how it got there, and where it might be headed.

Emergence phase	Coalescence phase
Rising up – critical awareness and common ground o Has a platform formed? o How do individuals feel about the platform? Is it a place where they find like-minded, trusted people? o Has the platform created a safe space for members?	**Standing up – mobilisation, alliance and action** o What plans does the platform have for achieving change? o Do platforms know who is on their side and who is not?
Building up – shared issues, organisation and leadership o Have platform members started to think about what they can do together? o Do they have common GEWE goals? How strategic are these goals? o Have groups begun to think about the risk to their members/participants in taking action?	**Shaking up – strategy, solutions and sustained impact** o Are platforms in a position to impact decisions, policies, institutions and cultural norms? o Who are the leaders? Are they from within the platform or not?

Using this framework, the study spoke to a range of stakeholders in each state to understand:

1. The formation and membership of the 'movement' or platform;
2. Its goals;
3. Types of joint actions; and
4. Any early evidence of impact.

After discussions with thematic leads, and due to budget and time limits, we chose to focus on the GEWE platform in Enugu that the work on women's political participation and legal frameworks had initiated in the state. This platform offers a good example of multiple groups from different areas of V4C's work coming together and shows the deliberate work of V4C to support micro-communities' convergence.

There were other examples we could have selected, including evidence of how student groups worked together on campuses to change policy, but with school calendars we feared it would be harder to interview a wide range of participants in these areas in the summer months.

Findings from the Enugu Gender Equality Movement (GEM)

Summary of movement formation

Stage of movement development	Evidence for GEM in Enugu
Emergence phase	
Rising up – critical awareness and common ground o Has a platform formed? o How do individuals feel about the platform? Is it a place where they find like-minded, trusted people? o Has the platform created a safe space for members?	• Platform has formed • Members express commitment to similar issues • There is evidence of growing trust between members
Building up – shared issues, organisation and leadership o Have platform members started to think about what they can do together? o Do they have common GEWE goals? How strategic are these goals? o Have groups begun to think about the risk to their members in taking action?	• Shared activities and agendas mentioned • Shared goals expressed by different constituents, but remain vague and non-strategic • Risks of action not yet identified
Coalescence phase	
Standing up – mobilisation, alliance and action o What plans does the platform have for achieving change? o Do platforms know who is on their side and who is not?	• Joint plans exist but at local and non-strategic levels • Some evidence of targeting key people to change, but less evidence that they are building a common cause with others who agree with them
Shaking up – strategy, solutions and sustained impact o Are platforms in a position to impact decisions, policies, institutions and cultural norms? o Who are the leaders? Are they from within the platform or not?	• Platform not yet in a position to effect wider policy or social change • Leadership elected from within, but still largely reflects existing power structures, i.e. president is a woman but older and well established

Detailed analysis

V4C has worked in Enugu State since its inception and all components of the programme have been active in the state. V4C supported the launch of the Enugu State Platform, called the Gender Equality Movement or GEM by members, in 2016. This platform has a **membership** of over 100 organisations, including the men's networks, Purple Space alumni, religious and traditional leaders, female politicians, professional women, the female lawyers' association, and the female lecturers' association. Most members were already involved in V4C or Purple and saw GEM as an opportunity to come together and share experiences and be a more 'unified force' (interview with female leader of GEM).

GEM has its own defined **leadership structure**, with leaders elected by the members. As the platform was formed and initially mooted by the female politicians, it did not have a particular focus on youth leadership, though it did cultivate youth membership. There is evidence that young people remained side-lined in the platform, with members noting that their inputs were not relevant to the rest of the membership, and that the workings of the group were 'beyond the level of the students' (from focus group with female GEM members).

It is clear, therefore, that in the Nigerian context, to encourage youth leadership, V4C may have to actively promote and support it, and in particular young women's leadership in the movement. So, with more time, and with the intention of establishing a Purple Movement, V4C would have looked at mechanisms that ensured young people were fully included and encouraged to take on leadership roles: without this, this platform could not independently evolve into a Purple Movement.

The wider **goals** of the platform were consistently and clearly stated by a range of members, showing common purpose and agreed GEWE goals. Yet it is also clear that the platform still sees itself as closely aligned with the activities and goals of V4C, including 50/50 and the *Being a Man in Nigeria* report. Its stated goals were relatively vague and aspirational, and not directed towards a set of clear GEWE outcomes: "We have a vision to make the society a safe home for both the female and male genders, where everybody's opinion can be heard, and not trampled upon', (from interview with a male leader in GEM.) This demonstrates an early stage of development of the platform into a coherent GEWE movement.

Members of GEM noted that the various clusters have worked together to undertake a **wide range of actions**, including meeting with different political parties, urging people to get voting cards, and supporting more women to take up political positions. The business people in GEM teamed up with the female politicians to urge women's leadership in market groups. GEM worked with students to look at abuse and violence on campuses, and jointly advocate to the administration for better protection. The religious leaders spoke of GEM's goals and efforts during their sermons, and invited members to speak to their congregants. The members proudly note that they have workplans documented on flipcharts, and meet regularly to review and plan GEM actions. This level of joint action and planning is a good sign of developing trust and coordination amongst partners towards a movement for change.

The interviewees also showed pride in the changes they have effected to date. The main **achievements** include opening up spaces for women to participate in decision-making and take up leadership positions, including local religious leaders, including women in their councils after pressure from GEM: 'In Enugu now, women drive buses and *keke* [tricycles] as a result of the sensitisation because it was not like that before. Some of the Igwes [village chiefs] have also allowed women in their cabinets.' (From an interview with female GEM member.) This has involved overcoming the strong stigma associated with women's leadership and public engagement by drawing on the power and connections of different members.

One clear example of a change effected through GEM advocacy and joint action relates to the regulations at Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) to enable open election for Student Union Government (SUG), so that women could bid for the coveted and powerful leadership positions in the SUG. While students at ESUT led this change on their campus, they were guided, supported and encouraged, and at times accompanied by, their GEM colleagues.

> *How this happened is that when GEM got involved, we started encouraging the girls to get involved* [in SUG]. *Initially, the girls felt that this was a male-dominated area and they might be viewed as prostitutes. But through workshops and seminars and*

showing them other women who have done it before [they saw they could do it]. *Now other   schools emulate and pass the same laws[1] to the favour of women where the women have softer landing rounds, like not buying forms, not having to pay to run for an election.* (From a focus group discussion with male members of GEM)

This is a significant example of policy change, and Purple Club members and GEM members rightly take great pride in it, and see in it their potential to change other policies. This and other achievements spur the platform members on and it is possible to see an emerging GEWE movement in their joint work.

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[1] Learning from ESUT, two other post-secondary institutions that have worked with V4C and its stakeholders to either change policies to support female members and leaders in their SUG or are planning to do so.