

# ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



## PCI's Approach to Gender Equality & the Empowerment of Women and Girls

- ✓ Ensuring that women and girls guide the design of our interventions
- ✓ Engaging men and decision makers to shift harmful gender norms
- ✓ Promoting social inclusion for women of all ages and recognizing that gender intersects with other forms of discrimination
- ✓ Advocating for policy change and investment
- ✓ Integrating evidence-based, gender-smart strategies into all of our sector approaches
- ✓ Empowering women socially and economically and investing in women's leadership
- ✓ Providing technical assistance at the national, provincial, district and community levels for gender mainstreaming
- ✓ Continually assessing our internal policies and procedures to ensure they promote equity and protection for all.



## INTRODUCTION

PCI's mission of empowering the most vulnerable in the communities we serve means putting gender equality and social inclusion at the center of our work. Despite unprecedented gains over the last two decades in the fight against global poverty, women and girls in developing countries continue to face systemic barriers and discrimination that inhibit equal access to resources such as education, financial institutions, and health services. Women and girls are also disproportionately affected by gender-based violence and exploitation. The World Health Organization estimates that one in three women globally will experience either physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Women and girls make up the majority of victims of human trafficking detected annually. Gender-based violence (GBV) is not only a grave violation of human rights but also a major public health concern. Through its community-based programs, PCI works to address systemic factors and discrimination that increase the vulnerability of women and girls to gender-based violence and prevent them from reaching their full potential. The following are examples that highlight our approaches.

**Promoting uptake of quality GBV screening and post-GBV care services:** In Zambia, PCI builds the capacity of the Zambia Defense Force (ZDF) to identify and support five one-stop post-GBV care pilot sites. PCI trains an integrated team of healthcare providers, paralegal officers, social workers and Provost Marshals in multidisciplinary management on GBV. PCI provides onsite mentorship and disseminates national post-GBV care information and Standard Operating Procedures to ensure the continued provision of high-quality one-stop post-GBV care services to GBV victims, which includes the provision of rapid HIV testing to GBV survivors with referral treatment and care, post exposure prophylaxis, rapid syphilis testing and treatment, pregnancy testing, facility-based psychosocial counselling, and referrals to legal and child protection services.

**Mobilizing communities to take action against harmful cultural and gender norms:** In South Africa, PCI's USAID-funded Prevention in Action (PIA) program mobilized civil society and public sector partners to end violence against women (VAW), facilitated the implementation of community mobilization activities, and amplified community actions to stop VAW by using innovative mass media and social media channels to change norms that perpetuate physical and sexual violence against women. The project was recognized by USAID for its "bold, well-conceived, and evidence-based strategies" that reached millions of men and women through innovative community-led organizing efforts. In Ethiopia, PCI's U.S. Department of State-funded Hope for Women project addressed women's rights within the hard-to-reach nomadic pastoralist communities of Ethiopia's Afar region through community-based systems for protecting women rights, school-based strategies for promoting gender awareness and respect, and self-help methods for women economic empowerment. Project activities achieved remarkable progress in rejection of harmful practices. At the end of the project 87.3% of women interviewed responded that FGM should not continue in the future, compared to the baseline figure of 61.2%. In communities where nearly 98% of women are circumcised, it was not practiced in 94.6% of target communities in the last year of the project.



PCI (Project Concern International) is an international nonprofit on a mission to enhance health, end hunger and overcome hardship worldwide. Founded in 1961, PCI impacted the lives of more than 10 million people last year alone through programs in 15 countries spanning Asia, Africa and the Americas.



**Empowering women economically and socially:** In Zambia, PCI strengthens female-headed households to reduce their vulnerability to HIV and GBV by linking them to Women Empowered (WE) savings groups and conditional cash transfer programs. WE is PCI's evidence-based social and economic empowerment platform that enables women to save money, develop financial literacy, and invest in income-generating activities, positioning them as leaders and decision-makers. WE groups target vulnerable, disenfranchised women by giving them a space to save and to develop their own social and economic capacities. The WE model has increased food and economic security, decreased use of exploitive money lenders, increased financial savings, improved relations between female participants and their partners, increased leadership in the community; and improved self-sufficiency of vulnerable women. Since 2008, almost 500,000 WE group members have participated across 12 countries.



**Increasing life choices for adolescent girls through empowerment:** With support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Girl Effect, PCI is working to help girls in Malawi and Botswana to develop into **D**etermined, **R**esilient, **E**mpowered, **A**IDS-free, **M**entored, and **S**afe women. Through the DREAMS Initiative, PCI seeks to substantially reduce new HIV infections among vulnerable adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) (15-24) by promoting positive sexual health behaviors, increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services, and creating an enabling environment for AGYW through creation of safe spaces in schools and communities.



**Reducing Vulnerability to Sex Trafficking:** PCI is addressing the problem of sex trafficking through four major intervention areas: Youth Empowerment and Prevention, Demand Reduction, Coalition Building and Public Awareness. Along the U.S./Mexico border, PCI's *Girls Only!* program promotes self-esteem, develops life skills and inspires positive motivation in young girls who are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. In Ethiopia, PCI developed the first resource manual for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Ethiopia in both Amharic and English. The manual is designed to build awareness of TIP in Ethiopia and provide information, knowledge and practical tools to help Ethiopians prevent and respond effectively to the problem of TIP in their country.



**Strengthening Local Capacity and Community Engagement to Stop GBV:** Through partnerships with local, district and national officials, PCI ensures that GBV prevention interventions will continue long after the program concludes. In Bolivia, partnerships with municipal Judicial Centers, the District Department of Education, and the Office of the Mayor in the city of El Alto led to integrated programming that continues today. In India, a partnership with village police forces has ensured the continuation of community-led Security Committees created to combat GBV in the community. In South Africa, PCI increased the number of men and women advocating or acting against VAW by strengthening the capacity of two local partners, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Networks on VAW to implement a branded community mobilization campaign. This involved working with the public sector and civil society organizations to train over 100 skilled and motivated individuals to serve as Community Engagers (CEs), who in turn recruited over 6,000 popular opinion leaders from their communities to serve as Community Influencers (CIs). As a result of the replicable, cost-effective community mobilization model that emerged from the program, 2,429 stories emerged describing actions taken against VAW – ranging from strategic meetings and promotional events to direct interventions that actively engaged with stopping acts of VAW.

Image used in PCI's communications campaign during the 16 Days of Activism against VAW in South Africa.



**INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**  
5151 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 320  
San Diego, CA 92123  
ph: (858) 279-9690  
www.PCIglobal.org

**WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE**  
1140 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20036  
ph: (202) 223-0088