



“GOD, GOVERNMENT AND GIRLS”



A Case Study on the
Linkages between Religion,
Government, Gender Equity
and Education

Focus: *Improving Girls Access
through Transforming Education
(IGATE)*

A Randomised Control Trial
(RCT) Programme focused
on Gender Equity in
Zimbabwe



The major religions, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, they deny somehow that God has a feminine face. However, if you go to the holy texts, you see there is this feminine presence." – Paulo Coehlo

'People place extraordinary trust in their faith leaders, who have a far-reaching ability to help achieve lasting peace and promote the status of women.'

– Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General, New York, 12 Feb 2013



"This system is based on the presumption that men and boys are superior to women and girls, and it is supported by some male religious leaders who distort the Holy Bible, the Koran, and other sacred texts to perpetuate their claim that females are, in some basic ways, inferior to them, unqualified to serve God on equal terms." - President Jimmy Carter, "Call to Action"

"In short, often we blame a region's religion when the oppression instead may be rooted in its culture." – Nicholas Kristoff, "Half the Sky"



PROS AND CONS OF RELIGION AS IT RELATES
TO CHILD WELL BEING??!?



PROs:

CONS:



Girls'
Education
Challenge



CASE STUDY FOCUS:

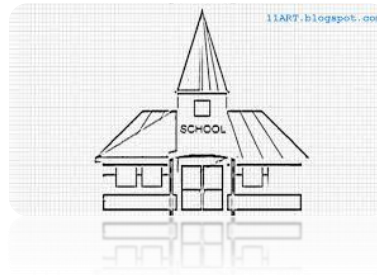
Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education

Improving educational status of **48,997 marginalised girls**, increasing retention of **60,000 girls** and impacting **approximately 101,000 beneficiaries** within **467 schools** and communities in 4 provinces of Zimbabwe.



For children. For change. For good.

The Biggest **Barriers** for Girls in Education in Zimbabwe



For children. For change. For good.



ZIMBABWE AND RELIGION: APOSTOLIC FOCUS

In Zimbabwe, 85% of the population identify as Church going Christians. There are approximately 3.5 million people who adhere to the Apostolic Faith, around 35% of the Zimbabwean population.

39% of women recently surveyed noted their adherence to the Apostolic religion as their reason for not accessing pre-natal care.

Modern medicine seen as evil.

Spiritual healing/prayer is the avenue for dealing with sickness.

Polygamy is favored.

Men are superior to women and women should be silent.

Girls are/can become pregnant and married off if a vision/dream is seen by a religious leader



The VaPostori movements fit the definition of “revitalisation movements”, which are movements that arise when a culture is being ‘threatened’ by foreign domination or marginalisation of beliefs or history.

“beliefs among ultra-conservative Apostolic groups act as a barrier to uptake of modern healthcare services...encouraging practices that increase risk to HIV and AIDS through polygamy, wife inheritance and pledging young girls to marry.”

““educational opportunities for the girl child are limited due to early marriage, church doctrine and undervaluation of a girl child (being) prevalent in the socio-cultural beliefs”.

- ***Apostolic Religion, Health and Utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services in Zimbabwe, written by Dr. Brian Maguranyanga***

“the lines of justification for (activities such as) these early marriages of girls as young as 12 and 13 years have nothing to do with indigenous cultures but they are purely religious”. - ***Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a Way of Protecting and Empowering the Girl Child by Dr. Ephraim Gwaravanda***

“One independent determinant for the spike in the rate of mortality among expecting women and their newborn was membership to an Apostolic denomination. OPHID (2012) described women (n=350) in one province of Zimbabwe who had non institutional deliveries and found a majority of the participants (60.6 %) identified themselves as members of an Apostolic denomination.” – ***Exploring the Forgotten Variable, OPHID***

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**A story of a
girl...
A story of
her God...
A story of
the gap...**

Lenora, aged 12, lives in Mwembesi Community, Gokwe South, Zimbabwe, and she is a member of the Apostolic Faith (VaPostori) Community. She is becoming a young woman and has seen the girls go before her – they face persecution for menstruation, they marry early, they become pregnant, some die due to birth related complications, they never learn to read or write. She has watched her mother and her grandmother who are illiterate, quiet and often times working at home. She has a significant amount of fear to become herself. Then, she meets IGATE.*



*this is her story, this is her friends story, this is Zimbabwe's story. This is **YOUR** story, this is the **WORLD's** story.*

LENORA'S REALITY



What Christianity says,
according to the Bible:

What Lenora is taught,
according to the
VaPostori:

VALUE

- So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. – Genesis 1:17
- “there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” - Galatians 3:28



VALUE

- Men are more representative of God
- Boys are more valuable than girls



What Christianity says,
according to the Bible:

What Lenora is taught,
according to the
VaPostori:

ROLES

- “God blessed **them** and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:28
- “Husbands, also live with your wife the way you know is right. Respect her because she is a woman. – 1 Peter 3:7

ROLES

- Girls must work in the home to care of men's needs
- Women are to be subservient to men
- Women are property to be traded, sold or used for sexual pleasure
- Girls are to be involved in leadership or participate in activities such as boys.



CHRIST AND HIS FOLLOWERS

- Jesus spoke with foreign women (John 4)
- He accepted women in his inner circle (Luke 10)
- He appeared post resurrection first to a woman (Mark 16)
- Jesus defended a 'sinful' woman against the Pharisees and compared the man and woman as mutually responsible (John 8)



APOSTOLICS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS

- Women are separated from the men in religious services
- Women are not allowed to be part of leadership or decision making
- Men are seen as the only conduits for God's communication
- Men are seen as less responsible for sinful actions and receive more permission for activities



HOW RELIGION IMPACTS EDUCATION: THE CASE FOR LENORA:

According to IGATE's Broad Gender Analysis:

Religious practices lead to girls dropping out of school, becoming pregnant, not using sanitary wear, become overburdened at home with chores and not being allowed to sit in school due to a lack of value.



We have realised that not sending girl children to school is not a doctrine but a religious practice. It is religious practices that hinder girl children from going further with education. It is religious practices that promote early marriages. In some of the Apostolic sects, women are seen as second class citizens; they are seen as by-products of men, drawing from the biblical story of creation in Genesis. It is because of this view that even in terms of access to education, boy children are prioritised. We are optimistic that this practice will come to an end because practices are easier to deal with than doctrines.

HOW DO WE HELP IMPACT HER AND HER RELIGIOUS LEADER? HOW DO WE CHANGE HIM IF HE HOLDS HALF THE PROBLEMS? ARE WE FROM THE OUTSIDE OR CAN WE ENGAGE FROM WITHIN? WHAT KEYS CAN WE USE TO CHANGE HER, HIM AND HER COMMUNITY?



HOW **GOVERNMENT** IMPACTS EDUCATION: THE CASE FOR LENORA:

World Vision Zimbabwe has been working for 42 years in Zimbabwe,
Working with government pre and post independence and working with
Key ministries to help bring positive change.



If you miss ONE link in the government chain, you will fail in your efforts to partner together.

National

Provincial

District

Ward AND..... Community Level



IGATE: A Comprehensive Response

Department for International Development (DFID) Funded Girls Education Challenge Fund (GEC) project contributing to the GEC aim of improving access and quality to education for over 1 million disadvantaged girls around the world.

IGATE Project Overview: March 2013 - March 2017

500 Communities, 10 Districts, 4 Provinces of Zimbabwe

43,000 girls **Total: Over 100,000 beneficiaries**

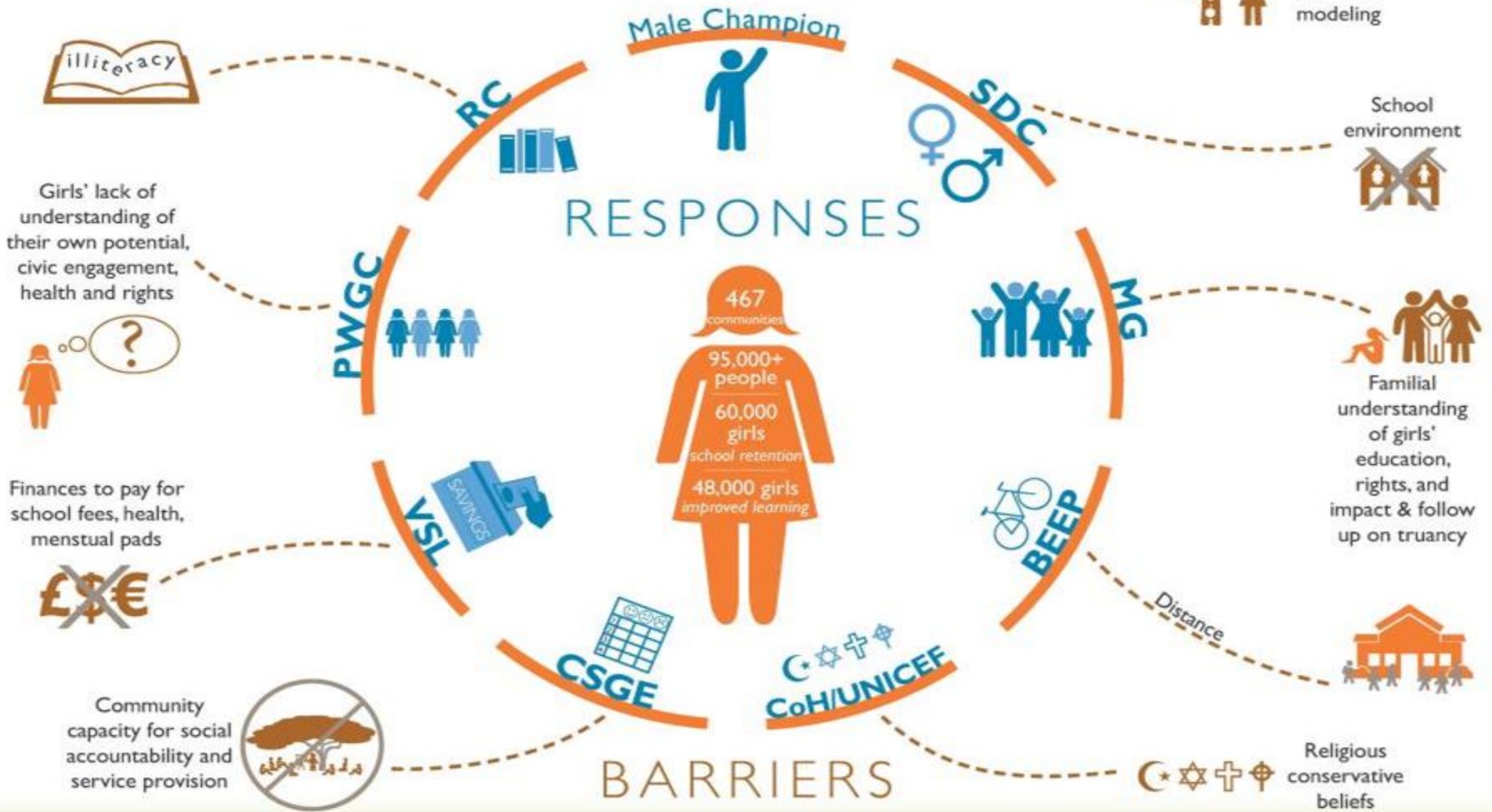
IGATE Project Partners: World Vision UK, World Vision Zimbabwe, World Vision Switzerland, CARE UK, CARE International in Zimbabwe, SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, Union for the Development of the Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe Africa, World Bicycle Relief, Happy Readers and Emthonjeni Women's Forum

IGATE Finance: 10% Payment by Results linked to .4 SD change in literacy and numeracy

IGATE M&E: RCT Quasi-Experimental Design with cohort and treatment schools – tracking occurring through baseline, midline and final evaluations



I-GATEkeepers in a girl's life



IGATE FOCUS ON RELIGION: Channels of Hope Gender (CoHG)



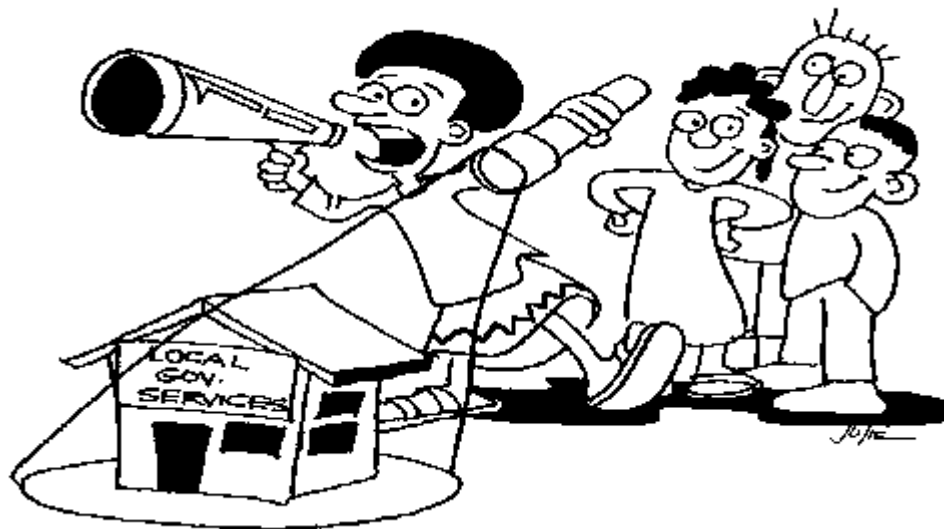
CoHG is a catalyst that transforms and motivates faith leaders and their congregations to respond to tough development issues that affect their communities. The CoH process directly addresses faith leaders' perceptions about especially volatile or taboo community issues.

- an innovative approach to exploring gender identities, norms and values from a faith perspective. The goal of the CoH G curriculum is to dispel cultural gender biases and contribute to the transformation of households' perspectives on gender identity and relationships. The curriculum challenges faith leaders to acknowledge and act upon gender injustices in their communities. The CoHG curriculum engages faith leaders, who in turn engage their local communities, to bring about change.

World Vision has entered in to subgrant arrangements with two organisations to use them as conduit partners to reach the most conservative (and most in need) communities and leadership: Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and the Union for the Development of the Apostolic Church in Zimbabwe Africa (UDACIZA)

- » World Vision is planning, through these partners to reach approximately 2,000 religious leaders and through their cascading of training many more beneficiaries

CITIZEN VOICE AND ACTION: A SOCIAL ADVOCACY MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND SCORE-CARDING





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Citizen Voice and Action is a “social accountability” methodology that transforms the dialogue between communities and government in order to improve services (like health care and education) that impact the daily lives of children and their families. Citizen Voice and Action increases dialogue between ordinary citizens and organizations that provide services to the public. It also aims to improve accountability from the administrative and political sections of government (both national and local) in order to improve the delivery of public services.

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-CVA is being applied in 277 ADPs in 34 National Offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

-Across the Partnership communities have reported their stories about clinics that have improved as a result of their CVA work.

-Academic research has corroborated these stories: for example one randomised control trial of 50 communities in Uganda showed that communities using a methodology almost identical to CVA had resulted in the following:

Communities around the World report important improvements in Primary education as a result of their CVA work

In 2011 WV joined Oxford University in a study of CVA's effect on education outcomes on 100 Primary Schools in Uganda

In the Communities using the CVA Community "Scorecards" researchers documented A .19 standard deviation increase in test scores among students in the treatment

Communities using CVA Scorecards

This increase would move the average student from 50th to the 58th percentile

CITIZEN VOICE AND ACTION: A SOCIAL ADVOCACY MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ACTION AND SCORE-CARDING

An 8-10% increase in student attendance in the treatment communities using the CVA scorecard

A 13% reduction in teacher absenteeism

Researchers calculated that these results had accrued to the Community just \$1.50 per student.

Academic research has corroborated these stories: for example one randomised control trial of 50 communities in Uganda showed that communities using a methodology almost identical to CVA had resulted in

33% drop in under five mortality (at a cost of less than \$300 per child life saved)

20% increase in the utilization of outpatient services

58% increase in the number of deliveries by skilled birth attendant deliveries.

19% increase in the number of patients seeking antenatal care

13% decrease in health worker absenteeism and

9% decrease in waiting time

4 years later these results have held standard.

WHY UDACIZA? WHY NOT WORLD VISION? HOW DO WE WORK FROM WITHIN AND WITH THE “PERPETRATORS” THEMSELVES??

- An integrated, inside approach to change working with THEIR leadership together to change THEIR views
- Historical context of outside colonial views
- Engaging the leadership themselves from the very beginning and first, before working with their congregants
- Using truths from their spiritual texts

Working within their community, with them and with their spiritual texts are keys to change.

When dealing with changing religious custom and transforming religious beliefs, development programmes must have clear, outlined strategies for engagement that include, not ignore, religious leadership, their influence and their understanding of the roles they plan within the power structures of society.

For children. For change. For good.

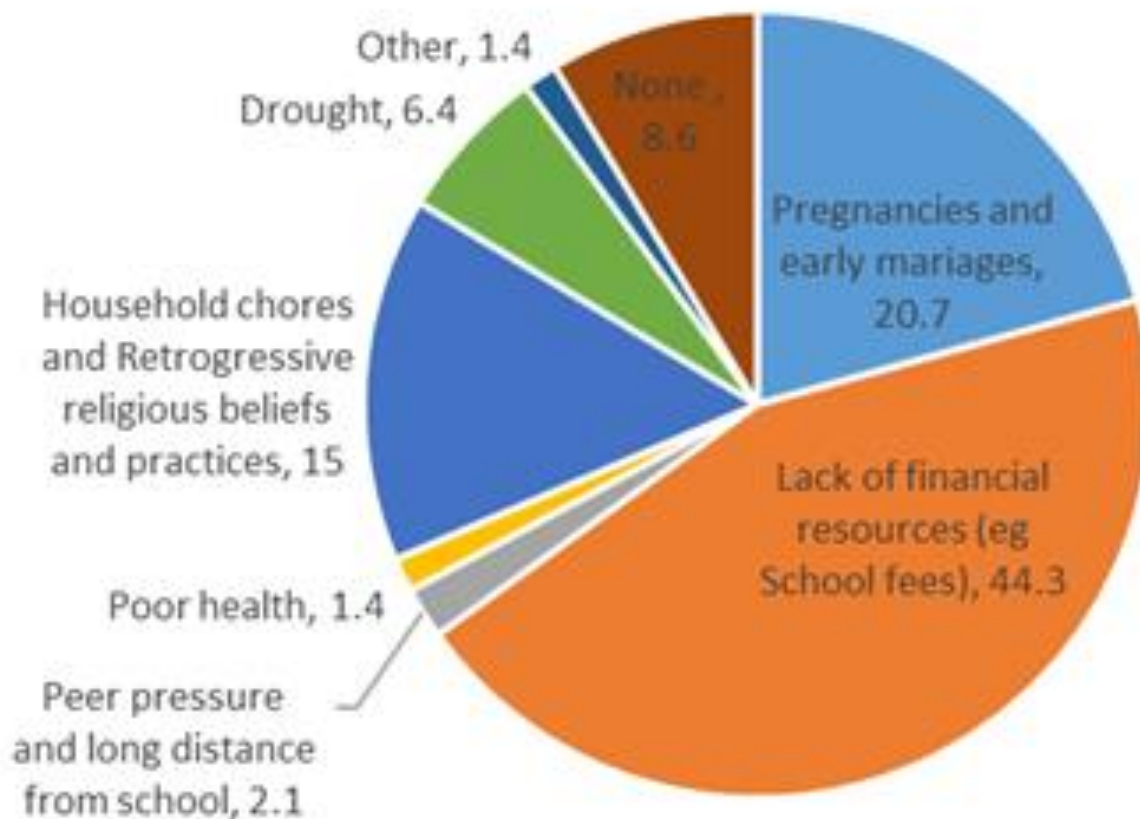
THE IMPACT OF IGATE: REPURPOSING RELIGIOUS ZEAL

In Mwembesi, approximately 80% adhere to the Apostolic belief system causing some problems for the local school in helping girls achieve educational success. The Mwembesi Primary School Head stated that payment of school fees, attendance at school on Fridays (during Apostolic church services), early marriage and mandatory household chores have all been negative factors in girls attending school.

IGATE, working to bring positive, permanent change to situations such as the environment in Mwembesi, began to introduce Girls Clubs, Family Groups, Village Saving and Lending Groups and training of all 32 Apostolic religious leaders. In meetings, trainings and community events, IGATE slowly began to see change.

In February of 2015, IGATE staff were able to see transformation at its best – beyond the group participation, beyond the change in attitudes....and, inside the attendance roll. As of February, Mwembesi Primary School reported an 18% increase in attendance – a celebration of a shift, a change, a transformation in understanding that education, empowerment and equity are the keys to community success.

THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??



THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??

The majority of survey respondents belonged to apostolic sects (28%).

The apostolic sects and Zion churches constituted the largest group (52%) amongst survey respondents and yet it is these religious groupings where there were serious concerns with regard to respect for the girl child's rights in general and access to education in particular. Across all the districts, FGD and KII participants perceived some churches belonging to the apostolic sects and Zion as having practices and beliefs that negatively affect girls' access to education.

Girls should be married whilst they are still virgins and therefore to increase their chances of getting married whilst still virgins, the girls must be married young before getting "contaminated" by the world. FGDs revealed that these churches believe that too much exposure of the girl child to "polluted education" might result in the girl child being "rebellious" against the church doctrine.

THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??

Virginity tests are necessary to raise morally upright and “pure girls”

However other FGD participants felt that the whole process is mortifying and an infringement of the girls’ rights because if a girl is found to have lost her virginity she will go through a public humiliation process where the church congregation is informed of the girls’ status.

The majority of the respondents (80%) believed that there are religious factors in their communities that positively influence girls’ access and success in education within their respective communities. The CoH was mentioned as the main influence of these religious factors emerging from churches that are being engaged by the programme.

THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??

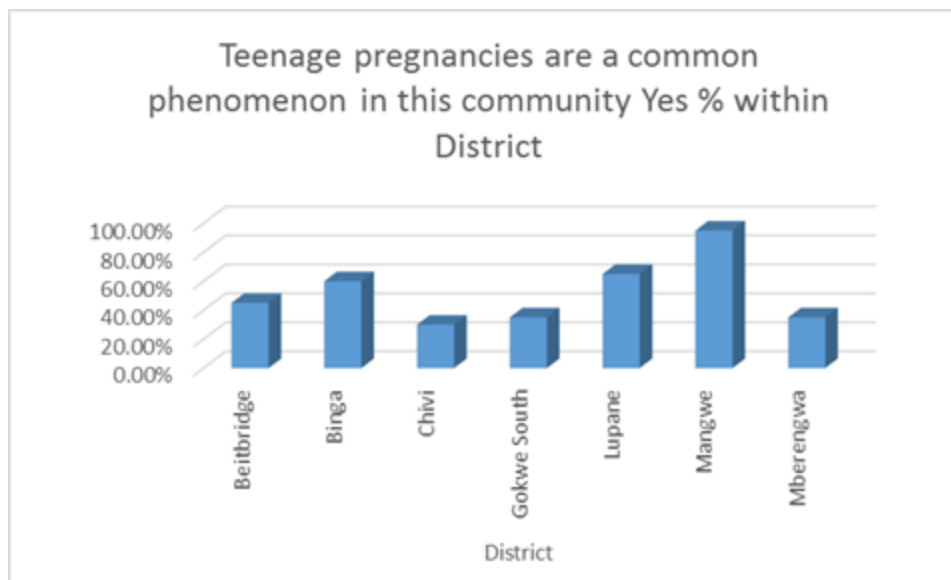
Eighty-nine percent (89%) of the respondents believed that teenage pregnancies were wrong while only 11% did not see anything wrong with teenage pregnancies. Surprisingly, the majority of the respondents whose perception was that there is nothing wrong with teenage pregnancies belonged to the protestant churches (28%), followed by the Roman Catholic Church (15.4%) and Pentecostal church (7%). Only 2.6% of the apostolic church and Zion church respondents believed there was nothing wrong with teenage pregnancies. The low proportion of those who see nothing wrong with teenage pregnancies amongst apostolic sects and Zion as well as Pentecostal **churches can be attributed to activities related to the Channels of Hope programme.**

21% of survey respondents believed that early marriages are mostly linked to religious beliefs and practices.

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the respondents believed that household chores and other economic activities informed by religion have a bearing on girls' access and success in education.

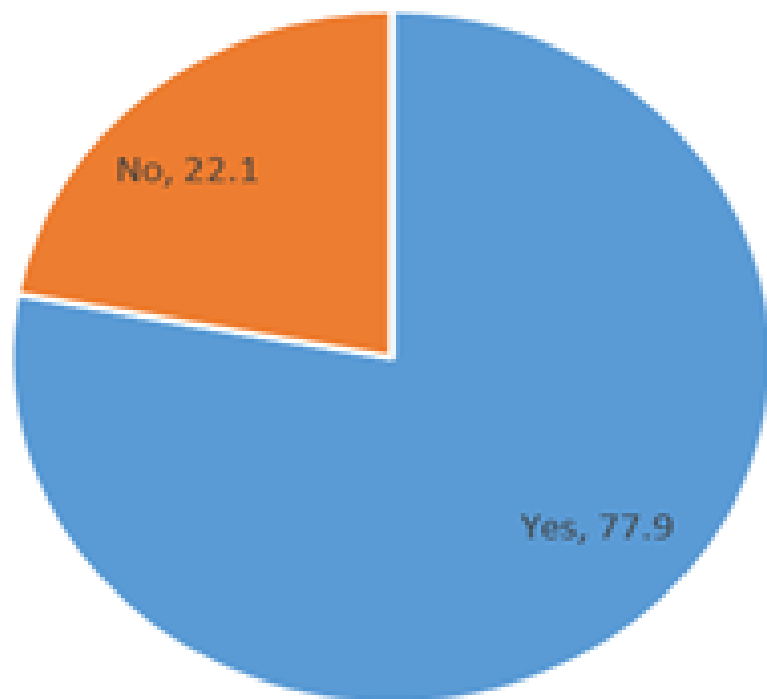


THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??



THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??

Has Channels of Hope achieved its goals??



THE IMPACT OF IGATE: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND SO FAR??

