

# Most Significant Change



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### Cover Photo

NOW participants Lucia Brima and Satta Momoh participate in a Most Significant Change Focus Group activity. Photo credit: Sophie Dresser, Gbeka, Sierra Leone.

## Table of Contents

Credits .....	1
Stories shared by .....	1
Stories Selected by .....	1
Report by .....	1
Planning .....	1
Design and Layout .....	1
Cover Photo .....	1
Acronyms .....	4
Acknowledgement .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Women’s Empowerment and Inclusion .....	7
Social Cohesion and Mobilization .....	7
Upcoming Challenges .....	7
MSC Requires Ongoing Revision .....	8
Introduction to OneVillage Partners .....	9
Community Action Program Summary .....	9
Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) Program Summary .....	9
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy .....	10
Introduction to Most Significant Change .....	10
Adapting the Methodology .....	11
Davies’ Most Significant Change 10-Step Process .....	11
Deviation from Davies’ MSC Process .....	14
2016 MSC Stories .....	14
<i>Top Story: My Wife’s Personal Savings Relieved Us!</i> .....	15
<i>Honorable Mention: My Source of Inspiration in Building My Own Latrine</i> .....	17
<i>Mohamed’s Behavior Motivated Youth in Gbeka</i> .....	19
<i>Grima Undertook a Sustainable Project</i> .....	21
<i>The Torchlight for Transformation in Gbeka</i> .....	23
Results .....	25
Distribution of MSC Participants .....	25
Headlines Collected by Role .....	26

Domain Distribution of Headlines Collected ..... 27

Unexpected Change Headlines Collected by Program..... 27

Secondary Analysis ..... 28

1. Women’s Empowerment and Inclusion..... 28
2. Social Cohesion..... 28
3. Mobilization..... 29
4. Improved Leadership..... 29
5. Unexpected Change: Women’s Empowerment and Inclusion..... 29

Lessons Learned ..... 30

*Programmatic*..... 30

*About the Method*..... 31

Conclusion ..... 33

Further Resources ..... 33

Appendices ..... 34

Appendix A: OVP Monthly Reflection Process ..... 34

Story of Impact Report Template: ..... 34

Appendix B: OVP MSC Story Selection Criteria and Scoring Rubric ..... 35

Selection Criteria ..... 35

Scoring Process ..... 35

## Acronyms

CAG	Community Action Group
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSC	Most Significant Change
NOW	Nurturing Opportunities for Women
OVP	OneVillage Partners



*Photo: Community Action Coordinators, Muje Josephine Belmoh and Brima Lansana lead a focus group discussion in Mamboma.*

*Photo Credit: Sophie Dresser*

## Acknowledgement

OneVillage Partners (OVP) would like to thank our partner communities of Gbeka, Grima and Mamboma who provided their time and valuable insight to help us undertake this process. Each person who shared a story during this process has contributed to the improvement of OVP's programs and work in Sierra Leone.

We are honored to work with our partner communities and the emerging leaders that will guide the future of development in their villages. The communities that you will read about in this report are mobilized, energized and determined to be self-reliant. As these stories demonstrate, unity, inclusion and strong local leadership contribute to a recipe for success.

To our field staff, we are grateful for your steadfast dedication to your work, which has made a tremendous impact on these communities, as illustrated in this report. Your further dedication to ensuring the success of this particular process, is greatly appreciated. We also recognize the remaining OVP staff that worked diligently to support the process in training of staff, story selection and the finalization of this report.

OVP also would like to thank The Improve Group who provided us with pro-bono services to aid in the planning for Most Significant Change this year. The Improve Group brought evaluation expertise, fresh ideas and a new perspective to help make this process a success.

## The **Improve** Group



*Photo: Women in Gbeka are front and center at a community meeting introducing Most Significant Change.*

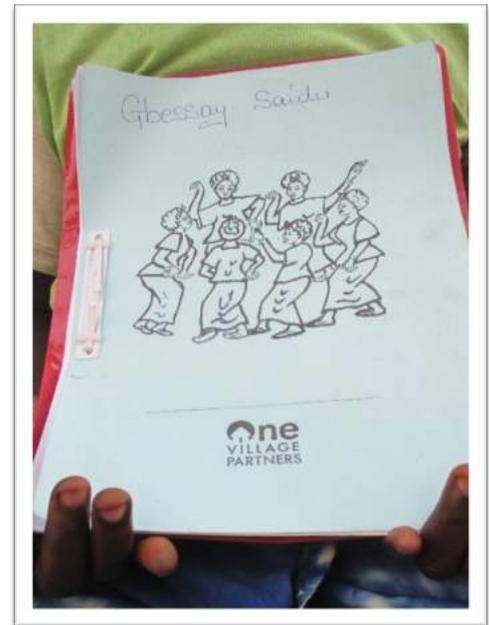
*Photo Credit: Sophie Dresser*

## Executive Summary

OneVillage Partners (OVP) inspires and equips people to transform their lives and their communities. Working in Sierra Leone, West Africa, we partner with local communities and assist them to 1) train, empower and mobilize leaders to design projects that address their community's most pressing, self-identified needs, and 2) create new opportunities for women through economic empowerment and financial literacy training. We believe that by letting communities lead their own development, rather than telling them what they need, we foster dignity for all and support equitable and sustainable development.

OVP works in partner villages to implement two programs, Community Action and Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW):

1. In our **Community Action Program**, we train volunteer leaders to effectively mobilize their communities. Through our human-centered process, volunteer community leaders work with their villages to identify their most pressing needs, and then design and implement projects that address these needs.
2. In our **Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) Program**, we implement an entirely picture-based curriculum to teach participants basic financial principals and the ways in which they can plan and manage finances throughout the year to reach their goals and inform household financial decision making.



*Photo: Gbessay Saidu, NOW Participant, holds her picture-based workbook.  
Photo Credit: NOW Team*

These programs are highly participatory to stay true to OVP's values of inclusion, transparency and sustainability. OVP's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy applies a mixed methods approach to uncover program outcomes and inform learning. Beyond the cache of quantitative methods that OVP utilizes to monitor and evaluate project and program-level outcomes, OVP introduced Most Significant Change (MSC) as a methodology to build capacity, engage community members in learning about their completed projects, and capture the outcomes of OVP's work. MSC is a participatory evaluation methodology that engages project participants in telling stories of 'most significant change' that they experienced throughout an intervention or program. These stories are subsequently selected by a hierarchy of stakeholders and then analyzed using qualitative research techniques. Unintended outcomes, which are difficult to measure using other methods, are captured alongside those that are anticipated using the MSC methodology. The main objectives of this report are:

- To deepen understanding of OVP’s values, programs and the learning.
- To explain how OVP adapted the methodology to be successfully implemented in majority illiterate, highly-engaged communities.
- To share top stories of most significant change as they were expressed from both direct and indirect stakeholders.
- To highlight the many intended and unintended outcomes of our programs. To use analysis and sharing of these community-identified outcomes to inform programmatic learning and develop community capacity.

A total of 217 stories of significant change were collected, quantified, and analyzed. Of these stories, 24 went through the rigorous and participatory selection process outlined in this report. The top five stories that are featured in this report illustrate many of the overarching outcomes that emerged during the MSC process. However, all stories were quantified and analyzed in order to holistically identify OVP good practices and lessons learned, both programmatic and methodological. Emerging themes include:



### Women’s Empowerment and Inclusion

- Creating a platform of gender equity through Community Action and NOW programs has instilled confidence in women that results in more women contributing to development at the household and community levels.



### Social Cohesion and Mobilization

- OVP has successfully included marginalized individuals (namely, women and young people) in programs and decision making, which has contributed to greater social cohesion and community mobilization.



### Upcoming Challenges

- Donor dependency poses ongoing challenges because communities are not familiar with working alongside participatory, grassroots organizations, therefore some people have different expectations.
- Traditional authorities and leaders should be continuously engaged in the programs in order to mitigate the existing culture of leadership where transparency and accountability are not the norm.



### MSC Requires Ongoing Revision

- Getting participants to critically think about change is difficult; for example, participants may only think about tangible changes such as new latrines installed as opposed to more abstract ideas like a change in civic engagement.
- Headlines or story ideas are an effective way to gather a lot of content efficiently, rather than drafting full stories from the beginning.
- OVP should integrate other qualitative methods already in use into the MSC process, such as including content from the Monthly Reflection Process (see appendix A) into the MSC analysis.

As OVP is constantly learning and adapting, we see MSC as an effective tool to not only measure success, but continue capacity building efforts in communities and inform our work moving forward. Implementing MSC with our partner communities was highly collaborative and mutually informative. The lessons learned and results from MSC are truly meaningful for both OVP's growth and for our partner communities to move forward towards their self-determined vision.



## Introduction to OneVillage Partners

The cornerstone of OneVillage Partners’ (OVP) approach and program models is that development must be community-led; interventions must be inspired, created, and implemented by community members. OVP believes that local people are integral in developing community solutions to their own self-defined needs, and that broad and mutually-respectful participation and local change agents are necessary for ongoing community development. By placing people at the center of our approach, we ensure that change is created within people and communities, not external to them. OVP’s values of inclusivity, transparency, sustainability and participation stimulate unity and a collective sense of ownership among community members, which leads to equitable and sustainable development. We fulfill these values in two programs as described below.

### Community Action Program Summary

The Community Action Program mobilizes, trains, and supports community members to achieve their vision of an improved standard of living for all. Community volunteers are selected by their peers to comprise the village’s Community Action Group (CAG), a gender-balanced cohort that undergoes an intensive leadership training that produces targeted development projects to effectively meet community-identified needs. The purpose of this ongoing training is to create long-standing leaders in the village that will continue to push the community towards their vision of wellbeing after OVP exits the community. By engaging and empowering community members throughout the project cycles, the Community Action Program also fosters transparency and inclusion—individual and community attributes that have far-reaching benefits.<sup>1</sup>

### Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) Program Summary

OVP takes a unique approach to financial literacy and empowerment training for all in the Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) Program. NOW uses an entirely picture-based curriculum to teach participants, literate or not, about basic financial principles and the ways in which they can plan and



#### Community Action Program 2016 Achievements

- 3 community projects successfully implemented in the WASH sector, improving the lives of over 3,500 people
- Installed 54 latrine structures with 108 individual toilets
- Installed 117 hygienic kitchens



#### NOW Program 2016 Achievements

- 98 women successfully graduated
- 85% of participants overall achieved their goal
- 89% of participants demonstrated the ability to successfully budget

<sup>1</sup> Figures in the Achievement box are from the three partner villages where OVP implemented MSC in 2016. In these villages, operations began in early 2014, but the Community Action Program was temporarily suspended due to the Ebola outbreak. In 2016, the communities’ first project cycle in Community Action was completed.

manage finances to reach their own self-defined goals. Participants' husbands and other male family members are encouraged to attend several 'family sessions' and 'home visits' incorporated in the program. When men are sensitized to and involved in both OVP programs, they see the positive power of women and are more supportive of participants engaging in household and community discussion. As household finances stabilize and women's goals are met as a result of their financial prowess, women experience increased social and economic power at the individual, household, and community levels. Inclusion and support of women through programs like NOW promote gender equity and unity within families, and communities as a whole.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Strategy

OVP's evaluation strategy is highly participatory, where evaluation ultimately serves two purposes. First, to include community members for their own learning, growth and capacity development. Second, to inform the innovative and constantly adapting programs that OVP implements. OVP's approach is inclusive and engages all stakeholders. OVP utilizes a mixed-methods approach to monitor, evaluate and learn about the programs we implement and the outcomes that succeed them.

Through Community Action, OVP trains volunteers within the CAG to set goals and develop basic indicators to measure project-level success. Further, these volunteers are charged with project-level monitoring in order to ensure project success and sustainability. Monitoring results guide community-wide sensitization and house-to-house education. Beyond project-level achievements within Community Action, OVP takes a much more up front role in monitoring and evaluating the change in capacity amongst both volunteers from the Community Action Program and participants from the NOW Program. This capacity-building measurement, especially, requires a mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative measurements to define success and inform adaptation.

## Introduction to Most Significant Change

In addition to program-specific monitoring and evaluation, OVP sought to include another methodology that would highly engage community members in programmatic learning, contribute to increased capacity to aspire and capture a mix of intended and unintended outcomes that are difficult to measure through other methods. OVP values a mixed-method evaluation approach, which allows us to not just evaluate the numbers associated with our work, but also leverage rich qualitative data that allows us to continually learn and adapt. Therefore, Most Significant Change (MSC) was a natural choice to add to the OVP strategy as it is qualitative in nature and captures a holistic array of outcomes. MSC was developed by Rick Davies in 2004 and utilizes stories told directly from program

participants to assess programmatic outcomes and impact<sup>2</sup>. Program participants lead the process, by telling stories of significant change they experienced due to a program or intervention. By simply telling the stories and explaining why they are most significant, participants play a valuable role in the selection of stories. Key aspects of MSC that will be illustrated throughout this report are the collection of significant change stories, the categorization of these stories, the selection of those that are most significant, the discussions around programmatic learning and the inclusion of feedback loops. OVP implemented MSC in order to further build capacity among participants and enhance programmatic learning. The qualitative nature of MSC enables the capture and measurement of unintended outcomes to further inform programmatic development when coupled with quantitative data. In each of the three villages where MSC was implemented, CAG and NOW participants were the primary stakeholders, although stories were also shared from participants in the community at large. The high rates of illiteracy within these populations demanded that OVP adapt the MSC process to be inclusive and user-friendly.

## Adapting the Methodology

OVP implemented MSC for the first time in 2016. The process took six months of planning in order to adapt the methodology in such a way that it would work well considering the capacity of the community members, OVP staff and existing OVP programs and values. OVP aimed to follow the original MSC process as closely as possible, making changes only where necessary for the method to be successful in the OVP context. OVP followed the following 10 steps in implementing MSC:

### Davies' Most Significant Change 10-Step Process

1. Getting Started: establishing champions and getting familiar with the approach
2. Establishing 'Domains of Change'
3. Defining the Reporting Period
4. Collecting Stories of Change
5. Reviewing the Stories within the Organizational Hierarchy
6. Providing Stakeholders with Regular Feedback about the Review Process
7. Setting in Place a Process to Verify the Stories (if necessary)
8. Quantification
9. Conducting Secondary Analysis
10. Revising the MSC Process

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team at OVP began to integrate pieces of the MSC methodology into daily work by asking staff to record stories of impact on a monthly basis, selecting the most unique or interesting stories and sharing these with the entire OVP staff at a monthly meeting. This Monthly Reflection process (see Appendix A) mirrored some of the key techniques of MSC including story collection, writing, selection and sharing.

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<sup>2</sup> Davies, Rick and Jess Dart. 2004. "The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use."

OVP began the process by raising interest (Davies Step 1) among staff who would be involved in the implementation. These staff were field-based facilitators with strong relationships with community members and were asked to take the community into account as they determine if this methodology would work.

Domains are categories that stories are organized into as they move through the selection process. Domains are often defined by the organization implementing MSC, based on key questions or expected programmatic outcomes. Therefore, in order to capture unintended outcomes, this set of categories often includes an ‘unexpected change’ or catch-all domain. Domains were selected (Davies Step 2) six months prior to implementation of MSC in OVP’s partner communities. Domains were selected using key evaluation and programmatic questions from program managers and insight from other members of the OVP leadership team. The domains were then shared and discussed with all staff in order to gain buy-in and endorsement. OVP’s 2016 MSC domains were:

1. Change in Civic Engagement – what changes did the community see or experience with regard to how people engaged with community development?
2. Change in Problem Identification/Solving – what changes did the community see or experience related to how they are able to identify and solve problems?
3. Unexpected Change
4. Change in Financial Literacy, Security or Resiliency (NOW Program) – what changes did NOW Participants experience related to their newfound financial literacy skills?
5. Change in Capacity as Leaders (Community Action Program) – what changes did Community Action Group members experience with regard to their own leadership skills?



*Figure 1: Illustrations of OVP MSC Implementation Strategy  
Artist: Aliocious*

Two program-specific domains were selected in addition to three domains that applied to OVP programs on the whole. Each domain stems from key questions that we had about our programs and the impact of the OVP model. OVP intentionally set domains that were rooted in behavior change in order to capture success beyond just outputs. For example, a question posed to participants of the NOW Program was, *what is the most significant change you have experienced in your life because of the financial literacy training you received?* This question guided the participant to think not just about the knowledge that she gained, but the change that this knowledge has contributed to her life.

As OVP defined the reporting period (Davies Step 3), we employed a Sierra Leonean artist to draw illustrations (see Figure 1 above) of all the steps in OVP's implementation process in order to share this easily with the majority-illiterate OVP partner communities.

The MEL team provided staff with a month of intensive training (15+ hours in total) in order to prepare them for OVP's implementation of the process (see OVP's 10-Step Implementation Strategy, below). MSC took place in three of OVP's partner villages (Gbeka, Grima and Mamboma) where staff planned for two weeks of engagement with each community in order to raise interest, gather headlines, select headlines, conduct verification interviews and turn them into MSC stories.

Figure 2 on this page outlines how OVP customized Davies' Steps 4-10 into their own process.

Analysis of the content took place following the implementation of MSC in the communities as outlined above. Lessons learned about the process continue to be integrated into how OVP adapts its programs. The MSC process will be revised on annual basis, in coordination with communities, as the team evaluates OVP programs after closeout.

## OVP'S 10-STEP IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



Figure 2: OVP's Implementation Strategy

## Deviation from Davies' MSC Process

The major modification that OVP made to the MSC methodology is the addition of *headlines* selected in the field. Due to the high level of engagement with communities and the limited time and resources available to implement MSC, OVP expected a high number of stories to be shared.

Additionally, implementing MSC in majority illiterate partner communities necessitated that OVP develop a tool for staff to capture all stories of significant change that were shared without requiring participants to write. Staff used headlines in order to gather all significant changes shared by the community but only wrote more comprehensive MSC stories for those headlines that were selected and moved to the next round<sup>3</sup>. Staff were trained to collect these headlines, which included a strong title and five key supporting facts, and recorded them on the Headline Selection Form (see Figure 3). This process enabled the selection team to visualize key aspects of the change noted in the headline and determine if it should be selected, then drafting it into a complete story and moving the story to the next selection round.

*Table 1: Headline Selection Form*

Headline Title:		
<b>Domain:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Financial literacy, security or resiliency <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity as leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Civic engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Problem identification/solving <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected change	<b>Village:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Gbeka <input type="checkbox"/> Grima <input type="checkbox"/> Mamboma <b>Program:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> NOW <input type="checkbox"/> Community Action	___/___/___ <b>Data Collected MM/DD/YY</b>  <b>Format:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Community Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group <input type="checkbox"/> Interview <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Conversation <input type="checkbox"/> Other
_____ <b>Staff Name</b>	_____ <b>Participant Name</b>	_____ <b>Role</b>
<b>Key Facts:</b> • •		
		Score: ___

<sup>3</sup> Due to high levels of illiteracy in the targeted populations and few English-speakers, having participants write their own stories was not feasible. Therefore, OVP staff collected headlines directly from participants, translated them into English and wrote stories by conducting verification interviews to gather additional information.

## 2016 MSC Stories

Of the 217 headlines that were collected from the three communities, 24 were selected by the Program Coordinators to be turned into stories. These stories were equally distributed by domain and villages, as the Program Coordinators selected the top story from each domain for each village as they implemented the process there. The top 24 stories were presented to the Senior Leadership Team in Sierra Leone, who selected the top five stories, equally distributed among the five domains. The US Executive Team selected the top story for 2016. All levels of the selection process utilized a set criteria and scoring rubric (see Appendix B).

*Top Story: My Wife's Personal Savings Relieved Us!*

**Village:** Gbeka

**Program:** NOW

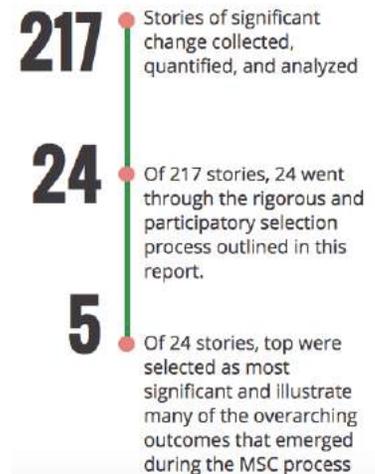
**Domain:** Financial Literacy, Security or Resiliency

Gbessay Alpha is the husband of a NOW participant in OVP's partner village of Gbeka. In most households in Sierra Leone, males are predominantly the family heads and control household decision making as well as the activities of their wives. Prior to OVP's involvement in Gbeka, Gbessay was no exception. He dictated household decisions and his wife had little control over their finances or her activities in the community.

When OVP introduced the Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) program to Gbeka, Gbessay was skeptical. The intent of the NOW program is to support women to manage household finances and raise women's confidence to engage in decision making. Gbessay did not want his wife to be part of NOW, primarily because he thought her involvement would waste the time she would otherwise put toward their farming activities. However, his wife explained that the meeting time and duration would not conflict with field work and she asked for his permission to attend the sessions. He admits, "I was not totally convinced that this would be beneficial to us".

For as long as he could remember, Gbessay had been content to be the only person to control all income and determine how to support their household. He paid their children's school fees from the income they received from selling their farm products, and he used the rest of their money on unproductive things, including buying gifts for other women, smoking cigarettes, etc. Gbessay stated that, "when I misused my money I become

### MSC STORY COLLECTION & SELECTION PROCESS

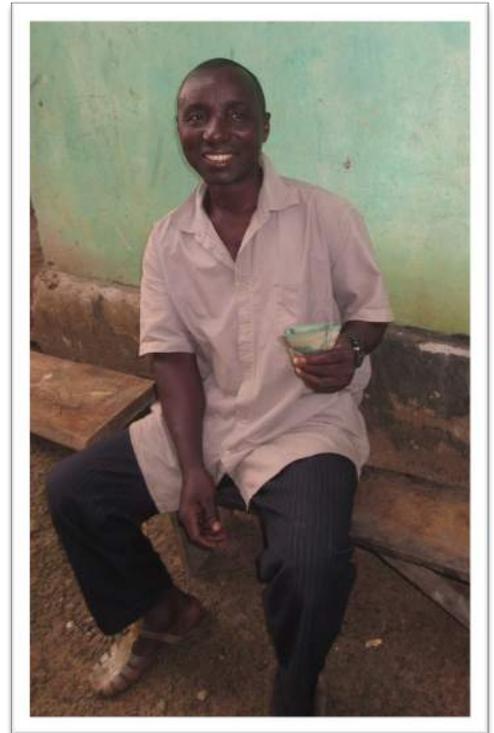


This story was selected as the Top Story of 2016. The story outlasted three rounds of selection by field staff, in-country leadership and the US-Based leadership team.

Gbessay's story is not unusual. 52% of stories collected contained a theme of women's empowerment or inclusion – either at the household or community level.

adamant in the home". He held such high esteem in the traditional belief that men should exert dominance in the home that he had never made a decision in consultation with his wife or allowed her any opportunity to control their income. It was difficult for Gbessay to fathom relinquishing his control over the household, but his wife pleaded with him and he finally agreed to her participation in the NOW program.

As his wife shared the financial knowledge and skills she had acquired throughout the duration of the NOW program, Gbessay realized that he had been very wasteful and that he was responsible for their financial distress. Gbessay credited his wife for teaching him how they could manage their income to have money throughout the year. He said, "I did not know we earn income throughout the year until my wife shared the Agricultural Calendar with me...we have palm kernel, grow vegetables, plant groundnuts, and cultivate a rice farm within a single year". The Agricultural Calendar is a picture-based planning tool that helps women track income and expenses on a monthly basis. When Gbessay realized that his wife's learning could transform their financial wellbeing, he began to include his wife in household decision making.



*Photo: Gbessay Alpha Shows Off His Wife's Savings*  
*Photo Credit: NOW Team*

Over a period 6 months, Gbessay and his wife discussed her NOW session learnings and incorporated new knowledge and skills into their household communication and decision making. They both began to see improvement in their household. Gbessay now has so much confidence in his wife's financial prowess that she manages most of their income. He has relinquished sole control of the household, and is happy to make joint decisions with his wife in order to improve their household. When schools reopened in Gbeka in September, Gbessay was pleasantly surprised; his wife took initiative and paid for their children's school fees and materials with her personal savings, and still had spare money to take care of the home!

Gbessay acknowledges that his traditional beliefs about men controlling the household had deluded him and inhibited growth within his own household. He gives credit to his wife's participation in the NOW program for the improved management of their household finances throughout the year. He realizes that his wife's involvement in financial management and decision making has been integral for his family's newfound unity and financial stability. Finally, Gbessay enthusiastically praises his wife, saying, "my family is now living happily...my wife manages our income...when given the opportunity, women are more careful with expenditures...I see how my wife's saving has relieved us!"

## *Honorable Mention: My Source of Inspiration in Building My Own Latrine*

**Village:** Gbeka

**Program:** Community Action

**Domain:** Unexpected Change

Mamie Lansana, a widow, lives in the small village of Gbeka. Mamie participated in Gbeka's community latrine project in partnership with OVP. Before OVP partnered with Gbeka, there was not a strong culture of using or building latrines, primarily due to the widespread practice of open defecation and misperceptions surrounding latrine construction and use. Open defecation was preferred as it offered fresh air, a means to examine feces to track one's health status, and was a longstanding practice. Additionally, community members did not want to put further pressure on the few existing latrines in the community, as new latrine was perceived to be too expensive and too technically involved to construct.

This story received Honorable Mention during scoring for the 2016 Most Significant Change process.

Mamie is an example of ordinary community members who feel involved in OVP's inclusive engagement with communities. While MSC was geared towards Community Action Group volunteers and NOW participants, Mamie was a part of the 48 people (22% of storytellers) who shared stories of significant change that were not directly engaged with OVP programs.

During Gbeka's design phase of their community latrine project, the Community Action Group (CAG) held a community meeting where they presented the budget necessary to build a single latrine. Mamie was present and noted the costs associated with building a latrine. As the community mobilized and gathered the resources for construction, Mamie realized that with little savings and the local materials widely available, including sand, stones, mud, and wooden poles, she too could build a latrine. Equipped with this knowledge, Mamie set a goal to build her own latrine closer to her home over the course of three months. Mamie stated, "I felt directly motivated and inspired by this [the OVP] process to build my own latrine."

In order to achieve her goal, Mamie started gardening, stashing away proceeds from her produce into a cash box built by the local carpenter. While saving, she started gathering local materials, which she now realized could be used to build an economical latrine. Using her savings from the cash box, Mamie gradually purchased other materials including cement, rod, metal roofing, nails, etc. As Mamie developed her confidence to build her own latrine, she contacted some local youth to dig a latrine pit near her home. She monitored their use of the materials she had purchased with her hard-earned money; during community meetings and project implementation led by the CAG, Mamie had learned that monitoring was a necessary means to ensure accountability and project success.

Mamie has now become a 'positive deviant' in Gbeka, someone who independently acts to implement solutions to problems and encourages others to follow suit. She regularly attends meetings where she serves as an inspiration for other women in the community. Where building latrines was once believed to be the job of a man, Mamie has illustrated that women are not only capable, but empowered, to take initiative and create sustainable development solutions. Mamie attributes her inspiration for her actions to OVP's expressed values of participation, inclusion, and gender equity. She now has a functioning latrine with a hand washing station for her family's use, and she believes others will be inspired to follow in her footsteps. Mamie enthusiastically shares, "we are only limited by our own thinking". Mamie's own initiative and pride in ownership makes community development sustainable long after OVP leaves.



*Photo: Mamie Lansana Poses in Front of Her New Latrine  
Photo Credit: Community Action Team*

## *Mohamed's Behavior Motivated Youth in Gbeka*

**Village:** Gbeka

**Program:** Community Action

**Domain:** Capacity as Leaders

Mohamed Koroma, a 32-year-old farmer and father of three, lives in an OVP partner village, Gbeka in Eastern Sierra Leone. With great pride, Mohammed shared his transformation from being classified by his family and community as a failure, to being recognized as an emerging leader and role model for youth in his village.

Prior to OVP's involvement in Gbeka, Mohamed's relationships with his family and fellow citizens were acrimonious. At the household level, he lived a cat-and-dog life due to his argumentative and short-tempered disposition. These prevailing characteristics extended beyond the household and in to the community. Mohamed had a reputation for disobeying bylaws and challenging authorities, which hindered his contribution to community development. Mohamed lacked focus and motivation to improve both his future and that of his village.

In a well-attended community meeting, Mohamed was endorsed by his community to serve as a Community Action Group (CAG) volunteer to lead development activities in his community after he presented himself as a volunteer. Mohamed was given the chance to serve in the CAG due to OVP's encouragement of diversified leadership within the community. He and his colleagues were trained in project planning, implementation and monitoring, and they also learned skills in facilitation, effective communication, and mobilization.

The trainings were a turning point in Mohamed's life. He gradually built confidence in himself, and he realized the need to be respectful, cool tempered, a good listener, and a team player in order to accomplish community work. As he began to put these new skills and behaviors in to practice, Mohamed developed good relationships with community members and leaders, and became increasingly committed to community development. He recognized the power that he and others like him had to shape the future of their community.

Mohamed realized the positive changes within himself and was encouraged to transform his reputation within the community and his relationships at home.

In Sierra Leone, young adults are considered "youth" and generally are not supported by their community or their leaders stemming from disunity that surfaced during the Civil War. **Stories about a change in youth leadership or collaboration with local authorities made up 17% of the total headlines collected during the MSC process.** Improved youth leadership, engagement and mobilization is considered an unintended outcome of OVP's Community Action Program.

Youth leaders have emerged in part due to OVP's engagement with them in several areas:

1. Many youth have been selected by their communities to serve on the Community Action Group.
2. Some youth provide local, skilled labor for construction projects led by the Community Action Group.
3. Youth are feeling engaged in the community development process because of OVP's push for inclusion and total participation.

Testament to his newfound motivation, he seized the opportunity to support his wife, Fudia, to join OVP's NOW (Nurturing Opportunity for Women) program. His wife was a participant in the program, and there were regularly organized family sessions where participants' husbands were encouraged to attend. Mohamed always attended these sessions, where he and his wife were able to discuss ways to improve household finances, communication, joint decision making, conflict resolution and household unity. This led to an opportunity for Mohamed and Fudia, along with their three children, to learn and share experiences on how to handle household issues. The door to open communication suddenly flew wide open as Mohamed and Fudia discovered new ways to face challenges.

Mohamed was also appointed to lead his Community Action Group by other volunteers, and he recently became a co-facilitator for OVP in two neighboring communities. Co-facilitators are outstanding community leaders who assist OVP with their expansion to new communities and help build an intricate network of change agent volunteers. Mohamed began working with the villages of Yandohun and Maloma where he was given the opportunity to share what he has learned through community development projects in his own village. The increased responsibilities and respect Mohamed has gained have seriously impacted others' view of him. He has transformed his behavior much to the admiration of his family and his community members. In return, he is also experiencing improved relationships, greater appreciation, respect, and increased leadership roles in the community.

Through the incredible wealth of experience Mohamed now has as a leader in his community, he took it upon himself to build a meeting place, called an Ataya Base (Ataya translates to 'strong coffee'), where young people can converge to discuss development challenges and solutions. Mohamed has become much more committed in helping to mobilize the young people of Gbeka to move forward with community development. He continues to work on his relationships at home, recognizing that respecting his wife and children is key to their own success. His family and young people in the community have taken notice and all speak positively to Mohamed's transformation. Mohamed believes that young people have to gain from and offer to the community. He now takes it upon himself, as a promise to his people, to continue his service as a positive role model for youth in his community.



*Photo: Mohamed, Wife Fudia and Daughters  
Photo Credit: Community Action Team*

## *Grima Undertook a Sustainable Project*

**Village:** Grima

**Program:** NOW

**Domain:** Problem Identification/Solving

Grima is a picturesque OVP partner village in Kailahun District, Eastern Sierra Leone. It is surrounded by hills, lush swamps, and rich farmland. After Sierra Leone's 11-year civil war, Grima was left completely devastated. A flood of developmental organizations, governmental and non-governmental alike, came to Grima to implement reconstruction and rehabilitation projects. These organizations predominantly prescribed to the traditional approach to development. The plethora of projects carried out in Grima were not participatory or community-led, but rather externally-designed and implemented by the various organizations.



*Photo: Grima Community Members Gather Local Resources  
Photo Credit: NOW Team*

Amara Saffa has lived in the Grima community since he was born and has been involved in many projects implemented in his community by various organizations, including many well-known international NGOs.

In 2014, OneVillage Partners identified his community as a partner village for its operations that were temporarily suspended due to the Ebola Outbreak, but began again in 2015. Amara voiced, " [before OVP intervention] our community had not been able to undertake any projects on our own, we had only depended on projects initiated by NGOs...we were not trained in project implementation and we lacked knowhow because we were not fully involved in the activities". Chiefs were generally the only people contacted by NGOs, which left the entire community unaware of and excluded from the planning of any project. However, community members were still expected to do work to implement projects, which resulted in poor work, disunity, and apathy towards community development. Until OVP partnered with Grima, this was the only experience they had with organizations.

According to Amara, Grima had been donor dependent and lacked knowledge and skills to sustain their own development because of the approach used by other organizations that have passed through their community. In 2015, OVP introduced two new programs to the community of Grima – Community Action and Nurturing Opportunities for Women.

Community Action was brought forth first to build leadership capacity and drive civic engagement. The Nurturing Opportunities for Women (NOW) program created a chance for women to manage their household finances and engage in good communication and decision making within their household and community.

These two programs demonstrated a new approach to community development and allowed the community to define and lead their own development initiatives, resulting in the creation of a thriving community. “OVP taught us self-reliance and to work as a group for community development, which showed us that unity is strength,” said Amara. The NOW program created opportunities for families to come together and discuss issues within and beyond household walls, which has contributed to a united environment that is conducive to community development in Grima.

The community recognizes the need for sustainability, as OVP has encouraged the community to better understand, develop, and maintain their assets to meet the evolving needs of individuals and the community over the long term. The Grima community recently partnered with a for-profit organization in the area to cultivate 30 acres of palm plantation. After realizing that the company would collect a portion of the profit, Amara explained that individuals in his section of Grima later joined together and independently planted individual palm plantations to support themselves and their families. They believe this will foster an even deeper sense of unity and sustainability within the community. Amara stated, “the knowledge and skills have changed our way of life...OneVillage Partners has built a strong and lasting legacy among us as we are now putting learning into practice and seeing the benefits it brings to our households and community at large.”<sup>4</sup>

According to OVP staff who spent time with Gbessay, the youth are serving as a torchlight in the sense that they are now a guiding light in the community. The youth are helping the community to see the way forward, to positive transformation and community development.

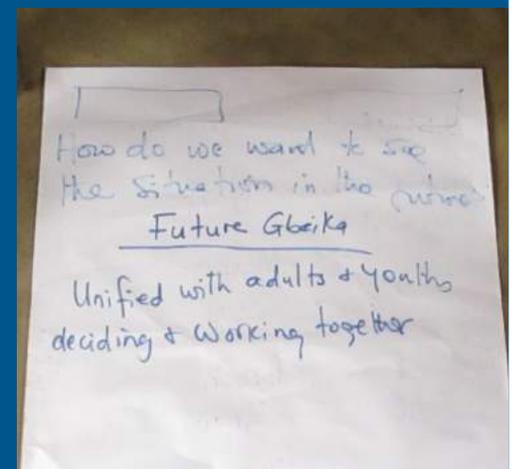


Photo: Early on in Gbeka’s engagement with OVP, they defined a future Gbeka as unified with adults and youth deciding and working together. A vision is realized in Gbeka, where 48% of headlines contained a theme of greater social cohesion or youth leadership. Photo Credit: Community Action Team

<sup>4</sup> Amara credits OVP for community members’ recognition that they needed a meeting space and the ensuing resumption of construction on an old barray (meeting place). He also points to OVP’s construction of a ‘health house’ during the Ebola crisis as a reason the community now understands the importance of maintaining and adding to their preexisting community clinic. It is very likely that OVP’s presence in the community before the Ebola crisis encouraged community members to independently mobilize to strengthen these assets. However, because OVP was not fully operational in Grima when these additions to their community assets took place, we cannot claim that these actions are a direct outcome of OVP’s current presence in Grima.

## *The Torchlight for Transformation in Gbeka*

**Village:** Gbeka

**Program:** Community Action

**Domain:** Civic Engagement

Gbessay Alpha, an active and enthusiastic youth, lives in Gbeka. During a meeting about most significant changes he experienced through his involvement with the OVP-Gbeka partnership, Gbessay shared his experience growing up as a young person in Gbeka. According to him, “the stone once neglected by the builder has now become the chief corner stone”. This statement illustrates that the youth are now the torchlight for transformation in his community. While they were once overlooked as vital contributors to community development, youth are now a leading force toward a luminescent future of Gbeka. His comment also reflects the high involvement of youth in Sierra Leone’s 11-year civil war – a consequence of the youth being neglected by the central government and their village authorities in earlier years.

Before the war, the voices of the young people in rural villages in Sierra Leone were not heard. There was serious disunity between young people and village authorities due to poor transparency and accountability, and the lack of engaging young people in decision-making.

Furthermore, a general lack of community and familial support for young people contributed to school dropout rates skyrocketing. Due to this lack of support and trust within their own communities, young people began to rebel, and they saw the civil war as an opportunity for vengeance against the leaders of the community that had kept them from experiencing progress and development.

After the war, spillover effects like drug addiction, alcoholism, poor trust in leadership, disrespect for the law and low levels of community participation have perpetuated underdevelopment in these rural communities. These effects were only exacerbated by the failure of the community to empathize with their emotions. This post war stigmatization resulted in the community completely losing focus on the youth.

These prevailing attitudes continued until the advent of OVP. The introduction of OVP’s model created a forum for greater participation, understanding and recognition of one another’s roles as partners in development. According to Gbessay, OVP’s approach, which focused on total involvement and high community participation, has opened the eyes of the chiefs, women and youth, and motivated them to work together for the development of their community.

At the early stage of OVP intervention, youth who volunteered were selected to participate in Gbeka’s Community Action Group (CAG). They were trained in facilitation skills,

community mobilization, effective communication, as well as project planning, implementation and monitoring. At each phase, youth were given voice in the community's development decision-making, which built up their confidence and encouraged their continued participation. Gbessay further explained that, during OVP meetings, chiefs recognized the important role of youth in development. One of the youth CAG volunteers, Mohamed Koroma, has also become more recognized and respected by community authorities due to his commitment to community work, and he acts as a role model and advocate for youth to be engaged in community development processes. The emergence of youth as powerful and valuable players in Gbeka's development has motivated traditional leaders and authorities to acknowledge the need to be more accountable and transparent.

Inclusivity and transparency have created good feelings and sense of unity among all. Mutual trust and respect between the youth and the chiefs has

deepened, youth's participation and involvement in community meetings has increased, community members are open to learning from one another, and finally, the youth of Gbeka are seeing themselves as key change agents essential to community development.



*Photo: Gbessay Proudly Poses with Mobilized Youth in Gbeka  
Photo Credit: Community Action Team*

Many youth were involved in the implementation of the latrine project in Gbeka; they banded together to dig holes, collect stones and make bricks. The youth's response to challenges has also improved. They can be easily mobilized for road maintenance, and many youth-based farming groups have been formed in order to provide support to family farms. By recognizing how much they have to offer to their community and how much they stand to gain in return, youth involvement in development initiative is steadily increasing.

However, despite these efforts, youth still experience challenges. Some community members do not have confidence in them, some youth are not willing to be involved in community work, and some leaders see motivated youth as a threat to their own power. Gbessay acknowledges that though these challenges are not surprising to the youth, they are more determined than ever to prove to the community that they are indeed the "torchlight for transformation".

Youth gather regularly to discuss ways to overcome these challenges and address other community problems at the local Ataya Base, a meeting place where gatherers converse and drink strong caffeinated tea. They have tried to build the community's confidence in them by voluntarily undertaking road construction, forming rotational farming groups, joining various savings groups, as well as attending regular community meetings, where they meaningfully contribute.

In conclusion, Gbessay and the youth in Gbeka have illustrated that they are dependable and important stakeholders in determining the future of their community. Youth have been engaged in identifying and solving community problems, and they have been proactive in undertaking community development work. This has been recognized by the community and traditional leaders, and youth are being more and more valued in the processes of community development. "The youth once neglected by our community are now the torchlight for transformation," said Gbessay.

*The five stories highlighted here represent the exemplary outcomes that OVP is seeing due to our partnership with communities in Eastern Sierra Leone. The stories provide us with rich qualitative data to inform our programs as we constantly adapt and learn. The accompanying quantitative data (see next section) illustrates overall trends associated with our work.*

## Results

MSC is heavily rooted in qualitative data, however, there is opportunity to conduct additional quantitative analysis from both headline and story content. Alongside the selection of the MSC stories, OVP's MEL team further analyzed all 217 headlines by quantifying the results. This analysis allowed the OVP MEL team to better understand the outcomes revealed in the selected stories, identify overarching themes and capture information from headlines as well as stories that were not included in the final rounds of selection.

All 217 headlines were entered into a database where they could be analyzed by several variables including participant role, village, program, domain etc. In addition to analyzing the headlines by variable, the MEL team also utilized QDA Miner™ qualitative data analysis software in order to more deeply analyze the content (notably the key facts) within the headlines. No headlines were eliminated from this process, and even headlines that were very similar to others were included in order to illustrate common themes.

### Distribution of MSC Participants

The MSC process focused on two primary groups, Community Action Group (CAG) volunteers from the Community Action Program and participants from the NOW Program. MSC was disproportionately targeted toward women because half of the CAG volunteers are women and all participants from the NOW Program are also women (thus,

87% of the targeted participants were women). However, true to OVP's values, the process was open to anyone who wanted to participate. Community meetings held at the start of the MSC process invited general community members, men and women alike, to share stories of significant change. All headlines that were shared during the process were integrated into the analysis.

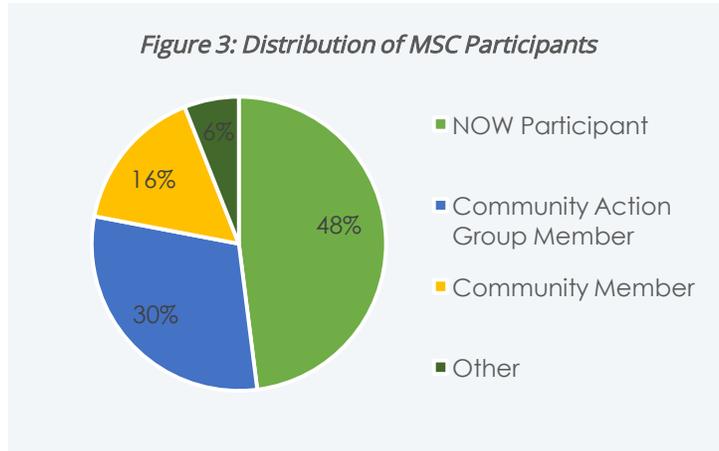
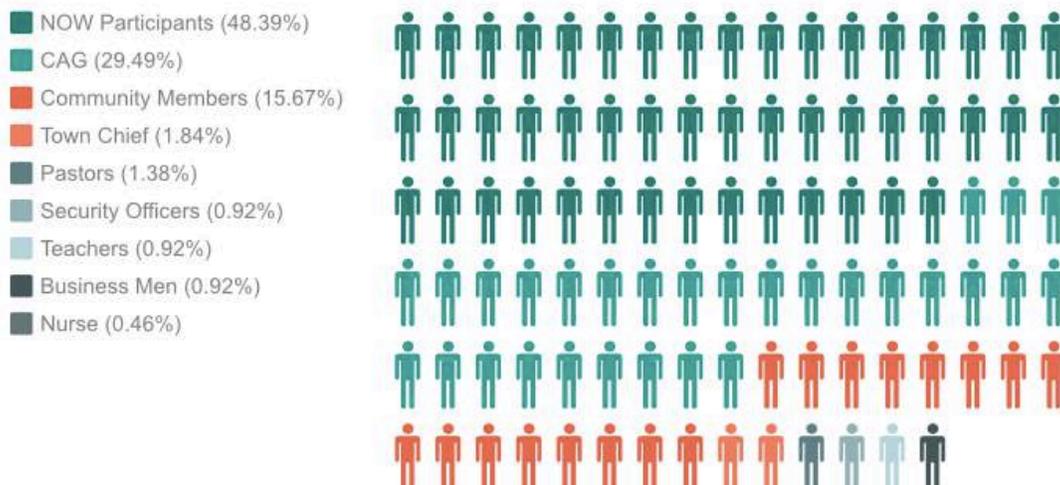


Figure 3 shows that while the majority of people who took part in the MSC process (78%) were members of the CAG or participants from NOW Program, 22% of people who took part in the process were ordinary community members or members of the 'other' category, which included: business owners, a nurse, pastors, sanitary officers, teachers and village authorities.

### Headlines Collected by Role

The number of headlines shared by each of these groups showed interesting correlations to changes within the domains. NOW participants shared the highest number of headlines, 105, while CAG volunteers shared 64. However, as shown in Figure 4 the nature of the Community Action Program is illustrated in the number of headlines collected overall, as an additional 34 headlines were collected from community members who experienced changes resulting from the program. Considering this, there is quite even distribution in the headlines collected by role – also demonstrated in the number of headlines collected per program, which again is quite evenly distributed (55% of headlines collected from NOW, 45% from Community Action).

*Figure 4: Headlines Collected by Participant Role*

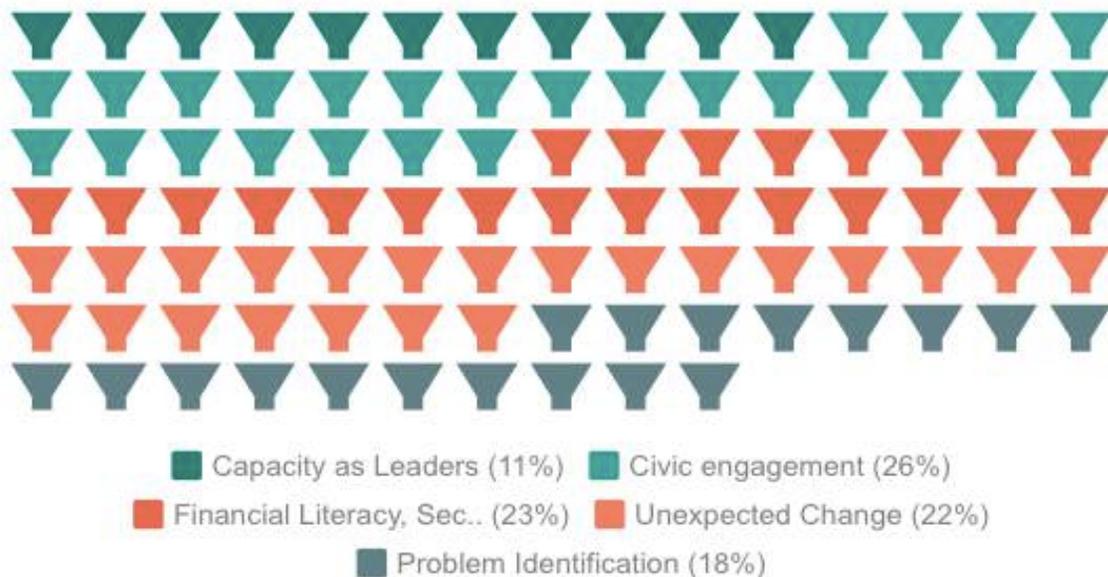


## Domain Distribution of Headlines Collected

Analyzing the domain distribution of headlines collected showed that the domain with the highest number of headlines was “civic engagement” – one of the domains selected by OVP to better understand the impact of the model (both Community Action and NOW programs) in the communities. This tells us, that when asked about change in civic engagement, community members and project participants alike had the most number of headlines to share.

After civic engagement, the domain with the next highest number of headlines collected was “financial literacy, security or resiliency,” the domain developed to better understand outcomes from the NOW program. Of the headlines that were turned into stories, the domain distribution was equal, as part of the process was narrowing down the top headlines and top stories to reach the five stories included in the previous section. Figure 5 illustrates the distribution of all stories collected across OVP’s five domains.

*Figure 5: Headlines Collected by Participant*



## Unexpected Change Headlines Collected by Program

The number of headlines collected in the unexpected change category reveals the high number of unexpected changes participants experienced through both programs. There were 28 headlines collected from the Community Action Program (labeled as “ACT”) in this domain and 20 collected from the NOW Program. Secondary analysis further explains the types of changes experienced in this domain by participants.

## Secondary Analysis

Secondary analysis is the process of utilizing qualitative research methods to further explore the qualitative content of all headlines collected, not just those that were turned into stories or selected to final rounds. There were five prevailing themes that emerged during the process of analyzing content from the 217 headlines gathered through the MSC process.

### 1. Women's Empowerment and Inclusion

An intended outcome of OVP's work and the key theme that emerged in the secondary analysis is women's empowerment and inclusion. This theme was not just found within the NOW Program, but also in the Community Action program. The NOW Program collected 76 headlines that mentioned women's empowerment or inclusion, whereas the Community Action Program collected 36 headlines that mentioned this theme. 52% of headlines included a statement about women's empowerment or inclusion related to the work of OVP, including:

- "Women attending and leading community meetings"
- "Community acknowledging gender inclusion"
- "NOW program has enriched us with knowledge and skills to undertake our own initiatives and development"

### 2. Social Cohesion

An intended outcome of OVP's work was also illustrated in the prevalence of social cohesion-related changes. 43% of headlines included a statement about social cohesion, either on a household or community-wide level. It is important to distinguish that OVP recognizes these changes as greater social cohesion and not unity. Even though the process was open to the entire community, not everyone chose to participate in the MSC process, therefore OVP cannot assume that this sample is representative of the way the entire community feels. There could be community members who do not feel represented or included in community development, therefore unity cannot be assumed. OVP expects that overtime, prevalence of social cohesion could contribute to unity. Examples of social cohesion include:

- "Unity and peace in the community"
- "Community united and now meets to discuss pressing development issues"
- "Community members united to achieve a common vision"
- "Husbands and their wives now listen and advise each other"

### 3. Mobilization

Notably, 37% of headlines included a point about community mobilization or engagement, an intended outcome of OVP's holistic model. While one MSC domain was developed to capture changes in civic engagement, it appears that community mobilization and engagement was a crosscutting theme as it appeared across four out of five domains (including all except "change in financial literacy, security or resiliency"), for instance:

- "More community responsibility"
- "More community mobilization and cooperation"
- "Increased community involvement and participation"

### 4. Improved Leadership

Finally, leadership was another common theme across all domains. 30% of headlines included changes around leadership, particularly with more transparent and accountable village authorities and greater leadership and mobilization among young people. Examples include:

- "Good relationship between youth and leaders"
- "Transparent and accountable leaders"
- "Youth taking the lead in community activities"
- "More interaction between the chiefs and community members"

### 5. Unexpected Change: Women's Empowerment and Inclusion

Changes experienced in the unexpected change domain were concentrated highly in one category –women's empowerment and inclusion. Women's empowerment and inclusion was included in 36 headlines collected in the unexpected change domain. It is clear that MSC participants did not expect to see involvement and inclusion of women to be so widespread, nor did they expect the high payoff that coincided with this change. Key facts collected during the headline gathering process included:

- "Inclusion of women in decision-making"
- "Exchange of gender roles and responsibilities"
- "Women being bold and playing active roles during meetings"
- "Women can now lead community meetings"
- "Men recognizing women as partners in development"
- "High respect for women's opinion in the community"

## Lessons Learned

### *Programmatic*

The goal of MSC is to inform programmatic learning. OVP's analysis of headlines and stories captured during the MSC process and discussions with OVP implementing staff have identified lessons learned in Community Action and NOW, as well as OVP's model as a whole. Key lessons learned include:

**When men are engaged in the NOW program, they are more supportive of women's involvement in decision-making.**

The home visits and family sessions of the NOW curriculum enable husbands and male family members to learn and practice communication skills, and see firsthand the benefits a NOW participant is bringing to the household. As men recognize the achievements and capacity of women, they support women's involvement in both household and community development. OVP should retain home visits and family sessions as well as create new opportunities for men to be engaged in and learn from NOW.

**Creating a platform of gender equity has instilled confidence in women to share learnings and use their voice.**

Women have gained confidence throughout the NOW Program to share the curriculum lessons not only within the household but at the community level as well. OVP should continue to promote gender equity, especially in the first year of Community Action, and create more opportunities within the NOW curriculum for participants to share knowledge and skills with the broader community.

**OVP is successfully meeting the principal internal value of inclusivity.**

OVP's value of inclusion of the marginalized was widely accepted. Women and youth empowerment and inclusion was seen throughout MSC stories. The involvement of both women and youth was recognized as key to community development, as it leads to greater mobilization and social cohesion. OVP should continue to encourage total participation and recognition of the marginalized in the Community Action Program, to ensure projects address community needs that are representative and beneficial to all.

**Donor dependency poses ongoing challenges.**

Prior to engagement with OVP, many communities were used to receiving monetary or material gifts from NGOs. Many participants, especially in the NOW program, are failing to understand that OVP does not provide such gifts. This is due in part to a lack of income generating activities within communities. More informative to programmatic learning is that the introduction of loans and business ideas in the NOW curriculum is creating an expectation among participants that they should be looking to OVP for monetary support. OVP should modify these sessions of the curriculum to be less beguiling and more strictly informative and continue to explore how to support income generating opportunities for women.

**Traditional authorities and leaders should be continuously engaged in program activities.**

Communities are not yet recognizing that their leadership is fully transparent and accountable. There is still an expectation from traditional leaders that they should be the sole decision-makers in community development, despite their knowledge of the OVP model and their participation in and endorsement of OVP programs. OVP should deepen awareness among traditional leadership by keeping them informed and engaged throughout the duration of the programs. Whenever appropriate, OVP should also include traditional leadership in trainings around good communication, consensus building, and community development to foster greater transparency and accountability among leaders.

*About the Method*

In addition to lessons learned regarding OVP's programs, there were many lessons learned about MSC as a methodology and implementing such a highly engaged process with entire communities. The key lessons learned are:

**Domains should be developed in a participatory way.**

OVP staff who implemented the process in communities requested more buy-in during the domain development step. Further, OVP recognizes that in upcoming iterations of the process the community should also have a voice in developing the domains. This was not undertaken in 2016 due to lack of time and resources.

**Staff training should be frequent but not highly intensive.**

Training staff to utilize new approaches can be challenging. Both staff and senior management recommended that trainings be more frequent but less time-intensive to allow them time to understand the key aspects of the training and practice their skills in the field. Moving forward, OVP plans to train staff over the course of two months with weekly trainings lasting only two hours rather than an intensive month of weekly trainings lasting more than four hours.

### **MSC should not occur back to back for programs.**

This year, OVP staggered the implementation of MSC by several weeks so that the two programs were not implemented at the same time. In theory, this was to reduce confusion for program participants regarding their involvement. In the end, this caused greater confusion and too much crossover of stories reported to staff from both programs. In the future, OVP plans to implement MSC during a 1-week period following conclusion of each program cycle, which will have several months of separation between the conclusion of the other program.

### **Getting participants to think about change is difficult.**

OVP staff found it difficult to get participants thinking and talking about changes, especially the significance of these changes. Several warm-up activities should be perfected to get participants thinking about changes, especially intrinsic ones focused not only on physical or infrastructure changes. Probing facilitation should be utilized in order to get participants thinking about significance.

### **Headlines or story ideas are an effective way to gather a lot of content in a time-saving manner.**

OVP expected a high number of stories to emerge from this process. It was recognized during the early stages of planning for MSC that writing complete stories for everything heard in the communities would be impossible. Instead of losing content that might not be selected as most significant, OVP decided to have program staff record key ideas in a format that was easily executed in the field during implementation, so that these story ideas could be included in the quantification and analysis even if they were not selected to be turned into stories.

### **OVP should integrate existing qualitative methods into the MSC process.**

Each month, OVP staff gather to share 'stories of impact' based on observations from the field that resonate as impactful or important to our work. This is both a learning and a reflective time for the team to gather and discuss improving programs. The process has a lot of crossover with MSC (it is story based, staff select the most impactful or unique stories, feedback loops are present). Therefore, in the future, these stories will be revisited as potential MSC story ideas, where staff may go back and visit participants to better understand significant changes they experienced.

Most Significant Change (MSC) proved to be a highly time and resource intensive undertaking. Despite this, the method allowed OVP to see concrete examples and evidence of the types of outcomes we expect the model to produce, in addition to unintended outcomes that will inform the model going forward. When we decided to use

MSC, we did so with two goals in mind. First, to include communities in our evaluation processes in order to foster learning, growth and capacity development. Second, to inform our holistic model – which includes our two programs, Community Action and NOW.

As OVP is constantly learning and adapting, we see MSC as an effective tool to not only measure success, but continue capacity building efforts in communities and inform our work moving forward. Thus, we have decided to incorporate MSC into our existing program cycles on an annual basis. Communities will expect MSC to come after the completion of benchmarks in our programs, such as the completion of a community-led development project or an iteration of the NOW curriculum. Not only will this process lead the community to reflect on significant changes, it will also jumpstart our next period of engagement with them – challenging them to vision further into their ideal future. As we continue to utilize MSC, it is imperative that we keep communities at the forefront of the process and find innovative ways to keep them engaged in the process.

With any process like MSC, there is always room for improvement. While we spent an immense amount of resources on this first iteration, it will not be a breeze in the future. We need to stay cognizant of the need for adaptation with the process. The way in which we do things with one community may not work with another, so we must remain flexible.

## Conclusion

The use of MSC was very effective for OVP. It allowed us to work directly with community members in new ways to support their own capacity development and for the development of our organization. The data collected reaffirmed some of our existing assumptions but also brought to life some unintended outcomes that we suspected might be widespread. This data will serve several purposes. For organizational learning, we will be able to continue adapting our model. For communications, these valuable stories will assist us in sharing our work with the outside world. Implementing MSC with our partner communities was highly collaborative and mutually informative. The lessons learned and results from MSC are truly meaningful for both OVP's growth and for our partner villages to move forward in achieving their shared vision for their own communities.

## Further Resources

Please see the appendices attached for clarifying additions to this report. Additionally, OVP is compiling all tools and resources created and utilized in our MSC training and implementation in to one toolkit. This MSC Starter Toolkit will be available in 2017 to those individuals or organizations that are interested in learning more about OVP's adaptation and application of the methodology in order to develop their evaluation work and an MSC process. If you are interested in receiving the MSC Starter Toolkit, please contact OVP's MEL Manager, Sophie Dresser, at [sophie@onevillagepartners.org](mailto:sophie@onevillagepartners.org).

## Appendices

### Appendix A: OVP Monthly Reflection Process

In early 2016, OVP revised a monthly process that intended to capture instances of impact from the field and encourage staff to share their experiences in a reflective all-staff meeting. This process was revised in order to include more components of MSC in order to prepare staff to implement the methodology in late 2016. Therefore, stories of impact were collected and grouped into a series of categories, later to be referred to as domains. Stories were then selected based on how impactful or unique the staff felt the stories were in order to further sensitize staff to the idea of significance. Finally, during sharing of the stories each month, managers undertook their own selection round by selecting one significant story each month to be featured on the OVP website in a blog series called *OneVillage Perspectives*.

This process of preparing staff by integrating MSC methodology into already existing processes enabled them to be more successful during a very intensive period of implementation. A sample of how these stories were collected is reflected below:

#### Story of Impact Report Template:

Story Title:			
Staff Name:			
Who:	_____	_____	_____
	Participant Name	Role	Village
When:	____/____/____	_____	
	Date	Activity	
Category: <b>Check one (✓)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Norms <input type="checkbox"/> Social Cohesion		
Key Point:			
Describe: <b>What happened?</b>			
Interpret: <b>Why is this significant?</b>			
Recommend: <b>What can we do to support this type of change moving forward?</b>			

## Appendix B: OVP MSC Story Selection Criteria and Scoring Rubric

### Selection Criteria

Stories of Most Significant Change were selected by scoring each story according to the degree of demonstrable evidence of the following criteria, encompassing behavior change, community needs, inclusion and sustainability:

1. **Demonstrates behavior change related to an activity of the program:** the story illustrates evidence of a specific behavior change that can be underscored and directly linked back to an activity of the program.
2. **Demonstrates program contributed to change beyond the storyteller:** the story illustrates a specific behavior change beyond the person telling the story – it shows impact that has spread to others. The change is underscored and can be directly linked back to an activity of the program.
3. **Demonstrates program met a need:** the story connects a need felt by the community or the person to an outcome of the program.
4. **Demonstrates program included a marginalized person(s):** the story illustrates how the program included a marginalized person in implementation or through the outcomes of the program. Marginalized person(s) are defined as those who are traditionally left out of the development or decision-making process in the community including but not limited to women and children.
5. **Demonstrates a change that will affect long-term development on a community or household level:** the story illustrates a change that will lead to more changes/outcomes/impact that will have a positive effect on the development of the community or household.
6. **Demonstrates self-reliance:** the story shows a change in the community's momentum towards self-reliance where there is a statement within the story of great reliance and movement towards self-reliance.

### Scoring Process

Only these six requisites were considered in story scoring at each level of story selection. This ensured consistency and minimized biased judgements of any given story's significance. Each member of each selection team scored a story on a scale of 0-4, based on the below criteria. The total scores of each criteria and total story scores were added, and the stories with the overall top scores were selected to advance to each subsequent selection team. The MSC Top Story of 2016, "My Wife's Personal Savings Relieved Us!" was the story with the top overall score in the final selection.

Criteria	Score
1. Demonstrates behavior change related to an activity of the program	
2. Demonstrates program contributed to change beyond the storyteller	
3. Demonstrates program met a need	
4. Demonstrates program included a marginalized person(s)	
5. Demonstrates a change that will affect long-term development on a community or household level	
6. Demonstrates self-reliance	
<b>Total</b>	

Scoring System
0—no evidence   1—little evidence
2—some evidence   3—strong evidence
4—strong evidence beyond expectation