



# Addressing Gender and Women's Empowerment in mHealth for MNCH An Analytical Framework

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# Why MNCH?

- Maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) is a global priority as reflected in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
  - ❖ MDG 4: Reducing child mortality;
  - ❖ MDG 5: Improving maternal health;
  - ❖ MDG 6: Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases.
- **Innovative solutions are necessary to reach these goals by the target date of 2015.**



# Why mHealth?

mHealth holds real promise to improve MNCH outcomes by providing:



Education  
& Awareness



Healthcare Worker  
Communication & Training



Diagnostic  
Treatment & Support



Remote  
Monitoring



Disease & Epidemic  
Outbreak Tracking



Remote Data  
Collection



**A real possibility: LMICs accounted for more than 80% of the 660 million new mobile-cellular subscriptions added in 2011.**

# Why Address Gender?

## Why Women's Empowerment?

- Gender inequity and women's low social status and disempowerment have significant impact on women's health, maternal health and overall demand for maternal health care services.
- An mHealth intervention can have the unintended negative consequence of gender based violence.

Women do not have equal participation in technological advancement in LMICs:

- ❖ A woman in the developing world is 21% less likely to own a cell phone than a man;
- ❖ 82% of married women who own a mobile phone say it makes their husbands suspicious.
- ❖ The husband is most likely to get the first handset in a household, where women are living on less than US\$2 a day

Source: GSMA Development Fund: Women and Mobile: A Global Opportunity: A Study on the Mobile Phone Gender Gap in Low and Middle Income Countries and Striving and Surviving: Exploring the Lives of Women at the Base of the Pyramid.

# Mobile Devices + Health Information helps empower people to make more effective decisions about their health

- 84% Women wanted better health care related information
- 39% expressed a specific interest in receiving general health care information through their mobile phones



# mHealth empowers Women!

Nine out of ten women who owned mobile phones **feel safer and more connected** with friends and family.

85% of women who reported owning mobile phones report **feeling more independent** because of their mobile phone.

Mobile phones have also helped with **solidarity and addressing issues of isolation and stigma** for HIV+ women (Mexico: SHM, Zumbid)



# mHealth empowers Women: CARE's IFHI project, Bihar, India

Suite of mHealth applications for Front Line Health Workers in Bihar, India – an RCT to compare paper based tools and job aids with mHealth applications

Initial learnings and FLW perceptions:

“I feel proud using this with women in my village. It increases my value in their eyes.”

“I can't read. But, as the phone reads out questions – I can use it.”

About prompts (guided questions): “I don't need to remember everything. It (the mobile) guides me what to discuss.”

About Job-aid: “showing videos to clients make our job easier. They also believe us more – when I show videos in the mobile.”

“Home visits are more exciting with this mobile.”

Women and children should not only be *beneficiaries* of mHealth projects but should be *equal participants* in the development and implementation of mHealth interventions.







# The Need for the Analytical Framework

This framework will provide mHealth interventions with an outline:

- ❖ To understand gaps and issues related to gender;
- ❖ Develop appropriate gender transformative interventions to achieve sustainable health and empowerment outcomes.

# Framework Development

This analytical framework draws from:

- Reviews of existing evidence and gaps,
- Lessons learned from the field,
  - IWG catalytic mHealth grants initiative implementing partners
- Dialogue and discussion with experts
  - Women, ICT and Development (WICTAD) Forum (Washington DC; January 10-11, 2013)



# Four Domains for Analyzing Gender Issues

The framework identifies 4 domains for analysis to encourage women's **voices, participation** and **access** to mHealth interventions:

- 1) Development of technology and related content;
- 2) Policy-making and implementation;
- 3) Providers of health services;
- 4) Clients of mHealth services.





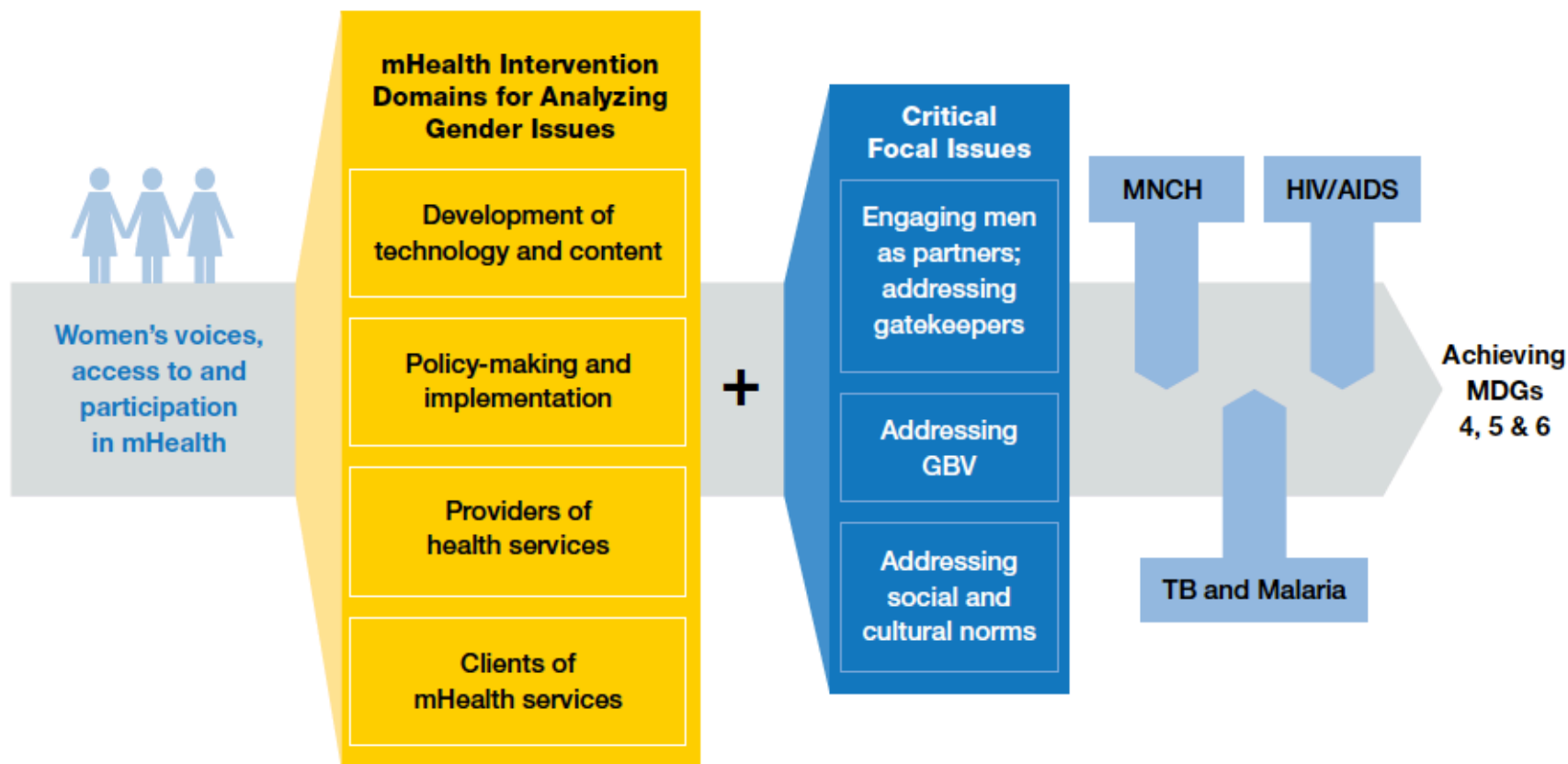
# Critical Focal Issues

- Gender Based Violence
- Engaging men and other community gatekeepers
- Social and Cultural Norms

# The Analytical Framework

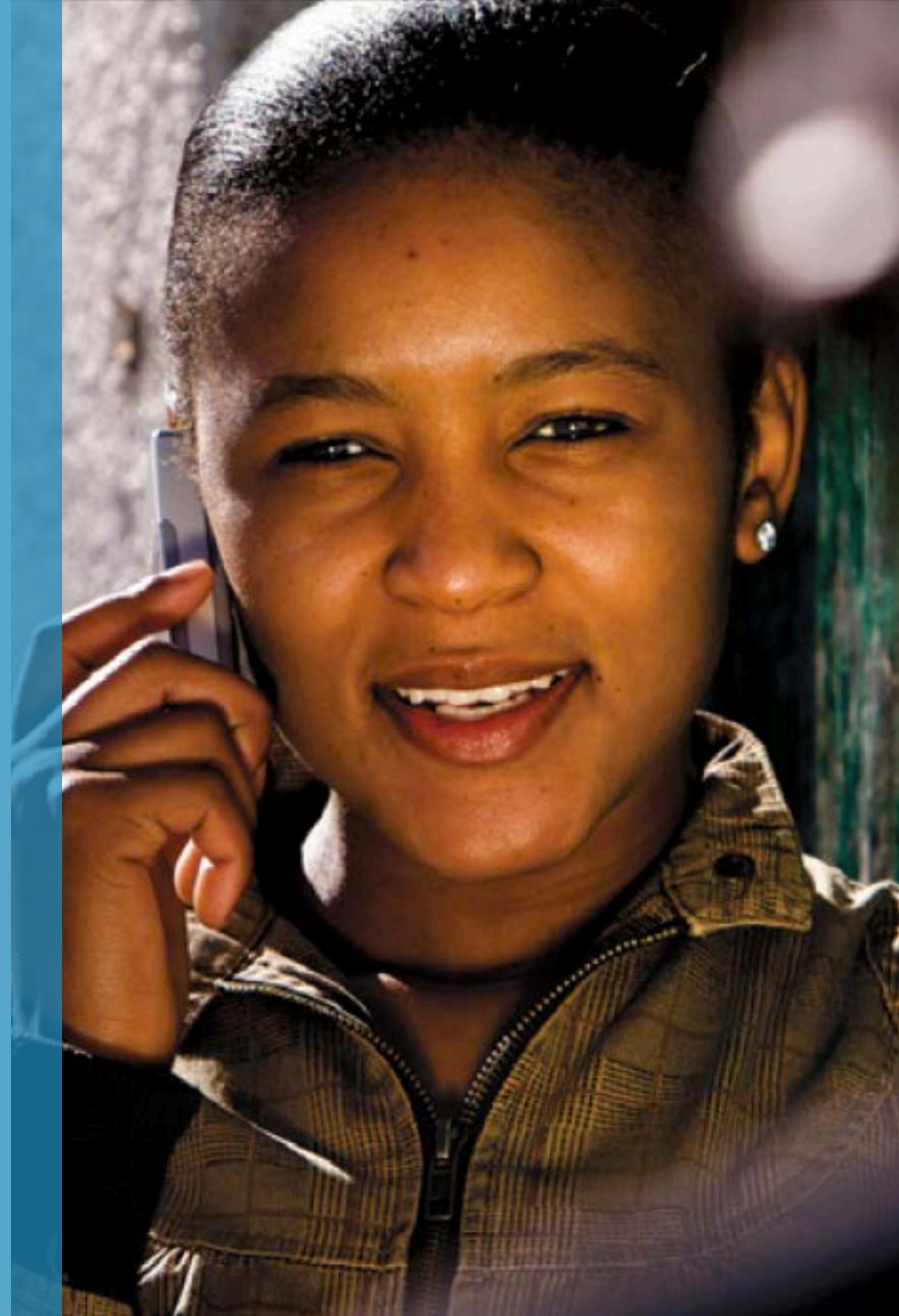
Figure 1.

mHealth and MNCH: Addressing Gender and Women's Empowerment—A Framework for Analysis



# Moving Forward: Applying the Framework

- Information and analysis from this framework can:
  - Inform assessment and measurement of women's empowerment, gender equality, and their contribution to health outcomes;
  - Serve as a model for organizing discussions at the community, national and global levels.



# Recommendations for mHealth community:

1. Conduct gender gap analysis within mHealth interventions;
2. Generate evidence related to mobile phone technology, women's empowerment and contribution to desired health outcomes;
3. Design gender transformative mHealth interventions;
4. Mainstream gender issues for adaptation to mHealth interventions;
5. Develop indicators to measure women's empowerment and gender issues in mHealth interventions;
6. Document best practices and successful approaches.

# Key Questions for discussion today:

1. What are the barriers, implications, and consequences related to gender and women's empowerment within specific mHealth interventions and solutions?
2. How do mobile phones address gender issues and empower women?
3. How does successfully addressing gender issues and empowerment of women with mHealth contribute to improved health outcomes?



# Thank you!

Download the full Gender Analytical Framework:

[www.mhealthalliance.org/media-a-resources/publications](http://www.mhealthalliance.org/media-a-resources/publications)

