GENDER EQUITY AND MALE ENGAGEMENT: IT ONLY WORKS WHEN EVERYONE PLAYS

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

› CEDAW
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

› CEFM
Child, Early, and Forced Marriage

› CVCT
Couples Voluntary Counseling and Testing (for HIV/AIDS)

› FGM/C
Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting

› GBV
Gender-Based Violence

› HIV/AIDS
Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

› ICPD
International Conference on Population and Development

› ICRW
International Center for Research on Women

› IPV
Intimate Partner Violence

› KIIS
Key Informant Interviews

› PMTCT
Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (of HIV/AIDS)

› SGBV
Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence

› SIDA
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

› STI
Sexually Transmitted Infection

› USAID
United States Agency for International Development

› UNFPA
United Nations Population Fund

› VAWG
Violence against Women and Girls

› WEE
Women's Economic Empowerment

› WfWI
Women for Women International

› WHO
World Health Organisation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meaningful engagement with men and boys is increasingly recognized as critical to advancing gender equality and equity. It is necessary not only for women's empowerment, but also to transform the social and gender norms that reinforce patriarchy and inequality and harm both women and men. The primary challenge embedded in this work is how to engage men and boys effectively without instrumentalizing them as a pathway to women's empowerment or marginalizing women and girls in the process. Success requires a firm understanding of the conceptual underpinning of male engagement work, how it has been brought to bear in practice, and to what effect.

In this report, supported by Cartier Philanthropy, ICRW provides a historical overview of the nearly 40-year-old male engagement field, as well as guidance for stakeholders on how to support the funding, design, and implementation of programming that engages men and boys in transforming gender norms. The insights we offer are drawn from published and grey literature, key informant interviews (KIIs), and a convening of global experts on male engagement programming for gender equity and women's empowerment. Specifically, this report details approaches, challenges, and best practices for working with men to achieve gender equity in six sectors: **violence against women and girls, health, economic empowerment, care work and fatherhood, land rights and agriculture, and political participation**. And we offer important considerations for male engagement programming in **conflict-affected settings**. Throughout the report, we also address how to ensure that engaging men and boys in gender equity programming takes place in collaboration with women and girls, recognizes the power structures that disadvantage them, and acknowledges their lived experiences.

Understanding Key Concepts, Rationales and Approaches

It is well understood that the concepts of empowerment, equality, and equity underpin all gender work. However, what these concepts mean, and how they relate to male engagement work, is not always clear.

Empowerment is defined as the ability to have the resources, such as knowledge and skills, and the agency—that is, the ability and freedom to define and act upon one's goals—to make decisions and take action related to matters of significance in one's life. All people stand to benefit from being empowered. However, due to patriarchal power structures, women and girls generally start from a position of disempowerment, societal constraint, internalized subordination, and lack of control over key aspects of their lives and bodies. Achieving women's empowerment requires

a commitment by people of all genders to pursue and realize universal standards of gender equity and equality.

While equality and equity often are used interchangeably, they are distinct concepts. **Gender equality** is defined as the same treatment of all people regardless of gender identity; simply pursuing equality fails to recognize the ways that gender identity informs needs, aspirations, priorities, and sensibilities. **Gender equity** refers to the creation of conditions of fairness that take into consideration the diversity of all people across all genders and identities—not despite their gender, but in response to their gender. As such, gender equity is necessary to achieve gender equality. This is why **ICRW proposes gender equity as the ultimate goal of male engagement programming**.

A common thread among rationales for engaging men and boys in gender equity work is that both women and men live within patriarchal power structures, uphold these structures, are harmed by these structures, and are responsible for transforming them. This notion should not be used to argue that men and women are harmed equally by patriarchy or to obscure the very real effects of male privilege. Rather, it should deepen our understanding of the full spectrum of these power imbalances and their ripple effects.

At its core, engaging men and boys is therefore about recognizing how social norms of power and gender affect men and women as individuals, in their relationships with each other, and in the structures and institutions that organize societies—and bringing this recognition to bear on gender equity programming. While the conceptualization of the role of men and boys in gender equity and women's empowerment programming often varies, a growing consensus is focused on engaging men as stakeholders or co-beneficiaries of gender equity programming, an approach that allows men to understand and advocate for the benefits of gender equity that both men and women will experience.[1] **Throughout this report, we advocate for the engagement of men as stakeholders and co-beneficiaries.**

Approaches to gender equity in male engagement programming fall along a gender inclusion spectrum, first outlined by former ICRW president, Geeta Rao Gupta, in 2000. The spectrum includes gender reinforcing, gender neutral, gender sensitive, gender transformative, and gender empowering programming.[2] However, gender sensitive and gender transformative approaches are most commonly used. Gender sensitive programming takes into account and seeks to address existing gender inequalities, while gender transformative programming aims to transform unequal gender norms and their attendant behaviors and attitudes. **Gender norm transformation is largely considered to be the most effective approach to programming**. It includes work on "masculinities"—or helping men to reflect on how their conceptions of masculinity, and thus their lives, are influenced by unequal gender norms, and encouraging men to move from "toxic" to "positive" definitions of what it means to be a man, such as being an involved father. A number of experts also make the case for **gender synchronized programming**, which addresses the needs of both men and women, utilizing both single- and mixed-gender groups strategically to transform gender norms.

The State of Male Engagement Programming

The international community was the first to recognize male engagement as a critical element of gender equality work in 1979, with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. It was again recognized in 1995's Beijing Platform for Action, and then was the focus of the 2004 UN Commission on the Status of Women. Although the literature centers mostly on the evolution of male engagement in the formal international arena, key informants suggest that the genesis of programming had its origins in both men's feminist anti-violence work and public health work on HIV/AIDS.

As the field has evolved, it has been met with—and continues to experience—challenges and criticism, as well as consensus. These include how to address the ever-present influence of patriarchy, even among practitioners; balancing the need to provide safe spaces for men and women to reflect on gender norms and inequality with the ultimate goal of bringing men and women together to do this work; and the need to address masculinities and femininities and explore the roles of men within women's lives while making a concerted effort to avoid reinforcing the gender binary.

The most significant challenge continues to be how to remedy a programmatic tension between emphasizing the ways in

1. MenEngage Alliance & UN Women. (2015). ***Men, Masculinities and Changing Power: A Discussion Paper on Engaging Men in Gender Equality from Beijing 1995 to 2015***. UNFPA.
2. Gupta, G. R. (2000). Gender, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS: The what, the why, and the how. ***Can HIV AIDS Policy Law Rev.***, 5(4), 86–93.

which men are harmed by patriarchal gender norms and the benefits men stand to gain from gender equity, and the need to explicitly address unequal power dynamics that privilege men and men's responsibility in upholding those dynamics. There is considerable disagreement among experts about how best to involve men in reflective discussions on these topics – including how to motivate their participation and the content of the discussion. Many experts stress the importance of avoiding a "zero-sum game" approach, which suggests that men have to give up or lose power to help advance women's empowerment. However, without addressing the potential shifts in power dynamics that will occur, programming can set up unrealistic expectations and ultimately reinforce benevolent sexism, which are beliefs and attitudes that view women as valuable, but not equal or equally as competent to men. This idea is also dubbed "patriarchy light."

Considerable concerns also remain around the framing of male engagement for women's empowerment. Some experts argue that this framing obscures the harms that men experience due to rigid gender norms and the benefits they can gain from a more gender-equitable environment. These experts instead preferred a focus on gender equity. Others, however, felt that women and girls should remain the center of gender equality work, since they are the ones who have been disadvantaged historically and systematically. Taking this into consideration, while the ultimate goal is gender equity, asking how male engagement impacts women and girls empowerment is a necessary step along the path to equity.

Another common challenge in the male engagement field relates to **intersectionalities**. While most agree that programming must recognize the multiple forms of oppression and power that may be experienced and expressed by both women and men, what this looks like in practice remains unclear. Additionally, as gender identity and sexual orientation influence access to and use of power and resources, there needs to be more exploration of how to break down the gender binary and include those across the gender spectrum in efforts to promote gender equity. Another area of widespread agreement, but little practice, is the need to engage men at the institutional level, rather than focusing exclusively at the individual, couple, and community levels.

Finally, **accountability** emerged as a critical concept and practice after reflection on these challenges and divisions in the male engagement field. In this context, accountability refers to the field's responsibility to the goal of gender equality and to feminist principles, to the women's movement, and to women as stakeholders, beneficiaries, and practitioners. While there is widespread commitment to accountability, its centrality in implementation at all levels of intervention and across the field is unclear.

Gaps and Emerging Best Practices

While many effective programming strategies are emerging from the male engagement field, gaps remain. For instance, programmatic efforts on positive masculinities often do not touch on sexuality or transgender and gender non-conforming identities. Instead, they employ a predominantly heteronormative framing of gender relations that can be counterproductive to achieving gender equity. In addition, most male engagement programming focuses on the individual and does not address the broader structures of patriarchy within which individuals and relationships operate. And while the theoretical framing of male engagement programming presumes the ultimate objective of contributing to gender equity, programs often are not structured in this manner on the ground. As such, they often do not incorporate considerations for women's existing work, voices, and needs throughout their programming. Programs also often fail to measure outcomes for women. This oversight prevents programs from determining whether there are connections between shifts in attitudes, behaviors, and norms, and whether male engagement efforts actually lead to changes in the lives of both men and women.

Through ICRW's study of the male engagement field, we identified the following best programmatic practices for addressing these and other gaps at the individual, community, institutional, and policy levels.

Individual

Start young and adapt through life transitions. Intervening with adolescent boys can have profound impacts, as these boys will likely have a greater chance of having more equitable relationships and of positively influencing those around them for the rest of their lives. It is also important to **continue to**

engage men and boys as they age and transition through life. Gender transformation programming should target men throughout their lives, involving them in different ways and using different conversations and activities, depending on what stage of the life cycle they are in. Programs also should consider the diverse roles men play—as partners, brothers, fathers, employees, community members, etc., and how these change over time—and incorporate the multi-dimensionality of a person's existence into discussions about gender.

Use a gender-synchronized approach. Programs should engage with all genders in a process of gender transformation. Gender-synchronized programs may choose to work with men and women simultaneously or sequentially and with single-sex groups or mixed-sex groups. When using a gender-synchronized approach, it is important to **provide men and women with safe spaces** where they feel they can discuss gender norms and reflect on the ways in which patriarchy plays out in their own lives.

Promote alternative, positive masculinities. Positive messaging that promotes men as agents of change can be encouraging and inspiring. These messages are most transformative when men have opportunities to also reflect on how messages apply to their own lives, and acknowledge and take responsibility for their own gendered behaviors. Also, **promoting positive, nurturing, and collaborative images of men's engagement in care and fatherhood** can be used as an entry point for involving men in care-giving and envisioning alternate masculinities that enable more equitable distribution of household tasks and decision making.

Community

Use male role models and advocates. Recruiting male role models from intervention communities is effective in catalyzing norm change and bringing gender equitable views out into the open. Using peer mentors, celebrities, community leaders and other role models to advocate for gender equality can begin to change overall gender norms that lead to inequitable outcomes for women. However, when working with these local role models and mentors, it is important to **unpack gender norms among male facilitators and role models**. Programming should recruit and train facilitators and role models that are open to fully embracing gender equity and are comfortable with and work effectively under women's leadership. Part of training male leaders should also include ensuring that they recognize the significant work that has been and continues to be done by women's groups.

Identify and collaborate with community influencers. It is important to engage with men in communities who are perceived as thought leaders and key influencers in creating, shaping, and upholding community norms, including those around gender. These community influencers are often religious leaders, elders, or other traditional authorities whose words can take precedent over those of foreign implementers, peer activists, and in some cases, even statutory law. Doing preliminary research to identify and collaborate closely with thought leaders and influencers of all genders can boost the effectiveness of interventions that engage men and boys.

Institutions and Policies

Acknowledge and address institutional hierarchies. Programs that seek to transform gender norms around masculinity at the institutional level should identify and target the individual men who hold power within these institutions and work to shift their gender norms.

Engage male leaders to create more gender equitable workplace policies. Men in leadership roles within companies should craft policies and procedures that promote more equitable employment or entrepreneurship environments, such as through equal pay for equal work, parental/family leave, flexible hours, and anti-sexual harassment policies.

Promote the voices of female policymakers, but also listen to voices "from the ground." Policy-based male engagement programming should seek to strengthen the visibility and agency of women in decision-making bodies where female policymakers exist. Interventions also should ensure that gender-focused civil society groups are included in policy formation and implementation to avoid a top-down approach.

Recommendations

In this report, we offer high-level recommendations for male engagement programming operating at any level, across any sector. A highlight of these recommendations follow—with more details in the report—to provide guidance for donors on how to use investments to advance the field of male engagement programming.

Fund programs that employ innovative measurement techniques to better understand if and how male engagement contributes to gender equity: Thus far, programs that include elements of male engagement seldom identify, measure, or monitor incremental shifts in underlying social norms and values. However, if male engagement approaches are to be used to contribute to greater and more sustainable shifts in gender equity, additional and "deeper" social norms measurement and evaluation is necessary to understand what types of approaches can truly and sustainably move the needle on gender equity. With this evidence, donors and implementers will better understand where to invest efforts to contribute to sector-specific goals and broader gender equity. Below are some measurement strategies we recommend for helping to build this evidence base:

- **Explore and address how aspects of masculinity and femininity play out in people's relationships with one another**. Programming that works with individuals and/or couples should look beyond changes within an individual's attitudes and behavior. Implementers should also seek to measure changes in how couples interact by looking both at relational changes as well as similarities/differences in data reported by each member of a couple.
- **Utilize more holistic and intersectional measurement**. Male engagement programs within a particular sector may measure outcomes that are relevant to that sector. However, programs should measure broader equity outcomes to understand if sector-specific programming contributes to gender norm transformation, beyond simple changes in men's behavior or attitudes. It is also essential to also measure experienced outcomes among women to know whether the program is actually shifting norms and behaviors.
- **Include social norm change programming in male engagement initiatives and create mechanisms to better understand how such programming may lead to gender equity**. Male engagement should be conceptualized as an approach to contribute to gender norm transformation, which can lead both to women's empowerment and improved standards of gender equality and equity for all people. In the literature and through our conversations with experts, the challenge of conflating changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors with gender norm change was apparent. Even when implementers theorize their activities as contributing to broader social norm change, they often are unable to measure whether activities are actually leading to sustainable norm transformation as opposed to short-term (and often superficial) changes in attitudes or behaviors.
- **Implement long-term programming and conduct complementary longitudinal studies to track incremental progress towards social change**. Social norm change takes time. Therefore, it would be beneficial for donors to consider funding longer-term programming to allow for sustainable changes to occur. To understand what changes are happening, why, and how sustainable they are, programs should include a rigorous measurement component to allow for panel or longitudinal data that would track norm change among a cohort over time.
- **Compare the effectiveness of different platforms for male engagement**. Research shows that male engagement approaches are most effective when they are context-specific and leverage existing institutions and platforms. It would therefore be beneficial for donors to fund interventions that use different types of institutional platforms (e.g., religion, school, sports, local leaders). These would be complemented by an analysis of the differential impacts and best practices in leveraging existing platforms to work with men to enhance gender equity. Such an assessment could also weigh the benefits and harms of working within existing structures—for instance, religious institutions, which are often defined by patriarchy—in their ability to truly transform gendered social norms.

Explore the impacts of male (and female) engagement on social movements: The rapid rise of civil society (globally, in-country, locally) is one of the most influential and effective mechanisms for transforming societal norms, governance institutions, human rights accountability, and political accountability to pursue the common good. Civil society often accomplishes this through broad-based coalitions that take the form of social movements. Women typically participate in these social movements, but frequently struggle to achieve the type of leadership roles so often dominated by men in society. Studies should explore recent and current social movements focused on women's empowerment and gender equity to uncover the roles of men and women in these movements. This effort would look for examples where male engagement in these movements helped to heighten the voices and concerns of women and achieved outcomes that were beneficial for women—without men dominating the process. These findings could be used to shape programming efforts that give support to current social movements and provide recommendations and guidance for future movements.

Uncover best practices for gender norm transformation in contexts where gender norms may be under extra pressure or quickly shifting, such as in conflict/post-conflict settings: In conflict-affected contexts, pressure on individuals to ascribe to gender norms or their lack of ability to carry out defined roles related to masculinity or femininity may be accentuated. Due to shifting social structures, there may also be unique opportunities to test alternative gender roles. Therefore, programming in these areas should seek to better understand how gender norms shift in these contexts and how programs and policies can reconstruct more gender-equitable norms.

Create programs that focus on gender norm transformation within the workplace, and seek to understand how this can help prevent sexual harassment: Gendered power inequalities enable sexual harassment to occur at the workplace. To call attention to these incidences, as well as to prevent future harassment, companies need to think about gender norm transformation within the workplace by investing in research and training to create more equitable work cultures. Engaging men in this process can foster an environment in which women not only feel safe, but are empowered to excel professionally.

Build coalitions and share knowledge related to male engagement work: Sustainable gender norm change is a complex process and therefore, requires long-term, multi-sectoral efforts across all ecological levels. Programmatic efforts can build synergies that contribute to broader social norm change over time and across sectors; through partnerships with organizations operating at different societal levels; and with the collaboration of men's and women's organizations and movements. As male engagement is still a relatively nascent field, it is also important for implementers and coalitions to create opportunities for learning and sharing around what works, as well as what doesn't work.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite at least 20 years[3] of broad consensus in the field of women's empowerment that men and boys need to be engaged for sustainable gender transformation efforts, much remains unknown about the most effective strategies for engagement. Furthermore, most of the research and evaluations that have been conducted on male engagement have focused on men's attitude change instead of changes in behaviors or outcomes for women. Where outcomes for women have been evaluated, the focus has largely been on women's health-related outcomes[4,5,6,7] and reductions in violence[8,9,10] leaving other dimensions of empowerment largely untested. Despite the lack of rigorous evaluations of male engagement programming, there is a growing body of expertise and grounded knowledge about what works well and what does not.

Cartier Philanthropy has a longstanding commitment to the social and economic empowerment of women and girls globally. It has demonstrated this commitment with strategic investments in a number of critical areas, including programming that seeks to engage men as allies in the empowerment of women to achieve higher standards of gender equality and equity.

With funding from Cartier Philanthropy, ICRW conducted a learning review to inform future investment and programming that engages men to enhance women's empowerment and contribute to broader gender equity. This report is the compilation of the learning review's findings and includes a theory of change as well as a synthesis of the available evidence on how engaging men can best contribute to gender equity. It also describes best practices in the field of male engagement, provides noteworthy program examples, identifies gaps in the research, and offers recommendations for where funders might best direct their future investments.

In preparing this report, ICRW reviewed over 150 different sources, including peer-reviewed publications, grey literature, and documentation of promising program examples. ICRW also conducted more than 20 key informant interviews (KIIs) with researchers, on-the-ground implementers, and funders who are working in the field of male engagement in Latin America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In July of 2017, ICRW hosted a targeted convening of both internal and external experts. ICRW also heard from several program implementers, who shared their experiences in the field. The convening resulted in additional information, contained in this report, which outlines current expert opinion on best practices and lessons learned to inform investment in male engagement programming moving forward.

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OVERVIEW OF THEORY – MALE ENGAGEMENT FOR GENDER EQUITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women's Empowerment in a Patriarchal World

Achieving equitable standards of human well-being and opportunity, and universal respect for human dignity is a formidable challenge. Success rests on all people having the freedom to pursue their own goals for personal and societal development, and being afforded reasonable means to realize those goals. It also rests on overcoming the historical and present disadvantages faced by women and girls, who across the world, live under patriarchal norms that constrain their opportunities and frequently frustrate their aspirations. Focusing on women and girls' empowerment is therefore essential to move beyond the inequitable patriarchal status quo sustained by deeply socially ingrained gender norms.

The concept of empowerment refers to the expansion of capabilities, especially for those whose agency has been systematically constrained. Such expansion depends on having both the ability and the freedom to make informed, rational choices on matters of significance to one's life. This understanding of empowerment is therefore closely linked to the unfettered ability to acquire information, access critical resources, and participate in decision making around one's personal development.[11,12,13] An appropriate combination of critical resources (physical and financial assets, skills, information, access to services, etc.), the exercise of genuine agency (i.e., the ability and freedom to define one's goals and to act upon them with due respect for the agency of others), and the sense of accomplishment and worth linked to the recognized achievement of such goals, together constitute the empowerment process.[14,15,16] All people, no matter their gender, stand to benefit from such empowerment, yet the need for empowerment is both intuitively and measurably more significant for women and girls, who generally start from a societal position of far greater disempowerment, widespread societal constraint, internalized subordination, and lack of control over key aspects of their lives.

Broad social development, as well as discernible movement towards gender equity, ought to underpin all policy and programmatic efforts. However, a realistic assessment of context is essential. Women's lives are situated within societal, economic, and other power structures of deeply entrenched patriarchy. Just a few statistics exemplify this inequitable position all too clearly:

a. One in three women worldwide have experienced some form of violence;[17]

b. Women and girls comprise two thirds of the world's illiterate population;[18]

c. Women carry out one to three more hours of household work each day compared to men, and women contribute two to ten times more time per day to caring for children, the elderly, and sick;[19]

d. Women are less likely to be engaged within the formal employment sector, and even when they are, they earn 10 to 30 percent less than men;[21] and

e. Globally, only 21.8 percent of legislative seats in national parliaments are held by women.[22]

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17. World Health Organization (WHO). (2013). *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*. Geneva: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council and the World Health Organization.
18. UNESCO. (2013). *Adult and youth literacy, UIS fact sheet*. Washington, D.C.: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved from: http://www.uis.unesco.org/literacy/Documents/fs26-2013-literacy-en.pdf
19. World Bank. (2012). *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development*. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development & World Bank.
20. Ibid.
21. UN Women. (2012). *Progress of the World's Women: In Pursuit of Justice: 2011–2012*. New York: UN Women.
22. Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2017). *Women in national parliaments*. Retrieved from: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

Under such entrenched, inequitable, and pervasive patriarchal norms, women are typically relegated to fill a limited range of socially sanctioned roles in which they exercise little power or influence. As summarized by one of the key informants in our study, "women are losing out."

The need is therefore evident and compelling: women and girls must be supported in finding a path to empowerment so that they are able to assert their equal dignity and move progressively and rapidly toward equal status with men and boys. Only through such empowerment will women and girls be able to exercise equal agency with men and boys, characterized by reciprocally respected dignity and meaningful participation in decision making and action at the household, community, and national levels.

Achieving this empowerment—and universal standards of gender equity and equality—require a shared commitment by people of all genders.

Equality and Equity

Gender equality generally refers to equal access to social services, public goods, and resources; and the ability to exercise agency and share the benefits derived from societal development. Under current conditions of gender inequality, women and girls, along with sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or intersex people) and other marginalized groups are commonly and significantly disadvantaged. However, while men may generally fare better, they may face various inequalities and deprivations due to other aspects of their identity, such as their socio-economic status, religion, or ethnic group. Additionally, men and boys also face societal expectations (e.g., being the "family breadwinner") that may place an unequal and onerous burden upon them.

Moving toward a world in which all people have equal agency and access to resources is necessary, but not sufficient. Equality is the same treatment of all people regardless of their gender identity; simply pursuing equality fails to recognize the ways that gender identity informs people's needs, aspirations, priorities, and sensibilities. Instead, the operative goal should be to create conditions that are fair to the diversity of people across all genders and identities. Achieving such fairness, or equity, is essential to helping everyone to flourish, not regardless of their gender, but responsive to their gender. Only through the exercise of gender equity is gender equality achievable.

Engaging Men and Boys

What is "Male Engagement"?

No simple answer exists; after all, men and boys play multiple roles in the lives of women and girls and within society as a whole. To engage men means unpacking these many roles and identities that men and boys hold within the lives of women and girls. Some such roles occur within families and relationships: husband, partner, father, grandfather, uncle, brother, nephew, cousin, son, or grandson. Men and boys also play many roles—often guided by highly gendered norms and expectations—in the community as religious or cultural leaders; in the market as traders, bosses, employees, or bankers; as political representatives; as teachers, doctors and other professionals; and as defense and security personnel.[23] Once such roles are identified and placed within their societal contexts, it is important to examine the concept of power, in terms of how it is exercised both within the performance of these various roles and as an attribute of personality not linked to roles. In all cases, the exercise of power by men and boys impacts women and girls. Making these power dynamics explicit—not only to women and girls through empowerment processes, but also to men and boys through male engagement—is a first step to understanding how power dynamics guided by gender norms can be transformed to become progressively more equitable and equal.

The analysis of male power dynamics is well developed in the literature and in programming, including in the assessment of how such power affects women and girls. The role of men and boys in gender equity and women's empowerment programming is generally conceptualized in three main ways:

- As **gatekeepers** holding power in society. This recognizes that men hold the vast m ajority of positions of power and have, to date, largely upheld inequitable patriarchal norms and protected their traditional prerogatives rather than seek more universally beneficial standards of equality;
- As **allies or partners** in the struggle for gender equality and equity. This is a more inclusive framework that envisions a positive, culturally transformed role for men and boys. However, it fails to fully encapsulate a compelling narrative that achieving gender equality would actually improve the lives of men and boys; or

23. Van Eerdewijk, A., Wong, F., Vaast, C., et al. (2017). *White Paper: A conceptual model of women and girls' empowerment*. Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

- As **stakeholders** and co-beneficiaries. This conceptualizes men as participants and promoters in the process[24] of creating progressively increasing standards of gender equality and equity. It also sees men as benefitting from this process through what they gain from more equitable families and societies.[25]

Related to this last framing is the concept of **gender synchronized programming**. Rather than focusing separately on engaging women and then also engaging men, gender synchronization reflects the premise that gender equality efforts will be most effective when conducted through optimal collaboration and coordination. (See section on *Gender Synchronized Approaches* ›). More specifically, gender synchronization theorists contend that both men and women shape and perpetuate gender norms in society, therefore true social change will only come when all members of a society are engaged to create this change.[26]

The value of gender synchronized approaches was expressed in key informant interviews as a matter of common sense. One key informant asserted that if the ultimate goal is to bring people together to seek common benefits and universal fairness, then continuing to divide them by gender to conduct engagement programming is counterproductive. That key informant posed the question: "When does a strategy of division ever lead to inclusion?" Or, as put by another key informant, "If there are two people you're trying to bring together, you have to bring both together; you can't just bring one together." Instead, it is better to focus on community engagement, or as a third key informant stated: "...we focus on community engagement on moving social change forward. We have found in practice that if we have a program that is designed for women or for men, it is difficult to meaningfully integrate the other part. Especially when it comes to working with men towards gender equality or women's empowerment, that becomes even harder because we all live in this society of patriarchy."

Rationale for Male Engagement

Reports vary as to the origin of the male engagement field, but one explanation asserts that the male engagement movement stemmed primarily from work with men on women's sexual and reproductive health—specifically, engaging men in efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS—and on preventing violence against women. These explanations make sense, as men are often the key household decision-makers on all issues, including those related to the use of condoms and other forms of contraception and to preventing sexually-transmitted infections.

Men (and to some extent, boys) are also the principle perpetrators of violence against women and girls. It therefore stands to reason that programs have largely focused on engaging men and boys to reduce gender-based violence, as reflected in this quote from *The Lancet*:

> The need for work with men in the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) is well accepted among advocates, educators, and policy makers. Over the past 10–15 years, interventions involving men and boys have proliferated around the world. These interventions have been motivated by a desire to address the role of men in violence perpetration, and recognition that masculinity and gender-related social norms are implicated in violence. Although not all men are violent, all men and boys have a positive part to play to help stop violence against women. Furthermore, these men can benefit personally from more equitable relations with women although use of this argument to encourage men to become involved is somewhat controversial.[27]

In programmatic efforts to prevent violence against women and girls, USAID, the largest bilateral donor, recognized the conventional wisdom that strategies to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) must include engagement with men and boys as part of a larger strategy towards achieving gender equality. As USAID stated:

> The recognition of the importance of male engagement strategies to end VAWG is part of a broader acknowledgement of the roles that men and boys can and must play in work to establish and maintain gender equality.[28]

In recent years, development interventions involving men and boys sponsored by a wide range of donors and funders

24. MenEngage Alliance & UN Women, 2015.
25. Ibid.
26. Greene, M. & Levack, A. (2010). *Synchronizing gender strategies: a cooperative model for improving reproductive health and transforming gender relations.* Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved from http://www.prb.org/igwg_media/synchronizing-gender-strategies.pdf
27. Jewkes et al, 2015.
28. USAID (2015). *Working with men and boys to end violence against women and girls: approaches, challenges, and lessons.* Washington, DC: USAID. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/Men_VAW_report_Feb2015_Final.pdf

have recognized that men's role in violence perpetration must be addressed directly, and that "...patriarchal norms of masculinity are implicated in violence."[29] And while accepting that male engagement on its own won't ensure gender equality and that women-focused programming must continue, the literature reflects a movement toward a consensus that:

> To change gender inequalities we have to involve men—but why? In short, because men are part of the problem of gender inequality and so they are therefore a crucial part of the solution.[30]

It is important to note, however, that although the male engagement field initially focused on men as perpetrators of violence and in the spread of HIV/AIDS, more recent efforts have shifted. They instead engage men as co-beneficiaries of programs as well as agents of change working alongside women to promote gender equality and broader positive social development. The ultimate goal of this approach is to achieve universal human dignity.

In addition to tackling the symptoms of gender inequality, such as HIV/AIDS and VAWG, the male engagement field also seeks to focus on the empowerment of women. In the literature and in our KIIs, women's empowerment was cited time and again as a key motivator for male engagement, with some arguing that unless society's norms about gender equality and fairness change concurrently with the empowerment of women and girls, newly empowered women and girls may be stepping out into a world that is not ready to receive them. That could be ineffective, and even dangerous, as it could create an environment ripe for VAWG, perpetrated by men who feel threatened or "left behind" by development efforts. One key informant stated this as follows:

> *Engaging men is important to ensure programming is doing no harm. If women are becoming empowered but the men are being left behind (either in terms of programming or in terms of gender norms/attitude changes), women may be unintentionally put at risk.*

Men need to be involved in women's empowerment programming, according to many key informants who described the desire of women to include men in their organization's (women's) empowerment programming. Women for Women International (WfWI), for example, decided to engage men in their programming after women

Photo Credit: Allie Glinski (ICRW)

participants asked that this component be added in. Female beneficiaries explained that they could not fully implement the empowerment strategies they were learning and gain maximum agency in their households and communities without the support of men, and specifically their male partners. As stated by a WfWI representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):

> *[It is important] to have men as our ally for women's empowerment because we realized that working only with women is not enough in our context because the [patriarchal] social norm is very strong here... We want men to understand that women's empowerment is not against men. Men can benefit from women's empowerment.*

29. Ibid.
30. Flood, M. et al. (2017). *Men make a difference: engaging men on gender equality.* Sydney, Australia: Diversity Council of Australia.

Another informant explained:

> *The value [in engaging men] is that you are not going to be able to reach women's empowerment, or even transform gender relations, if you don't go through men. You have to challenge and look at the unequal relationships and look at how it harms not only women, but in some cases also men and children…The whole idea is to create a more equal dynamic between men and women—from the household level to the community level and on up.*

When men and boys hold more equitable values and are more committed to equality in relationships and in the roles of men and women within institutional structures, they create an enabling environment for women's empowerment. This is applicable at the individual level, as well as the community and institutional levels. By transforming the attitudes and behaviors of men and boys—especially those who are seen to be leaders among their male peers—the prospect for more gender-responsive laws and policies creates space for women and girls to speak up, participate, and engage in decision making. Similarly (and ideally concurrently), when women and girls access greater skills and knowledge and build their own agency, this in turn reinforces gender equity as they gain progressively more equal control over resources.

The dilemma lies in avoiding the premise that men and boys ought to be engaged in women's empowerment solely or predominantly from an instrumental perspective, serving only the interests of women and girls. Experience indicates that program implementers and policymakers should not conceive of male engagement as instrumental to women's empowerment. Instead, they should understand that engaging both men and women in a reflective process that leads to robust commitment to more gender equitable beliefs—and to the course of actions that flow from such beliefs—will be good for society as a whole. Progress on gender equity will be hampered if men see women's empowerment primarily as a zero-sum game in which men are giving something up in order for women to advance. Instead, the objective must be to reach a shared consensus across genders that through more gender-equitable beliefs and improved standards of gender equality, and through more gender-equal behaviors and institutional structures, all members of any society will flourish.

In many households in developing and developed countries, gender norms create and perpetuate an inequitable distribution of power and household responsibilities. While men are pressured to serve as the primary financial providers and decision-makers, women are prescribed the role of submissive caretakers. Because of this, women bear a large burden of unpaid care work. One multi-country study found that women spend on average more than twice as much time on unpaid care work as men do, and in some settings, such as India, women's time spent on unpaid care work is more than 10 times greater than for men.[31] It is also clear from the literature and from expert opinion, that women's unpaid care work responsibilities limit their income-earning capacity. Engaging with men to recognize this inequitable distribution of work within the household may begin to shift gender norms, creating opportunities for women to participate in household decision-making as well as income-generation, and/or to use their time in ways that help enhance their well-being.

More broadly, in order to create greater gender equity, men need to first recognize the gender-based, unequal, and inequitable advantages they enjoy within the prevailing patriarchal structures of society, as well as the harmful restrictions and pressures that these structures place on their lives. Even among women and girls, such norms have become so engrained that their expectations for equity and equality are frequently distorted and the denial of these rights has become internalized. Men hold most of the power, and any policies, programs, or projects intended to realize gender equality and gender equity that do not recognize this fact are doomed to be ineffectual. The transformation of such norms within men and boys, as well as within women and girls, requires the agreement of the power-holders. Male and female engagement is essential if gender equality and fairness and the development benefits that flow from them, is to be achieved.

Within the literature, numerous authors also expressed opinions that align with this consensus that both men and women need to be engaged in gender norm transformation. As asserted by a leading publication:

> …our perspective has always been that we have to work with both women and men if we're about to create social change. How else can we do it? If we're in a community where men and women, together, make up the values of that community, how can we be working with just one group?[32]

31. Budlender, D. (2008). The statistical evidence on care and non-care work across six countries. *Gender and Development Programme Paper 4.* Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Development.
32. Carlson, J., Casey, E., Edleson, J. L., Tolman, R. M., Walsh, T. B., & Kimball, E. (2015). Strategies to engage men and boys in violence prevention: a global organizational perspective. Violence Against Women, 21(11), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801215594888

A key informant further made the case for gender synchronized programming, highlighting how comprehensive programs that work with men and women together may promote more inclusive, gender equitable communities:

> *Make your programs inclusive rather than exclusive…If the ultimate goal is to bring people together, continuing to divide them is not going to get you there. Does a strategy of division ever lead to inclusion?*

Conceptual Frameworks in Male Engagement Programming

Approaches to Gender in Programming

The prevailing theoretical reasoning for and against male engagement in the empowerment of women and girls is derived from the recognition of what is arguably the worst case of gender inequality and inequity: gender-based violence (GBV) directed at women and girls by men and boys. The vulnerability of women and girls to this type of violence demands a societal response, based on a shared norm of valuing the dignity and bodily integrity of women and girls.

Among the best-known conceptual framings of the approach to male engagement is that established by former ICRW president, Geeta Rao Gupta, in her 2000 work on gender-based issues associated with GBV and with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in which she put forward a "spectrum of prevention approaches" that characterize programming. The spectrum starts with **gender reinforcing**, and then moves through **gender neutral**, **gender sensitive**, **gender transformative**, and ultimately to **gender empowering**.[33]

Under this spectrum, **gender-reinforcing** programming actively promotes the status quo of inequality, while **gender-neutral** programming simply does not engage with gender roles and norms.[34] Neither of these approaches is common in gender equity programming that engages men, although programming can inadvertently reinforce gender norms. The spectrum next ranges into **gender-sensitive** programming. Policies and programs that are classified as gender sensitive are those that "take into account, and attempt to rectify, existing gender inequalities and patterns of discrimination or exclusion"[35] as well as those that "…recognize the specific needs and realities of men based on the social construction of gender roles."[36] Gender-sensitive approaches also play an important role in moderating and partially mitigating the imbalance in gendered power relations, although these approaches on their own will not generate sustainable, fundamental changes for greater equality and fairness.[37] At the far end of the spectrum, and at the center of the field, are **gender-transformative** approaches. These policies and programs focus on addressing gender-related norms and subject them to critical examination—particularly those norms associated with masculinity—while also reaching for the larger objectives of transforming norms and behaviors to become progressively more gender-equitable. Approaches that are gender-transformative intentionally set out to examine, question, and change entrenched gender norms and associated imbalances of power. Approaches that are gender transformative encourage critical awareness among men and boys, and women and girls, of prevailing gender roles and norms; promote the dignity of women and girls; push for a more equitable distribution of resources and allocation of duties between genders; and address the power relationships between women and men. Key informants, convening participants, and the reviewed literature (including evaluations) demonstrated a clear consensus that gender-transformative programming was most effective in changing gendered attitudes and behaviors.

How do gender-transformative approaches succeed in sustainably changing gender norms? First, the challenge is to make such norms explicit, by calling attention to and raising awareness around how these norms dictate behavior. Doing so not only sensitizes communities about the gender norms that exist, but it also makes it possible to evaluate and challenge these norms.[40] Effective approaches that are gender transformative disrupt default social assumptions about what constitutes "appropriate" behavior for women and girls and men and boys, and compare these assumptions

33. Gupta, G. R., 2000.
34. Ibid.
35. Edström, J., Hassink, A., Shahrokh, T. & Stern, E. (eds). (2015). *Engendering men: a collaborative review of evidence on men and boys in social change and gender equality.* EMERGE Evidence Review, Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies
36. Barker et al., 2007.
37. Gupta, 2000.
38. Casey, E., Carlson, J., Two Bulls, S., & Yager, A. (2016). Gender transformative approaches to engaging men in gender-based violence prevention: a review and conceptual model. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.* Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838016650191
39. Greene & Levack, 2010.
40. Edström et al., 2015.

against principles of universal human dignity, gender equality, and fairness. This process exposes many unjustifiable, often deeply entrenched norms, such as the premise that men and boys are culturally entitled to control women and girls, thereby exposing women and girls to being vulnerable to physical, emotional, and sexual violence by men and boys.[41] Changing such underlying cultural and societal norms entails interventions that are context-specific and culturally relevant,[42] and that engage male participants in identifying and deconstructing the gendered norms that govern their societies. Norms are based on an assumption of agreement on certain beliefs and values. For instance, if a man makes a sexist remark in a room full of men, he likely believes that the majority of other men agree with him. If no one contradicts him, then he continues to believe that they agree with his remark, and the other men in the room continue to believe that their companions agree with the remark as well, *even if they do not agree*. This perception of shared beliefs perpetuates sexism as the norm, and keeps those who hold more equitable beliefs silent for fear of the social retribution that can come with breaking social norms. To counteract this, interventions should support men in identifying what they perceive the shared beliefs about gender are in their communities (the operating norms), where they disagree with those norms, and where others share their disagreement. Doing so will allow men to explore how they perpetuate norms they don't agree with and give them more security in speaking out against them.[43]

The culmination of the spectrum proposed by Geeta Rao Gupta is **gender-empowering** programming. As described by Gupta, these are policies and programs that "...seek to empower women or free women and men from the impact of destructive gender and sexual norms ... in the ultimate analysis, reducing the imbalance in power between women and men requires policies that are designed to empower women."[44] In reality, few policies and programs are designed and implemented to be gender empowering; instead, efforts that are gender transformative have become the norm in men and boys programming, as exemplified by Promundo and UNFPA's work.[45] Policies and programs that are genuinely gender empowering do exist (see Gupta, 2000) and should not be forgotten; gender-transformative policies and programs can be intentionally designed to lay the groundwork for subsequent gender-empowering approaches.[46]

Gender Synchronization Approaches

The premise that characterizes gender synchronization approaches is simple: it is essential to engage with both men and boys and women and girls together to address the needs and aspirations typically associated with each gender.[47] This cooperative model has been well articulated by the demographer Margaret (Meg) Greene and Andrew Levack, who is the Deputy Director of U.S. Programs for Promundo. Together they have defined gender synchronization as follows:

> Gender-synchronized approaches are the intentional intersection of gender-transformative efforts reaching both men and boys and women and girls of all sexual orientations and gender identities. They engage people in challenging harmful and restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity that drive gender-related vulnerabilities and inequalities and hinder health and well-being.
>
> Such approaches can occur simultaneously or sequentially, under the same "programmatic umbrella" or in coordination with other organizations. Gender-synchronized approaches seek to equalize the balance of power between men and women in order to ensure gender equality and transform social norms that lead to gender-related vulnerabilities. Their distinctive contribution is that they work to increase understanding of how everyone is influenced and shaped by social constructions of gender. These programs view all actors in society in relation to each other, and seek to identify or create shared values among women and men, within the range of roles they play (i.e., mothers-in-law, fathers, wives, brothers, caregivers, and so on) — values that promote human rights, mutual support for health, non-violence, equality and gender justice.[48]

A key aspect of gender synchronized programming is the need to educate men/boys and women/girls about the challenges that the other experiences, the pressures and barriers they face, and the opportunities that are available to them. This also

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Carlson et al., 2015.
44. Gupta, 2000.
45. Casey et al., 2016.
46. Ibid.
47. Edström et al., 2015.
48. Greene & Levack, 2010.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

includes understanding how the opposite gender makes and acts upon decisions, and even how their reproductive system works. Through this shared understanding men/boys and women/girls will be able to better relate and collaborate.

However, this should be done in a deeply context-specific manner, and practitioners should be extremely careful not to justify existing unequal norms. For instance, when describing gendered pressures men experience to be breadwinners for their families, it should be made clear that this pressure does not justify intimate partner violence (IPV) nor women's unequal care work burden, as these arguments are often made in service of existing, oppressive gender norms. It is also essential to be mindful of violence and trauma—asking women who have experienced IPV, or GBV as a weapon of war, to empathize with the gendered struggles of men may be, understandably, alienating. To reach their full promise, gender-synchronized approaches, like all approaches to gender equity work, should keep an equal consideration of gender justice and gender equity.

Men and Boys in Gender Relations

Gender norms are created, passed down, internalized, and sustained through dynamic and relational interactions and influences among individuals and groups—all of whom experience norms and their impacts differently. Men's relationships to women can be viewed as both personal and political. From the political level, men's alliances with women and women's organizations are essential to ensuring men's accountability to women and women's movements. On a personal level, men's relationships with women have strong connections to women's health, bodily integrity, and well-being. Interventions at the relationship and community levels are required to affect and transform current norms to align with gender equality principles, and involve engagement with women and girls, and men and boys, sometimes together and sometimes separately.[49]

Institutionalizing Gender

There is a need to look beyond the individual and community levels of gender norm creation and transformation to the systemic, institutional forces that shape gender norms. Through this approach, existing norms that underpin widespread gender inequalities and inequities are made explicit in order to raise awareness and understanding, and to recognize violence as an instrument of this oppressive system. This approach also characterizes systems of inequality to be overlapping, expanding the focus to accommodate diverse experiences of violence and oppression in a variety of contexts. This view typically embraces a demand for system-wide changes across the social ecology, in which individuals, in different positions, recognize and take responsibility for their own roles in the promotion of equity, in the prevention of inequalities, and in being positive and effective agents of change in support of gender equality and universal human dignity.[50]

49. Ibid.
50. Jewkes et al., 2015.

THE STATE OF MALE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING

Historical Overview

The process of engaging men within the field of gender equality had a discernable beginning in 1979, when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is frequently referred to as the "international bill of rights for women." CEDAW became the first international agreement to include specific language about the equal responsibilities of men and women in family life, and the importance of transforming social and cultural gender norms. Specifically, Article 5 asserts that all states must take measures "to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women."[51]

Following the adoption of CEDAW, there is little available documentation regarding the emergence of the male engagement movement until the 1990s. However, through one of our KIIs, we benefitted from a knowledgeable, informal summary of the history of male engagement work, which our informant argued was an offshoot of the women's movement. In particular, she asserted that male engagement had its origins in the 1980s and 1990s through reaching out to men to play a significant role in the prevention of VAWG and to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS. At the time, work on VAWG in the U.S. focused on creating shelters for battered women; holding perpetrators (always then presumed to be men) accountable; and implementing appropriate sanctions for such acts of violence. At the same time, the male engagement movement was similarly emerging in other parts of the world; in the 1990s, there were reportedly several noteworthy groups engaging men and boys in gender equality efforts within Latin America. One such group was the Men's Group Against Violence in Managua, a pioneering group in the field of male engagement and masculinities. This group raised awareness around how harmful certain permutations of masculinities were in the context of VAWG specifically, and gender inequality more broadly, within society. Men Against Violence was joined by other groups seeking to transform gender norms through male engagement programming. These organizations conducted workshops in which men were encouraged to question gender norms and, specifically, to reflect on how certain ideas of "masculinity" and "machismo" are harmful to both men and women.

Other significant documented milestones in this field occurred during the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, both of which were driven by strong feminist movements.[52] A primary outcome of these meetings, the Beijing Platform for Action, states that a "critical piece for advancing the gender equality agenda is engaging men and boys." Before this, men were primarily seen as an obstacle to women's empowerment, rather than a partner in equality efforts. The Beijing Platform for Action further argued "that women's empowerment and gender equality are central to achieving greater social justice, peace and security, and sustainable development."[53] A 2014 article by the global network of nongovernmental organizations known as the MenEngage Alliance[54], noted the importance of this platform:

> In the Beijing Declaration, governments expressed a commitment to "encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards equality." This language and commitment marked a concerted shift in international discourse toward actively acknowledging and engaging men and boys as an integral part of achieving gender equality. Beyond just the nominal or symbolic involvement of men, the Beijing framework envisions male engagement as a necessary means to challenge the structures, beliefs, practices, and institutions that sustain men's aggregate privileges, as well as to address inequalities between women and men.[55]

51. Ibid.
52. MenEngage Alliance; UN Women; & UNFPA (2014). *Men, Masculinities, and Changing Power: A Discussion Paper on Engaging Men in Gender Equality from Beijing* 1995-2015. New York, USA: UNFPA.
53. Ibid.
54. MenEngage Alliance is a global network of more than 600 NGOs with regional coordinators in six regions of the world and country-level networks in 32 countries, and including UN Women, UNFPA and other partners. The network emerged as an effort to strengthen linking and learning; to improve the evidence base and field of practice; to articulate a common cause of men and boys working on/towards gender equality; and to create a set of core principles to guide and inform the growing field of men's activism for gender equality. Among its core principles are the maintenance of alliances with women's rights movements as well as keeping a feminist perspective, at the same time recognizing that men and boys are affected by rigid and harmful gender norms as well.
55. MenEngage Alliance; UN Women; & UNFPA, 2014.

The Beijing Platform for Action also identified possible areas where male engagement was most needed and where it might generate the greatest positive impacts. These included: 1) education, (2) the socialization of children, (3) childcare and housework (e.g., unpaid and paid care work), (4) sexual and reproductive health, (5) gender-based violence, and (6) the balancing of work and family responsibilities.[56]

According to our KIIs, an increasing number of men's groups arose in the mid- to late-1990s and into the early 2000s consisting of men who identified as feminists and who took an outspoken stand against violence. These men and their groups approached their advocacy work explicitly from a feminist perspective, and they encouraged men and boys to reconsider the prevailing pernicious—and often quite dangerous—traditional cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. These efforts were not limited to advocacy alone; at approximately the same time, one of the first large, well-funded male engagement program began in South Africa. The Men as Partners (MAP) Program, focused on HIV/AIDS prevention, was implemented by a EngenderHealth and Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa. It intentionally embraced men as partners, marking a notable shift in thinking about engaging men as perpetrators of violence and carriers of HIV/AIDS, to thinking about men as co-beneficiaries of and change agents within development programming.[57] This program boldly challenged organizations to find ways to motivate men to practice safe sex and to reflect upon and acknowledge how hegemonic masculinity is an obstacle to those goals.

As male engagement programming gained more attention, especially in the fields of violence prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention, the framing of men and gender in development work continued to evolve. As the focus on addressing unequal gendered power dynamics grew, practitioners and theorists advocated for a framing of men as partners and co-beneficiaries in gender equity work, alongside women. Approaches that focused on encouraging positive masculinities, especially with young men, emerged and flourished during this time as a way to transform gender-unequal beliefs and attitudes. While some programming worked jointly with men and women, the majority of formal male engagement work at the time focused on the beliefs and attitudes of men.

It is important to note that as men's groups for gender equity emerged, and continue to emerge, men's rights groups, with a very different orientation, also materialized. These groups surfaced as a backlash to gains in women's rights—not in support of those gains. They argue that men are victims of patriarchy and gender inequality which favor women. While some of our key informants felt that these groups had occasionally been able to gain at least temporary legitimacy through the male engagement framework, there is a distinct ideological difference between these groups.

The male engagement field continues to spark interest and debate in the 21st century, and has in recent years garnered much international attention and funding. In 2004, the 48th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) examined the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality as one of its priority themes. In preparation for the session, the UN Secretary-General issued a report that described the struggle for gender equality as a "societal responsibility that concerns and should fully engage men as well as women, and one that requires partnerships between women and men." His report also asserted that men and boys have much to gain from progress toward gender equality, noting that men and boys encounter significant deficits in quality of life from the manner in which gender relations are currently defined and practiced.

In this Session's Agreed Conclusions, the CSW reaffirmed that both men and women must participate in promoting gender equality. These conclusions further provided recommendations to continue and expand inclusion of men and boys in key areas, including: (1) the socialization and education of boys and young men; (2) the workplace and the sharing of family and care-giving responsibilities; (3) the prevention of and response to HIV/AIDS; and (4) the elimination of violence. These agreed conclusions are considered the first international policy document to systematically treat men and boys as agents of change in the gender-equality process, recognizing that men and boys should not be perceived as a barrier to progress, but rather can and do make contributions to gender equality in their many capacities and in all spheres of society.[58]

In 2009, the MenEngage Alliance organized a "Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This first global event focused exclusively

56. Ibid.
57. Peacock, D, Levack, A. The men as partners program in South Africa: reaching men to end gender-based violence and promote sexual and reproductive health. *Int J Mens Health*. 2004;3:173–188.
58. Ibid.

on engaging men and boys marked a pinnacle moment in the male engagement field. More than 400 people representing 80 different countries attended, including activists, researchers, and practitioners. At the conclusion of the symposium, the convening produced The Rio Declaration, a document that "expressed the shared desires and goals of the participants for a more equal world."[59]

As male engagement and masculinities work has gained increasing attention and funding in gender and development, many perceive a tension between practitioners of male engagement and those who have historically focused on women's empowerment. The latter group is concerned that the focus on male engagement and masculinities has, or threatens to, marginalize women and girls in development—the half of the population that historically has been at a greater disadvantage in so many facets of life, and a group that is still, in many ways, unheard. This concern also extends to funding, and is not only about women and girls as program beneficiaries but as practitioners and activists, in women's groups on the ground and at the international level. Some women's empowerment groups also feel that "men's groups" increasingly have their own agendas and are no longer as committed to keeping the inequitable plight of women as the focus of their discussions. This trend, in turn, has stimulated some groups working on male engagement, such as the MenEngage Alliance, to reflect on and respond to the backlash, as highlighted in the following excerpt from a 2014 article published by the organization:

> Many activists and organizations engaging men and boys actively seek to align their work with women's movements, but there is a need for greater reflection on the part of feminist men regarding their own gender-based power, and how to ensure that women's leadership and voices remain the backbone of feminist discourse in these shared spaces. There is also a need for activists and organizations working with men to be vocal in their opposition to anti-feminist groups and movements. While these groups are a minority, they are visible in some settings, and sometimes actively seek to usurp the dialogue about gender relations and power inequalities.[60]

Criticism and Consensus

Various criticisms were raised, particularly from consulted experts, during the process of carrying out the KIIs, literature review, and convening of experts. ICRW also discerned different areas where consensus was either evident or could plausibly be construed. These identified areas of criticism and consensus are described in detail below:

Framing of Male Engagement Objectives

Among the most common concerns expressed was the overall framing of "male engagement for women's empowerment." While acknowledging that the field is currently largely defined by this terminology, there was considerable unease expressed around the instrumentalist implications of the framing.

Many participants independently expressed support for an alternative framing with a larger and more inclusive goal: engaging men as partners—stakeholders, co-beneficiaries, and change agents—in working towards gender equality and gender equity. Sustainable change leading to progressively greater standards of universal gender equality and fairness will require more fundamental transformations of societal norms and attitudes. Several key informants wanting to shift the discussion away from instrumental notions about "engaging men" shared a conviction that progress will only really be achieved and sustained by working with women and men, girls and boys. The focus must be on transforming entire communities to support gender equality (including but not limited to reducing violence against women and girls). Male engagement, while essential, cannot stand alone as a solution to achieving gender equity. This refocusing on positive social development and associated norm change recognizes that men and boys and women and girls each have differing but equally important roles to play in overcoming harmful patriarchal structures. And, that for both genders, there are benefits to be gained from a more equitable society.

However, other experts worried that moving away from an explicit focus on women and girls in gender equality and equity work obscures the realities of patriarchal power structures and could contribute to the tendency to allow the needs and voices of women and girls to be overshadowed by men taking on the role of protagonists. Additionally, women's and girls' contributions to the larger mission of achieving a more equitable and equal society for people of all genders is hindered or distorted by their current inequitable status and constraints on their agency. Overcoming these obstacles requires focusing on the empowerment of women and girls so that they can be equally as effective and engaged as men

59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. Cornwall, A., Armas, H., & Botha, M. (2011). Women's Empowerment: What Do Men Have to Do with It? In Cornwall, A., J. Edström and A. Greig. *Men and Development: Politicising Masculinities*. Zed Books: London and New York.

and boys. Ultimately, while male engagement programming benefits from attracting male participants and focusing on transforming larger structures of inequality and inequity, the current patriarchal power structures that disadvantage women require a simultaneous programmatic focus on the equality, equity, and empowerment of women and girls specifically.

Recognition of Diversity in Men's Experience of Power and Privilege

Another frequent concern expressed by participants and in the literature surveyed is that men and boys are often viewed one-dimensionally. With that, there is a need to acknowledge diverse and often overlapping identities among men that create differing levels of power and influence. As one key informant poignantly noted, "Men don't have a homogenous experience of male privilege. It is amazing how rarely that is part of the conversation." The presumption that all men experience a uniform position of power and privilege within their respective societies is erroneous; men experience diverse dimensions of inequality, opportunity, and deprivation dependent on the intersectionality of various facets of their identity. Women's and men's lives, roles, and relationships are not just shaped by gender, but also by age, class, ethnicity, nationality, caste, social-economic level, education, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.[61,62] Low-income and minority men in particular may be in a position of relatively low power and status. How they see and experience the outcomes of gender equality will be different from men of different economic or social positions.

Men's environments matter, too. In many settings, particularly in conflict or post-conflict situations, men may, like women, feel that they have little or no control over their lives. Men and women have also felt powerless in other environments, including within a relationship, with their partners, or with a supervisor.[64] This shared experience of powerlessness is a common entry point for programming that embraces all genders towards the common goal of greater gender equality. More than the differential exercise of power by men is at stake, however. Men who feel powerless perceive themselves to be disadvantaged compared to other men, and this perception can be harmful not only for them, but also for the women and girls in their lives. Studies have found that men's frustration with their perceived lack of power can lead them to adopt certain behaviors that give them a sense of power over others, including high-risk sexual behaviors as well as violence against female partners.[64,65] One of ICRW's informants explained that there need to more expansive or better targeted ways of talking about power and privilege that will resonate with male program participants.

In the overall evaluation of power and influence in society, it is necessary to get beyond the monolithic understanding of men controlling a disproportionate amount of power over women. Instead, the aim should be to see the many levels of hierarchy that men may be experiencing; they may have power over women in their lives, but in the larger scheme of things, they may not feel very powerful. Therefore, such men may not be receptive to discussions that seem to suggest that they must give away the little power they currently hold. Similarly, men who experience powerlessness in their lives seek to have their plight more clearly understood. For example, one key informant told us that the men he works with have recounted to him how they may spend the whole day looking for work, unsuccessfully, and yet when they return from work, empty handed, their wives challenge them to justify what they were doing all day and why they can't provide for the family. These men know it is a valid question, but since they have nothing, they don't know how to respond. In such instances, some men may resort to violence against their wives. A study compiled by the MenEngage Alliance, UNFPA, and UN Women states:

> Throughout the world, there are still strong social and cultural norms that perpetuate power imbalances between men and women. While men usually have more agency than the women in their lives, men's decisions and behaviors are also profoundly shaped by rigid social and cultural expectations related to masculinity. Broadening the discussion about how gender norms affect both women and men helps us to better understand the complex ways that rigid gender norms and power relations burden our society, and to more effectively engage men and boys in reflections about inequalities and change.[66]

62. Wentzell, E.A. & Inhorn, M.C. (2014). Reconceiving masculinity and 'men as partners' for ICPD Beyond 2014: Insights from a Mexican HPV study. *Global Public Health,* 9 (6): 691-705.
63. Carlson et al., 2015.
64. MenEngage Alliance & UN Women, 2015.
65. Barker, G. 2005. Dying to be Men: Youth, Masculinity, and Social Exclusion. *Sexuality, Culture and Health*. London: Routledge.
66. MenEngage Alliance; UN Women; & UNFPA, 2014.

Another critique shared in our KIIs was that men who don't feel like they benefit from the patriarchal dividend often resent development programs that they perceive as allocating benefits and entitlements only to women and girls.[67,68]

Overall, many key informants asserted that it is essential to recognize and be responsive not only to the disadvantages and inequities faced by women and girls, but also the gender-related power inequalities that men and boys may encounter. However, rather than negotiating or comparing these inequalities, it would be more constructive to accept and understand that gender norms and complex power relationships can have both positive and negative effects on both men and women, but that these norms can be reflected upon and transformed for the benefit of all.[69] A review of male engagement programs compiled by Sonke Gender Justice and Promundo-US states:

> When other social inequalities and interests (such as class or race) converge with—or override—gendered differences, this can affect how men may support women's empowerment or representation … Linking gender to other issues of social injustice can facilitate men working more effectively with women for gender-equality.[70]

Ultimately, there is consensus around a paradox: It is necessary to acknowledge men's diverse experiences of power and privilege while still acknowledging the superstructures of power and privilege that disadvantage women as a whole and the power men hold over the specific women in their lives. The question of how to live this paradox in programming has no definitive answer, though varying approaches and strategies are discussed throughout this paper.

Promotion of Positive Masculinities

At the core of male engagement programming, a need exists to explore and create more positive constructs of masculinity. Many men and boys have internalized and feel regular pressure to conform to the rigid, pervasive, and harmful social norms about masculinity as messaged in media, societal values, and institutional structures; they seldom recognize that exploring, reflecting on, and deconstructing these norms can be beneficial to them. As noted by MenEngage and UN Women, "Men's decisions and behaviors are also profoundly shaped by rigid social and cultural expectations related to masculinity, as well as by power imbalances which have costs for both them and the women and girls in their lives."[71,72,73]

While not all common norms of masculinity are harmful, there are ample instances where masculinity is associated with risky behaviors—such as alcohol consumption and other substance abuse, violent gang participation, or having multiple sexual partners—that can result in dangerous consequences for men and boys. In addition, prevailing constructions of masculinity often prescribe that the man is the provider and protector of the family. The inherent pressure that this can place on some men may lead them to participate in aggressive behavior, possibly to direct the focus away from their perceived sense of failure in not being able to meet the expectations of this role. In settings characterized by sparse economic opportunities and high unemployment or under-employment, such pressures can be crushing for male family members.

One avenue for creating positive masculinities is through developing a more equitable distribution of power and labor within the household. The way that power and roles are distributed at the household level is often dictated by gender norms. This division leaves women with inequitable participation and power in household decision-making and a disproportionate amount of care work. This large care work burden hinders women from having the time and ability to productively participate in society. Programs should work to redefine positive masculinities to include men's involvement in care work, and to emphasize the benefits men reap from closer relationships with their families.

An informant noted:

> *Ultimately, men want to feel appreciated and valued by their partner and others in their domestic sphere. If this core need for recognition and appreciation is acknowledged and addressed, men are more inclined to want to engage in a range of other tasks such as helping with cooking, gathering water, child care, care of the elderly, etc., and their relationship with their wife or partner, children, and other family members becomes better.*

67. Ibid.
68. Connell, R. (2003). Scrambling in the ruins of patriarchy: Neo-liberalism and men's divided interests. In UPasero (ed), *Gender: From costs to benefits.* Westdeutscha, Verlag, Germany.
69. MenEngage & UN Women, 2015.
70. Edström et al., 2015.
71. MenEngage Alliance & UN Women, 2015.
72. Fleming, P.J., Barker, G., McCleary-Sills, J., & Morton, M. (2013). Engaging Men and Boys in Advancing Women's Agency: Where We Stand and New Directions. *Gender Equality & Development.* World Bank.
73. Hendra, J., FitzGerald, I., & Seymour, D. (2013). Towards a New Transformative Development Agenda: The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality. *Journal of International Affairs*, 67 (1): 105-122.

And for women, when their husbands begin dedicating regular time and effort on a consistent basis to helping out around the house and they do not feel that their husbands only view them as an object of sexual desire, their own sense of self-worth and significance is enhanced.

Effective Incentives and Entry Points for Men's Participation in Male Engagement Programming

The perpetual challenge faced by advocates for male engagement is how to identify and offer persuasive incentives that will attract men and boys to join with women and girls in a common pursuit to transform gender norms. Some scholars argue that in order to encourage men to participate in intervention activities around gender, programs should promote positive outcomes for men and boys, i.e. crafting a persuasive argument that it is in their best interest to support the empowerment of women and girls. This can include highlighting that gender equitable men will have better and closer relationships with their children/partners. Similarly, some men may be persuaded to change their attitudes when they come to recognize the benefits that flow to the entire household (economic, health, etc.) from having more equitable relationships. One program implementer explained that when men see their family's financial status improve due to their wife's participation in an economic empowerment program, they often support this practical shift in the status quo.

Another good entry point for engaging men in development programming may be promoting the discernible benefits to men's health. One informant explained that in HIV/AIDS-prevalent settings, current constructions of masculinities that encourage men to have unsafe sex with multiple partners are very detrimental to men's health, and can cause high death rates. These same norms often inhibit men from disclosing their status to others, placing women's health at an increased risk as well. And while less likely to be persuasive in changing the attitudes of individual men, male policymakers and others in positions of influence may be moved by the recognition that the spread of HIV/AIDS is expensive for societies as they attempt to treat patients.

Family dynamics offer other avenues for constructive male engagement. An emphasis on broadening the norms of fatherhood can be an effective entry point for male engagement programming as men quickly come to see the benefits and self-satisfaction that they derive from having closer relationships with their children. Experiences cited by several of our key informants noted that as a result of their taking on a greater role in caregiving, men often become motivated to take on additional unpaid care work. As stated by one of these informants, "Caregiving is where we've seen the easiest port of entry to get men to see that they get something out of gender equality."

Accentuating possible positive outcomes for men may be an obvious—and sometimes effective— recruitment tactic, but it also has its drawbacks. "The danger [with this type of approach]," one key informant noted, "is that you can overdo this positive-ness, because you still have to talk about the inequalities and the imbalances that underlie the purpose of the work." Positive approaches tend to focus on how dominant and toxic masculinities sustain unequal gender norms and roles, rather than focusing on individual male's inequitable and violent attitudes and behaviors. There is danger in this approach if it focuses solely or overwhelmingly on masculinities and the constraints they pose on men. Doing so can obscure men's responsibilities for their actions and their agency in making change, giving the impression that men and women are simply pawns of the patriarchy. On the other hand, if emphasis is placed too strongly on individual behaviors, men may perceive this framing as an anti-male bias that discourages their participation. It can also contribute to the construction of men as a homogenous, violent entity. This is not only a harmful reduction that erases LGBT, non-binary and otherwise genderqueer individuals; it also provides an excuse for men's sexist and violent behavior; "that's just how men are." The key challenge here is to engage men positively, recognize their diversity of sexual orientations, gender orientations, races, ethnicities, abilities, classes, etc., and promote the idea that men can be agents of change, while holding them accountable for sexist and/or violent behaviors.

Power is the subtext to many of these discussions intended to engage men, especially as men become more conscious of the many advantages that they may have largely taken for granted under the status quo. As such awareness grows, men may feel that they are going to be losing something by empowering women; therefore, program implementers should frame the discourse around shifting power dynamics for the betterment of all, rather than as a zero-sum game with limited resources

and power. In a world in which men almost always still benefit from the patriarchal dividend, men can support greater gender equality by helping their female family members access resources that are essential to their economic empowerment or the start-up and growth of their businesses.[74] Programming that draws men in by highlighting how gender norms hurt them and the benefits they stand to gain from more gender equitable norms can indeed be effective. However, ICRW and others argue that conceptual and programmatic goals should achieve the most desirable outcomes for the whole society, e.g. greater gender equity for all. This approach is found in a variety of conceptual frameworks, as described below.

Engaging Men at the Individual vs. Structural/Institutional Level

To date, programs that engage men and boys for gender equality and equity have had significantly greater focus on individuals and communities than on the policy and structures that create and perpetuate inequitable gender norms, a pattern that also extends to development theorists and practitioners, policymakers and researchers.[75]

While much progress can and has been made by engaging men at an individual level, scaling up from solely an individual focus is important: Changing an individual's beliefs and attitudes without changing the broader system in which gender relationships operate can limit the reach and sustainability of programmatic impacts. As noted by one key informant:

> *We need to be working with the people and the institutions that produce that injustice. Broadly speaking, those people and those institutions are male and patriarchal in virtually every society I've ever worked in. It's important to work with people who run things, [who tend] to be men.*

Changing social policies have more far reaching impacts than work at the individual level, and may be determinative in enabling men to fully support women's empowerment. For example, in South Africa, no government policies provide parental leave for fathers. This could be interpreted as the government stating that it is women's responsibility to take care of children, thus enforcing a social norm that already exists among many individuals and families. To achieve institutional changes that align with gender equality, it is essential to find effective methods to hold men in positions of power accountable for creating and enforcing such policies.

This type of strategic thinking, however, seldom finds its way into male engagement theory and practice. As stated poignantly by a key informant working in South Africa::

> *Too often when we think about male engagement, the men we are thinking about engaging are the men with the least social influence, and if they're religious leaders, they're in rural communities. Not the men who make the decisions that shape the lives of men and women across the country. Men in power are not part of the conversations we are having about engaging men and masculinities, but their decisions have dire consequences for women and for men. We instead focus on the most marginalized men, and this is actually insufficient and problematic. Those in power embody a particular type of corporate masculinity. We need a broader critique of how we thinking about male engagement, which is currently too behaviorally focused.*

Accountability

What does accountability mean?

The relationship between men active in gender equality and equity work and the far larger number of women in this space can also raise accountability issues. Women seek some degree of acknowledgement by men of women's long history, prodigious efforts, and on-going commitments to this work. At the same time, they want men and the men's movement to respond to the priorities and concerns of women's movements. It has also been noted anecdotally that men involved in gender equality work may be given greater status, power, and recognition than women engaged in the same work, and may rise more quickly to leadership positions within organizations—a phenomenon sometimes referred to as "glass escalators."

Accountability also applies to the dynamics of engagement between women and men in pursuits associated with achieving gender equality. In mixed gender meetings, men and women often demonstrate different styles and standards of collaboration, competition, and communication. One key informant noted a "phallic drift," meaning a tendency to revert towards or default to a male point of view and to give priority attention to men, with the concomitant diminishment of feminist voices, approaches, and attention to women's needs and experiences.[76] Another key informant said that some women's rights groups feel that they have been working on these issues for a long time, but as soon as men enter the

74. International Labour Organization. (2011). Engaging Men in Women's Economic and Entrepreneurship Development Interventions: an ILO-WED Issue Brief. Geneva, Switzerland: ILO.
75. Edström et al., 2015.
76. Ward, J. (2016). It's not about the gender binary it's about the gender hierarchy: A reply to "Letting Go of the Gender Binary". *International Review of the Red Cross,* 98 (1): 275-298.

field, the men get all of the attention and a spot at the table. In this context, accountability applies to the need to ensure that the voices and agendas of women's groups are still being heard, and that the leadership of women (as those who are most directly disadvantaged by the prevailing patriarchy) is situated at the center of gender equity work. A logical extension of this argument is that there is no justification for a male engagement "sector" or even for organizations that are focused specifically on male engagement. Rather, all organizations that promote social justice should approach their work holistically and with a gender lens.

The yearning for accountability also derives from women's organizations and feminists questioning the origins of donors' motivation for male engagement. Do funders aspire to allocate equal resources towards men's and women's programming?

With so much in the way of polemics (actual or perceived), there is an obvious need to assess the intensity of these claims and counterclaims, while also taking appropriate note of the many instances where men's groups and women's groups (and individual men and women) do collaborate very effectively together on gender equality and equity issues. In particular, there has been a historical concern that the very limited pool of resources for gender equality work is being disproportionately allocated to men's groups, which must be resolved. Some of the experts whom ICRW consulted explained that overall, donor funding for grassroots initiatives is down, so women's groups (who mostly work in the grassroots space) may feel that their funding has decreased. Their perception is that funding is being reallocated to men's engagement programming, when in fact it may be that the overall pie has shrunk. While it requires further validation, Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa conducted a research study in which they asked the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) how much of SIDA's funding went to men and boys. This assessment found that 0.9 percent of the funding for gender equality was specifically directed towards men's groups (and anecdotally SIDA is considered to be far more generous with their investments in men and boys than other donors).

All key informants and convening participants valued accountability to the women's movement and to a gender equality agenda; this theme was also strongly reiterated in the literature. What that means in practice, however, is more contentious. While specific examples are given throughout this paper, some high-level concerns are noted here. A number of participants expressed concern over a subset of male engagement practitioners that argued for "gender inclusivity" wherein men's issues, experiences of violence, harmful constructions of masculinity, etc. are considered of equal importance as the concerns raised by women and girls disadvantaged under patriarchal norms. At its most extreme, "men's rights" groups argue that it is men who are truly disempowered by patriarchal power structures, and that women's empowerment and gender equality programming purposefully ignores men's needs and represents a discriminatory force.[77] Although key informants were in agreement that this view is not representative of the field of male engagement at large, they felt that organizations working in this space do not speak strongly enough against these views and in failing to do so, give them some legitimacy within the development field at large. In addition to these concerns, a participant in the convening noted that an essential area of further work is to push back against men's rights groups and distinguish between such groups and male engagement for gender equality. Additional concerns about the level of accountability to women's movements and gender equality included ensuring that organizations and practitioners working on male engagement engage constructively with feminist criticisms that arise and that partnerships with women's organizations on the ground be a central part of program design, as well as the previously mentioned need to avoid programming that results in "patriarchy light."

Why is accountability needed and how is it being addressed?

Demands for higher standards of accountability arise out of concerns about keeping the growing field of engaging men and boys in balance with the objective of centering women and girls under the umbrella of gender equality and equity programming. As advocated in one USAID study, there is a need to, "manage tension between appealing to men's interests in adopting positive masculinities at the same time as addressing women's interests in their own empowerment."[78] There is also growing tension around authors, theorists, advocates and practitioners who mischaracterize feminist concerns and critiques, which calls into question the values of accountability they are claiming to espouse (especially given that a major principle of accountability is to constructively engage in criticism).

77. Ibid.
78. USAID, 2015.

In terms of being responsive to demands for improved accountability, in a critical discussion facilitated by the MenEngage Alliance, one group mentioned that acknowledging privilege and power within relationships and overall sensitivity to power are key to uphold accountability.[79] Responsiveness also implies an acceptance by all stakeholders of the reality that collaboration between men's groups and women's rights groups is increasing because of growing consensus on the need to work with men and boys. However, the problem has never been accepting this need; the ways in which male engagement is conceptualized and operationalized are really what matter the most in terms of responsiveness.[80]

Institutional mechanisms for improving accountability have been proposed, although one participant in the MenEngage dialogue observed that a risk in creating such accountability mechanisms "could pose accountability problems, as they risk being imposed from above in a patriarchal manner."[81] Best practice indicates that self-facilitated and participatory accountability mechanisms are preferable to those imposed from the outside or above.[82] Among gender equality organizations, best practice also encourages ensuring that at least 50 percent of the openings on boards of directors and in an organization's staff should be allocated to women. While such quota-based systems have an obvious appeal, they are problematic in that they are based on a default assumption of a gender binary and can lead to a notion of just "checking a box," instead of working to shift the organizational culture.

Programmatically, sensitivity to prevailing cultural norms is important, even where these are invidious to the goals of gender equality and equity. However, this sensitivity can never veer into justifying gender-based violence and inequality.[83]

Challenges in Male Engagement Work

While male engagement work has significantly evolved and expanded over the past two decades, many conceptual weaknesses and problematic assumptions remain unresolved within the dominant frameworks. These gaps must be explored, understood, and rectified if the field of male engagement programming is to reach its stated goal of contributing to women's empowerment and broader gender equity, and to larger social goals of gender equality and universal human dignity for all.

Patriarchy permeates all aspects of male engagement work, yet **the intensity and complexity of patriarchal influences are seldom unpacked** in the context of women's empowerment programs. In fact, the simple presence of men in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment studies, policy, and programming frames them as "advocates," which many are. However, it also can place such men beyond critical assessment and neglect to make explicit the privileges and entitlements that men in general receive in patriarchal contexts. The tendency to divide men into "well-meaning" men and sexist men, obscures the necessary and ongoing process of self-reflection on sexist attitudes, values, or assumptions that they were raised with and may have unknowingly internalized or linked to their own gender identity. Well-meaning men are assumed, by others or themselves, to have done this work, thus excusing perpetuation of patriarchal norms or behaviors. At the same time, this dichotomy condemns other men to a static state of sexist behaviors and beliefs.

While dismantling patriarchy is the work of all people committed to gender equality and gender equity, there is a legitimate **need for both separation and collaboration between genders** in this endeavor. While the arguments for collaborative and gender synchronized programming are persuasive, it is important to recall that gender synchronization calls for working with genders both separately and together in a strategic manner. There are many pragmatic reasons to do so. For instance, men are generally socialized away from emotion and vulnerability, and the deep reflection and critical thinking that transformative programming calls for requires a space where men can do this work without embarrassment or shame, which may occur in mixed groups. Alternatively, dominant constructions of femininity often call for women to be quiet, not assert their needs, and not contradict or interrupt men. If women are placed immediately in a mixed-sex group without gaining the skills to make their voices heard, the dominant social constructions will likely lead to a situation where women's voices are marginalized and men dominate the conversation. Additionally, for programs that address violence, the need for safe, women-only spaces where participants can deal with trauma, is underscored. Beyond the pragmatic reasons to include single-sex work alongside mixed-gender groups are the historical and ethical reasons to continue to support such spaces: women, sexual minorities, disabled persons, non-white persons, ethnic minorities, etc., have historically been excluded from majority spaces on the basis of these identity markers. Spaces

79. MenEngage Alliance. (2016). *Critical Dialogue on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Justice*. Retrieved from http://menengage.org/critical-dialogue-on-engaging-men-and-boys-in-gender-justice-summary-report/
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. USAID, 2015.

specifically for these disadvantaged groups are hard-fought and hard-won, and serve an essential historical and practical purpose. Male engagement work and programming must balance support for collaborative work with both genders and respect for and support of such spaces.

Many existing weaknesses within male engagement programming derive from flaws or omissions in how male engagement is conceptualized, as well as from some problematic assumptions regarding pathways of change. A common challenge is related to **parsing the sequence and relationship between attitude, behavior, and norm change**.[84] Often there is an implicit and occasionally explicit assumption made that simply by designing programs and other interventions to focus on attitudes, positive behavior changes will follow, even though this has yet to be proven.[85] The absence of such proof is indicative of the fact that few male engagement programs make any effort to measure behavior change or assign attribution, and while attitudes are frequently surveyed, the connections between such attitudes and the underlying ethical, cultural, religious, and social norms are seldom recognized or evaluated. Unless the prevailing discourse embraces moral and ethical values, principles, and norms, efforts to deliberate and reflect on issues of social justice, universal human dignity, care, and solidarity are frustrated or fail to even be considered.

Another challenge in this space is that employing techniques to engage men in a more positive reconceptualization of masculinities can result in the **unintended consequence of enforcing the gender binary**. This may be seen in "real men" campaigns, which spread messages that manliness should be redefined within stereotypically masculine traits so that they are more accommodating to the goals of gender equality and fairness. Inadvertently, such campaigns may reinforce strict gender norms and gendered roles, effectively validating traditional hegemonic masculinities.[86] Similarly, campaigns that engage men as protectors of women's rights, such as HeForShe, can reinforce the concept of powerful men "saving" helpless women. While such campaigns may appear to be pragmatic and effective because they appeal to men's existing investments in masculinity, they tend to reinforce inequitable gender binaries and intolerance of sexual minorities.

Another common assumption that may have some merit, but also poses challenges for the field, is the **notion that the best people to work with men are other men**.[87] This is seen clearly in the many successful examples of male-only groups, and in the common preference for male educators to engage with and teach other men. In many and perhaps most cultures, it is assumed that men will more readily listen to men, and that they will perceive men as more reliable and less biased when speaking about gender inequalities or unfair social structures that are gendered. While there is some evidence that men can be effective in working with other men, there is the risk of strengthening the fallacious assumption that men can't change by working with women.[88]

Non-heteronormative sexualities and gender-nonconforming identities will inevitably come up when people reflect on and discuss gender roles and norms. It is crucial that interventions that engage men for gender equity try to be as inclusive as possible and try to anticipate how to address the needs of non-heteronormative or gender non-conforming people. If your organization is one of the very few working on issues of gender and sexuality in a community, you may receive requests to counsel or help non-heteronormative or gender non-conforming people, and your staff should be prepared to refer them to the appropriate resources.

Furthermore, an important consideration for programs that engage men at the household level is that **non-heteronormative women might not have husbands who influence their opportunities and decision-making ability**. Or, even if they do have husbands, their marriages might be marriages of convenience, where the marriage is not intimate but exists because of pressure to conform to social norms. In short, assuming that all opposite-sex marriages hold great potential for one spouse to influence the other may not be accurate. A more inclusive method of engagement is to target male household members generally as opposed to focusing on husbands. Even outside of ensuring that the benefits of engaging men for women's empowerment reach non-heteronormative women, it is a best practice to engage male household members instead of just husbands because gendered power dynamics are highly variable across households even within the same geographic contexts.

84. Ibid.
85. Jewkes et al., 2015.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

FRAMEWORKS OF GENDER NORM TRANSFORMATION FOR GENDER EQUITY

These frameworks visually depict: (1) the conceptual process of gender norm transformation for gender equity; and (2) the role of male engagement programming contributing to the achievement of gender equity. The first framework is applicable for any gender norm-transformation programming. The second framework specifically identifies the approaches and change processes that take place with male engagement programming. Below, we first include both of the visual frameworks, followed by a narrative guide for how to interpret each one.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework: Gender Norm Transformation for Gender Equity

Ultimate Goal:
Enhanced and Sustainable Gender Equity and Positive Social Development

Benefits for Women (Empowerment)

- Women's increased participation in decision-making (enhanced agency) at the household, community, institutional, and policy levels
- Women's increased participation in income-generation activities
- Women's increased access to resources (e.g., land, financing, justice, health services)
- Women's increased leadership and political participation

Benefits for Men

- Men's enhanced relationships with partners, children, and extended family members
- Men's enhanced life satisfaction with being able to create and fulfill alternative masculinities
- Increased uptake of health services and decreased risk-taking behavior due to reconstruction of masculinities

Benefits for Families and Communities

- More inclusive, productive decision-making at the household, community, institutional, and policy levels
- Increased household and community economic and social stability through expanded ability to earn money and access resources
- Greater resilience to conflict

Gender transformative behavior change and social action ⇄ **Increase in gender-equitable knowledge and attitudes**

GENDER NORM TRANSFORMATION & DECONSTRUCTION OF THE GENDER BINARY

PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES

Multi-sectoral, Intersectional, Long-term Program and Policy Efforts

Leverage momentum to extend change across societal levels

Individual

Examine, question, and transform definitions of masculinity and femininity

Provide individuals with skills and resources to challenge the status quo

Address harmful gender norms around masculinity and femininity

Community

Create collective action around equitable gender norms and behaviors

Institutional

Create more gender-equitable institutions and service provision in the workplace, schools, health centers, and justice system

Ensure enforcement of laws that promote gender equality

Policies

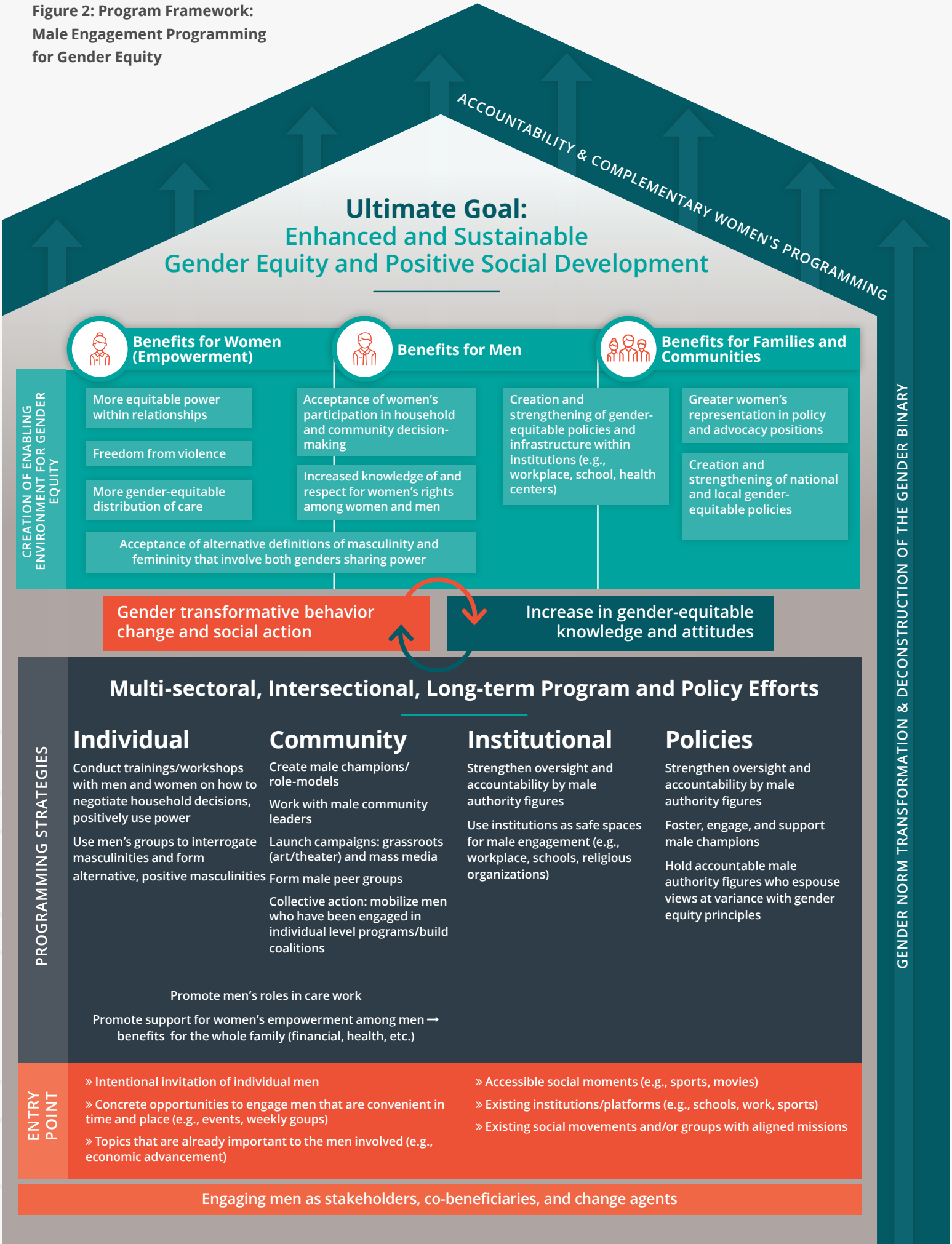
Engage with authority figures on the importance of gender-equitable policies and reform gender-equitable policies (e.g., around paternity leave or women's property rights)

FOUNDATIONAL CONDITIONS

» Formative research and participatory program design (including a gendered cultural analysis) to ensure local buy-in and culturally-relevant, context-specific programming

» Conceptualization of gender-transformative approach from inception → initial engagement → intervention

Figure 2: Program Framework: Male Engagement Programming for Gender Equity



Conceptual Framework: Gender Norm Transformation for Gender Equity

This framework outlines the foundational conditions, program strategies, and change processes through which gender norm transformation takes place. It also provides illustrative examples of the outcomes experienced by women, men, families, and communities when this transformation process creates more gender-equitable relationships and division of labor.

At the bottom are the orange **foundational conditions** for any programming focused on transforming gender norms to create greater gender equity. These are recommendations for on-the-ground implementers to consider at the outset of any new gender norm-transformation programming.

The grey **programming strategies** lay out strategies for transforming gender norms across the individual, community, institutional, and policy levels. Numerous program reviews use this framing to identify the different ways in which programming can and should occur.[89,90,91]

- These strategies should be **interlinked** and that change at each level should be **extended across the other levels** to build upon and maximize impacts. For example, efforts that aim to influence gender norms at the individual level should also engage individuals in collective activism to change policies and promote gender equity more broadly.
- We also note that all strategies should be **multi-sectoral, intersectional, and long-term**. Gender norm transformation takes time and requires coordinated efforts across sectors in order to create true, sustainable gender equity. Intersectionality in programming means coordinating programming to address the needs of individuals of all gender identities, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, abilities, etc. It also means acknowledging the ways in which multiple identities intersect to impact privilege and power.

The orange and turquoise boxes and related cyclical arrows depict the mutually reinforcing processes of **changes in gender-transformative behavior and social action** and increases in gender-equitable knowledge and attitudes, which ultimately contribute to gender equity. It is important to note that these processes are iterative and don't necessarily follow a sequential pattern wherein changes in knowledge and attitudes precede changes in behaviors. Sometimes during gender norm transformation, people will adopt more gender-equitable behavior and later adjust attitudes to match these behaviors. It is this cyclical relationship of shifting knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and social action that propels sustainable norm change for gender equity.

The teal boxes show the **benefits that women, men, and families and communities experience** from enhanced gender equity.

- These elements are not meant to be all-encompassing, but align with the core programming strategies outlined in the framework, as well as the core dimensions of empowerment: **resources**, defined as the necessary skills and information; **agency**, defined as the ability to define one's goals and act upon them; and **achievement**, defined as the outcomes of the empowerment process.[92,93,94] These benefits also include the important outcomes that result from more equitable participation of men and women in decision-making, as well as more balanced distribution of labor and care work within the household. In addition, these benefits cover the results of more positive and equitable constructions of masculinities and femininities.

All of this ultimately contributes to **enhanced and sustainable gender equity and positive social development**. This is critical to our conceptual framework, as we want to push the conversation forward to include a discussion of equity for all people, regardless of their sexual or gender identity, age, race, class, ethnicity, religion, geographic location, etc.

To the right, in turquoise, we depict how the process of **gender norm transformation and deconstruction of the gender binary** simultaneously progresses and catalyzes the process of change.

- **Gender norm transformation** represents the process through which individuals, communities, and institutions question existing gender norms and reconstruct alternative, equitable norms in which power and resources are shared among genders for the benefit of all. This process often plays out first as an introspective journey as individuals reflect on their own constructs of masculinity, femininity, and gender norms. Then, individuals use these alternative masculinities and femininities to interact differently with their environment, and over time, settle on a new construction of gender norms.

89. USAID, 2015.
90. International Labour Organization, 2014.
91. Edström et al., 2015.
92. Kabeer, 1999.
93. Malhotra et al., 2002

» **Deconstruction of the gender binary** represents a two-fold objective. This paper urges moving away from a gender binary that pits women against men. Rather, we encourage the field to see that men's and women's lives are contextualized by a gender hierarchy in which their daily experiences are influenced by gender norms and their position along a scale of power and privilege.[95] While women are often most disadvantaged by structures of patriarchy, men also experience these deprivations. Secondly, this deconstruction of the gender binary serves to emphasize that gender (and sexual orientation) is itself a continuum and, thus, engaging all genders—and understanding how their experiences intersect—in a manner that promotes general human dignity and equity is most effective.

While not depicted in the graphic, we also want to call attention to the **macro-shifts that influence gender norms and relationships**. Broad changes in society can impact gender norm transformation processes; these could include: economic development, changes in the political environment, conflict and/or natural disasters, or exogenous norm change due to societal influences, such as through the internet or TV. Gender norm-transformative programs should be aware of these shifts and engage with these processes to ensure that interventions align with broader social changes. Specifically, if processes of gender norm transformation are underway, such as with the #MeToo movement, programs should build on this momentum—for example through discussions over social media around what men can do create equitable work cultures that do not accept sexual harassment—to enhance the scalability and sustainability of program efforts.

Program Framework: Male Engagement Programming for Gender Equity

This second framework layers the specific strategy of male engagement over the conceptual framework of gender norm transformation for gender equity. While the previous framework outlines the conceptual relationships, this framework focuses on the specific activities and outcomes of male engagement programming. It helps to identify how male engagement programming contributes to these outcomes and can be used as a strategic approach for creating enhanced and sustainable gender equity and positive social development.

Below, we provide details about the additional elements to the general framework that are specifically relevant for male engagement programming.

The first orange bar articulates our framing of **engaging men as stakeholders, co-beneficiaries, and agents of change**. Male engagement programming typically involves men in one or more of three main categories: as gatekeepers who hold power in society; as allies or partners who understand the benefits of and promote gender equality; or as stakeholders and co-beneficiaries who are participants in the process of creating greater gender equity, but also who benefit from this process.[96] Engaging men as gatekeepers recognizes that they hold positions of authority, but can reinforce patriarchal norms. This framing suggests that men have the power to control the process of gender equity, instead of benefit from it. While the framing of men as partners and allies is more inclusive, it also suggests that men's support is necessary for women to succeed and does not capture how greater gender equity can improve men's lives. Framing male engagement as involving men as stakeholders, co-beneficiaries, and change agents emphasizes the responsibility that men have in promoting gender equity and also the benefits that they gain from more equitable families and societies.[97]

Next are the **entry points** for engaging men (also in orange). Identifying effective ways to initially recruit and retain male program participants is necessary, particularly because of the complex objectives of male engagement programming and the need to involve men in a process of questioning their power and privilege.[98] These methods should include promoting how men can benefit from more equitable beliefs and behaviors; meeting men in familiar and non-threatening spaces by using ambassadors and promoters to whom men can relate; using existing institutions/platforms/events; and exploring topics that men see as interesting/advantageous.[99,100,101] Following this initial recruitment phase, programs can and should delve deeper into structures of patriarchy and harmful masculinities.

94. Bandura, 2001.
95. Ward, 2016.
96. MenEngage Alliance & UN Women, 2015.
97. Ibid.
98. Carlson et al., 2015.
99. CARE International. (2009). Women's empowerment & engaging men. CARE's Strategic Impact Inquiry
100. Edström et al., 2015
101. International Labour Organization, 2014.

Under **program strategies**, we have included male engagement approaches that are relevant at the individual, community, institutional, and policy levels.

- **Leveraging momentum to extend change across societal levels** can be particularly important in male engagement programming. For example, as men involved at the individual level begin to deconstruct/reconstruct masculinities and power relationships, they should engage through networks and collective action to spread and reinforce these new social norms at the broader community level. These new beliefs should then be used to advocate for change at the institutional and policy levels. And of course, these relationships work in the opposite direction as well, wherein changes for example at the policy and institutional level that promote men's role in care responsibilities or more gender equitable teaching methods, can also contribute to shifts in norms at the community and individual levels.
- Effective male engagement programming should be **multi-sectoral, intersectional, and long-term**: Since male engagement programming is attempting to shift deeply entrenched social norms, change will take time. As men adopt more equitable norms, they often face push back from peers and society. Therefore, strategies that perpetually reinforce these new, alternative masculinities and provide opportunities for networking and collective action will be most effective.

As mentioned above, the mutually reinforcing process of changes in **gender transformative behavior change and social action** and **increases in gender-equitable knowledge and attitudes** create an enabling environment for gender equity. The next layer of teal boxes describes some of the illustrative changes we might see from male engagement programming that create an **enabling environment for gender equity**. Although we are framing male engagement programming with an end-goal of empowering women and contributing to broader gender equity, programming doesn't directly empower women. Instead, it creates an enabling environment for women's empowerment and more equitable relationships.

- Boxes at this level show the different elements of change through male engagement that create space and opportunities for women's empowerment and gender equity. These elements directly align with the program strategies depicted in grey as well as with definitions of empowerment as the expansion of the ability to make choices through acquiring information, resources, participation, and voice.[102,103,104]

The turquoise arrows that underpin this entire process represent **accountability and complementary women's programming**. These are crucial elements to any male engagement programming. Accountability to the women's movement as well as to programming that provides women with needed resources and agency enable interventions to progress along this pathway of change and create impacts on gender equity.

Accountability is defined as "the commitment that activists and organizations working in the engaging boys and men field must have toward women's rights groups and other social justice movements."[105] Advocates emphasize that accountability should be thought of as a process rather than an outcome. Calls for accountability rise out of concerns about keeping the growing field of engaging men and boys balanced with centering women and girls under the umbrella of gender equity programming. Specific concerns that emerge when accountability is not central to male engagement programming include: dilution of feminist orientation of gender equality work; marginalization of women's voices; rhetorical rather than substantive engagement of men; male involvement in advocacy in a patriarchal/patronizing manner; greater recognition and status given to men doing gender equality work than to women; and diminished legitimacy of women-focused programs and services.[106]

While not depicted, it is essential to also incorporate ongoing research, monitoring and evaluation, to enhance this process of change. With any programming cycle, it is essential to complement it with research, monitoring, and evaluation to track changes and discern what is and isn't working so that programming can be adjusted to enhance impacts. While some male engagement programs collect monitoring data on their interventions, few track and/or report on outcomes for women, and even fewer undergo a rigorous, external impact evaluation. To truly understand how male engagement programming can be most effective and to fully validate our theory of change, more research is needed.

102. Kabeer, 2012.
103. Narayan, 2002.
104. Klugman et al., 2014.
105. MenEngage Alliance & UN Women, 2015.
106. Flood et al., 2017.

Accountability to Women and Feminist Movements

Below are additional considerations for accountability of male engagement programs across the program framework.

Figure 3: Accountability to Women and Feminist Movements

Accountability to Women and Feminist Movements	
Programming Strategies	» Ensure that M&E systems measure, at least in part, contributions to women's empowerment (i.e., behavior change). » Whenever possible, get feedback from women in measuring behavior change. » Solicit and engage with both positive and critical feedback from women beneficiaries, community members, program implementers, and women's groups. » Ensure that programming moves beyond "soft entry" to engage men on issues of privilege and power. » Don't be afraid of backlash! Discussing privilege and power with men can be difficult. Backlash can be positive and indicate real engagement when planned for and appropriately handled. » Be careful when distinguishing between "masculinities" and "men" to avoid a obscuring men's sexist behaviors and placing male advocates' gendered behaviors above criticism. » Avoid creating "glass escalators:" Be aware that men doing gender equality work may be given greater status, power, and recognition than women doing the same work, and may rise more quickly to leadership positions within organizations. » Recognize that practitioners may sometimes act in patriarchal ways; be prepared to address this behavior and support critical reflection.
Engaging men as stakeholders, co-beneficiaries, and change agents	
Entry Point	» Don't focus only on men in terms of their sexual or familial relationships to women (e.g., fathers, partners, and sons); this runs the risk of reducing women to their relationships with men, neglecting important non-sexual or non-family power structures, and excluding non-heterosexual men and women. » Promoting male role models can lead to positive male engagement as change agents. However, be careful this does not give the false impression that men are "saving" women from gender inequality or obscuring women's existing and prior work. Also, make sure that these men are not getting disproportional recognition for their contributions to gender equality work, but rather are also acknowledging contributions of female leaders who have been active in this space.
Foundational Conditions	» In formative research and program design, pay particular attention to the voices of marginalized members of society (e.g., women, youth, LGBT persons, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, etc.) to ensure that programming is intersectional, culturally relevant, and respectful of existing work, especially by women's groups. » Continually seek out and listen to the voices of women colleagues, practitioners, leaders on the ground, and community members/ beneficiaries in target communities for partnership as well as critical feedback. » Practitioners must be diligent in continually evaluating their own internalized notions of gender and gender conformity to ensure that they are engaging responsibly with feedback from women and that they are not inadvertently reinforcing gendered hierarchies. » Creating "male only programming" runs the risk of reducing funding for women's programming and services. Consider instead joint-programming for women and men together that focuses on, for example, power imbalances and gender inequalities at a broader level. » Recognize the value of hard-fought and hard-won minority-only spaces and programming; see such programming as in partnership with male engagement rather than exclusive or divisive. » Engage feminist partners at the program design stage to ensure that programming does not dilute feminist orientation of gender equality work or marginalize women's voices.

MALE ENGAGEMENT ACROSS KEY SECTORS

While the above frameworks provide structure on the different levels and outcomes of male engagement programs, generally, a more in-depth look at male engagement programing in key sectors highlights important approaches, challenges, and best practices. Below, we provide an analysis of male engagement programs across the sectors of violence against women and girls, health, economic empowerment, care work and fatherhood, education, land rights and agriculture, and political participation. At the end of this section, there also are special considerations for male engagement programming in conflict-affected settings.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Why Engage Men?

There is a general consensus among practitioners that engaging men and boys is critical to preventing and addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG). The rationales vary, but generally fall under two themes: feminist justifications and practical observations.

Flood (2015) describes the feminist justification for engaging men and boys in work to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as hinged on three arguments.[107] First, **perpetrators of SGBV are overwhelmingly male**. Thus, efforts to eliminate existing VAWG and prevent violence from occurring in the first place will need to address men's attitudes and behaviors. Effectively engaging men and boys in violence prevention properly locates the responsibility to end violence with men as well as women.[108]

Second, **violence against women and girls is shaped by social constructions of masculinity and their manifestations as social norms that subordinate women across societal levels**. Violence against women and girls is understood as rooted in gender inequality, inequity, and discrimination against women; therefore, this inequality will need to be addressed in order to reckon with the root causes of VAWG.[109] This requires work to change social norms, which will in turn require a reconstruction of toxic masculinities and sexualities. Conceptions of masculinity in many places remain strongly tied to war, sexism, violence, and aggression.[110] Violence against women is an extreme manifestation of these norms; an expression of power and masculinity.[111] Hegemonic, toxic masculinity teaches men that they are entitled to obedience from their wives and the other women in their lives, and that if this power balance is disturbed in any way (by disobedience or any assertion of power by women), violence is their right. The degree to which obedience is expected and men are entitled to violence in response to disobedience varies by socio-cultural position.

Third, **violence is also of concern to men, and ending violence has direct and indirect benefits for them**. This interest may lie in empathy for men's female loved ones—mothers, wives, sisters, daughters—but also includes concern for the well-being of women in their communities, countries, and in general. Additionally, violence against women has significant costs for households, communities, and nations, meaning that each of us has a vested interest in ending violence against women. Finally, men benefit directly from ending violence against women in that everyone benefits from a less violent society.[112]

In addition to the feminist justifications, there are practical reasons to engage men and boys as well. It is widely recognized that a multi-faceted approach is needed to end and prevent VAWG;[113] VAWG interventions result in better outcomes for women when a variety of stakeholders, including men, are engaged. **In male-dominated societies, those in positions of power with the ability to impact VAWG and gender equity in public policy and institutions are typically men**. This applies to formal and informal institutions. In conflict-affected or particularly remote or impoverished areas, or less stable states, informal or traditional justice systems hold significant power over preventing and responding to violence against women, and in most cultures, these systems tend to be even more male-dominated than formal institutions.[114]

107. Flood, M. (2015). Work with Men to End Violence Against Women: A Critical Stocktake. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 17 (sup2): 159-176.
108. Ibid.
109. Sandys, E. (2008). *The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality.* New York, NY: United Nations.
110. Ibid.
111. Edström et al., 2015.
112. ICRW Key Informant Interviews, 2017.
113. Sandys, 2008.
114. Ibid.

Relatedly, **when women experience violence and must interact with local institutions, they are almost certain to encounter male service providers and/or officials**. Thus, male medical professionals, police officers, lawyers, judges, and others involved in the care of victims and investigation and prosecution of VAWG cases must be engaged to ensure that women have access to the care and justice they seek and do not face undo barriers, stigma, or discrimination.

Finally, when women's agency and empowerment increases in other sectors (i.e., education or financial independence) there is a **risk of violent backlash** from men who are threatened by the destabilization of existing gender norms and view women's empowerment as their disempowerment.[115] Engaging men around VAWG can prevent this violent backlash, increasing the impact of women's empowerment programming and keeping women safe.

Common Approaches

Over the past few decades, there has been a shift in the field toward preventing VAWG versus responding to it, which has meant moving from programming that targets only women to programming that aims to transform gender relations.[116] This shift has been accompanied by an evolution in the ways VAWG programming conceptualizes and engages men and boys. Figure 4 below shows this evolution from viewing men as invisible/violent, to the current state in which they are seen as having roles to play both within gender relations and through political influence.

Figure 4: The Evolution of Male Roles in Violence Prevention Programming[117]

INVISIBLE, VIOLENT MEN AND BOYS

Outdated framing that fails to capture dynamics of gender inequity. In this framing:

- Men's gender and roles in prevention are invisible
- Binary views of violent men and victimized women are used
- The potential role of boys and men in primary prevention is ignored

MEN WITH ROLES TO PLAY IN GENDER EQUITY WORK

Framing that recognizes that men exist in gender relations and that prevention of violence is political. In this framing:

- Men are part of the problem and should be part of the solution
- Men can be active in positive change for prevention
- Men are engaged as partners, empowered allies to women, active bystanders, and co-beneficiaries with something to gain from gender equity

MEN IN GENDER RELATIONS

- Understand that people reproduce gender norms through their relationships with others and different groups, and are affected by these norms differently
- Focus on group- and community- level changes
- Work with groups of women, men, boys, and girls at times separately and at times together

PREVENTION AS POLITICAL

- Understand gender inequalities as systemic and violence as an instrument of this oppressive system
- Focus on the diverse experiences of violence and oppression across the life course and in different settings
- Call for system-wide changes across social ecology; different individuals, in different positions, should have positive roles to play for prevention and equality.

115. Edström et al, 2015.
116. Ibid.
117. Adapted from Jewkes, R., Flood, M., & Lang, J. (2015). From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls. *The Lancet, 385* (9977), 1580–1589. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61683-4

Most work with men and boys around VAWG shares a **broadly feminist approach**, and "typically take[s] as a given that gender relations are relations of inequality and injustice and that the social construction of masculinity as dominant and aggressive is central to men's violence against women."[118] Despite a general shared feminist approach, there is diversity in the centrality and interpretation of this feminist analysis by organizations and programs.[119]

The field is increasingly recognizing the need to address and change gender norms, and to look for approaches that aim to be **gender transformative**. These programs view masculinities as a set of social norms that can be modified to reduce rates of violence through approaches that include critical reflection on masculinities and femininities.[120] Though rigorous evaluations are limited, gender-transformative programs have shown to be more effective than those that focus on simply addressing specific behaviors or attitudes instead of the gender binary and its related norms.[121]

Finally, **public health approaches** to working with men and boys have had significant impacts on VAWG.[122] These approaches view violence against women as a poor health outcome for women and children and contributor to mortality rates. They also focus primarily on violence as a symptom of unhealthy relationships between men and women. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this influence, as described by Michael Flood in his critical review of male engagement programming on VAWG. The public health approach emphasizes evidence-based program and policy development, comprehensive and multi-level interventions, collaborative work across sectors and integration of evaluation into prevention—which are all important in effective programming to end VAWG. However, this approach also tends to neglect the collective and institutional factors that shape health, and views VAWG as a contributor to poor health rather than a social injustice.

The remainder of this section will look at common programmatic approaches and strategies around male engagement in the VAWG sector, with desired impacts at the individual, community, institutional and policy levels.

Individual

The goal of programs that operate at the individual level is to change the attitudes and behaviors of individual men and boys around violence against women and girls. Programs may work with individuals or couples in one-on-one or small group settings. These programs take a relational approach to gender, focusing on the roles that men and women play in relationships with each other and in promoting gender equity and non-violence in these contexts. As noted in Figure 4 above, this approach posits that men and women reproduce gender norms through their relationships, and by changing men's and women's attitudes toward and behaviors within these roles, men will be less likely to commit violence against women. Norms of gender inequity that condone and promote VAWG will then be transformed within the target group.

Providing group-based gender education and reflection is the most common approach to change VAWG-related attitudes and behaviors at the individual, couple, and household levels.[123] Curricula in these programs allow participants to reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about gender and violence, as well as on the costs of rigid norms of masculinity and femininity. To maximize gender-transformative impacts, programs should also address the power imbalances that underpin VAWG. Programs may work with individuals or couples, in single-sex, mixed-sex, or a combination of groups. Programs working with couples or specifically aiming to build more equitable and non-violent marital relationships, may also focus on communication and conflict resolution skills.[124] Programming at this level may be focused on specific forms of VAWG or VAWG in specific contexts, such as rape and sexual assault on college campuses.

The evidence base for group-based gender education and reflection is mixed. While there is evidence that programs have the potential to change men's attitudes regarding VAWG, whether this attitude change translates into actual behavior[125] change and reduced violence against women and girls is less clear; most evaluations of programs center around attitude change have shown no or marginal change in behavior. For instance, a 2015 USAID study of programs engaging men to end

118. Flood, 2015.
119. Ibid.
120. Dworkin, S., Treves-Kagan, S. & Lippman, S. (2013). Gender-transformative Interventions to Reduce HIV Risks and Violence with Heterosexually-active Men: A Review of the Global Evidence. *AIDS and Behavior*, 17 (9): 2845–2863.
121. Ibid.
122. Flood, 2015.
123. Dworkin et al., 2013.
124. USAID, 2015.
125. Ibid.

VAWG found no change in women's power to decline sex but did find significant positive change in men's attitudes toward gender equity in general and sexual violence against women specifically. This underscores the importance of directly measuring outcomes for women instead of using male knowledge or attitude change as proxies. Further, regarding the gendered power imbalances that underpin VAWG, some evaluations have shown that while women may have a greater voice in household decision-making, the change represents a shift from autonomous male decision-making to male decision-making in consultation with women, not collaborative decision-making.[126] Whether this is a step on the path to truly collaborative decision-making is an area for further research.

Working directly with male perpetrators to change their behavior and attitudes toward women is a common approach to addressing and preventing VAWG. Men may participate in one-on-one sessions or small group discussions, and may do so voluntarily or through a court order.[127] This approach can be controversial, as it often focuses on management of men's emotional stress (mostly anger), neglecting the power dynamics that funnel men's stress into violence against women and girls. Evaluation has shown that further violence can be reduced or prevented when the focus is on power dynamics, and when male perpetrators voluntarily complete such programs.[128] These programs work best over a long period of time—with sustained participation and space for men to discuss their behavior—and when programs work in tandem with a criminal justice system that is able to react strongly to breaches of the conditions of participation (in the case of mandated participation).[129]

In Lebanon, ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality runs a men's center that provides voluntary and confidential counseling for men. While male perpetrators of VAWG are not specifically targeted by the center, many men who visit disclose that they have committed violence against women or girls. In individual and group settings, ABAAD's counselors and trainers explore the stressors in men's lives that precipitate violence and teach alternative and non-violent reactions to those stressors. Complementary programming addresses the gendered nature of VAWG by reflecting on the harms men experience due to toxic and violent masculinities, and attempts to reconstruct more equitable forms of masculinity and redefine power in such a way that it is shared more equitably between men and women.[130] However, because male perpetrators are not directly targeted, it is unclear whether the same men who are seeking help at the men's center are also participating in trainings and education on gender and masculinities.

Evidence is mixed about the effectiveness of "batterer intervention" programs, which specifically target male perpetrators of violence. While some research points to positive outcomes and reduced rates of violence, high rates of attrition are a concern; many men who participate in these programs do not complete them.[131] Key informants for this report warned that the exposure of the limited effectiveness of batterer intervention programs was one of the major research accomplishments of the early 2000s in the field of VAWG prevention in the United States. During this time, the judicial system used rehabilitation programs as an alternative sentence for men facing domestic abuse charges; programming moved away from its origins in gender equity, where violence was recognized as a manifestation of gendered power imbalances, toward anger and stress management trainings for men. Programs that treat VAWG as the result of men's inability to control their emotions fail to address the root causes of violence and are ineffective as a result.

Key informants also stressed that **targeting young men and boys** is an important approach as they are still forming their own gendered identities, their beliefs and attitudes around gender are more flexible, and they are more open than adults to critical reflection on hegemonic masculinities and femininities. Programs that **specifically target boys and young men who have grown up in violent homes** can be especially effective. Evidence has shown that children who experience violence in their homes are more likely to commit violence later in life; thus, targeting "at-risk" boys and young men to set a non-violent life course is a form of primary prevention.[132,133] The outcomes for women and girls are twofold: Ideally, violence committed by boys against girls, in current contexts such as in school or

126. Ibid.
127. Sandys, 2008.
128. ICRW Key Informant Interview, 2017.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Sandys, 2008.
132. Ibid.
133. Barker, G., Contreras, J.M., Heilman, B., Singh, A.K., Verma, R.K., & Nascimento, M. (2011). *Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).* Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo. Retrieved from https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Evolving-Men-Initial-Results-from-IMAGES.pdf

dating, will be reduced and they will be less likely to commit violence against women in the future. Such programs encourage boys and young men to critically reflect on their experiences of violence and gendered expectations of masculinity, as well as their attitudes and behaviors towards women and girls. A common strategy for reaching boys and young men is to combine VAWG prevention and gender equality programming with other social activities, particularly sports (see *Box 1* for an example of a program—Parivartan—that uses sports for norm change).

Community

Community-based approaches to engaging men on VAWG generally aim to change community norms around violence. Although individuals commit violence, community attitudes shape its perpetration and the costs and benefits to men who commit violence, as well as the responses to women victims. Community norms determine whether violence is seen as a rightful expression of manhood, a personal matter, or a violation of women's human rights. They determine whether survivors are met with support or scorn and whether or not perpetrators face consequences. Engaging men to prevent and respond to VAWG at the community level can change norms that encourage and tolerate violence, prevent violence in the form of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), and increase women's access to justice and support for survivors.

Just as **reflective group education and dialogue** can be effective in changing individual attitudes and behaviors, it can also have an impact at the community level. Male and female participants have an opportunity to reflect on gender and violence in their communities. They are also encouraged to imagine what a more equitable and non-violent community would look like and are supported in mobilizing their communities to bring about change. For example, Women for

Box 1: Parivartan – Coaching Adolescent Boys to End VAWG

ICRW – INDIA

Parivartan, which means "transformation" in Hindi, was implemented by ICRW in Mumbai to transform gender norms among adolescent boys. The program engaged boys ages 10-14 in a popular sport—cricket—paired with group-based reflection and mentorship. The program trained community mentors and school-based coaches to implement discussions with boys, which occurred once a week, usually before or after cricket practice.

Topics included respect, ethics, gender-based violence, and gender norms. Through this approach, the program sought to:

1. Raise awareness about abusive and disrespectful behavior
2. Promote gender-equitable, non-violent attitudes
3. Teach skills to speak up and intervene when witnessing harmful and disrespectful behaviors

The goal was that by becoming partners in preventing violence and promoting gender equity, male coaches/mentors and athletes would contribute to transforming the gender norms that condone violence against women and girls.

An evaluation conducted in 2012 found significant changes in attitudes regarding VAWG and gender equity among athletes, coaches, and mentors. The evaluation also included qualitative interviews with the female partners of coaches and mentors, many of whom reported that the men had changed their behaviors at home. The attitudes of community mentors, and the athletes they worked with, showed slightly more change than school-based coaches, indicating that age and shared socio-economic and cultural background may have an effect; mentors were more likely to be closer in age to their athletes and to come from the same community.

The Parivartan program shows significant promise as a locally rooted, gender-transformative approach. However, the evaluation did not measure behavior change and also noted that sustaining change is unclear given the duration of the program.

As the next generation of this program, ICRW is currently implementing Parivartan for Girls (Parivartan Plus) which engages girls through the sport of Kabaddi—a kind of wrestling for women—to conduct similar gender norm transformation and empowerment work with adolescent girls, in the same communities where Parivartan for boys was implemented. Evaluation data is forthcoming.

Source: Das, M., et al. (2012). *Engaging Coaches and Athletes in Fostering Gender Equity: Findings from the Parivartan Program in Mumbai, India*. New Delhi: ICRW & Futures Without Violence.

Women International (WfWI) programming in the DRC begins with all-male and all-female community discussion groups, where men and women reflect on how they are harmed by rigid constructions of masculinity and femininity and how they can effect change. The groups then come together in community dialogue sessions where men have an opportunity to hear from women about the issues they face and both sexes work together to take community action against VAWG. In a recent pilot program, this action has taken the form of a community compact—a shared agreement on the behavior changes community members will make to prevent and respond to VAWG.[134]

Such approaches, wherein men and women are engaged both separately and in mixed-sex groups, are often referred to as "gender synchronized." Research shows that gender synchronized programming is more effective than working with women or men alone, a finding that was supported by the perceptions of our key informants.[135] Research has additionally shown that hearing from women about their experiences of violence is a key way to deepen men's engagement with VAWG prevention and response efforts and to build empathy.[136] Group discussions like the ones undertaken by WfWI DRC provide an opportunity for learning in a space where women have been prepared to share and speak up, and are supported in doing so by skilled facilitators. Group education and dialogue are most effective when they are rooted in local contexts and operate with local ownership.

Relatedly, **male leaders in the community have a critical role to play in encouraging gender norm change and increasing women's access to justice in cases of VAWG**. Engaging male leaders as an entry point consists of identifying which leaders—formal or informal—hold power over the targeted beliefs and behaviors and working with them to act as champions of VAWG prevention and gender equality. For example, WfWI Afghanistan has a program in which they train religious leaders in rural communities who then form discussion and reflections groups with local men. The training uses verses from the Quran to demonstrate the compatibility of women's rights—including violence prevention—with Islam. Religious leaders, in turn, educate and heighten awareness of Islamic values of non-violence against women and girls in their communities.[137] This approach is particularly valuable where violence is seen as a man's right, and women's rights are seen as Western or foreign values that are irrelevant, or even dangerous, to society. While religious, cultural, or local government leaders are common targets of programming that works with male leaders, it is additionally important to look at non-formal leaders who hold the respect of the community, be they activists, teachers, business leaders, etc.

Community mobilization and activism thrives when male engagement programming partners with women's rights organizations to support campaigns that raise awareness about the problem of VAWG and existing laws that set consequences for perpetrators and recourse for victims. They can demand stronger implementation and enforcement of existing laws and/or advocate for reform or the creation of laws to prevent and respond to VAWG at the community level.[138] This strategy is often undertaken in conjunction with community education and dialogue, and is promising for a number of reasons. First, it emphasizes partnerships between women and men, shared interests in and responsibility for ending VAWG as well as the community benefits of decreased violence and greater gender equity. Second, men's engagement in community activism can help bring mainstream attention to VAWG as a community issue rather than a women's issue or private, family matter. Finally, visible male engagement in VAWG prevention and response work may encourage those men who hold equitable attitudes and beliefs, but fear social repercussions of speaking out, to become more vocal.

Engaging men as active bystanders posits that many men hold more equitable views but don't speak up; if they were to do so, tolerance of VAWG would decrease and so would perpetration.[139] Programmatic strategies include building men's skills and capacity to intervene when they witness violence or the expression of violent and/or sexist beliefs. Additionally, **social norm transformation is an essential part of the active bystander approach**—men do not speak up against sexism and VAWG because they fear consequences from other men; men who commit violence and express sexist beliefs feel comfortable doing so because they feel their actions will be accepted by other men. Therefore, it is necessary to create a peer group that shares

134. ICRW Key Informant Interviews, 2017.
135. Greene & Levack, 2010.
136. Flood, 2015.
137. ICRW Key Informant Interviews, 2017.
138. USAID, 2015.
139. Sandys, 2008.

Box 2: SASA! – Locally-Rooted, Gender-Transformative Community Activism

RAISING VOICES – UGANDA/GLOBAL

The SASA! Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV/AIDS is designed to help communities mobilize to address SGBV. The program uses an ecological model of violence prevention to develop initiatives that aim to transform harmful social norms with a diverse array of community stakeholders, including activists, local government and traditional leaders, and service providers—such as police, health workers, and judiciary—at multiple societal levels.

SASA! community activists are ordinary men and women who are interested in issues of gender, equality, and rights. They move through four phases within the intervention:

1. **Start**: Learn about the community, select community activists, and institutional representatives
2. **Awareness**: Enable activists to gain confidence and critically assess gendered power dynamics
3. **Support**: Strengthen connections between community members and build supportive relationships for change
4. **Action**: Try new behaviors and foster positive change

The intervention explicitly focuses on critical analysis and reflection on power imbalances between men and women in the community. Additionally, it is action-oriented and enables participants to use their power to effect positive change.

Evaluation, using a randomized controlled trial over 2.8 years, found significant positive results:

- Past-year experiences of physical intimate partner violence were reduced by 52 percent.
- Among those women who did experience physical and/or sexual partner violence in the past year, perceived levels of appropriate community response to the violence were two times greater.
- These effects were demonstrated at the community level, and were not limited to those with high levels of exposure to the program.

The success of SASA! demonstrates the importance of involving multiple community stakeholders and using multiple strategies to effect change at many levels. The program also had an impact even on those who were not direct participants, crucial findings for gender transformative programming that seeks social norm change. SASA! is currently being replicated in more than 15 countries. Research is still needed on the cost of the intervention, adapting to different communities, and the processes of change undergone by couples and communities.

Source: Edström, J., Hassink, A., Shahrokh, T., & Stern, E. (2015). Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality. *EMERGE Evidence Review*. Promundo-US, Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies.

Photo Credit: @Cartier Philanthropy/Cyril Le Tourneur

values of positive masculinity in order to support men when/if they face negative social consequences for deviating from accepted social norms.[140]

Finally, a subset of VAWG programming includes community-based male engagement programming that is **centered around specific harmful practices, such as FGM/C or CEFM**. A 2010 UNICEF review of interventions to end FGM/C highlighted the importance of understanding and engaging with local dynamics of social change, diverse actors within the community, and networks for collective decision-making in encouraging abandonment of harmful practices. The review "showed that programmes are most effective when they include diverse stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders, women's associations, youth groups, and traditionally marginalized groups; promote local ownership; and link human rights and social justice to local values using recognizable language and images." [141]

Institutions and Policies

Male engagement in VAWG prevention and response at the structural level is rare; many key informants emphasized this significantly limits the effectiveness of anti-violence work with men and boys. Engaging men and boys at the structural level seeks to change the conditions in which men make choices about how to behave. Though an underdeveloped area of programming, it is nonetheless essential to "change the structures of costs and benefits of violence, not just men's calculations of them." [142]

Political mobilization and activism are critical strategies for driving social change that challenges institutions and demands accountability for gender justice.[143] Campaigns for structural change may engage men and boys in several ways and take several forms. They may seek to make public spaces safer for women by encouraging men to speak up in instances of public VAWG and holding public figures accountable for sexist or violent statements or actions. They may increase support for a specific policy or initiative to prevent or address VAWG, or attempt to demonstrate and normalize alternative, non-violent conceptions of masculinity. Programs that engage men in VAWG prevention and response may partner with women's rights activists to design and implement campaigns. Male role models, especially sports stars, may be used in VAWG prevention and response campaigns to demonstrate that socially desirable individuals hold non-violent and equitable views. Men are also often the targets of these campaigns, both as potential perpetrators and potential allies. Mass media campaigns, for instance, may encourage men to reconsider sexist and violent forms of masculinity and associated attitudes and behaviors or take action in support of anti-VAWG groups, policies, or initiatives.

Occupation-specific trainings can be used to increase women's safety in public spaces, improve how laws and policies related to VAWG prevention and response are implemented, or improve institutional responses to survivors of VAWG, depending on the target group. Trainings for law enforcement and judicial officials have focused on heightening awareness of existing laws on VAWG. They have also aimed to improve officials' sensitivity to and treatment of survivors so as not to re-traumatize victims during the legal process and to end the culture of impunity that allows VAWG to thrive. Trainings on women's rights and effective ways to intervene in cases of VAWG can engage male public transit workers and improve women's safety in public spaces. Trainings on sexual harassment and women's rights in all sectors can increase women's safety and ability to participate in the workforce and governance institutions. More detail on these strategies can be found in the ***Economic Empowerment*** › section.

The evidence base for trainings is mixed. One-off trainings have not shown to be effective, but more thoughtful, localized programs where trainings and mentorship take place over a sustained period of time, have had some success. Qualitative evaluations have shown that trainings can be effective in improving understanding of and support for the rights and needs of female survivors of violence. A 2015 USAID review of male engagement in VAWG prevention and response programming suggests that effective programming directed at specific occupational groups included the following elements:[144]

- Emphasis on addressing personal attitudes as well as professional responsibilities
- Buy-in from the institution, including institution leaders' participation in facilitation
- Institutionalization of standardized curriculum
- Strong oversight mechanisms and institutional policies

140. USAID, 2015.
141. Edström et al, 2015.
142. Flood, 2015.
143. Edström et al, 2015.
144. Grieg, A. (2015). Working with Men and Boys to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Approaches, Challenges, and Lessons. USAID. Bur. for Economic Growth, Education and Environment. Ofc. of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/Men_VAW_report_Feb2015_Final.pdf

Innovative approaches to engaging specific occupational groups have incorporated active bystander programming and targeted groups that had been previously unconsidered. For instance, Fiji's Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International partnered with Suva City's Community Police Unit as part of the Streetwize Project to train "shoeshine boys" and "wheelbarrow boys" to intervene when they saw women and girls being abused in the streets. In the United States, the organization Truckers Against Trafficking seeks to educate truck drivers to recognize and report suspected human trafficking.[145] While these programs are generally unevaluated, they represent an interesting, potential pathway for not only reducing VAWG, but also for increasing the range of stakeholders involved.

Finally, male engagement strategies may include working with men in power as champions and allies. This includes business leaders, lawmakers, judges, union and party leaders, etc. If these men can be encouraged to support and advocate for gender-equitable and anti-VAWG policies and initiatives within their respective institutions, they can use their power and privilege to support women's rights and safety.[146] Key informants suggested that this approach is a key way to move men's involvement in VAWG prevention and response work into the structural and policy sphere. They described it to be most powerful when used in combination with political activism and mobilization by men and women. Key informants also noted that engaging men in this manner often requires tailored arguments on the benefits of gender equity and the costs of gender-based violence. For example, to engage a business leader in supporting workplace sexual harassment legislation, it can be useful to make the business case that sexual harassment reduces productivity and harms the bottom line, as does shutting women out of the workplace to "protect" them from violence.[147]

Challenges and Cautions

An intersectional approach is widely recognized as necessary in engaging men to reduce VAWG but does not seem visible as a practice.[148] Programming tends to focus on men in the context of heterosexual relationships, neglecting non-binary and LGBT individuals and communities.[149] Additionally, most programming takes place in the context of socially marginalized communities, but the logic of working within these communities is not made transparent in design, implementation, or evaluation.[150] It is essential to acknowledge and address the intersecting structures of power experienced by men in the target population, as noted by Flood in a critical review of male engagement in anti-VAWG programming:

> Racism, poverty, and other factors push issues of men's violence against women to the margins, make it harder for men to become and remain involved, limit the sustainability of programmes and unsettle strategies focused on asking disadvantaged men to critically evaluate their power and privilege.[151]

For instance, if non-white men are asked to consider their male privilege without acknowledging the myriad ways they are disempowered based on race, they are likely to be resistant and even lose faith in the credibility of the program. If, instead, they are asked to consider the ways that they are disempowered, and then consider the ways in which women specifically are disempowered, the reflection is much more likely to be fruitful. It is absolutely necessary to address the underlying structures of power that perpetuate men's VAWG, and to do so successfully, programming must address the intersecting structures of privilege and power experienced by men while emphasizing that no experience of other injustices can be justification for gender-based violence.[152]

Several key strategies for engaging men focus on a **"soft entry" approach**, which emphasizes the harms that men also experience due to patriarchal power structures and the benefits they stand to gain from more equitable relationships, communities, and societies. This approach avoids discussions of men losing power by adopting more equitable gender norms, and emphasizes harms caused by toxic masculinities rather than individual men's behaviors. Programs and campaigns may also appeal to aspects of dominant masculinities, such as men's roles as protectors, to persuade men to change their behavior, thereby reinforcing men's investment in binary constructions of gender.[153]

145. Truckers Against Trafficking. (2017). *Truckers Against Trafficking: Using Network Leadership to Mobilize the Trucking Community as the Eyes and Ears of the Nation's Highways to End Sex Trafficking*. Truckers Against Trafficking. Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52b07f32e4b007c7c22600c3/t/58828e6844024340519a54d1/1484951152563/TAT+Theory+of+Change+Paper+%281-20-17%29.pdf
146. Edström et al, 2015.
147. Feldblum, C. R., & Lipnic, V. A. (2016). Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Retrieved from https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/upload/report.pdf
148. Flood, 2015.
149. Edström et al., 2015.
150. USAID, 2015.
151. Flood, 2015.
152. Sandys, 2008.
153. Flood, 2015.

If programming does not go beyond this "soft entry" to address men's power and privilege and individual men's responsibility for their attitudes and behaviors, the outcome is what one key informant termed "patriarchy light."[154] While men may stop using violence, the power balances that underpin men's VAWG remain unaddressed. Men may stop being violent because they are "good men" but they still believe they have the right to use violence against the women in their lives in specific circumstances, and their dominance over women remains unchanged.[155]

There is disagreement over whether the soft entry approach makes it more difficult to do the necessary work of addressing the structures of power and privilege that underpin VAWG. One key informant felt that a period of benevolent sexism—or beliefs and attitudes that see women as valuable and worth protecting but not equal or equally competent to men—was a step in the right direction on a path to more radical change. But the informant emphasized that it is not enough to just get men to the benevolent sexism stage; the same program must see them through to gender norm transformation that addresses gendered power and privilege.[156] Other experts agreed that it was a necessary step and did not feel that it made addressing power and privilege in later stages more difficult; they felt it was necessary to avoid backlash from male participants. However, several other informants felt that using soft entry approaches to engaging men may inhibit programs from achieving transformative change—or worse, that programming would end at the benevolent sexism stage. Casey et al. address this tension in a 2016 study of available evidence on programs that engaged men in gender-based violence prevention. The authors argued that if programming aims to be gender transformative—which the majority of programming in the GBV sector does—then initial engagement should also be designed through a gender-transformative lens. That isn't to say that a soft approach can't work, but that it is necessary to consider how initial engagement strategies will impact deepening engagement and addressing power and privilege.[157]

Training and engaging local men as facilitators and educators in their communities is a common approach to contextualizing programming and promoting local ownership and investment in outcomes. Program implementers who were interviewed emphasized that **quality staff can make or break programming that is focused on dialogue and critical reflection**. Facilitators must be faithful to the goals and values of the program and be able to address harmful attitudes and behaviors exhibited by group participants. The latter may be difficult, especially if program participants are older than facilitators, wealthier, or otherwise hold some type of authority; program facilitators should be supported in negotiating these situations. Additionally, Flood (2015) described a harmful trend in which male facilitators may be seen as beyond reproach—their own gendered privilege and power is not reflected upon or addressed, which impacts their ability to faithfully implement program goals and creates a situation of gender inequity within the field of practitioners.[158]

Photo Credit: David Snyder

Feminists and longtime practitioners in VAWG prevention and response work have expressed several concerns about the growing emphasis on male engagement. Funding, which is always limited for women's rights work, is a prominent concern. There are worries that funding for programs solely targeting women is disappearing and being redirected toward male engagement programs, and that the value of women-focused programs is being obscured. Representatives of women's rights organizations have reported pressure to engage men in their programming irrespective of potential

154. ICRW Key Informant Interview, 2017.
155. Flood, 2015.
156. ICRW Key Informant Interview, 2017.
157. Casey et al., 2016.
158. Flood, 2015.

strategic use.[159] While there is little evidence to support the claim of uneven funding,[160] the concern coincides with a general shift toward funding larger INGOs, rather than grassroots organizations. Most explicitly feminist development work and women's rights work is done by grassroots organizations, who experience a smaller pool of funding to work from. At the same time, male engagement programming has captured the attention of the INGO community, who have more resources and are competing in a larger pool of funding. Additionally, donors are placing increased emphasis on male engagement programming, at times veering into treating it as a "silver bullet" and demanding male engagement elements in all programming, edging out grassroots groups that focus on women and girls. While funding isn't being directly taken from women's empowerment programming and given to male engagement programming, general development funding trends contribute to perceptions of uneven emphasis.[161]

Another major concern is that the emphasis on engaging men may **diminish the feminist orientation of VAWG work** by obscuring that women and girls experience the majority of gender-based violence or by representing women and girls as victims of gender-based violence, disempowered by patriarchy, without agency, and in need of male saviors. For instance, in mass media campaigns that aim to appeal to men, men are often shown as the protagonists, championing gender equality and non-violence, with women shown in supporting roles, as victims, or not at all. While this has a political value—showing men taking a role in violence prevention—it also obscures existing work done by women and reinforces a patriarchal value of men as protectors of women.[162] Similar concerns have arisen in interviews over anti-violence campaigns designed and implemented with no input from women, with the rationale that the men leading the campaigns were not yet ready to be led by women.[163] There is also a fear that the emphasis on men may further marginalize women's voices and delegitimize women-only and women-focused programs and services.[164]

Finally, there are also feminist concerns about **gender inequity among practitioners themselves**. Some female informants who had criticisms felt that male practitioners, especially those with substantial power in the field, had failed to genuinely engage with criticism and had not spoken strongly enough against harmful and sexist views about VAWG and gender equity espoused under the guise of male engagement and masculinities work.[165] On the ground, practitioners working in male engagement for VAWG reduction have reported being met with suspicion by women's rights and advocacy groups, who have expressed concern about ideological compatibility and leadership sharing.[166] There is also a concern about "glass escalators," where men rise through the ranks of organizations and their work rises to prominence quickly, while women's expertise and work is left behind and further marginalized.[167] While this divide may not contribute directly to violence against women, strong partnerships between women's rights advocates and men's VAWG prevention and response work are necessary for accountability to principles of feminism and gender equity, as well as for effective programming.

Addressing these concerns is a central part of the growing attention and efforts to ensure accountability to gender equality and women's movements among practitioners of male engagement programming. For more, see ***Figure 3: Accountability to Women and Feminist Movements.* ›**

Available Evidence

Evaluations have shown some success in efforts to shift men's and boys' attitudes towards VAWG. **Group-based gender education** programs that facilitate individual reflection on harmful gender norms and behaviors have created significant changes in male attitudes about violence.[168] These programs typically focus on deconstructing "toxic masculinities" and reconstructing "positive masculinities." This includes programs that work with perpetrators of violence and those that aim to prevent GBV by encouraging men to reflect on the gendered causes of stress and anger in their lives, and non-violent ways to cope with those stresses.

Additionally, **trainings** have been effective in shifting attitudes, particularly related to support for and understanding of the needs of survivors of GBV. A 2015 USAID review of male

159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
161. ICRW Key Informant Interview, 2017.
162. Ibid.
163. ICRW Key Informant Interviews, 2017.
164. Flood, 2015.
165. ICRW Key Informant Interviews, 2017.
166. Flood, 2015.
167. Ibid.
168. Grieg, 2015.

engagement in VAWG prevention and response programming suggests that effective programming directed at specific occupational groups includes the following elements:[169]

- Emphasis on addressing personal attitudes as well as professional responsibilities;
- Buy-in from the institution, including institution leaders' participation in facilitation;
- Institutionalization of standardized curriculum; and
- Strong oversight mechanisms and institutional policies.

There is significantly less evidence on whether male engagement programming is shifting behaviors and thus having an effect on gender inequity as lived and experienced by women and girls. This is partially due to lack of data—few evaluations measure behavior change, and those that do often rely on self-reported data from male program participants. The underlying assumption is that attitude change and the adoption of ideals of positive masculinities will lead to behavior change and thus, decrease GBV and gender inequity. However, available research does not necessarily support this assumption. For instance, the same evaluations of group-based education and reflection programs referenced above found positive changes in men's attitudes toward gender equity in general and sexual violence against women specifically, but no change in women's power to decline sex.[170]

Community mobilization approaches have shown effectiveness in reducing support for and prevalence of traditional harmful practices such as CEFM and FGM/C.[171] These programs engage and bring together diverse stakeholders, use rights-based approaches, and are highly context-specific, using familiar and resonant language and images.

A 2016 review by Casey et al. found that **gender transformative approaches** were most effective in preventing and reducing GBV. However, this review also found that most programs, while aiming for gender transformative results, were not transformational in design and especially initial engagement of men, resulting in reduced effectiveness.[172] The overarching tensions between the "soft approach" and transformative outcomes are discussed elsewhere in this report. Specific to violence, to be effective in transforming inequitable gender norms, that promote and perpetuate violence, and to reduce its prevalence, programming must explicitly address the root causes of GBV—gender inequity and its attendant power dynamics.[173] This was reflected by our key informants, who emphasized that batterer intervention programs that treat violence against women and girls as a symptom of stress and anger, rather than gender inequity, were ineffective not only in changing norms, but also in preventing violence.[174,175]

Finally, research supports the effectiveness of working with boys and male youth in gender inequity work. In efforts to prevent violence, there is a substantial body of evidence that shows that men who are exposed to violence as children, especially in their homes, are more likely to commit GBV later in life.[176] Engaging boys, adolescents, and young men, especially those who have experienced violence, can help to break this cycle of violence by addressing the negative effects of violence on boys themselves, and help them to set a non-violent life course.[177,178]

Best Practices

- **Work across multiple societal levels**. Not every program will have the capacity to work at the individual, community, and institutional levels. However, every program should, in its design, implementation, and evaluation, consider how the program will be affected by these factors and how programmatic outcomes can fit into work in other sectors and levels of society. More purposeful connections need to be made between men's personal processes of change, grassroots mobilization, and organizing with men, and efforts to change broader social and economic policies that influence SGBV and gender relations in men's everyday lives.
- **Work across multiple levels of prevention and consider linkages between levels**. That is, work to prevent violence before it occurs, address it when it occurs, and prevent it from reoccurring.
- **Build strong evaluation into program design**. This includes measuring behavior change as well as attitude change and engaging women in the evaluation, even if

169. Ibid.
170. Ibid.
171. Edström et al., 2015.
172. Casey et al., 2016.
173. Ibid.
174. ICRW Key Informant Interview, 2017.
175. ICRW Key Informant Interview, 2017.
176. Barker et al., 2011.
177. Sandys, 2008.
178. Promundo, ECOS, Instituto Papai, & Salud Y Genero. (n.d.). Program H: Working with Young Men (Program Manual). Promundo. Retrieved from https://promundoglobal.org/resources/program-h-working-with-young-men/

they are not direct beneficiaries or participants. This helps to verify self-reports from men and to capture impacts for women based on their own experiences.

- **Apply a gender-transformative lens from design through evaluation**. Ensure that initial engagement strategies to appeal to men do not hinder the ability of programming to address the power and privilege that underpin violence against women and girls. Programming should not stop at the level of "benevolent sexism" where violent behaviors may have stopped but power relationships remain unchanged. These outcomes are limited to specific behaviors in specific contexts and do not address deeper norms and changing behavior and attitudes toward women in general.
- **Avoid a zero-sum game, but set realistic expectations**. Emphasizing the benefits of gender equity and non-violence for men is an essential programmatic strategy, as is moving away from a viewpoint in which either men or women can hold power. However, the reality is that men benefit from a "patriarchy dividend" which will shrink as patriarchal structures are reformed. Men are likely to experience this as a loss of power, and preparing them for it (and preparing women and program implementers for potential backlash) is an important element of moving beyond their initial discomfort into truly equitable and non-violent relationships.
- **Start young**. Working with boys and young men to set them on a non-violent life course is an essential form of primary prevention. Ideally, programs will target adolescents in existing schools and community gathering settings. Programming with adolescents should be especially cognizant of potential backlash against boys and young men who express more equitable attitudes, including from teachers and family members.
- **Work with men and women, boys and girls in gender-synchronized approaches**. Consider the sex-segregation of groups as a strategic tool rather than an assumption that single-sex or mixed-sex groups are better. Additionally, do not assume that only male facilitators can work with men.
- **Link positive masculinities to culturally-compelling gender identities**. It is essential to avoid perceptions of non-violence and gender equity as a foreign or Western value. These efforts are strengthened when those promoting positive masculinities are from the same community. This is especially important when addressing harmful traditional practices such as FGM/C and CEFM. However, these efforts should be careful not to use male role models that reinforce a masculine ideal in order to be culturally appealing.
- **Consider men's potential roles in responding to and supporting survivors of VAWG, not just in prevention**. Men within key institutions such as police, health workers, and judiciary have a role to play in providing safe, response services to survivors of VAWG. These men can help to ensure that women receive the support the need and also that they are not exposed to further violence or discrimination.
- **Nurture male peer groups that reinforce positive masculinities**. Men may face social repercussions for transgressing gender norms, either in their personal lives or by other men when speaking out against violence. Male peer groups that share values of positive, non-violent masculinities can support and validate men in these experiences, and can make feelings of loss of power easier to accept as gender relationships become more equitable.
- **Train male champions to support and work in partnership with women activists**. This promotes women's leadership and collaborative cross-gender relationships, builds partnerships between men and women around other shared interests, and increases the effectiveness of women's advocacy.

Health

Why Engage Men?

The health sector is one of the most established when it comes to male engagement. Targeting men as partners within health interventions started as early as the late 1990s, when a family planning programs began engaging men, particularly with the goal of preventing HIV/AIDS. In addition to continuing to engage with men to prevent HIV/AIDS, in more recent years the health sector has expanded its work to also include men as part of reproductive health interventions—such as those that seek to increase uptake of available contraceptive methods, promote birth spacing, and facilitate other positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes—as well as programs on maternal and child health more generally.

Engaging men in health interventions is critical for a number of reasons. The most obvious one, perhaps, is that a woman's sexual and reproductive health is often inexorably linked to a man's, which makes it only logical that programs should engage men when seeking to improve health outcomes for women and for overall households and communities. As one article succinctly puts it, "reproduction requires both a man and women. Men are half of the equation." And if men are half of the equation, they should also be engaged in relevant interventions that seek to promote more positive health behaviors for both men and women.[179]

Husbands, fathers, uncles, and other male family members often control decisions about a woman's health. A woman's sexual and reproductive health in many contexts is considered the most important part of her identity; as a result, men often see it as their responsibility to "protect" this aspect of a woman's life, which in many cases means to control it. The literature notes, however, that historically, men's engagement in women's health has not always been in a woman's best interest. Unequal gender norms, and specifically harmful gender norms related to masculinity, all too often lead to negative health outcomes for both men and women. According to an article by the Health Policy Project, "Narratives of masculinity that justify men's capacity for violence, control over women, and dominance in the economic and political spheres is influential in many local contexts around the world. Global health literature documents the impact of such social narratives, which act as structural drivers to increase the risk for negative health and social outcomes."[180] Research has shown that when men and boys internalize traditional masculine ideals—such as the need for multiple sexual partners—and when they feel that they cannot fulfill rigid gender norms, they engage in risky behavior, leading to negative health outcomes such as those related to violence against women, alcohol abuse, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).[181]

When women do not have control over their own health, they may be unable to make decisions about whether and when to use contraceptives. This can lead to unwanted pregnancies and STIs, including HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS interventions should also use clinicians to encourage men to be tested; this burden should not be left to women, who may experience backlash, including the increased possibility of violence, when suggesting that a male partner also undergo an HIV/AIDS test.[182]

Male engagement is also important in preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2009, 370,000 children became infected with HIV/AIDS the majority of whom acquired it from their mothers.[183] With HIV/AIDS being a leading cause of death for women of a reproductive age, it is critical for both women and their babies to be protected. While HIV/AIDS services are readily available in many countries with high prevalence and mortality, uptake of treatment, including of PMTCT services, is far too low. This is in part due to a lack of male engagement and support in women's healthcare around preventing and treating HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS programs need to respond to the realities of women's lives for uptake to be successful and at scale. Men are part of women's lives—and an important part of their decision-making around health practices in many parts of the world—so they must be involved. In response to this reality, WHO recommends efforts that "efforts must be taken to secure the involvement and support of men in all aspects of these programs and

179. World Health Organization (WHO). (2012). *Male Involvement in the Prevention of Mother-to-child Transmission of HIV*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO. Available online at: http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/70917/3/9789241503679_eng.pdf.

180. Health Policy Project (2014). *Evidence-Based Strategies to Engage Men and Boys in Gender-Related Health Interventions: Evidence-Based Strategies to Transform Gender Norms, Roles, and Power Dynamics for Better Health*. Washington, DC: USAID, PHFI, MEASURE Evaluation, ICRW, and Heath Policy Project. Available online at: http://www.healthpolicyproject.com/pubs/382_MenandBoysBrief.pdf.

181. Barker et al., 2007.

182. WHO, 2012.

183. Ibid.

to address HIV/AIDS and gender related discrimination that impedes service access and uptake as well as client retention."[184] Male engagement can be especially effective when HIV-positive women are breastfeeding. Widely publicized PMTCT guidelines suggest that exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life can prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS, however this same practice is not promoted among non-HIV positive mothers.[185] Because of this, many women are hesitant to adhere to these recommendations if their husbands do not know their HIV/AIDS status, and fear unintentionally disclosing their status by breastfeeding exclusively. When men understand more about women's health care and the transmission of HIV/AIDs, however, they can help to create a positive environment where women are supported in adhering to healthy practices that can help protect babies from HIV/AIDS.

Research has also shown that engaging men in family planning interventions can increase gender equality and lead to positive health outcomes for both sexes.[186] In Uttar Pradesh, India, for example, there was a positive correlation between contraceptive use and men who held gender-equitable attitudes towards women.[187] Since in most contexts men are not traditionally involved in family planning discussions and also since many programs have historically targeted women only, men often lack knowledge about family planning methods and may hold misconceptions about these methods.[188] In particular, men may believe erroneous information about side effects of contraceptives, like condoms—for example, thinking that they reduce pleasure—and may decline to use them as a result.[189] It is therefore important to educate men properly about men's and women's family planning options. In addition, it is critical to encourage healthy, open, and honest conversations about family planning so that couples are empowered to make more informed decisions about their health.

Contrary to popular belief, male engagement programs have found that when given the option, men have a keen interest in being part of family planning and other health care discussions and in creating an enabling environment to improve the health of their partners and families as a whole.[190] Health programs should capitalize on men's interest in being positive change agents in order to create more comprehensive and effective male programming in this sector.

In addition to engaging men who are already married, programs should engage young men before and as they are embarking on their sexual journeys so that harmful sexual and reproductive health behaviors can be prevented before they lead to negative outcomes for men and women. Health interventions and behavior change communication interventions, in particular, may also want to consider whether and how to work with traditional and religious leaders. These stakeholders—who are often male—serve as thought leaders and play a significant role in many communities in shaping gendered norms and practices related to sexual and reproductive health. For example, elders can either reinforce or transform certain norms around condom use, male circumcision—which has been widely proven to help prevent HIV/AIDS—and other forms of contraception, all of which may have significant positive or negative health outcomes on men and women in the community.[191]

Common Approaches

Programs in the health sector may engage men in a number of different ways: some work with young boys and adolescents; some with adult men, either as partners, male family members, or traditional and religious leaders; and others work with male community members more generally. In all scenarios, men play an important role in influencing women's health outcomes.

Individual

Many promising programs choose to **target youth**, arguing that starting young is essential and allows interventions to capitalize on the moment when young men's and women's views on sexuality are just forming. It is particularly important that adolescents—both male and female, single and in couples—are educated about their own sexuality and reproductive health, as well as about the reproductive health of the opposite sex. Most comprehensive programs

184. Ibid.
185. Moland K., De Paoli M., Sellen D., Van Esterik P., Leshbari S., & Blystad A. (2010). Breastfeeding and HIV: Experiences from a Decade of Prevention of Postnatal HIV Transmission in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Breastfeeding Journal, 5* (10): 4. Available online at https://internationalbreastfeedingjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1746-4358-5-10.
186. FHI360. (2012). *Increasing Men's Engagement to Improve Family Planning Programs in South Asia*. Research Triangle Park, NC and New Delhi, India: FHI360. Available online at: http://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/MaleEngageBrief.pdf.
187. Health Policy Project, 2014.
188. WHO, 2012.
189. FHI360, 2012.
190. WHO, 2012.
191. Health Policy Project, 2014.

work on multiple levels and in varying ways with girls and boys. For example, programs may have girls and boys alone, boys and girls together, and also engage in behavior change communication for influential family and community members.

Programs may **present contraceptive options** to youth and **discuss the consequences of harmful practices like early marriage and unsafe sex**. These interventions may also **encourage youth to be more confident discussing their sexual health and desires with their partners** so that they are better prepared to handle and mediate conversations around sex as they begin their sexual lives. Programs also commonly use peer education to encourage discussion on these taboo subjects and build confidence among youth to make decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health.[192]

To engage men in the next stage of life, many programs work with married and unmarried couples to encourage family planning, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, and PMTCT through **couples counseling, often paired with one-on-one counseling for men and/or women**. This type of counseling is often done at clinics, with intervention points being prenatal and antenatal visits. Programs that take this approach to family planning have seen positive outcomes for women, including: increased knowledge about family planning options (both effectiveness and use); increased male involvement and support for women in making decisions about family planning; and a decrease in stigma for both men and women using these methods.[193] It is important to note, however, that a gap in this type of programming is that they focus only on men's roles as sexual partners and not as spouses. As a result, safe motherhood, or "a series of initiatives, practices, protocols and service delivery guidelines designed to ensure that women receive high-quality gynecological, family planning, prenatal, delivery and postpartum care,"[194] is not frequently discussed.[195]

Community

Working with community members, who may play a role in decision making and norms around family planning practices—either as a separate intervention or as part of more comprehensive, gender-transformative programming—is another well-accepted approach. This type of programming may include the use of interactive communications such as dramas, puppet shows, song, and dance, to educate participants about potentially harmful health-related practices and issues in their community. This participatory approach capitalizes on traditional community gatherings as a place to facilitate dialogue around these issues. Community-based programming may also **target traditional and religious leaders**, who influence community-wide beliefs and practices around health behaviors. This type of programming may include **using religious texts as an entry point** to discuss family planning or other community health issues. Through these conversations, programs educate leaders about harmful family planning practices, debunk myths about contraception, and **promote a more progressive interpretation of sacred writings** that supports, rather than forbids, the use of contraceptives.

Regardless of the intervention point or target population, the goal of most male engagement programming in this sector is to create more gender-equitable health attitudes and behaviors among men and boys. This is achieved through either **accommodating or transformative strategies**. Accommodating programs often engage men as husbands, sexual partners, and community members "to address inequalities in access to health information and to **build and reinforce linkages between the community and local health services**."[196] Transformative approaches **use social and behavioral change communication strategies** to target men of varying ages and marital statuses, and often focus on engaging key community stakeholders and thought leaders. These programs encourage men to question traditional masculinities and femininities and to reflect on the related implications of gender norms on health behaviors (both positive and negative). Programs also often focus on promoting more equitable communication, negotiation and decision making around family planning.[197]

While transformative approaches have the greatest potential for deep and long-lasting impacts—including creating more gender-equitable attitudes and beliefs and increasing self-confidence and self-efficacy among women[198]—few actually seek to shift gender norms, since this is time intensive and expensive.

192. FHI360, 2012.
193. Ibid.
194. POLICY Project Human Rights Working Group. (2017). *Guidance on the use of the Human Rights and Reproductive Health Matrix: Safe Motherhood Website.* Available at http://www.policyproject.com/matrix/SafeMotherhood.cfm.
195. Health Policy Project, 2014.
196. Ibid.
197. Ibid.
198. Ibid.

Box 3: Brothers for Life – Using Behavior Change Communication to Prevent HIV/AIDS

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL (SANAC), DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/US PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF (USAID/PEPFAR), JOHNS HOPKINS HEALTH AND EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (JHHESA), SONKE GENDER JUSTICE, UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF), INTERDEPARTMENTAL MANAGEMENT TEAM (IDMT), UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND MORE THAN 40 OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS – SOUTH AFRICA

Brothers for Life is a national South African program implemented by a large consortium of partners that sought "to contribute to the prevention of new HIV/AIDS infections and GBV in South Africa, by addressing men's limited involvement in fatherhood, encouraging men to reduce risky behaviors, increasing their use of HIV/AIDS related services, and challenging gender inequalities that are driving the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS. In particular, the project works to bring about a change in men's attitudes and behavior to reduce the incidence of multiple concurrent partnerships, alcohol and substance abuse, and the use of violence." Launched in 2009, the Brothers for Life "Salon" program targeted men ages 18-34 years old using a behavior change communication campaign that was comprised of TV and radio advertisements, billboards, and posters, that promoted correct and consistent condom use, HIV/AIDS testing among men, and medical male circumcision (MMC) as a means of preventing HIV/AIDS. Secondary audiences of the program included women and girls, health care workers, and traditional leaders.

The mass media program, in which women primarily communicated the importance of MMC, increased knowledge among men and women about male circumcision and cervical cancer. Attitudinal shifts among both groups also occurred. Men reported a greater sense of responsibility over their own health as well as that of their partners; women noted feeling more able and willing to talk about sexual and reproductive health, and specifically about male circumcision, with their families and partners, which demonstrated a shift in gender norms. Men also demonstrated behavior change, with a number of them getting circumcised after being exposed to the campaign. No behavior change was seen among young women, but older women reported refusing to have sex with uncircumcised men after seeing the ads.

Source: Sonke Gender Justice. (2017). *Brothers for Life Program Description*. Available online at http://www.genderjustice.org.za/community-education-mobilisation/brothers-for-life/.

Orr, N., Hajiyiannis H., Matekane T., & Ntlabati, P. (2016). *Post-broadcast Evaluation of the Brothers for Life Medical Male Circumcision "Salon" Campaign, Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation (CADRE)*. Johannesburg, South Africa: CADRE. Available online at http://www.brothersforlife.org/sites/default/files/images/post-broadcast_evaluation_of_the_brothers_for_life_medical_male_circumcision_salon_campaign.pdf.

Institutions and Policies

Service-based interventions have shown promising results. These approaches build the capacity of health care workers to more successfully engage with and serve men. When health care workers feel more confident and comfortable discussing sexual and reproductive health and family planning with men, they are better able to serve male clients in a stigma-free environment. This type of programming may also work with health clinics more broadly to create safer and more appealing spaces for male clients. Activities might include "making literature on men's needs available, seeing male clients at different hours of the day, and training staff to be more welcoming to male clients."[199] Service-based interventions may also scale up the availability of male-centric services in clinics and encourage clinics to promote couples counseling. The latter has been proven to be an extremely effective strategy in PMTCT, the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, as well as in improving the uptake of family planning services more generally.[200]

Building the capacity of service providers, local governments, and institutions and forming partnerships with local NGOs also increases the likelihood that programming will be sustainable and that stakeholders can

199. Barker et al, 2007.
200. FHI360, 2012.

continue program activities even after development funding ceases. The Promoting Change in Reproductive Behavior in Bihar (PRACHAR) program, implemented by Pathfinder, demonstrates the promise of building the capacity of local implementing partners and service providers to increase program scale and sustainability (see *Box 4*).

Box 4: Improving the Health of Young Mothers Through Local Partnerships

PATHFINDER INTERNATIONAL – INDIA

The Promoting Change in Reproductive Behavior in Bihar (PRACHAR) program, which was a three-year, community-based intervention in India funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and implemented by Pathfinder International, was "designed to reach a large proportion of the population in three districts of the state of Bihar and to change beliefs, attitudes, and practices among adolescents, young married couples, and parents and influential adult figures in these communities." This comprehensive programming methodology was based on a proven approach previously used by The Gates Foundation. The main goals of this program were to raise awareness and uptake of family planning among adolescents (and particularly male adolescents) and to educate young couples on healthy spacing between pregnancies. The ultimate, long-term goal of the program was to improve the health of young mothers by changing traditional practices around childbearing, and to delay the age of young women's first birth. To do this, the program worked directly with unmarried adolescents (ages 15-19) and young newlywed couples in their teens and early 20s (both those that did and did not yet have children) as well as with parents (especially mothers-in-law) and other key community stakeholders, such as traditional leaders and elders, to change knowledge and attitudes around family planning and childbearing.

To implement this program at scale, Pathfinder forged partnerships with 30 different local NGOs. The implementation partners worked with youth participants to deliver age-appropriate training about sexual and reproductive health. For the older cohorts, education components included lessons on family planning, preventing STIs, including HIV/AIDS, and the importance of delaying childbirth and birth spacing. Families of young married couples and other community stakeholders received information about the health and economic benefits of women delaying the age of their first birth and of healthy birth spacing. Pathfinder also implemented a complementary behavior change communication component where Pathfinder "cultural teams" visited villages every six weeks to conduct plays, songs, and puppet shows illustrating the negative consequences of not adhering to recommended health behaviors around childbirth.

Results from the evaluation of the pilot phase were extremely promising. The program, which took place in 452 villages, reached over 90,000 adolescents and young adults, over 100,000 parents and other community members, and was widely accepted. Results included:

- An increase from 38.3 percent to 80.8 percent among all respondents in the belief that contraception is both necessary and safe. The increase was even greater among married adolescents (increasing from 45.3 percent to 90.5 percent);
- An increase in the interval between marriage and first birth from 21.3 months to 24 months;
- A significant increase (almost triple) among the percentage of newlyweds who use contraceptives to delay their first child;
- An increase (more than double) in the percentage of first-time parents who used contraception to space their second child (from 14 percent to 33 percent); and
- Changes in attitudes among both adults and youth, recognizing the harmful effects of early marriage and childbirth and the importance of birth spacing.

Source: Wilder, J., Masilamani, R., & Daniel, E.E. (2005). *Promoting Change in the Reproductive Behavior of Youth: Pathfinder International's PRACHAR Project, Bihar, India.* New Delhi, India: Pathfinder International. Available online at http://www2.pathfinder.org/site/DocServer/India-Prachar_Project.pdf?docID=4261.

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Challenges and Cautions

While globally, many men continue to have decision-making power over household decisions—including those related to a woman's health care—**family planning continues to be seen as a "woman's concern"**; one which men do not want to understand or be involved in. This poses a challenge for male engagement programs that seek to involve men in family planning discussions and to create a more gender-equitable dynamic between husbands and wives where women have more control over their own bodies, particularly when to have children, how many to have, and how to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

The stigma surrounding men's engagement in family planning adds another layer of complexity to engaging with men in this sphere. **Men may experience stigma for engaging in a "traditionally female sphere", for using unconventional family planning methods, and for their involvement in HIV/AIDS-related-programming**. In order to address this pervasive stigma, programs should consider creating male role models or champions who have broken down this male/female barrier and are successfully engaging with their female partners around family planning needs and practices. They may also employ community-wide behavior change communication programs to address gender biases and misconceptions around the use of certain forms of contraception.[201]

Issues of stigma are also a major concern when discerning how best to engage men in HIV/AIDS—and specifically PMTCT—programming. Men may fear learning their own status and the stigma and discrimination they might experience from their partners, family, and other community members and thus refuse to participate in interventions as a result. They may also fear the possible stigma they might experience at health clinics.

Institutional barriers may also play a role in discouraging men from participating in discussions and activities about family planning and HIV/AIDS. **Frequently, health programs are adapted for women and do not offer "male-friendly" family planning services and as a result, further alienate men from the health sphere**.[202] Family planning and HIV/AIDS clinics should be aware of this unintentional bias, and seek to create safer, more approachable, and more comfortable spaces for men and to advertise male-friendly health services. This could include training clinic staff on how to have appropriate, productive, and non-stigmatizing conversations with men about family planning use, installing male condom dispensers in clinics and other public spaces, and using male role models as spokespeople in media campaigns to advertise these services.

While it is important to find ways to constructively and appropriately engage men in health programming and to encourage them to play a greater role in family planning and other health issues, **it is imperative that programs do not unintentionally reinforce harmful gender norms that disempower women**.[203] Health interventions that seek to work with men should take caution in encouraging men to play a greater role in women's health care and teach men and women that women should have the right to and should take the lead in making decisions about their own bodies.

The complex nature of marital dynamics may make it challenging to discern how best to work with couples. Programs—especially those in Africa where there is a "complex spectrum of marital types"[204] and where marriage may be difficult to define—may encounter challenges in knowing which types of couples to target. For example, if programs focus solely on married couples, they may inadvertently leave out a key population of couples that are cohabiting, but not married. Polygamy, a common practice in many parts of Africa, further complicates this decision. Programs should therefore consider expanding their definitions of couples to include those that have a relevant partner, particularly when seeking to prevent HIV/AIDS. They should also aim to work with single women and adjust their approach depending on the target population.

Like many other gender norms, those around health are rooted in centuries of highly-regarded tradition and cultural practice. Thus, it may be **challenging for health programs to have a significant and sustainable impact if they do not have the time and funds available to invest in a long-term, multi-faceted intervention**. Such programming is expensive and requires many resources. Many donors are more concerned with immediate outputs—such as how many men and women programs reach—rather than longer-term health outcomes, and do not want to fund long-term efforts. While organizations may not be able to commit to such funding, they should be careful to implement consistent programming, as

201. FHI360, 2012. / Health Policy Project, 2014.
202. WHO, 2012.
203. FHI360, 2012.
204. WHO, 2012.

inconsistent interventions may end up being superficial and could do more by reinforcing misconceptions about gender norms and health practices.

Available Evidence

Health programs that are well-designed to engage men have demonstrated promising results in a variety of different health outcomes, including positively transforming attitudes and behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health and maternal, newborn, and child health; and in creating positive outcomes related to PMTCT interventions for women, children, and families.[205,206] A 2014 meta-analysis of male engagement health programming in India and other low-income countries indicates that engaging men in health programming may have other positive gender outcomes as well. These included "reports of reduced perpetration of violence by young men, increased action against early marriage by religious leaders, increased gender-equitable attitudes and beliefs, increased partner communication, greater numbers of men reporting that they believe that women are justified in refusing sex, men contributing more to household chores, and improved emotional and sexual intimacy."[207]

One of the most common ways to measure the effectiveness of male engagement programming in the health sector is through the use of the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale, which is a validated attitude scale developed by Population Council/ Horizons and Promundo to track men's attitudes (and, in particular, changes in attitudes as a result of male engagement programming) on a variety of different gender norms.[208] The scale measures attitudes around gender norms related to violence, sexuality, masculinities, and reproductive health. The GEM scale has been widely adapted, and is used as a complementary measurement piece to popular male engagement programs in the health sector, such as Program H. [209]

Since the health sector was one of the first to engage men, there is much evidence about effective interventions and "what works." We have included evidence from a few promising practices below:

- There is some evidence demonstrating that **uptake of family planning knowledge is greater for women if their husband is present**. Results from an intervention study in Nepal show that women who participated in couples-based education with their partner had significantly greater understanding of both family planning and maternal health, including pregnancy complications, than women who attended education sessions alone.[210] Studies have also shown that **engaging men in health interventions may result in an uptake in contraceptive use**.[211]
- Involving men in HIV/AIDS testing and treatment and in PMTCT programming results in a number of positive health outcomes for women, including creating an enabling environment for and increasing spousal communication about HIV/AIDS and sexual risk. Research has shown that this is particularly important in couples where only one partner is HIV-positive. By being able to discuss their HIV/ AIDS status more freely, couples can decide how best to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS or other STIs, including using a condom and decreasing sex with outside partners.
  - Studies have also shown that **male engagement in HIV/ AIDs programming leads to an increase in seeking treatment and adhering to treatment regimes**, which may also be important in preventing HIV/AIDS transmission during and after childbirth. One study in Kenya found that HIV-positive women who attended voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) programming with their spouse were three times more likely to adhere to treatment plans during pregnancy and delivery and five times more likely to adhere to proper breastfeeding protocols to prevent mother to child transmission.[213] This demonstrates that when men are supportive of their wives in getting tested and treated for HIV/AIDS, women feel that they do not have to hide their status and do not fear disclosure by adhering to treatment regimes. They are therefore more likely to be consistent in taking medicines and in using proper breastfeeding protocols to prevent transmission to the child.
- **Engaging religious leaders has also shown positive results**. For example, one male engagement program

205. FHI360, 2012.
206. WHO, 2012.
207. Health Policy Project, 2014.
208. Singh, A., Verma, R., & Barker, G. (2013). *Making Women Count: An Annual Publication on Gender and Evaluation by UN Women Multi Country Office for India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives.* New Delhi, India: UN Women. Available online at: http://promundoglobal.org/resources/measuring-gender-attitude-using-gender-equitable-men-scale-gems-in-various-socio-cultural-settings/.
209. FHI360, 2012.
210. Ibid.
211. WHO, 2012.
212. Ibid.
213. Ibid.

in Bangladesh chose to work with religious leaders, using religious texts in the Quran and Hadith to discuss family planning practices and the role that men play in responsible family planning. The program had very promising results, stating that, "By 2006, more than 40,000 Imams received orientation on these topics and an evaluation has shown that at least 40 percent of Imams bring up these topics during Jumma prayer and at social gatherings."[214]

- **Combined programmatic approaches that include 1) group education; 2) community outreach, mobilization, and mass media campaigns; and 3) service-based programming have shown positive results**: According to the Barker et al. 2007 meta-analysis, programs deemed most effective in "changing men's behavior and gender-related attitudes" included at least one of the following components:
  - **Group education**: This could include traditional educational sessions along with group discussions and the use of more participatory methods, such as role-playing. For maximum and sustained effectiveness, Barker et al. recommends weekly sessions 10-16 weeks, with each session running for approximately 2-2.5 hours. Activities should include discussions about sex versus gender, with a particular focus on understanding, exploring, and questioning the social constructs of masculinity and femininity and the gender binary generally. Time should be reserved for participants to reflect on how these constructs play out (both positively and negatively) in their own lives. Activities could also include skills-building components, like teaching boys how to properly put on a condom. Giving participants time between sessions to consider and apply what they have learned also seems to be a critical component of group education interventions.[215,216]
  - **Community outreach, mobilization, and mass media campaigns**: These include radio and television messages, billboards, widespread educational materials, and public events. Such outreach should promote the positive ways in which men and boys can act as agents of change and encourage healthier lifestyles for themselves and the women and girls in their lives. Effective messaging in health interventions often appeals to a man's sense of familial responsibility, and may focus on how positive health behaviors can improve a man's relationship with his spouse and/or children. Using thought leaders and other influential members of society that men and boys look up to, such as fathers, coaches, and religious leaders, has also been proven effective. Formative research to identify what type(s) of messages and messengers may work best is key to program success. Mass media campaigns should run frequently (daily or weekly), though they can be fairly short-lived—lasting from 4-6 months to a year—and still effective, depending on available funding.[217]
  - **Service-based interventions**: These approaches build the capacity of health care workers to more successfully engage with and serve men. When health care workers feel more confident and comfortable discussing sexual and reproductive health and family planning with men, they are better able to serve male clients in a stigma-free environment. This type of programming may also work with health clinics more broadly to create safer and more appealing spaces for male clients. Activities might include "making literature on men's needs available, seeing male clients at different hours of the day, and training staff to be more welcoming to male clients."[218] Service-based interventions may also scale up the availability of male-centric services in clinics and encourage clinics to promote couples counseling. The latter has

Photo Credit: David Snyder

214. FHI360, 2012.
215. Barker et al., 2007.
216. FHI360, 2012.
217. Barker et al., 2007.
218. Ibid.

been proven to be an extremely effective strategy in PMTCT, the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, as well as in improving the uptake of family planning services more generally.

While much has been done in the field of men's engagement in health programming, few programs have been implemented over a long period of time, and many do not even extend past the pilot stage, despite showing promising outcomes. In Barker et al.'s meta-analysis, most of the 58 evaluated programs lasted only from 16 weeks to one year.[219] It is clear that more information is needed about the effectiveness and sustainability of longer-term engagement with men and boys, and to discern whether outcomes at the end of pilot programs are able to be sustained over a longer period of time.

Best Practices

- **Start young**: work with young boys/adolescents: Many programs seeking to transform gender norms about masculinity that may have implications for health behaviors, target adolescents—specifically boys ages 10-17 and young men ages 18-24—to make an impact before gender norms are rigidly ingrained. This type of programming should create safe spaces, where adolescents can feel free to be vulnerable, ask questions about gender norms, and reflect on their own ideas about masculinity, especially as it relates to health, including, though not necessary focused exclusively on, sexual and reproductive health. Programs may seek to debunk traditional myths about health that may be linked to masculinity, such as the idea that women are sexual objects, that sex should be performance-oriented, and that it is ok to force women to have sex.[220] Interventions should also encourage boys to have open, honest, and respectful dialogues with their partners about sex, reproductive health, and family planning, and to give their female counterparts a voice in these important discussions.
- **Continue to engage boys as they age and transition into new stages of their life**: While it is important to start young, it is equally important for health interventions to sustain their engagement with boys. Men, like all people, transform and adopt different roles throughout their lifetime and their health needs shift as they age and enter different phases of life. How they see the world, their own health, and how they interact with women is very different when they are boys versus adolescents versus husbands versus fathers. Interventions should change their approaches and subject matter to reflect the life stages, roles that men move through, and men's and women's health needs over time.
- **For preventing HIV/AIDS, working with couples is key**: Most of the promising programs and practices aimed at preventing and treating HIV/AIDS engage, at least to some extent, with couples. These efforts work to improve couples' communication about their sexual and reproductive health issues and needs, and, more specifically about HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, and treatment. According to the WHO: "…HIV testing is usually proposed to men and women separately, and on very different occasions. This does not facilitate communication between couples regarding HIV, their status, or the adoption of preventive behaviours … male partners need to be viewed and treated not only as a powerful influencing factor, but as a constituent part of reproductive health, and can no longer be excluded from any debate surrounding issues like pregnancy or HIV/AIDS." [221]
- **Create opportunities for dialogue between men and women**: Health, specifically sexual and reproductive health, is often a taboo topic of discussion for men and women; and reproductive health is often considered a "woman's domain." Thus, effective programs must find ways to create dialogue between partners on these health issues and to encourage male partners to allow women to make decisions about their own health. Through these dialogues, it is important to explore, question, and transform harmful gender norms that may lead to an increase in HIV/AIDS or other negative health outcomes. These conversations should also explore power imbalances between men and women (both within couples as well as within community structures as a whole). As noted above, couples voluntary counseling and testing (CVCT) is one strategy for creating such opportunities.
- **Ensure that programming addresses the needs of men as well as women**: For all health care programming—especially HIV/AIDs programing, including PMTCT efforts—it is important to address the needs of men as well as of women, and to avoid using an instrumentalist approach. Programs should treat men as health care clients, rather than engage them solely to facilitate better

219. Barker et al., 2007.
220. Health Policy Project, 2014.
221. Ibid.

health outcomes for women. This will encourage men to get involved in programming and maximize impacts for women, men, and children. To convince men to participate in HIV/AIDS counseling and treatment services or in reproductive health programming more generally, interventions should also demonstrate how they will positively impact men.[222]

- **Consider a combined programmatic approach that includes 1) group education; 2) community outreach, mobilization, and mass media campaigns; and 3) service-based programming**: Programs that have been found to be most effective in changing men's health behavior and gender-related attitudes include elements of working directly with men to reflect on gender norms, working with communities to establish consensus around new norms, and working with service-providers to ensure that men are able to adequately participate in and access health services.
- **Whenever possible, programming should be long-term[223] and seek to use a combined approach, engaging men through multiple channels, using a variety of different types of activities**: The most effective male engagement programs in this sector have been "multifaceted and complex." [224] According to Barker et al., while standalone activities may be effective, programs that implemented at least two of the following activities in tandem were more effective: group education, community mobilization, and service-based interventions. In particular, efforts that combined other types of interventions with community-based programming—including mass media campaigns—have been most promising in producing behavioral or health outcomes, showing an increase in condom use, a decrease in STI rates, a decrease in violence against women, and a later age of first sexual activity.[225]
- **Building upon and working alongside other, existing programs** in the same geographical area is another good option, as it allows programs that might not otherwise have the budget or capacity to work across the ecological levels. As part of formative research, program designers should explore and map out other complementary programming that is happening in the surrounding area.
- **Knowledge-only interventions are not enough**: While educational programming can be effective, it should be complemented with other components in order to change men's health attitudes and behaviors. While some results can be seen with group activities alone, those coupled with individual counseling and/or mass media campaigns were shown to be most effective.[226]

Photo Credit: David Snyder

222. WHO, 2012.
223. Pathfinder International. (2017). *Promoting Change in Reproductive Health in Bihar: PRACHAR Program Website*. Available at http://www.pathfinder.org/projects/prachar/. Accessed August 28, 2017.
224. FHI360, 2012.
225. WHO, 2012.
226. Ibid.

Economic Empowerment

Why Engage Men?

While more and more women have entered the labor market in the past few decades, large gaps between female and male labor force participation remain. Across the world, women are more likely than men to be in the informal sector, which is characterized by more precarious, instable, and lower paid work.[227] Men are twice as likely to have full-time paid employment, and they earn between 10 and 13 percent more than women.[228] To increase women's access to economic opportunities, global development programming has focused on increasing women's entrepreneurship and income-generation opportunities in the informal and formal labor markets.

The complex relationship between women's income-generation and experiences of violence underscores the need to involve men and boys in women's economic empowerment programming. The relationship between women's economic empowerment and violence is driven by definitions of masculinity that enforce men's role as the household's "breadwinner" and financial provider. Specifically, gender norms for men emphasize public, productive roles, while definitions of femininity consist of private, reproductive roles.[229,230] As women participate in savings and loans programs, gain income-generation skills, participate in formal markets, and bring home larger sums of money, men may feel that an important piece of their identity is being challenged. In some cases, income-generation can put women and girls at a greater risk of violence as this may upset household power dynamics and make men and boys feel threatened.[231,232,233] These risks can increase in settings where men are out of work or economically disadvantaged.[234] To ensure that women and girls' economic empowerment does not incite additional violence, but rather contributes to positive development for families and communities, programs and policies should create an understanding of how women's income generation contributes to overall household well-being among men and boys.

Additionally, for women to successfully participate in income-generation activities, unpaid, care work within the household needs to be redistributed. Women across the globe spend many hours each day on household chores: a study in India found that women have an average working day of 11-14 hours, compared to 10 hours for men, and similar differences have been found in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda.[235,236,237] In order for women to have time to dedicate to income generation, household responsibilities need to be more equally distributed among men and women. This requires transforming gender norms that prescribe men's roles as the sole income-earner and women's roles as the caretaker. A more equal distribution of household tasks will free up women's time and enable them to better engage in and concentrate on work and income-generating activities.

Finally, as more women enter the workforce, there is greater need for creating gender equitable environments both at work and in public spaces so that women can effectively travel to and from work, and perform their professional duties. Men often make and enforce the policies that govern workplaces and have the ability to monitor and shift public behavior. Therefore, men need to learn about the different challenges women face in these spaces, and what men's role can be in creating more gender equitable environments.

Common Approaches

Male engagement in the domain of women's economic empowerment can help shift community acceptance of women's participation in income-generation; enable people to see how women's earning can contribute to improvements for the entire household; redefine masculinities and femininities so that both men and women contribute financially to the household and share care responsibilities; and create a more enabling environment in the workplace and in public spaces for women to commute to and execute their jobs.

227. Razavi, S., Arza, C., Braunstein, E., Cook, S., & Goulding, K. (2012). Gendered impacts of globalization employment and social protection. *UNRISD Research Paper 2012–3.* Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.
228. World Bank. (2013). Gender at work: A companion to the world development report on jobs. Washington, DC: Word Bank.
229. Edström et al., 2015.
230. United Nations. (2008). The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality. Women 2000 and Beyond. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat: Division for the Advancement of Women.
231. Ahmed, F. (2008). Microcredit, Men, and Masculinity. *NWSA Journal, 20* (2): 122-155.
232. Ahmed, F.E. & Woodruff, S. (2012). *Oppressive Masculinity as a Public Health Problem: Microcredit and Domestic Violence Prevention in Rural Bangladesh.* Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC).
233. Neville, S. et al. (2014). *Evaluation of the Madhya Pradesh Safe Cities Initiative: Baseline Report.* London: SDDirect, Columbia University and New Concept.
234. Heise, L. (2012). What works to prevent partner violence? An evidence overview, London: STRIVE. http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/what-works-prevent-partner-violence-evidence-overview
235. ENERGIA. (2006). From the Millennium Development Goals: Towards a Gender-Sensitive Energy Policy Research and Practice: Empirical Evidence and Case Studies. *Synthesis Report for Department for International Development (DFID) KaR research project R8346 "Gender as a Key Variable in Energy Interventions".* ENERGIA.
236. IFAD (2005). Gender Mainstreaming in IFAD Supported Projects in West and Central Africa, International Fund for Agricultural Development.
237. Zuckerman, E. (2002). Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Gender. Background Paper for the Conference on Sustainable Poverty Reduction and PRSPs - Challenges for Developing Countries and Development Cooperation, Berlin. Cited in ICRW WG 4 Technical Report Draft.

Individual

At the individual and household level, programs often engage men and women in **groups and trainings that provide savings and income-generation skills and opportunities to reflect on definitions of masculinities and femininity**, especially how they relate to men's and women's roles and intra-household decision making and division of labor.[238] These programs often encourage men to reflect on how they, and the entire household, might benefit from additional income entering the family. And, how they could benefit from having more equitable relationships with their wives and closer relationships with their children by taking on more care responsibilities and spending more time together.

In many cases, male engagement components are not standalone interventions, but are added into larger women's economic empowerment programs. These programs often engage men either through **all-male groups or as couples** to inform men about the details and benefits of the economic programming that their wives are participating in; reflect on how economic decisions are made within their household; develop mutually respectful communication and negotiation techniques; and challenge and shift the distribution of care work within the household.[239] From the limited evidence available, most successful programs first engage men and women in single-sex groups to explore the consequences of existing gendered norms, provide opportunities for education and reflection, and begin to challenge these norms. Then, programs engage men and women as couples to **explore household decision making, roles, and division of labor**.[240,241,242,243] For example, The Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) in South Africa first involved only women through the Sisters for Life curriculum to learn about gender, HIV/AIDS, savings and loans, and communications and leadership, and then had women mobilize male community members around these ideas.[244] Similarly, the Journeys of Transformation program in Rwanda first had all-men groups explore masculinities and then engaged these men with their wives in couples to discuss household relational dynamics, decision making, and division of labor.[245] (For more information about Journeys of Transformation, see *Box 5*.) Self-reflection is the key approach in these programs, with the aim of redefining masculinity into one that incorporates care as part of what it means to be a man. In this redefinition, programs should emphasize the benefits that men can experience from more equitable relationships including how greater involvement in care work can lead to better relationships with their children, their partners (including sexual relationships), improved health, and increased household economic stability.[246] Additionally, programs found that actively engaging couples in facilitated discussion about economic decision making within the household created more peaceful negotiation techniques and outcomes that were more mutually beneficial.

Community

For attitudinal and behavioral shifts among individuals to lead to more sustainable change, parallel efforts need to occur at the community level. This is critical to starting to create acceptance of women's participation in paid work and household decision making, as well as of new norms of masculinity that allow room for men to share in care work and collaboratively make decisions with their wives. Programs often use male champions, peer groups, and media campaigns to show men that these new definitions of masculinity and different divisions of labor and decision making are socially acceptable.

Male role models and peer groups are used to demonstrate to men that other men in their community are also questioning and challenging traditional gender norms. As men witness their peers adopting more gender-equitable beliefs and behaviors and see resulting improvements in household economic situations and relationships, they are motivated question traditional gender norms and create a more equitable environment within their household. Programs should use peer educators and role models to first sensitize men on the gender norms that exist and how these can be harmful to the household, and then work to transform these norms by teaching participants the household benefits of making more equitable economic and social decisions. With these types of programs, selecting the right men to serve as peer role models, or "male champions" is extremely important. Choosing men

238. USAID. (2015). *Working with Men and Boys to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Approaches, Challenges, and Lessons*. Washington, DC: USAID.
239. ILO. (2014). Engaging Men in Women's Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development Interventions. An ILO-WED Issue Brief. ILO.
240. USAID, 2015.
241. Slegh, H., Barker, G., Kimonyo, A., Ndolimana, P., & Bannerman, M. (2013). "I can do women's work": reflections on engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. Gender & Development, 21:1, 15-30.
242. Gupta, J., Falb, K., & Lehmann, H. (2014). Gender Norms and Economic Empowerment Intervention to Reduce Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Rural Côte d'Ivoire: A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
243. Kim, J., Ferrari, G., Abramsky, T., Watts, C., Hargreaves, J., Morison, L., Phetla, G., Porter, J. & Pronyk, P. (2009). Assessing the Incremental Effects of Combining Economic and Health Interventions: The IMAGE Study in South Africa. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 87(11): 824–32.
244. Ibid.
245. Slegh, et al., 2013.
246. Ibid.

Box 5: Journeys of Transformation – Working with Couples for More Equal Households

CARE RWANDA, PROMUNDO, AND THE RWANDAN MEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE (RWAMREC) – RWANDA

In an effort to study the impacts of engaging men in a women's microcredit program, CARE Rwanda, Promundo, and the Rwandan Men's Resource Center (RWAMREC) implemented and evaluated a program that deliberately engages male partners of women who were participating in a women's village savings and loans (VSL) program. The pilot program engaged men in male-only groups, as well as in a couple-focused process with their wives to question gender roles and decision-making. From 2010-2012 in the Huye District of Rwanda's Southern Province, CARE implemented their standard VSL program for women, with the added components of sessions with only men and sessions with couples groups to discuss household dynamics, health, and gender-based violence. The program contained 16 2.5-hour weekly sessions, the first ten of which were with men only and the final six with couples.

Through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, the pilot evaluation found that this approach was effective in increasing collaboration in household chores and care work, reducing household poverty, improving partner relations, and enhancing women's roles in decision-making. Income gains among intervention households were nearly double that of control families. Conflict among couples also decreased and both men and women were better able to cope with stress.

Source: Slegh, H., Barker, G., Kimonyo, A., Ndolimana, P., & Bannerman, M. (2013). "I can do women's work": reflections on engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. *Gender & Development*, 21:1, 15-30.

who truly believe in the benefits of more equitable relationships and providing them with ongoing technical and emotional support as well as mentoring are key to ensuring that program messages are delivered appropriately.[247,248] It is also important to understand men's motivation for participating as role models in these groups, to ensure that men aren't just involved to gain recognition, but out of a true desire to create norm change.

Bottom-up, grassroots initiatives can be particularly effective in convincing others of the benefits of adopting more gender equitable economic norms. For example, through the Abatangamuco project in Burundi, CARE supports a group of men who have independently decided to change their lives, end abusive and oppressive practices, and collaborate with their wives.[249] These men are highly motivated to transform gender norms and have helped to improve women's negotiating power and experiences of violence in their communities. While very effective, the project has been an organic development and not necessarily one that organizations can initiate or implement on their own. Several key informants mentioned that finding and retaining peer mentors who truly embody concepts of gender equality and equity, such as those active in the Abatangamuco project, is a challenge.

Another way in which men can help promote positive masculinities and more equitable behaviors is through **community mobilization efforts and campaigns**. Men can be engaged as advocates to push for more equitable relationships both publicly and within private groups. This includes men thinking about their roles in relation to their wives as well as to the institutional structures from which they benefit, and how to make those structures more equitable. Approaches at this level often include: dialogue to educate community members about the benefits of more equitable relationships related to income-generation, workload distribution, decision making, communication, and leadership; training and support to male champions to advocate for more equitable policies with community leaders and government structures; and training for organizational staff and community leaders.[250] Engaging men as champions of equitable economic relationships not only helps to spread messages of more positive masculinities, but it also encourages these men to take responsibility for the messages they are promoting.[251]

These community level programmatic elements are important for creating a safe, supportive environment for women to participate in economic activities, and for showing others in the community the benefits of a more equitable distribution

247. CARE International. (2012). Engaging Men Initiative. CARE Bangladesh.
248. USAID, 2015.
249. Wallacher, H. (2012). *Engaging Men: The Abatangamuco and Women's Empowerment in Burundi.* Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo.
250. USAID, 2015.
251. International Labour Organization, 2014.

Box 6: Engaging Men as Partners – Promoting an Enabling Environment for Women's Empowerment

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (WFWI)–AFGHANISTAN

Marginalized by decades of war and bound by strict religious practices, Afghan women face limitations on their education, mobility, and opportunities for income generation, and often endure physical and emotional violence. Since 2002, Women for Women International (WfWI) has been providing a 12-month training program that teaches women how to earn and save, enhance their health and well-being, negotiate household decisions, and build social networks.

However, these women expressed that in order to participate in the program and exercise their rights at home, the men in their lives also needed to participate and undergo a process of gender-norm transformation. Therefore, WfWI incorporated a male engagement component into their women's economic empowerment programming, which aims to increase men's knowledge of the social and economic issues that women face, change their attitudes, and motivate positive behavior to help improve women's lives. The program uses a cascading model wherein: (1) it directly trains male community and religious leaders to challenge prevailing norms, build acceptance for WfWI's women's programming, and create an environment that encourages more gender-equal attitudes and behaviors; (2) conducts a "training of trainers" with a subset of these participants to teach them how to share their new knowledge with other men in the community and integrate information about women's rights into local decision making and dispute resolution; and (3) provides "step down" trainings with groups of local men to discuss issues around women's rights, GBV, and positive concepts of masculinity. In Afghanistan, 576 male religious and community leaders participated in the direct training, which consisted of 24 bi-weekly 90-minute sessions held over a three-month period. The "step down" discussion groups extended the reach of the program to an additional 400 male community members. WfWI also used posters, banners, and radio messages to spread key messages of the program related to women's rights.

Pre- and post-tests with direct participants measured shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to women's rights and gender norms. While most of the measured outcomes centered around attitudes and behaviors about violence against women, there were some striking changes overall, among them:

- Knowledge about women's rights increased from 9 percent at baseline to 98 percent at endline;
- Understanding of what constitutes violence increased from 1 percent to 53 percent;
- Disagreement with justifications for violence increased from 6 percent to 60 percent;
- Positive attitudes regarding women's role in family decision making increased from 6 percent to 99 percent;
- Those who report taking action to stop their own violent actions against women increased from 16 percent to 42 percent; and
- Men who believe that a women's most important role is to take care of her home and cook decreased from 92 percent to 28 percent.

While these initial results are impressive, WfWI would like to continue to interrogate the cascading model to ensure that local men are disseminating accurate information in their community discussions and whether these discussions are producing measurable changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

1. Source: Harvey, M. (2015). *Afghanistan Learning Brief: Engaging Men as Allies to Promote Women's Empowerment.* Kabul, Afghanistan: Women for Women International.

of labor, care work, and decision making. Program evaluations of both the Journeys of Transformation program, which added men's groups to a women's village savings and loans (VSL) program in Rwanda; and the Cost of Violence against Women (COVAW) Role Model Men Initiative, in which used men who supported the project's anti-GBV messages served as role models, found that while changes start with individual men, "over time, as more and more [men] join in, a tipping point is reached beyond which change becomes easier for individuals by seeing the same practices happening in other households."[252,253]

Institutions and Policies

Policies that create safer work settings, enable women to balance productive and reproductive responsibilities, and encourage men's involvement in care work, have the potential to create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment. Since men often hold power at the community and national levels, educating policymakers about the challenges women face and suggesting policies that will allow women to more effectively enter, stay, and rise up in the labor force, can begin to shift institutional structures of patriarchy.[254] Specifically, men can advocate for worker's rights for women such as equitable hiring, pay, working conditions, and promotions.[255] Men in trade unions, employers' associations, and civil society organizations can advocate for better working conditions, as men have within the Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women (MASVAW) in India to ensure fair conditions for female kiln workers. Due to the advocacy of MASVAW, some brick kiln owners have modified their workplace policies to allow pregnant women to engage in lighter work and to pay women salaries that are equivalent to men's. Previously, overseers did not bother to learn the female workers' names, but rather referred to them with abusive slurs. Following the introduction of better workplace policies, overseers now call employees by their proper names, creating a much less hostile environment for female workers.[256,257]

Recognizing, reducing, and redistributing care work has the potential to enable women to enter and stay in the labor market. This can be achieved in a variety of ways: **Institutional and national policies** that allow women to reconcile their productive and reproductive roles include more flexible work arrangements, maternity and paternity leave, and part-time, temporary, and home-based work.[258] **High quality and affordable childcare** services give women and men the liberty to choose how to spend their productive time.[259] **Men's involvement in care work** can initiate from paternity leave policies, but will become more engrained and sustainable if there is an institutional culture that supports men taking leave and actively balancing work and home responsibilities.[260] There is also the need for programs and policies that create safer environments so that women can effectively participate in public life, including in labor markets. A few programs, including the Gender and Education with Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) Initiative and the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA), have specifically **targeted transportation workers to mobilize them to discourage harassment and violence towards women**. The effort aims to create a safer and more comfortable environment for women, thereby increasing their mobility. Mostly concentrated in large cities in Asia, these programs have included campaigns to raise awareness of the harassment women face on public transportation, create or link with hotlines, and provide of training for transportation workers on how to identify and address incidents of sexual harassment.[261]

Challenges and Cautions

While there is a body of evidence around the effectiveness of group-based training and reflection in combination with VSL programs, the long-term **sustainability** of these programs is not well researched. Programs such as Engaging Men in VSL in Burundi, IMAGE in South America, and Journeys of Transformation in Rwanda, have been successful in shifting men's attitudes about women's work and income-generation, creating more collaborative decision-making processes within the household, and enabling a more equitable division of household tasks. However, underlying these attitudes and behaviors are deeply entrenched social norms that the programs did not necessarily address. While some community mobilization and male role model programs might have

252. Slegh, et al., 2013.
253. Robinson, V.C. (2012). *COVAW Project Final Evaluation*. CARE Bangladesh.
254. International Labour Organization, 2014.
255. United Nations, 2008.
256. Ibid.
257. Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women (MASVAW). (2007). *A Journey towards Justice: Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women*. India: MASVAW Secretariat.
258. United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. (2004). *Panel discussion on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality: summary submitted by the moderator (E/CN.6/2004/CRP.10).* New York: United Nations. Forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.
259. European Women's Lobby. (2004). *The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.* Brussels: European Women's Lobby.
260. European Opinion Research Group. (2004). *Europeans' Attitudes towards Parental Leave.* Brussels: European Commission: Standard Eurobarometer.
261. USAID, 2015.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

shifted attitudes among men, there isn't enough evidence to demonstrate how effective these approaches are in transforming gender norms. Additionally, several program evaluations warned against misinterpreting study findings, saying that even though specific attitudes and behaviors changed, it was often clear that participants still upheld social norms that prescribed men's roles as the provider.

While it is important for men to recognize the benefits of women's economic empowerment, it can be a challenge to find the **balance between presenting the benefits for men of women's economic empowerment, and addressing women's rights and gender equality**. Programs may want to initially promote the economic benefits to men, to motivate them to participate in the program. However, in order to create more sustainable change that reflects gender norm transformation, programs eventually need to delve into deeper issues of gender relationships. Programming should find the balance between appealing to men and also being accountable to women. Sometimes, a first step in this process is benevolent sexism, in which men learn about the discrimination that women face and then feel bad for women and want to serve as their supporters and protectors to ensure that they are able to access their full rights. However, this should not be the end goal of male engagement programming, but rather a step along the gender norm-transformation process. The ultimate objective of gender equity may cause men to feel that they are giving up some of their power, but the goal is to enable them to see how a more equitable balance of power is beneficial for themselves, their family, and society.

In terms of using group facilitators and male champions, **selecting individuals who truly embrace equitable norms and can effectively relay these messages** can be a challenge. Once male champions are identified, they need to be provided with ongoing support and mentorship as they may experience resistance from the community and may at times need outside reinforcement. Additionally, programs should ensure that their champions have the necessary technical and emotional skills to facilitate norm interrogation and transformation within the community.

Available Evidence

A few strong evaluations have been conducted of programs that involve men in trainings related to women's participation in village savings and loans (VSL) programs. These evaluations have looked at outcomes related to shifts in household decision-making processes, economic stability, conflict within the household, and division of labor. Table 1 shows the outcomes achieved by the evaluated programs.

Table 1: Measured Outcomes of Evaluated Village Savings and Loans (VSL) Programs that Engage Men

	Women's increased participation in household economic decision- making	Men's increased participation in care work	Enhanced household economic stability	Reduced conflict within the home
Engaging Men in VSL[262] *(Burundi)*	✓			
Gender & Business with Microfinance[263] *(Vietnam)*	✓		✓	✓
Happy Families Program[264] *(Sri Lanka)*	✓	✓	✓	✓
IMAGE[265] *(South Africa)*	✓		✓	
Journeys of Transformation[266] *(Rwanda)*		✓	✓	
WIINGS[267] *(Uganda)*				✓

262. Iyengar, R. & Ferrari, G., (2010). Discussion Sessions Coupled with Microfinancing May Enhance the Role of Women in Household Decision-Making in Burundi. *CEP Discussion Paper 1010.* Center for Economic Performance: London.
263. Vu, N. T. H., Velzen, van R., Lensik, R., & Bulte, E. (2015). The impact of gender and business training for female Microfinance clients in Vietnam. *3ie Grantee Final Report.* New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).
264. Robinson, V.C. (2014). *Emergent Practice: CARE International Sri Lanka's Gender-based Violence Work 2011-2014*. CARE International Sri Lanka.
265. Slegh et al., 2013.
266. Kim, J., Ferrari, G., Abramsky, T., Watts, C., Hargreaves, J., Morison, L., Phetla, G., Porter, J. & Pronyk, P. (2009). Assessing the Incremental Effects of Combining Economic and Health Interventions: The IMAGE Study in South Africa. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 87(11): 824–32.
267. Blattman, C., Green, E., Annan J., & Jamison, J. (2013). *Building Women's Economic and Social Empowerment Through Enterprise: An Experimental Assessment of the Women's Income Generating Support (WINGS) Program in Uganda.* Uganda: AVSI and Washington, DC: World Bank.

There is less evidence around the effectiveness of community mobilization and media campaigns, as well as the use of male role models, since these approaches are often components of larger program strategies. However, an evaluation of CARE's Abatangamuco program in Burundi found that personal testimonies of change by male group members were a very powerful tool in motivating other men to support more equitable views.[268]

While not rigorously evaluated, efforts to engage men in advocacy to promote better working conditions for women have been successful in changing workplace policies, such as MASVAW that as secured better workloads and pay for women.[269] And while the direct connection between male engagement and more equitable working conditions has not been extensively studied, a body of evidence shows the benefits to women's income, retention, and progression within the labor market that are associated with more gender-equitable policies and practices.[270]

Best Practices

- **Map men's multiple roles**: It is important to map the multiple roles that men play in women's lives and to think through how these roles will be affected by women's participation in economic growth projects and potential subsequent economic advancement.[271]
- **Invite men to trainings targeting women's economic empowerment**: The purpose of this is to ensure that men understand what the program is trying to achieve in order to mitigate suspicion and obstruction. This overlaps with the previous point in that programs should promote the benefits that men will experience, so they are more open to their wives' participation.
- **Market the benefits that men will experience from gender equality and link this with positive masculinities**: Promote how women's economic empowerment and alternative, positive masculinities can help ease the pressure of being the main breadwinner, improve economic stability of the household, and foster healthier relationships with wives and children.
  - **Start with topics of interest to men**: Men may be particularly interested in the economic benefits for the household and how their relationships with their wives and children may be enhanced through women's participation in income-generation activities.
- **Promote men's role in care work**: As women enter the workforce, they are often faced with the double burden of balancing care work and paid work. Promoting men's role in care work opens opportunities for women to spend more time on productive activities.
- **Combine single-sex and mixed activities, specifically working with couples**: Programs seem most effective when they use a combination of single-sex groups to explore gender norms and roles, as well as groups of couples to discuss and reconstruct decision-making processes and division of labor within the household. More specifically, the most effective programs first worked with women/girls and men/boys separately, providing opportunities to interrogate traditional gender norms, and then brought these groups together to discuss inequalities, household decision-making, and the benefits of a more equitable division of labor.
- **Nurture male champions and peer groups to reinforce positive masculinities**: Since male peers from within a community are often the most effective ambassadors of alternative masculinities, these individuals need to be supported with the technical and emotional skills and resources to spread messages and to continue on a path of gender transformation themselves.
- **Build men's skills to collectively advocate for women's rights within the workplace and public spaces**: Given their occupations and roles within work environments, men often have a greater ability to advocate for policy and practice change. Educating men on the challenges women face and encouraging them to engage in activism has the potential to create more equitable work conditions.

268. Wallacher, 2012.
269. MASVAW, 2007.
270. International Finance Corporation (IFC). (2017). *Investing in Women: New Evidence for the Business Case.* Washington, D.C.: IFC.
271. Schulte, J., Williams, S., Rapic, D., Morris, P.T., & Robbins, T. (2014). *Toolkit for Integrating GBV Prevention and Response into Economic Growth Projects*. Arlington, VA: USAID.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

Care Work and Fatherhood

Why Engage Men?

In many parts of the world, deeply ingrained social norms suggest that men are expected to be the sole economic providers for their families and women are expected to be entirely responsible for caring for the children and household. Across the world, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men do.[272] The World Bank has suggested that this large care burden is one of the main drivers of the gender pay and employment gaps.[273] In recent years, women's participation in the workforce has increased, but men's participation in care work has not kept pace. This has created a double work burden for women between their employment and their unpaid care responsibilities. Because of the insurmountable restrictions on how women spend their time, often called "time poverty," as well as the norms that prescribe that care is a women's role, women often have limited time to dedicate to education, employment, and political participation.[274]

In addition, studies have found many positive impacts of men's greater involvement in fatherhood and household management both for men and their families. Men's involvement in care has been found to be associated with improved physical and mental health for men.[275] Studies have also found that when men are engaged in childcare, they develop deeper relationships with their children.[276] And children who have more engaged fathers are likely to have higher self-esteem, fewer behavioral problems, better relationships with friends, and non-traditional attitudes regarding earning and childcare.[277] Sons who see their fathers engaging in care work are more likely to contribute equally to care work themselves and daughters have stronger views about gender equality.[278] Some evidence has also shown that when men are engaged in childcare, they may adopt more gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors.[279] For example, when men become close with their daughters, they begin to see the discrimination and sexual harassment that women face from a different perspective.[280,281]

272. Budlender, 2008.
273. World Bank. (2013). *Gender at work: A companion to the world development report on jobs*. Washington, DC: Word Bank.
274. Hassink, A. & Baringer, L. (2015). *Fatherhood, unpaid care and the care economy. In Engendering Men: A Collaborative Review of Evidence on Men and Boys in Social Change and Gender Equality.* Institute of Development Studies, Promundo-US, and Sonke Gender Justice.
275. Dykstra, P. & Keizer, R. (2009). The Wellbeing of Childless Men and Fathers in Mid-life. *Ageing & Society, 29* (8),1227-42.
276. Barker, G., Greene, M., Nascimento, M., Segundo, M., Ricardo, C., et al. (2012). *Men Who Care: A Multi-Country Qualitative Study of Men in Non-Traditional Caregiving Roles*. Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Promundo.
277. Burgess, A. (2008). *The Costs and Benefits of Active Fatherhood: Evidence and Insights to Inform the Development of Policy and Practice.* Marlborough, UK: Fatherhood Institute. Retrieved from: www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/uploads/publications/247.pdf
278. Barker et al., 2011.
279. Rogers, S. (2004). What men think about gender equality: lessons from Oxfam GB staff in Delhi and Dhaka. *In Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice*, Ruxton, ed. Oxford: Oxfam Publishing.
280. Ibid.
281. United Nations, 2008. Ibid.

Several studies also have found that men who participate in care work are less likely to commit violence against their partners.[282,283,284] And a study in South Africa found that women report higher levels of relationship satisfaction, including sexual satisfaction, when their partners contribute to care work.[285]

Common Approaches

While it is clear that men's involvement in care work has many benefits, this is not the norm in many cultures. Therefore, programs and policies need to specifically encourage men to participate in care work in order to realize these benefits.

Individual

Men-only spaces or groups can provide men with opportunities to share their experiences, challenges, and fears about fatherhood and receive support from a peer group. These groups can be particularly effective when they engage men who share something in common, such as HIV-positive fathers in Uganda or fathers in prison in the US and UK.[286,287] These groups can address issues that are specific to fathers of this particular identity. Programming that specifically targets **adolescent fathers**, is effective as they are just embarking on their journey of fatherhood and are still forming their social identity and may be more receptive to taking up caregiving activities. Emphasis should be placed on engaging adolescent fathers to form alternative masculinities in which gender equity and involvement in children's lives are valued.

For new fathers, **fatherhood training classes** can help equip young men with the skills and confidence to participate in caregiving. These classes also provide a safe space for men to discuss their questions and challenges. These classes often include men-only spaces for training and support, but they also provide opportunities for structured dialogue between partners to discuss parenting styles and how to distribute work in a way that will satisfy both partners. Fatherhood training can also be incorporated into education curricula for adolescent boys.

Men's **engagement in their wives' healthcare during pregnancies**, through attendance at perinatal services, can be an effective way to introduce men to fatherhood. In fact, men's involvement in perinatal visits with their partners has been proven to be one of the strongest predictors of men's sustained involvement in parenting.[288] Hospitals can also increase involvement at this early stage by creating more "father-friendly" policies that allow fathers to be present during childbirth.[289]

Community

As with other sectors, it is helpful for men to see **role models** who exemplify these alternative masculinities. Identifying men who are positively involved in parenting and then engaging them to educate and model behavior among their peers can show men that this is an acceptable way to behave.[290] In India, the Society for Integrated Development of the Himalayas identifies men who help their wives in childrearing and then encourages these men to speak up about and model fatherhood.[291] This approach led to more men helping their wives and mothers with household chores. Young men also reported being more open to talking about reproductive health issues with their friends and were more sensitive to the problems women experience while pregnant.

Campaigns and public education can be used to spread awareness about the benefits of men being involved in fatherhood. Programs such as the Fatherhood Project in South Africa and MenCare develop and distribute education materials on caregiving, masculinity, reproductive health (including sexual risk and HIV/AIDS), and gender-based violence. (For more information about MenCare, see *Box 7.*) These campaigns build networks of local organizations to advocate for men caring for and protecting children, with an aim to have men make a long-term commitment to this role and share the responsibility of raising children with women.[292] These programs can begin to shift the social norms that delegate all care responsibilities to women and contribute to time poverty that constrains women's labor force participation.

282. Ibid.
283. Morrell, R. (2005). Youth, Fathers and Masculinity in South Africa Today. *Agenda, Special Focus on Gender, Culture and Rights*, 84-87.
284. de Keijzer, B. (2004). Masculinities: resistance and change. In *Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice,* Ruxton, ed. Oxford: Oxfam Publishing.
285. Morrell, 2005.
286. United Nations, 2008.
287. Lamb, M. & Lewis C. (2004). Fathers: the research perspective. In *Supporting Fathers: Contributions from the International Fatherhood Summit.* The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.
288. Interagency Gender Working Group (2004). *Reaching men to improve reproductive health for all.* Washington, D.C.: USAID.
289. Barker, G., Nascimento, M. & W. Marcondes, W. (2003). *Men's participation as fathers in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: a critical literature review with policy considerations.* Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
290. United Nations, 2008.
291. Plantin, L., S. Mansson & J. Kearney (2003). Talking and doing fatherhood: on fatherhood and masculinity in Sweden and Britain. Fathering. Harriman, TN: Men's Studies Press.
292. United Nations, 2008.

Box 7: MenCare – Promoting Equitable Distribution of Care Work

PROMUNDO – GLOBAL

MenCare is a global campaign to promote positive fatherhood. The goal is to advance equality and family well-being through encouraging equitable, caring, and non-violent partners and caregivers. MenCare is active in more than 25 countries and uses media campaigns and program activities to promote men's role in fatherhood, particularly during the prenatal period, transform gender norms, and distribute care work more equally.

MenCare+

Promundo and Rutgers—Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda, and South Africa

Building on the MenCare campaign, the MenCare+ program specifically works within healthcare systems to involve men in maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH), sexual and reproductive health and rights, and violence prevention. MenCare+ also works with local governments and the healthcare sector to influence policies and practices to be more conducive for involved fatherhood. The program targets men aged 21-35 who are either expecting a child or are already fathers. It brings these men together into fathers' groups and provides them with education and space for discussion. The curriculum is adapted from the Program P manual, which was also developed by Promundo. The curriculum includes 15 sessions around themes such as family planning or sharing work. Women also participate in six sessions, which focus on MNCH, caregiving, decision making, and couple communication. The project uses local experts, such as healthcare providers and police, to co-facilitate relevant sessions.

A qualitative evaluation of MenCare+ in Rwanda found that since participating in the program, men reported positive changes in their participation in care work, including both involvement in caring for children and involvement in household chores. Men's involvement in maternal, newborn, and child health also appeared to be increasing; men were accompanying their wives to deliver their babies and taking children to medical visits. Additionally, some men reported improvements in couple communication and more equitable decision making at home. Many fathers said that they are now sharing major household financial decisions with their partners and some of the couples are developing monthly or weekly family budgets to jointly decide how to spend money in a way that will benefit the family.

Source: Doyle, K., Kato-Wallace, J., Kazimbaya, S., & Barker, G. (2014). Transforming gender roles in domestic caregiving work: preliminary findings from engaging fathers in maternal, newborn, and child health in Rwanda. *Gender & Development, 22* (3), 515-31.

Institutions and Policies

At a higher level, **women's unpaid work needs to be recognized and valued** in order for men to see their responsibility to contribute to women's unpaid labor. Several international agreements such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions, and various international human rights treaties, oblige states to recognize and address women's large burden of unpaid care work.[293] These policies encourage men to more fully participate in the care of their children, and also encourage states to provide public and/or subsidized childcare so that women can participate in the workforce. Men should be engaged in advocating for and implementing these policies and conventions in a context-specific manner.

Men face systematic and institutional barriers to participation in care work through the lack of **paternity leave policies**, pressure to work long hours, and stigma against balancing unpaid care work and paid work. Policies that offer men limited or no days of paternity leave reinforce gender disparities in the workforce by forcing women to take on the primary care role and encouraging men to put work first. Providing paternity leave allows men to bond with their children at an early age and take on a larger role in family responsibilities, which can contribute to positive child development and more equitable parenting throughout childhood.[294,295] Globally, 79 countries have paternity leave policies, with the majority offering between one and six days.[296,297] Not only is this length too short to make a significant impact, but also, due to stigma

293. Hassink & Baringer, 2015.
294. International Labour Organization. (2014). Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and Practice Across the World. Retrieved from www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--dgreports/--dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms_242615.pdf
295. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2014). Family Database: Key Characteristics of Parental Leave Systems. Retrieved from www.oecd.org/social/family/database
296. Addati, L., Cassirer, N., & Gilchrist, K. (2014). *Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and Practice Across the World.* Geneva: International Labour Organization.
297. International Labour Organization, 2014.

and pressure, men's uptake of available parental leave may be stifled.[298] To increase uptake of paternity leave, workplaces need to create an environment that encourages men to take their allocated leave and support men's broader role in parenting. Additionally, making sure that paternity leave is flexible, paid, and non-transferable may increase the likelihood that men will take advantage of it.[299]

Challenges and Cautions

Since individuals' identities are wrapped in definitions of masculinity and femininity that promote men's roles as the breadwinner and women's roles as care-takers, **women may resist men's participation in care work as this is part of what gives women value and social capital**.[300] For women and men to see how a more equitable distribution of care and income-generating work is both fair and beneficial for all household members, programs should engage both men and women in reflection and discussion of existing, inequitable gender norms as well as in a process of gender norm transformation, which will help to create an enabling environment for a more equitable division of labor.

While all parental leave policies serve to promote better childcare and the ability to balance unpaid care work and paid work, **uneven leave policies can reinforce women's roles as the primary caretaker**. Long, paid leave for women allows women to step out of the workforce and focus on care work, however it can establish a dynamic wherein childcare is viewed as the woman's role within the family. This is why complementary, non-transferable, paid paternity leave is important in establishing a more equal balance of care between mothers and fathers.

In developing countries, **many people are informal workers without salaries and contracts, and therefore do not have formal leave policies**. In 2013, family workers, informal workers, and self-employed workers, accounted for 56 percent of total employment in developing countries.[301,302] To ease the care burden of these groups, governments can provide subsidized childcare, lengthen school hours, or shift the school start time.[303] However, a challenge with these approaches is that while they might facilitate women's participation in more formal forms of labor, they do not necessarily increase men's role in care work. In fact, they may cause men to feel that they have less of an obligation in childcare.[304] Efforts that aim to ease the care burden on female workers should make sure to sensitize men on their role in caring, in addition to the practical provision of care.

Available Evidence

Evidence from initiatives that focus on men's involvement in prenatal care and presence during labor and delivery demonstrate that these are some of the effective approaches for increasing men's involvement in care work. A study of the Ecole de Maris (Schools for Husbands) program, which engages men in groups to discuss health issues that are relevant in their community and develop action plans, found that in a village where the program was active, the percentage of safe deliveries doubled in one year.[305] Men's involvement in their wives' pregnancies is a strong predictor of their involvement in their child's life; a study in Mexico found that three quarters of fathers who were present at their children's births were still involved in their children's lives four years later.[306,307]

Studies have found that men's involvement in in discussion groups for fathers can be successful in influencing positive attitudes towards wives and better father-to-child communication.[308] Evidence shows that the MenCare project, which combines group discussions, community mobilization, and advocacy, has contributed to more equitable decision-making processes and more equal sharing of household tasks (see *Box 7*).[309] Men explained that previously they may spent their money in ways that did not necessarily benefit the family, but now they discuss expenditures with their partner, have a shared goal, and it is easier to agree on how to use the money in a way that will benefit the family.

298. Hook, J. (2006). Care in Context: Men's Unpaid Work in 20 Countries, 1965-2003. *American Sociological Review, 71* (4), 639-60.
299. World Bank, 2012.
300. Hook, 2006.
301. Too-Kong, T. (ed.). (2014). The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014. New York: United Nations Population Fund. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=858075
302. United Nations. (2014). Framework of Actions: For the Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development Beyond 2014. New York: United Nations.
303. World Bank, 2012.
304. Hook, 2006.
305. United Nations Population Fund. (n.d.). Niger – Husbands' Schools Seek to Get Men Actively Involved in Reproductive Health. Retrieved from http://niger.unfpa.org/docs/SiteRep/Ecole%20des%20maris.pdf
306. United Nations, 2008.
307. Greene, M. & Biddlecom, A. (2000). Absent and problematic men: demographic accounts of male reproductive roles. Population and Development Review, 26 (1). New York: Population Council.
308. Chevannes, B. (1995). *Fathers Incorporated: helping men become better fathers.* Jamaica: University of West Indies, Department of Sociology and Social Work.
309. Doyle, K., Kato-Wallace, J., Kazimbaya, S., & Barker, G. (2014). Transforming gender roles in domestic caregiving work: preliminary findings from engaging fathers in maternal, newborn, and child health in Rwanda. Gender & Development, 22 (3), 515-31.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

While there is evidence of the success of paternity leave policies in encouraging men's engagement in fatherhood in developed countries, less is known about their success in developing countries. The evidence that does exist for wealthy countries shows that the nuances of the policy are important to increase uptake. For example, non-transferable, "use-it-or-lose-it" paternity leave in Sweden is associated with a 90 percent uptake, compared to a 24 percent uptake in Denmark, where leave can be transferred to the mother.[310]

Best Practices

- **Involve fathers in prenatal care**: Involving men in prenatal care improves birth outcomes and leads to more involved fathers with closer bonds to their children later in life. These efforts can include creating physical space for fathers during prenatal visits, changing policies to allow fathers to be present during their child's birth, and offering additional educational programming to help sensitize men to the role of being a father.
- **Create safe spaces for discussion and education about fathering responsibilities**: Fathers often need to learn practical fatherhood skills, as this may not be something they have learned naturally from other family members; this lack of skills and confidence may inhibit them from participating more in care work. Additionally, discussion groups provide a safe space for men to share their questions and fears about becoming fathers, and also allow them to see that other men are going through similar experiences.
  - This is particularly important among adolescent boys who are new fathers and not yet fathers, who lack the education about the roles and responsibilities required for fatherhood. It is important to establish this understanding at a young age so that when it comes time for boys to become fathers, they know how to be involved and supportive.
- **Promote role models to showcase positive images of fatherhood**: Men may not have good role models of what an involved, supportive father looks like. In order to help them shift to this new behavior, holding up men from their community who are demonstrating positive fatherly behavior, will help men to see that this is feasible and acceptable.
- **Support employers in establishing fair and flexible paternal leave and flexible work schedules**: Providing paternity leave is a powerful way to ensure that fathers are able to bond with their children and to recognize the importance of men's involvement in their children's upbringing. This leave should be sufficiently long, paid, and flexible. Companies should also try to create a culture that encourages men to take their allocated leave.
- **Promote national policies that encourage equitable parenting**: In addition to workplace policies, national policies can set a standard for maternity and paternity leave. This not only ensures that parents have sufficient time with their children early in life, but it also establishes an understanding that the state values men's and women's contributions to parenting.

310. OECD, 2014.

Education

Why Engage Men?

Around the world, girls face significant educational inequality. Although significant progress has been made on enrollment, over 131 million girls are out of school worldwide.[311] Girls' learning levels and completion rates remain lower than boys', and their participation decreases as they progress through the education system. It's no surprise, then, that women make up the majority of the world's illiterate adults – 2/3, according to UNESCO.[312] Girls' education is affected by the support of their fathers, male relatives, and communities, as well as their teachers and school administrators.

Lessons learned from school-based girls' empowerment interventions show that empowering girls is not enough when they are harassed by boys in their schools and face a stifling and discriminatory learning environment. Programs that target older adolescent boys with gender sensitization or transformation curricula are particularly important because as young men go through puberty, they can experience social pressures to prove their sexual prowess and masculinity by harassing and showing dominance over girls.[313] In certain contexts such as Bangladesh, sexually harassing girls (often minimized as "eve-teasing") is seen as a rite of passage for adolescent boys.[314] Sexual harassment is a key factor that, among others, causes girls to drop out of school during adolescence; while more than two thirds of the world has reached gender parity in primary education, less than half of countries have achieved such parity for secondary school.[315] Programs such as CARE's *Innovation through Sports: Promoting Leaders, Empowering Youth (ITSPLEY)* focus specifically on equipping boys to combat the norm of sexual harassment in their communities, which helps foster a safe environment for girls to learn. Programs that engage male teachers are critical to ensure that girls are given equal resources and opportunities to learn, that teachers avoid reinforcing gender roles in the classroom, and that abusing girl students is not tolerated. Finally, as CARE discovered in the beginning stages of its *Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA)* intervention, including boys in girls' empowerment activities is essential because parent and community leaders are often unwilling to support programs that benefit only girls and not boys. (For more information about the PTLA program, see *Box 8*.) Also, boys can get jealous and threaten girls with violence if they see girls receiving benefits that they are shut out of.[316]

Box 8: Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA) – Creating Safer, More Equitable Schools

CARE – EGYPT, HONDURAS, INDIA, MALAWI, TANZANIA, AND YEMEN

CARE's engagement with men and boys through the Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA) involved several stages, beginning with a research phase to assess the state of gender norms in target communities. Gender transformational work involved discussions, exercises, and games to help boys and men see and analyze the negative consequences of harassment, discrimination, and other harmful normative practices. Reflective processes helped them empathize, which leads to more transformational changes, rather than just gender sensitization. As a result, men and boys were willing to take on the work of monitoring instances of gender-based violence in schools; boys and men held demonstrations to protest gender-based violence; and also performed participatory theater to initiate community discussion and debate on negative gender norms.

CARE's final evaluations of PTLA found that it had changed dynamics between boys and girls in all countries where they implemented the program. Boys who participated in PTLA activities alongside girls—such as debate team, school government, or other co-educational extracurricular events facilitated for the program—experienced firsthand the capabilities of their female peers. They also empathized with them, thus transforming their beliefs on gender equality.

Source: Miske, S. & Boardman, G. (2011). The Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA): *Empowering Girls to Learn and Lead* (Rep. No. M/OAA/GRO/EGAS-08-108). Saint Paul, MN: Miske Witt & Associates Inc.

311. UNESCO. (2014). Women and Girls Education - Facts and Figures. Retrieved March 19, 2018, from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/international-womens-day-2014/women-ed-facts-and-figure/
312. Ibid.
313. Verma, R., Pulerwitz, J., Mahendra, V.S., Khandekar, S., Singh, A., Das, S., Mehra, S.,Nura, A., & Barker, G. (2008). *Promoting gender equity as a strategy to reduce HIV risk and gender-based violence among young men in India.* Washington, DC: Population Council.
314. Miske, S. & Boardman, G. (2011). *The Power to Lead Alliance (PTLA): empowering girls to learn and lead.* (Rep. No. M/OAA/GRO/EGAS-08-108). Saint Paul, MN: Miske Witt & Associates, Inc.
315. UNICEF. (2016). *Secondary Education.* UNICEF DATA, United Nations Children's Fund.Retrieved from www.data.unicef.org/topic/education/secondary-education/#
316. Miske, S., Boardman, G., & Bakkenist, K. (2011). Innovation through sport: Promoting Leaders, Empowering Youth (ITSPLEY) final evaluation report for CARE USA (Rep. No. GPH-A-00-03-00001-00). Saint Paul, MN: Miske Witt & Associates Inc.

To be effective, programming that aims to keep girls in school must engage men because men often have final say in household decision-making, especially decisions related to marriage, which directly impact girls' school enrollment. Globally, girls who enroll in secondary school are up to six times less likely to marry before the age of 18, compared to girls with little or no education.[317] It's particularly important to engage men around child marriage because it can be dangerous to implement interventions that ask girls to do social norm change work themselves. Asking girls to confront influencers and authorities in their communities alone can be ineffective at best and lead to retaliation at worst. Also, working with religious leaders specifically—as CARE does in its *Tipping Point* program by using arguments based in religious texts in Bangladesh and Nepal—can have a broader and deeper impact on community norms than campaigns coming from girls or from people outside the community.

Common Approaches

Individual

One of the pioneering approaches to engaging boys in educational settings for girls' empowerment has been to **engage them on an individual level in male-only groups**. By far the most influential tool for this purpose is the *Program H* curriculum from Promundo. Interventions that have adapted curricula from *Program H* for adolescent boys have almost all used this delivery mechanism of boys-only groups. For example, both the *Young Men Initiative* implemented by CARE in the Balkans, and the *Yaari Dosti* program implemented by CORO, Horizons, and Population Council in India, trained older adolescent boys without girls present. Both programs also took special care to adapt Program H to their local contexts. Adapting a proven framework to local contexts allows great potential to scale, as evidenced by the accreditation of the *Young Men Initiative* curriculum by the Ministries of Education in Kosovo, Serbia, and Croatia for use in all secondary schools in those countries.

Community

In contrast to programs that work at the individual level, two leaders in male engagement in educational settings—CARE and Save the Children—have implemented **programs that work on many levels and engage boys, male family members and male community influencers in girls' empowerment interventions**. For example, Save the Children originally implemented the *Choices* program to educate adolescent boys on gender sensitivity, and later added the *Voices* intervention arm, which worked with parents to diminish the inter-generational transfer of gender norms around girls' educational attainment; and the *Promises* arm, which worked with community influencers to facilitate dialogues on girls' education.[318] Interestingly, *Choices* was originally intended to focus solely on boys, but formative research conducted early on suggested that a relational approach, or activities designed to stimulate discussion between boys and girls, would be more effective.[319] (For more information on the Choices, Voices, Promises program, see *Box 9*.) Many of these programs focus on reducing rates of child marriage, and many, such as the *Tipping Point* intervention implemented by CARE in Bangladesh and Nepal, aim to shift social norms to support girls' education as an alternative to early marriage. These kinds of approaches that engage males on all levels and use a relational approach to gender transformation, are emerging as the best practices of the field.

Institutions and Policies

In order to create a more equitable environment for girls' learning and empowerment, many programs **work in educational settings with gender sensitization or transformation curricula**. The outcomes of these programs for girls include lower rates of in-school harassment from boys, better learning environments, and more space for their voices, especially when boys are engaged as a component of girls' leadership programs. The vast majority of these programs engage adolescent boys by educating them about gender equality. Some, such as *Gender Socialization in Schools: Enhancing the transformative power of education for peacebuilding* implemented by UNICEF in Uganda, also train teachers to combat harmful gender norms and treat their male and female students equally.

The Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) program, is implemented in multiple locations in India by ICRW, the Committee of Research Organizations for Literacy (CORO), and the Tata Institute for Social Sciences. The program works to create more gender equitable schools by promoting "gender equality by encouraging equal relationships between girls and boys, examining the social norms that define men's and

317. Girls Not Brides. (2017). *Child Marriage and Education. Impacts of Child Marriage, Girls Not Brides.* Retrieved from www.girlsnotbrides.org/themes/education/.

318. Lundgren, R., Gibbs, S., & Kerner, B. (2017). *Fostering gender equity among early adolescents: benefits of adding family and community interventions to the Choices curriculum (Rep.).* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health.

319. Lundgren, R., Beckman, M., Chaurasiya, S. P., Subhedi, B., & Kerner, B. (2013). *Whose turn to do the dishes? transforming gender attitudes and behaviours among very young adolescents in Nepal.* Gender and Development, 21 (1): 127–145.

Box 9: Choices, Voices, Promises – Intergenerational Engagement for Girls' Education

SAVE THE CHILDREN – NEPAL

Implemented in children's clubs in communities in Nepal, Save the Children first rolled out its Choices curriculum in 2009. This curriculum was designed to stimulate discussions between boys and girls to reflect on topics relating to power and gender that are appropriate to their stage of development. Examples are hopes and dreams, actions that are fair and unfair, and communication and respect.

Save the Children added the Voices and Promises components to their Choices intervention to involve men in households and communities to improve girls' educational outcomes, the most significant of which was girls' secondary school retention. Voices took the approach of "trigger videos" followed by intergenerational dialogues, while Promises involved a series of posters placed in the community and social diffusion by community influencers engaged in a facilitated dialogue.

Positive intervention effects were concentrated among measures in gender equitable education and gender equitable household chores and resource sharing domains. There was less evidence of intervention effect in the domains of delaying marriage for girls and gender equity in aspirations. More impacts were measured among children than adults. A evaluation of the Voices and Promises arms of the program found that, "[Parents'] remarks reflect the fact that mothers and fathers are learning to parent in a world with moving goalposts. Roles, expectations, laws, and economic realities are changing."

Source: Lundgren, R., Beckman, M., Chaurasiya, S.P., Subhedi, B., & Kerner, B. (2013). Whose Turn to Do the Dishes? Transforming Gender Attitudes and Behaviours among Very Young Adolescents in Nepal. *Gender and Development, 21* (1): 127–145.

women's roles, and questioning the use of violence."[320] The program also works with teachers to help them interrogate and reconstruct their own conceptions of gender norms, masculinity, and femininity. An evaluation of the program's work in Mumbai found that students who participated in the program demonstrated a positive shift in attitudes toward gender equality, including the belief that women should be over the legal age of 18 before marriage, and were more likely to say they would take action in response to sexual harassment.[321]

Challenges and Cautions

One challenge of teaching concepts of gender equality for girls' empowerment in education settings is to **design trainings or discussions and information delivery mechanisms so that boys internalize and retain the information**. One key finding that was echoed in multiple program evaluations is that videos are highly effective (as stated by participants of CARE's *Tipping Point* program) while SMS campaigns are not.[322,323]

Interventions in education will necessarily involve children and youth, which means that **interventions must be thoughtful and deliberate regarding the age and psycho-social development of child participants**. While the benefits of engaging teens and older adolescents are clear and were agreed upon by all of our key informants, engaging younger, elementary-aged children is less straightforward. Some psychologists have argued that children are incapable of norm transformation, as they are not able to critically reflect on social norms. This school of thought argues that the most children are only capable of is parroting back lessons they are taught about norms.[324] This is potentially reflected in the evaluation of CARE's PTLA intervention, in which nearly 100 percent of Egyptian boys who participated in the program's activities agreed that girls have the same rights as boys to express their opinions, but held reservations about the value of those opinions.[325] Alternatively, others, including many of our key informants, argued that engaging with children was valuable precisely because they are still learning the gender

320. Achyut P., Bhatla N., Khandekar S., Maitra S. and Verma R.K. (2011). Building Support for Gender Equality among Young Adolescents in School: Findings from Mumbai, India. ICRW, New Delhi.
321. Ibid.
322. Chinen, M., Coombes, A., De Hoop, T., & Elmeski, M. (2016). *Evaluation of the transformative potential of positive gender socialization in education for peacebuilding.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.
323. CARE International. (2016). *Tipping Point: digging up the roots to replant the future. Women's Empowerment and Child Marriage.* Retrieved from www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment/child-marriage/tipping-point.
324. Walrath, R. (2011). Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development. Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development.
325. Miske & Boardman, 2011.

norms of their surroundings, and interventions can provide an opportunity to learn and internalize more equitable norms. What is clear is that interventions with children should be sustained throughout childhood and adolescence, and help children make connections between their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. All programs should first conduct formative research to understand the most appropriate age, in that context, for initiating gender norm change work.

Available Evidence

Measuring programs that engage men and boys for girls' educational empowerment is complex and rife with potential challenges. It is important to find a way to measure outcomes for girls and not just assess knowledge and attitude changes in boys or men. There is a weak link between changes in attitudes or knowledge among males and shifts in their behavior; and it's behavior change that can impact outcomes for girls. **Programs that sensitize participants on gender, but do not take the time or correct approach to achieve gender transformation, result in little to no changes in behavior**. For example, for the pilot project *Gender Socialization in Schools: Enhancing the transformative power of education for peacebuilding* implemented by UNICEF in Uganda, teachers attended three gender training sessions coupled with a short message service (SMS) campaign. However, while their knowledge and attitudes improved measurably, the evaluation found no changes in their behaviors after their trainings.[326] One way to more accurately measure behavior change is to ask men about their behavior and then triangulate those self-reports with reports from girls. Including qualitative measurement can also help paint a fuller picture of the changes that occur as a result of a program—beyond increases in knowledge or attitudes.

When measuring gender equitable attitudes, the most well-established tool used is the **Gender Equitable Men Scale (GEMS)** developed by Population Council/Horizons and Promundo. This scale measures attitudes around gender norms in the domains of violence, sexual relationships, homophobia, domestic chores and daily life, and reproductive health and disease prevention. This scale has been used extensively in educational programs to measure attitude change in boys after the program activities are done.

Best Practices

- **Use a gender-synchronized approach to gender transformation that is based on reflection**: Separating boys and girls at first for activities that encourage discussion and reflection, and then bringing them together in the same group, has been shown to maximize gender transformative effects. These reflective processes should be designed to foster empathy in boys, which can involve drawing parallels between times that boys have felt powerless with girls' feelings of powerlessness due to gender-based discrimination and harassment.
- **Pair gender-transformative education with leadership trainings for boys**: As evidenced in evaluations of CARE's PTLA program, this approach can enlist boys as advocates for girls, and influence their behavior as well as that of those around them. Research shows that when boys are involved in both leadership and gender sensitivity education, they are compelled to make changes in their communities alongside girls.[327] Therefore, if programs do not have the scope to work with adult men in households and communities, they can still have impacts beyond individual adolescents by fostering community activism among *both* boys and girls.
- **Engage boys through sports and extracurricular activities**: Mixed-gender activities are a particularly effective entry point to begin the gender norm transformation process. This is because boys and girls may be more comfortable in these settings than in a formal classroom, and that comfort helps create a supportive atmosphere for discussion and reflection. Also, coaches and other adults overseeing these activities are excellent candidates for mentors and role models that promote gender equity.
- **Engage males across all levels of the ecological framework**: In order to ensure that girls are in a safe environment that is conducive to learning in schools, can stay in school and not be married off, and can live in a community that does not devalue their education, it is important to engage key male stakeholders across all levels of society. Brothers, fathers, and other male family members have a role to play in encouraging girls to stay in school and promoting the value of girls' education; and male teachers and key authority figures in the community can help make schools safe and supportive for girls.

326. Chinen et al., 2016.
327. Miske & Boardman, 2011.

Land Rights and Agriculture

Why Engage Men?

In the developing world, land is one of a rural family's most important assets. It provides food for households and a means for income generation. Land ownership is also important for resilience and financial security, as it can be liquidated to respond to economic shocks. While women in rural communities are often the ones cultivating the land—making up almost half of all agricultural workers globally—they constitute only a fifth of land owners around the world.[328] According to the UN, only 19 percent of women globally have formal land titles and a mere 9 percent own land in conflict and post-conflict countries.[329] This is the case for a number of reasons, all of which are context-specific. However, one of the most common barriers to women's land rights is that in many countries, women do not have equal rights to access, use, inherit, and/or control land under the law.[330]

Even in places like Vietnam where land and property rights for women are relatively progressive and firmly established, both male and female community members in rural areas often do not know of or understand women's legal rights to land.[331] Additionally, socio-cultural factors may hinder the enforcement of gender-equitable land laws and prevent

Photo Credit: @Cartier Philanthropy/Andrea Borgarello

328. Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Women. (2012). *Facts & Figures: Rural Women and the Millennium Development Goals.* Available online at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/ruralwomen/facts-figures.html.
329. Landesa. (2017). *What We Do: Women's Land Rights.* Retrieved from: https://www.landesa.org/what-we-do/womens-land-rights/.
330. USAID. (2016). USAID Issue Brief: Land Tenure, Property Rights, and Gender – Challenges and Approaches for Strengthening Women's Land Tenure and Property Rights. Washington, DC: USAID. Retrieved from: https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/USAID_Land_Tenure_Gender_Brief_061214-1.pdf.

women from realizing their legal land rights. Men are often the gatekeepers at the family, community, and policy levels, which can either prevent or facilitate women's access to land and property rights. In some places like Uganda, there is a direct conflict between statutory law and customary laws—the latter often favor men in inheritance practices—and male elders and other traditional leaders continue to reinforce these traditional patriarchal norms.[332]

Women's lack of decision-making power further contributes to their lack of control over land. In many cases, it is the husband who decides how land is allocated within the family, both during his life and after his death. For girls, this means that they are often forgotten in inheritance discussions and left out of wills completely; for women who become widows, they may have no legal rights to land, and once the land is returned to the patriarchal family, they are often forced off of it, losing their houses, source of nutrition, and sometimes their children. Problems also arise for women in polygamous relationships. Second or third wives may have fewer rights to land and a first wife's plot may be decreased if a husband takes on additional wives.[333]

These inequitable land practices are not only detrimental to women, but also to their families and communities. Limited research suggests that when women have rights to land and property, there are a number of positive outcomes related to health, financial stability, and food security, including increases in women's household decision-making power, net household income, expenditure on food, education for children, and the ability to prevent HIV/AIDS infection. There are also decreases in domestic violence.[334] Conversely, when a woman does not have legal rights to her land, she is vulnerable to economic shocks and food insecurity.

Engaging men in programming to achieve women's economic empowerment (WEE) and gender equality outcomes in the agricultural sector is critical. As with other types of programming, particularly related to WEE, it is important to engage men to avoid negative consequences such as violence against women, which may occur when the traditional patriarchal power dynamic is disturbed. According to a recent report on male engagement in agricultural initiatives, "Looking first at the ethics, we see significant evidence that failing to engage thoughtfully with men can lead to negative unintended consequences in agricultural initiatives, including co-option of women's resources, assets, and other program benefits, and even—in some cases—a measurable increase in domestic violence or sexual harassment and coercion experienced by program participants."[335] Beyond risk mitigation, programs are more effective when they adopt a comprehensive, gender-synchronized approach that engages men and women together to challenge unequal and harmful gender norms. After all, men and women do not operate independently of each other in any aspect of life, and both men and women contribute to household agricultural production and earnings. Heilman and Meyers elucidate this, saying, "In these settings, engaging with only one gender stands upon a mistaken understanding of program participants' actual economic realities, and as a result, may have unanticipated negative implications on household economics and roles."[336]

Common Approaches

The land rights and agriculture sector is more nascent in efforts around male engagement; few programs in this sector explicitly mention targeting men as a key implementation strategy. Similarly, according to a recent study, "It is essential to note that there are very few long-term or comprehensive initiatives to effectively involve men and boys in agricultural women's economic empowerment (WEE)," and that most existing initiatives tend to be short-term and poorly evaluated.[337] Most of the land and property rights programs that engage men do so as part of an overarching community mobilization methodology. Several promising programs engage men and women together as change agents—and more specifically as paralegals—who sensitize community members on women's land issues and help mediate land-related disputes in their communities.

331. Alvarado, G. et al. (2015). *Vietnam Land Access for Women (LAW) Program: Women, Land, and Law in Vietnam.* Washington, DC and Hanoi, Vietnam: USAID, ICRW, and ISDS. Retrieved from:: https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WomenLandLaw.pdf.
332. Patel, P., Douglas, Z., & Farley, K. (2014). *Learning from a 'Paralegals' Intervention to Support Women's Property Rights in Uganda."* Washington, DC: ICRW. Retrieved from: https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ICRW-Uganda-Paralegals_final.pdf.
333. USAID, 2016.
334. Ibid.
335. Heilman, B. & Meyers L. (2016). *Engaging and Working with Men: Program Insights and Key Considerations for the Agriculture Sector.* Washington, DC: USAID. Retrieved from: https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/LEO_SEEP_Brief_2_-_Engaging_Men_FINAL.logos_.pdf.
336. Ibid.
337. Heilman & Meyers, 2016.

Box 10: Men's Engagement Program in Nigeria – Shifting Men's Attitudes Towards Women's Land Rights

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (WFWI) – NIGERIA

Like many of their other male engagement programs, WFWI began working with men in Nigeria as a complement to ongoing women's empowerment programs, which provide women with life skills training—including lessons in health awareness, decision-making, negotiation, and civic participation—along with more concrete business and vocational skills. Female program participants requested that WFWI also work with their male counterparts, noting that men at the household and community levels were the biggest barrier to them being able to fully realize their rights. Thus, WFWI developed a separate training program for men, which taught men about the value of girls as well as a host of other women's rights issues, including land and property rights.

The training program uses a cascade-approach, where WFWI trains 50 male community leaders who then serve as role models and male champions for women's rights and train 500 additional men in their respective communities. One of the four main components of the training focuses on women's land and property rights (called "Rights and Resources"), and specifically discusses justice systems, women's property ownership, and inheritance. Meetings are then held with community leaders, community members, and husbands and male family members of WFWI-Nigeria's holistic women's empowerment program participants to discuss ways to further empower women in their communities.

Data from a recent study conducted by American Institutes for Research (AIR) did not show any significant changes in knowledge as a result of the program, perhaps because the level of knowledge of women's property rights at baseline was already quite high. However, there were promising quantitative results regarding attitude change among program participants. According to AIR, 71 percent of leaders in the treatment group were likely to agree with the statement, "Women should have equal share of family inheritance as their male counterparts," compared to 51 percent in the comparison group. Moreover, 76 percent of leaders in the treatment group agreed with the statement, "It is a girl child's right to inherit landed property," compared to 60 percent in the comparison group. Qualitative data showed that while participants understood that the training advocated for equal property rights for both men and women, some still struggled with how to reconcile the statutory law with their traditional beliefs.

Source: Chinen, M. et al. (2016). *Longitudinal Evaluation of Women for Women International: Nigeria's Men's Engagement Program to Promote Women's Rights and Create a Gender-Balanced Society – 12-Month Report*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Individual and Community

Male engagement programs in this sector work in a variety of ways and approach men in a diversity of roles. They may **work with male traditional leaders or elders**, who have the ability to enforce either progressive statutory laws or yield to more conservative and patriarchal customary law. They may also **work with men as family members—husbands, uncles, and sons—encouraging them to include women in their wills and inheritance practices**. Some programs, like Women for Women International's (WFWI's) male engagement programming, organize male-only groups to explain the negative consequences of inequality, including unequal land rights, for both women and the entire community. Target groups for these programs are often the male family members of women beneficiaries already engaged in WFWI programming.

Paralegal-type programs, which almost exclusively engage men at the community level, are prevalent in the literature and have demonstrated much success. This approach was first tested in East Africa, and has since been rolled out in other regions, including Southeast Asia. These programs typically **train community members to educate others about existing laws on property rights** in order to increase knowledge and change norms related to women's ownership of property. In many cases, these community volunteers also help **mediate disputes** about land and other property.[338] Men are trained

338. Patel et al., 2014.

alongside women on national and local land laws and practices and work to sensitize community members around gender issues in an effort to create more gender-equitable attitudes about women's land and property rights.

Other common approaches in this sector include more general, **community-level educational programs on girls'/women's land rights under the law**. Landesa's Security for Girls Through Land Project (Girls Project) in West Bengal, India, for example, works with school-aged boys and girls and their parents, village leaders, and other community members to improve girls' social and economic status and to educate them about their legal rights to assets such as land. They hold community-level workshops and trainings for men/boys and women/girls separately and then together in mixed-groups. This project uses an innovative approach of targeting girls instead of women. "By increasing girls' and communities' understanding of girls' land-related rights and helping girls to use land to create assets and demonstrate their value," Landesa explains in an overview of the project, "girls can gain some control over their futures and are more likely to enjoy secure land rights as adults." [339]

Institutions and Policies

Other programs **work with men as policymakers**. Many land and property rights, women's assets, and agriculture programs operate at the local and/or national policy level. While most of these efforts do not explicitly mention targeting men through their programming, it is understood that in many of these countries the policy/advocacy space is dominated by men, so, inherently, their program does include a male engagement component. One example of this is Landesa's land rights program in Kenya, which works with mostly male government authorities to establish a more gender equitable national land registration system and dispute resolution mechanisms.[340]

Many land rights programs operate within multiple ecological levels, engaging men at the individual and community level, most commonly as champions for women's land and property rights. Or, at institutional and policy levels, where programs may aim to create more gender-equitable land laws or to build the capacity of male stakeholders (including elders and traditional leaders) to enforce women's existing land rights under the law. These interventions, such as the Women's Property Ownership and Inheritance Rights (WPOIR) Program, which operates in Nyanza, Kenya, and is funded by USAID's POLICY Project, build mostly male leaders' capacity to uphold women's and children's rights in cases of disputes over inheritance and other land issues within the community.

Challenges and Cautions

While some programs may have seen success in certain outcomes working solely with men, there are pitfalls. **Programs that only target men run the risk of creating and reinforcing gendered silos between women and men**, and make it difficult for programming to be accountable to women in the community since they are not involved. According to Heilman and Meyers, this is especially true in the agricultural sector where working exclusively with men may further facilitate men's dominance in the sector. They note: "A 2012 study of banana production in Kenya found that initiatives to establish and expand farmers' groups, though well intentioned, had the unintended result of facilitating men's takeover of what had traditionally been a 'women's crop.' The authors of this particular study conclude that, owing to this risk, it would be advantageous to limit participation in these farmers' groups to women specifically, though these types of decisions would necessarily fluctuate from crop to crop and setting to setting."[341] While interventions should certainly not exclude men from agricultural programming, it is important to consider how a male engagement program in this sector may unintentionally undermine women's livelihoods. Based on a thorough needs assessment at the onset, program designers can decide who to target and how to engage men to ensure that programming does not ultimately result in negative outcomes for women.

As with other development programs, resources for male engagement programs in the land and agricultural sector are often scarce. With that, **implementers must consider which programs are most effective and compare projected outcomes with the price of implementing a program** (in terms of money, time, and staff resources) to determine whether the benefits justify the cost. By using this sort of cost/benefit analysis, some potentially effective programs may not make the cut. For example, according to Landesa, "While there is some qualitative and quantitative evidence that the Community Conversations serve to mobilize the community in a positive direction, it is a resource-intensive endeavor that is not easily scaled. Further, the magnitude of improved outcomes from the intense Community Conversations does not seem able

339. Landesa. *What We Do: Security for Girls Through Land Project (Girls Project).* Seattle, WA: Landesa. https://www.landesa.org/what-we-do/womens-land-rights/security-for-girls-through-land-project-girls-project/.

340. Landesa. (2012). *Landesa in China.* Seattle, Washington: Landesa. Retrieved from: https://zpmpd2mggwg34rgsm60didr9-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/China_FactSheet_2012_print.pdf.

341. Heilman & Meyers, 2016.

to justify the increased cost."[342] Paralegal programs, in contrast, are considered more cost-effective and sustainable than community discussions, since once trained, paralegals do not require a large amount of additional funds or other resources to conduct their sensitization and mediation work.

Box 11: Vietnam Land Access for Women (LAW) Program – Helping Women Access Land Rights

ICRW AND ISDS – VIETNAM

Vietnam is one of the few countries where policy attention to women's property rights has resulted in progressive laws that promote and protect these rights. Despite this progress, many women are unable to enjoy the full benefit of these laws and realize their rights. One reason for this is poor implementation, particularly when laws conflict with more traditional social norms, or when larger social and economic dynamics restrict women from using the laws to claim their rights. Women's lack of access to justice is further exacerbated by the limited availability of lawyers in Vietnam, particularly in rural areas.

The Vietnam Land Access for Women (LAW) Program aims to address these barriers and increase the efficacy of land rights for farmers, particularly women. The program uses a multi-pronged approach at a variety of different ecological levels that engages male stakeholders in diverse ways, including:

1. Identifying and training 110 male and female Community Volunteers for Gender Equality Advocacy (CVGEAs) in Hung Yen and Long An Provinces on gender and land rights. These volunteers work together to conduct awareness-raising activities on women's and girls' land rights and provide legal advice and mediation to those experiencing land-related conflicts;
2. Training (primarily male) communal authorities and selected partners on advocacy efforts that aim to promote the integration of gender into the content and implementation of existing laws and policy frameworks; and
3. Collecting information concerning gender-inequitable access to land and land rights.

The project has experienced much success since it launched in 2014. Quantitative and qualitative data collected at mid-term found significant shifts in both knowledge and attitudes of male and female program participants, and over 600 land-related disputes have been resolved with help from community volunteers. A baseline/midline survey found a significant increase in knowledge for both male and female respondents: The average knowledge score obtained by men during midline was 9 percent higher than at baseline; and the average score for women was 16 percent higher than at baseline. There were also increases in positive attitudes of a similar magnitude among both women and men.

Qualitative data were collected from commune residents, CVGEAs, local administrators, and Land Alliance (LANDA) network representatives. This data suggests there has been some positive changes, particularly for women, who reported feeling more knowledgeable and confident to discuss gender and land. Group discussions with villagers indicated high satisfaction among participants with counseling services delivered by the program's volunteers, and the qualitative report notes that "volunteers' counseling services were regarded as an effective channel that equipped rural residents with proper assistance to facilitate their ability to access land and property."

Source: Quantitative and qualitative project monitoring and evaluation data collected and analyzed by ICRW

342. Landesa. (2013). *Security for Girls Through Land Pilot Evaluation (2012-2013).* Seattle, WA: Landesa. Available online at http://zpmpd2mggwg34rgsm60didr9-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Landesa-Girls-Poject-Baseline-Study.pdf.

Available Evidence

There are several evaluations of promising programs in this sector, a few of which we highlight below:

Vietnam LAW Program (ICRW and Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS): The Vietnam LAW Program uses a paralegal-type approach to resolve land-related disputes and sensitize community members—including government representatives and other influential stakeholders—about women's property rights in a northern and southern province of Vietnam. One of the LAW Program's main objectives is to increase farmers' awareness of women's existing land rights under current legislation. To this end, the project has seen much success: After two years of implementation, men's average knowledge of women's land rights was 9 percent higher than the baseline, and women's knowledge of their own land rights was 16 percent higher than the baseline.[343] (For more information on the Vietnam LAW project, see *Box 11*.)

A secondary program objective is to increase female farmers' ability to access their land rights. Similar improvements were seen in this area, through resolved land disputes: Sixty-two community volunteers (59 percent of whom were men) worked to settle 689 land-related cases (out of 1,100), 51 percent of which were brought by women.[344]

Kenya Justice Project (Landesa): This project worked at different levels and with men and women in a variety of capacities in a remote, rural community in Kenya. Project activities included: 1) trainings for (predominantly male) elders and chiefs as well as for women, youth, and teachers on women's land rights under the Kenyan Constitution, which were followed by community conversations with the same groups; 2) public-speaking trainings for women, to increase their voice and agency around advocating for their own land rights; 3) capacity-building for elders and chiefs around dispute resolution to encourage them to uphold women's constitutional land rights; and 4) community-wide sensitization events, including arts-based curriculum for youth, to increase men's and women's knowledge of women's land rights and create more gender-equitable attitudes. The project saw a number of remarkable changes in women's outcomes around land and property rights, gender-based violence, and girls' education. In particular, women in the community reported that they have more access to land, more support from tribal elders, and experienced fewer incidences of gender-based violence; and school officials reported that a greater number of girls were attending school. In addition, there was an observable increase in commercial activity in the area led by women in the community.[345]

Afghanistan's Men Engagement Program (WFWI): Women for Women International uses a cascade training model, where male champions train others in their community, in its Men's Engagement Program (MEP) in two rural communities of Afghanistan. This approach builds a community of male allies for WFWI's initiatives that strive to increase male religious and community leaders' knowledge on women's rights, including women's land and property rights. While the evaluation only tracked changes in men's knowledge and attitudes towards women, the program did see some promising results that were likely indicative of improved outcomes for women. Among other encouraging outcomes, the evaluation noted changes in men's attitudes towards inheritance, "with several participants stating that they intended to provide an inheritance to their wife and/or daughters as a result of [the] training." According to one focus group participant, "Before, we did not give inheritance to our daughters or wife, but now we have learned that they are also part of our inheritance."[346] While these results seem favorable, it is important to note that attitude change is not always linked to behavior change; thus, it is important to measure outcomes for women as well as for men in evaluating male engagement programming to have a clearer picture of program results.

Best Practices

- **Consider engaging men and women together as program participants**: It is important to consider a gender-synchronized approach, which works with both men and women. A program may choose to first engage with men and women separately, but should ideally eventually work with both genders together.
  - **For paralegal programs** like Vietnam LAW, build a network of volunteer men and women of various ages who can work together to create and share best practices and to influence community members based on participants' unique perspectives.
  - **For market-based issues that affect both men and women**, a community-based approach that engages men and boys alongside women and girls to create connections and networks across the entire value chain, may be most effective.

343. Alvarado, G. (2017). *Promoting Women's Land Rights in Vietnam.* Presentation made at the World Bank's Land and Poverty Conference in Washington, DC.
344. Ibid.
345. Landesa. *Kenya Justice Project.* Seattle, WA: Landesa. https://www.landesa.org/what-we-do/sub-saharan-africa/kenya/justice-project/.
346. Women for Women International (WfWI). (2016). Afghanistan Learning Brief: Engaging Men as Allies to Promote Women's Empowerment. Washington, DC: WfWI: Available online at http://wfwmarketingimages.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/wfwi-learning-brief-afg-mep-fco-20160401-final.pdf.

- **Create interventions that address both a lack of knowledge and gender-inequitable attitudes about women's land and property rights**: Programs are most effective when they seek to create awareness about women's land and property rights under the law and also simultaneously aim to transform negative attitudes towards women and girls' ability to access these rights. Using community legal volunteers like paralegals, and working to increase knowledge in combination with community-awareness campaigns appear to be effective in creating positive behavior change among women and men.[347]
- **Support behavior-change interventions with supplementary services related to dispute resolution**: In addition to sensitizing community members, paralegals are able to conduct dispute resolution techniques to help community members resolve land-related disputes.[348]
- **Identify and engage key influencers at each ecological level who serve as thought leaders and decision-makers around traditional land and inheritance practices and other land-related issues**: It is critical to establish and/or strengthen relationships with local, district, provincial, and national institutions—including civil society organizations and other community bodies, like unions—and build their capacity to support programs focused on increasing women's land and property rights. Programs that engage leaders in these institutions could work with traditional or religious leaders, elders, government representatives, police officers, etc., who are often men. It is crucial to inform these stakeholders about project activities, create project buy-in, and identify ways for these individuals to show support for program activities.[349]
- **Messages should also be context-specific and relayed by an existing male thought leader in the community**: According to Heilman and Meyers, gender equality messages "are likely to resonate much more powerfully with traders, association members, regulators, agro-dealers, and other male market participants when they are adapted for their specific reality by *someone relatable within that reality*."[350]
- **Messages should be accompanied by facilitated discussions**: Discussions allow men to reflect on messages and consider how to apply them in their own lives. Gender norm transformation is more likely to result from this type of introspective and participatory approach, as opposed to more didactic trainings where men are told what to believe.
- **Understand the relevant customary and statutory land and property laws**: It is important for interventions to first have a deep understanding of the legal frameworks in the country (at both the local and national levels) and whether and to what extent they support women's land and property rights. It is also critical to explore how statutory law operates in relation to customary law and whether they complement or contradict each other. Finally, programs should seek to identify the decision-makers and key stakeholders at each level (individual, community, institutional, and policy) who can either reinforce or facilitate the transformation of harmful gender norms related to women's land and property rights. Based on this formative research, programs can then craft effective intervention strategies to address barriers to women's access to their land rights.

Photo Credit: @Cartier Philanthropy/Cyril Le Tourneur

347. USAID, 2016.
348. Ibid.
349. Ibid.
350. Heilman & Meyers, 2016.

Political Participation

Why Engage Men?

In addition to the more general justifications for engaging men in gender equity work, it is important to engage men in increasing women's political participation, given the extremely male-dominated nature of political institutions, parties, and movements. In the context of political participation, men are very much the gatekeepers to power. To be elected, women need men to vote for them; and to be effective in politics women need to be able to collaborate with men. Finally, to effect widespread change, social justice movements must adopt principles of gender justice. This means explicitly recognizing structures of gendered inequality, their intersection with other systems of inequality, and deliberately working to reform those structures.[351] Additionally, "gender mainstreaming"—or consideration of gendered contexts, needs, and impacts in the development of all policies and programs and at all levels—has been recognized as an essential strategy for gender equity at the institutional and political level, meaning that men will necessarily be engaged as gender becomes a major consideration in all aspects of government.[352]

Common Approaches

Community

Men can **act as partners and mentors for women politicians**, as they do with male politicians, by supporting capacity-building programs and helping to create and maintain a pipeline of women candidates. Beyond gender trainings and workshops, programmatic strategies to facilitate men's uptake of these roles are few, as this represents a mostly unexplored avenue for male engagement programming. One approach highlighted by a USAID review of programming on women's political empowerment noted the potential in facilitating the building of partnerships between male and female politicians, by inviting men and women politicians to participate in convenings and gender equality events and by supporting the formation of women's caucuses to bolster the political capital necessary to incentivize partnerships.[353]

A guide by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) detailing best practices for programs to build capacity of female politicians suggests that male buy-in is essential for programs situated within institutions. Doing so ensures that the skills enhanced are the right ones for women's success and advancement, and that this will lead to women's increased power and representation.[354] Also, essential cross-gender

Photo Credit: @Cartier Philanthropy/Andrea Borgarello

351. Edström et al., 2015.
352. Palmieri, S. (2013). Sympathetic advocates: male parliamentarians sharing responsibility for gender equality. Gender & Development, 21(1): 67–80.
353. Krook, M.L., Ashman, D., Moughari, L., & Pournik, M. (2014). Women's leadership as a route to greater empowerment: desktop study. Management Systems International and USAID.
354. National Democratic Institute. (2013). Increasing women's political participation through effective training programs: a guide to lessons learned and best practices. National Democratic Institute.

Box 12: Women Organizing to Form Equal Partnerships with Men in Social Movements

CLOC-VIA CAMPESINA – LATIN AMERICA

The CLOC-Via Campesina movement in Latin America fights against injustices in the distribution of land, territory, water, and seeds. Though many women were initially members, gender justice was not a central part of the movement's platform and women's voices were underrepresented among decision-making structures.

Women within the movement joined together to address the interests of rural women. The impacts of these efforts became evident as more spaces were created for women to organize. In turn, these spaces enabled women to have a greater voice within the movement. Their collective power incentivized (or pressured) men to acknowledge and accept them as leaders and gender justice as paramount to social justice. The first Women's Assembly of 1997 led to an agreement to reserve 50 percent of decision-making positions for women, which was accepted by the men in the movement. Since then, female membership has increased, and male and female members both have had the opportunity to learn the ways in which gender justice is central to other social justice movements.

The backdrop of an existing social movement can provide a common point of departure for men and women to engage with each other's gendered identities and experiences. Emphasizing this common ground can help to build empathy, which can facilitate men's understanding that gender equity and women's empowerment are fundamental aspects of any social justice cause.

Source: Bhattacharjya, M., Birchall, J., Caro, P., Kelleher, D., & Sahasranaman, V. (2013). Why gender matters in activism: feminism and social justice movements. *Gender & Development*, 21(2):277-293.

professional and mentoring relationships can be formed when men are facilitators or participants in program activities. Moving outside of political institutions, men can and must be engaged to **strengthen women's positions in social movements**. One approach is to encourage women's rights and gender justice organizations to form relationships and partnerships with non-gender focused social movements and male politicians.[355] NDI was successful with this approach in South Sudan during the initial phases of the new country's drafting of a constitution. They organized 82 public sessions in 2012 and 2013 that reached more than 10,000 citizens (nearly half of whom were women) to engage in issue-based advocacy discussions with policymakers and community leaders. Following these sessions, over 120 participants attended a women's national constitutional conference to share lessons learned from these discussions and to consult with women. The media attention these events received spurred the president to request further feedback from women on the constitutional process before he signed the constitution into law.[356]

Flood (2015) points out that male engagement doesn't have to mean working directly with men – in fact, it can mean working with women to build their capacity to constructively engage the men in their lives. For instance, women may mobilize to gain an equal voice within non-gender focused social movements. These movements, even when they have female members, frequently see gender justice as a secondary or even unrelated issue, and may reproduce structures of gendered inequality within their leadership. Women's organizations within these political movements have been effective in amassing enough support to be taken seriously by male leadership, moving gender issues into the mainstream agenda and increasing women's representation in decision-making and leadership positions.[357] See *Box 12* for an example of how this approach can work, drawing from the experiences of women in Latin America.[358]

When supporting women to engage men on their own, it is essential that interventions be highly context-specific and culturally resonant. Otherwise, programs run the risk of prompting potentially violent backlash against women and the association of women's human rights and empowerment with foreign or Western interference. This can be alleviated by using a gender synchronized approach.

355. Edström et al, 2015.
356. Krook et al, 2014.
357. Edström et al, 2015.
358. Bhattacharjya, M., Birchall, J., Caro, P., Kelleher, D., & Sahasranaman, V. (2013). Why gender matters in activism: feminism and social justice movements. *Gender & Development, 21*(2):277-293.

Institutions and Policies

The most common approach to increasing women's representation in political institutions and parties has been for women's rights groups to pressure governments and political parties to **adopt and implement gender equality measures around elections and governance**. These include gender-based quotas for representation, family-friendly policies within political institutions, increased criminalization and reduced impunity for political violence against women,[359] and sexual harassment of and discrimination against women within political institutions.[360] In this sense, men have been engaged as gatekeepers to power, with programs pressuring and incentivizing them to adopt and implement measures. Programs have also trained male election officials and political party elites to heighten their awareness of the requirements of such legal measures. However, the passage and frequently uneven implementation of such measures does not always indicate success. For quotas and other gender-based legislation to support women's increased and substantive representation and participation in politics, women politicians must be seen as holding legitimate power and must be able to form equal partnerships with male politicians to be effective in their positions. Studies of men's attitudes toward women in politics have shown that even when men generally support women's political rights, they are far less likely to support gender-based quotas.[361] Without buy-in from men, women's substantive political representation cannot realistically be achieved. Thus, it is essential to engage men in roles beyond gatekeepers to power. They need to be engaged as champions and allies of women in political spaces to address patriarchal norms.

A main approach to increasing the buy-in of male politicians, activists, public officials, and voters has been **to heighten their awareness of the benefits of women's political participation**.[362] Rather than targeting men specifically, such programming is generally directed at political actors or institutions, such as election officials, party leaders and campaign staff, politicians/political staff, media outlets, and the electorate. Women's groups in support of women's political participation have used strategies such as providing gender sensitivity and awareness-heightening trainings and workshops; inviting male political elites to participate in public events in support of women's political rights (such as International Women's Day celebrations); and launching mass media public awareness campaigns to highlight the qualifications of female candidates and benefits of women's political participation. The effectiveness of these strategies can be improved by targeting sympathetic men in positions of power to not only participate in efforts, but also to facilitate trainings, speak at events, and be shown as role models in public campaigns.[363]

Engendering institutions—that is, addressing the patriarchal norms and rules on which political institutions have been built—is essential to ensuring that women who do enter political institutions are able to be effective. In addition to generating increased buy-in as described above, men can be engaged as allies and champions in engendering institutions.[364]

Once men are engaged as allies and champions of women's political representation, they can support women's success within institutions in many ways. Men can support or co-sponsor women's proposed gender equity agendas to bring mainstream attention to gender equity legislation and move such issues out of the margins. They can support female politicians' efforts outside of the gender equality arena to lend legitimacy to women politicians. Men can also support and champion family-friendly and gender-equitable policies and practices within institutions. Finally, drawing from work on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), men can be engaged as active bystanders, holding their male peers accountable for sexist and or discriminatory attitudes and behaviors.[365]

Challenges and Cautions, Available Evidence and Best Practices

Political/institutional programming in general is rare within male engagement work, making this an optimal sector for further research and more intentional programming. However, possibilities for programming and potential effective practices can be gleaned from evidence on what works to increase women's political rights, representation, and power, as well

359. Political violence against women is distinct because a) it is committed against women for being outspoken politically rather than in the context of personal relationships b) it has the intent and/or effect of intimidating women into leaving politics/public spaces and c) it's distinct from other forms of political violence because it is enacted in specifically gendered ways, i.e. rape threats.
360. Krook et al., 2014.
361. Peacock, D. & Barker, G. (2012). *Working with men and boys to promote gender equality: a review of the field and emerging approaches.* Bangkok: UN Women.
362. Krook et al, 2014.
363. National Democratic Institute, 2013.
364. Edström et al, 2015.
365. Ibid.

as on how women's rights groups have engaged men thus far. Due to the limited programmatic efforts and research in this area, the points below are a combination of best practices, highlights of existing evidence or gaps in the evidence, and common challenges encountered.

- **Foster women's voting rights**: Although women may have the right to vote in many countries, the reality is that exercising this right is often constrained by men. In contexts where women's mobility is limited, they may not be able to register to vote or cast their ballot without being accompanied by a man. Or, women may face challenges meeting their expected care obligations as well as registering to vote or voting, which frequently takes a significant amount of time. This being the reality, women's right to vote hinges on the permission of their husbands or other male relatives. When working with men to increase their support for women's empowerment, it is critical for programs to focus on men's roles in supporting women's political engagement and ability to vote—as well as in supporting women's education, careers, and the redistribution of care work.
- **Go beyond quotas**: While evidence shows that quotas do, indeed, increase the number of women in political institutions, they do not necessarily equate to power and agency. Quotas can get women in the door, but they should be accompanied by working with men within political parties and serving as election officials to increase understanding of the requirements of quotas; engaging male politicians as allies; and mass media and educational campaigns to heighten awareness of the importance of women's political participation. These supportive strategies are intended to increase the legitimacy of female politicians, both among the general public and within institutions.
- **Link political rights to other gender norms and masculinities work**: Beliefs around whether women should participate in public life underpin the structural obstacles to women's political equity. Toxic and hegemonic masculinities and femininities that prescribe decision making as a male trait and right contribute to the marginalization of women and violence against women in politics. Therefore, work on masculinities, femininities, and gender norms should not only focus on engaging men in the equality and rights of women as they relate to the household, but also on women's right to be engaged in public life and to participate in politics.
- **Incorporate transformative masculinities work into work with male elites, political parties, and social movements**: Just as political equality and equity should be considered in masculinities work with men more generally, masculinities work should be incorporated into work with male political elites. So far, these men have been engaged based on their professional roles, but less work has been done to have male politicians reflect on their own personal conceptions of masculinity and femininity and how these beliefs influence their attitudes and behaviors toward female colleagues. The same kind of critical reflection work described elsewhere in this paper is also required with male politicians; however, they may need to be incentivized to participate. Combining work on masculinities with other skill-building activities is a potential strategy.
- **Create opportunities to build partnerships and mentorships between male and female political elites**: Success in political institutions often relies on mentorship and professional networks. Many men have these relationships in place when they enter the institution, whereas women often have to build them from scratch. Engaging men and women together in cultivating collaborative cross-gender relationships helps women politicians be successful in their careers and adds legitimacy to their participation in political institutions in general.
- **Facilitate the formation of coalitions between women's rights organizations and other social movements**: This helps to raise the profile of gender and women within non-gender-focused social justice movements. It can be done by creating new coalitions and networks that include both women's and non-gender-based organizations, bringing together male and female activists; by encouraging the male leaders of existing coalitions to add women's groups to their membership; by working with male leaders in existing movements to heighten awareness of the importance of a gendered lens in the issue area in question (e.g., land rights or climate change); or by building the capacity of women's groups to do this work within their existing networks and coalitions.
- **Combat gender-based political violence to ensure that women politicians have a safe environment in which to work**: This can involve training men to be active bystanders, reforming policies that punish sexist behavior, and recruiting men as champions to create awareness of gender-based political violence and to publicly refuse to tolerate it.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MALE ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED CONTEXTS

In addition to the many approaches and best practices highlighted throughout specific sectors of programming, in conflict-affected regions, additional considerations should be taken to ensure that male engagement approaches are acknowledging the potentially shifting gender dynamics and are being responsive to the context. These considerations are informed by our key informant interviews with previously listed experts; contributions from a convening of experts that included representatives from Women for Women International, Promundo, MenEngage Alliance, USAID, ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality, George Washington University's Global Women's Institute, Jhpiego, and the International Center for Research on Women; and two short focus group discussions with representatives from ABAAD Resource Centre for Gender Equality and Women for Women International.

Conflict-affected situations impact the construction of masculinities and femininities. Masculinities may take on a greater protectionist angle that leads to controlling behavior as a response to heightened, and legitimate, security concerns. This may lead to increased and specific harms for women and girls, such as restricted mobility and increases in child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C).

Militarization of societies in conflict can also impact how gender identities are constructed. Masculinity and violence may become more closely and strongly associated, and women's role in reproduction is likely to be emphasized. This often leads to a resurgence of traditional and strict gender roles and a curtailing of women's sexual and reproductive rights in the name of "protection." This is especially salient in situations of ethnic or nationalist conflict.

Alternatively, men's participation in conflict leads to more female-headed households, which can increase the number of women participating in the formal and informal economy and making decisions for their households and communities. This means that constructs of womanhood can shift during periods of conflict without a corresponding change in constructs of manhood, leading to instability in gender norms upon men's return and potential backlash against women.

Designing programming that is accountable to women, context-specific, and considers impacting factors at the individual, community, institutional, and governmental levels becomes even more important in conflict and post-conflict settings. This is true regardless of the level of intervention. In conflict-affected settings, even individual-level, interventions should have a thorough understanding of how the programming interacts with other levels of society and vice versa. It is important to recognize that programming may be operating within an environment of weak, unstable, or changing institutions and to continually monitor changes in these structures.

In this environment, traditional and informal systems of governance may emerge or be strengthened, which may represent an increase in patriarchal power structures. Militias and emerging political parties may become important actors to engage as they could hold significant access to particularly at-risk populations, through for example, their provision of essential services/resources to those in need. There may be tension between national governments and those working on gender equity issues. This can be circumvented by focusing on local level engagement, while still being mindful of overarching institutional/political structures.

Relatedly, it is important to conduct significant research on the ground to ensure a thorough understanding of the context of the conflict and where power truly lies. Key informants stressed that in conflict-affected contexts, there may be strong incentives for those in power to misrepresent the situation on the ground in order to gain or maintain their position in a power-vacuum.

In settings where there are significant migrant or refugee populations, it is essential to gain access to and work within refugee communities and formal or informal settlements. Program implementers must be sure to understand the specific and intersecting dynamics of both soft and hard power in these contexts.

It is also important to link with existing peacebuilding programming in the target community to ensure a gender-transformative lens. For instance, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs rarely incorporate a gender lens, much less a transformative one. Gender-transformative DDR programming should include: recognizing the existence and needs of female combatants; working with male and female combatants to prevent GBV/IPV as increased incidence of domestic violence is common

Photo Credit: David Snyder

following conflict; and addressing the needs of male perpetrators of rape as a weapon of war, which is essential to long-term gender norm transformation. However, when working with these men, care should be taken to not equate the experiences and trauma of male perpetrators with those of female survivors.

Women face specific gender-based risks in conflict-affected environments that make accountability to women community members, beneficiaries, practitioners, and women's groups even more essential:

- Increase in FGM/C and CEFM
- Increase in transactional sex/human trafficking
- Traumatic effects of the use of rape/sexual violence as an instrument of war

Women who have experienced rape as a weapon of war, and any children conceived and born as a result, often face significant stigma in their communities. Male community leaders should be engaged to demonstrate inclusion and acceptance of women survivors and their children. It is essential to hear directly from women what their needs are and to tailor programming to this information. Single-sex, female-only programming may be necessary in conflict-affected societies before mixed-gender programming can be implemented. While programming should always be vigilant that reconstruction of positive masculinities does not lead to paternalism and/or benevolent sexism, this is especially important in conflict-affected settings. Specifically, implementers should avoid engaging men as "protectors" of women and girls.

Conflict-affected situations present opportunities for transformative gender equity work due to the potential disruption of social norms, especially at the institutional and political levels. Men engaged in conflict often view women and girls, as well as issues pertaining to them, as distractions to their military goal. If left unchecked, this perception can and often does continue through peace negotiations and peacebuilding. It can become inscribed or strengthened in societal norms and structures past the end of the conflict.

During this time, institutions are often being rebuilt, which presents an opportunity for advocacy and change. Program implementers should engage male allies within peace negotiation teams and delegations to advocate for women's rights and representation in new policies and governance structures. Even better, they should support male allies to elevate women and women's voices to peace negotiation tables, where they are still largely absent. When new policies are put in place to encourage gender equity in governance institutions—such as increased female political representation or increasing the number of women in security sector positions—programming should work with men to prevent gender-based discrimination for women entering these structures. Programs should also engage male allies to support the voices of women in these institutions even in disagreement, so that women's representation is real and not only symbolic.

Women's roles in everyday life may also change significantly during conflict. For example, women and couples may be less likely to be stopped at security checkpoints than men alone, putting women into the role of protector. Additionally, because the work available for migrant and refugee populations is often "women's work," i.e., domestic labor, women frequently also take on the role of provider. This is compounded by the fact that the number of female-headed households tends to increase due to conflict, as men leave to join armed groups, are separated from their families, or are killed. These role reversals are seen as circumstantial and do not often increase women's agency and decision-making power. As one key informant noted, "It buys them a seat at the table but it does not buy them a decision." However, male engagement work can emphasize that these roles do not have to be circumstantial and can seek to normalize a more equal distribution of labor and decision-making power. This is also an effective strategy in work with adolescents, who see their female relatives taking on these new and important roles.

Male engagement programming in conflict settings should be responsive to the specific needs of both men and women and the nature of the conflict. In both conflict-affected and other humanitarian settings, many men and women cannot fulfill the basic needs to sustain themselves and their families. In this context, it can feel ridiculous to ask individuals to reconsider the gendered roles and dynamics that structure their lives. Programming should be sensitive to this by ensuring that gender-related work is accompanied by elements that help participants meet their basic needs. For example, programming could provide skill-building trainings aimed at helping participants obtain employment or generate income. Approaches grounded in psychology may become increasingly important in this context; conflict creates immense insecurity, and adhering to established gender roles can provide a sense of normalcy and comfort. This benefit is real, and should be acknowledged and addressed, potentially by emphasizing increased emotional support in more equitable relationships or the potential for increased household income.

Conflict can make men feel powerless. With good programming, this can be used as an entry point for increasing empathy with women and acknowledging gendered hierarchies. However, it is important when engaging with men based on this entry point to not draw false equivalencies between men's disempowerment during conflict and gender inequity.

Photo Credit: Shana Williams

EMERGING BEST PRACTICES

Through our research, ICRW has discerned a number of best practices in how male engagement programming can make significant contributions to wider efforts to achieve gender equity. ICRW identified these best practices through an extensive literature review, through key informant interviews, and through a convening of recognized global experts in male engagement.

Entry Point

Use messaging that avoids a zero-sum game mentality, but that also discusses power imbalances and sets realistic expectations: Emphasizing the benefits for men of gender equity and non-violence is an essential programmatic strategy, as is moving away from a polarized viewpoint in which either men or women hold all the power. However, in reality men do benefit from these power imbalances and such benefits will diminish as patriarchal structures are reformed. Many men are likely to experience this as a loss of power, and preparing them for such an adjustment (while simultaneously preparing women and program implementers for potential backlash) is an important element of moving beyond their initial discomfort into appreciating the new benefits that are derived from more truly equitable relationships.

- **Be cautious of using a "soft approach" to engaging men and boys**: Some interventions use a "soft approach" to initially engage men and boys, in which they emphasize the harms that men experience due to rigid gender norms and the benefits they stand to gain from more equitable relationships with women. The danger of this approach is that it is not gender transformative—it does not address the power structures that subjugate women in patriarchal societies—and can thus lead to benevolent sexism, or beliefs and attitudes that see women as valuable and worth protecting but not as equal or as competent as men. While a soft approach can be effective in initially securing buy-in and program participation from men and boys, it should be an intermediary step on the path to gender transformation, not an isolated approach.

Programming Strategies

Consider working across ecological levels—individual, community, institutional, and policy: Most male engagement programming to date has been focused on the individual, families/couples, or community level. While this work is beneficial, it is equally important for there to be programs that work at the institutional and policy levels to create an enabling environment for sustainable gender transformation. Realistically, not every intervention can work at all levels of engagement; however, interventions should do introductory research and then design their projects to complement, build upon, and leverage work that's being done at other levels. Implementing organizations may also consider partnering with other implementers to create a more comprehensive program that identifies and addresses power imbalances across multiple levels.

- **Interventions should combine knowledge/attitude change, community mobilization, and service provision to transform norms and change behaviors**: For example, for women to exercise their legal reproductive rights or land rights, it is necessary to increase knowledge of these rights, shift attitudes related to the acceptance of women exercising these rights, and to adjust institutional systems and services to adequately provide these services.

INDIVIDUAL

Start young and adapt through life transitions: Adolescent boys are effective intervention targets because they have had less reinforcement of harmful, inequitable gender norms, and therefore are more easily persuaded to reflect on and question patriarchal norms and structures. In addition, intervening with adolescent boys means that the impacts of programming are intensified because these boys will likely go on to have more equitable relationships and positively influence those around them for the rest of their lives. Some programs, particularly interventions related to addressing health and violence, suggest starting gender equitable norm formation programming with very young boys and girls. However, some experts are concerned that targeting very young adolescents, or boys under the age of 14, can be ineffective because they are not far enough along developmentally to be able to think rationally and truly question and reflect on gender norms; they cannot understand the nuances of the system in which they live.[366] While boys may be able to regurgitate lessons that they are taught about gender equality, they are still vulnerable to the reinforcement of gender norms that will happen within their communities as they grow older. Therefore, program implementers should conduct formative research to determine the best target group for their intervention given the context and desired outcomes, and consider progressive programming to continue working with boys as they transition to adolescence and adulthood.

- **Continue to engage men and boys as they age and transition through life**: Programming with youth is critical and has been proven to be extremely effective;

however, questioning and challenging harmful gender norms is a life-long process. Gender transformation does not happen overnight; to have a sustainable impact, programming should continue, whenever possible, to engage men throughout their lives, involving them in different ways and using different conversations and activities, depending on what stage of the life cycle they are in. Additionally, programs should consider the diverse roles men play—as partners, brothers, fathers, employers, employees, community members and leaders, teachers, etc., and how these change over time—and such programs should incorporate the multi-dimensionality of a person's existence into discussions about gender.

Use a gender-synchronized approach: Gender synchronization means that all genders are engaged in a process of gender transformation—seeking to dismantle hegemonic masculinities—through a single program. Gender-synchronized programs may choose to work with men and women simultaneously or sequentially and may use single-sex or mixed sex-groups. For gender-synchronized programs that choose to do single-sex programming, it is often most effective if, at some point, men and women are then brought together to discuss gender in a mixed setting. This is particularly important for programs that work with heteronormative couples, as it provides an opportunity for critical dialogue. In mixed-gender group settings, programs should ensure that women are able to contribute equally and safely.

- When using a gender-synchronized approach, it is important to **provide safe spaces for discussion**. Talking about gender and questioning masculinities may be new and uncomfortable. Program participants need to feel that they can safely discuss gender norms and reflect on the ways in which the patriarchy may be playing out in their own lives. When working with men, providing these spaces, especially for specific groups like new fathers, can allow men to learn the skills necessary to take on more care work, provide them with peer role models, and prompt them to deeply reflect on universal commitments to human dignity and gender norms to the extent that is necessary for gender-transformative change. In programming that works with both men and women, safe spaces for women are also essential.
- In gender-synchronized programming, it is important to educate each group (men/boys and women/girls) about what the other gender is going through. It can be very beneficial for men to understand the challenges and barriers that women face to economic and civil participation, as well as what resources and opportunities might be available to them, and vice versa. In particular, it is important to teach boys and girls about each other's decision-making processes and the pressures that factor in, as well as reproductive systems so that they understand how bodies work together and also how to equitably negotiate sexual behaviors.

Promote alternative, positive masculinities:

- **Use positive messaging that promotes men as agents of change instead of "shaming and blaming" them**: Messages are most effective when they encourage and inspire men, rather than castigate them for men's bad behavior and for the negative effects of patriarchy as a whole. This is the case whether interventions develop messages to disseminate as part of recruitment strategies for male participants, as part of behavior change communication campaigns, or for use within discussion groups and educational settings. Messages may best be delivered by existing male role models in the community, and are most transformative when accompanied by facilitated conversations. In these environments, men have the chance to reflect on how messages apply to their own lives, and acknowledge and take responsibility for their own gendered behaviors while recognizing that they are acting within patriarchy.
  - **However, it is also important not to portray men as saviors**: While positive messaging has been proven to be effective in fostering male engagement and transforming masculinities, programs must ensure that they continue to reinforce messages of gender equity, and that recognizing men as change agents does not ultimately translate into portraying them as the sole agents of change or saviors, as this is counterproductive to the ultimate goal. To do this, programs should avoid framing men as protagonists and women as passive. Instead, programs should create an understanding of the ways that men and women can work together as partners in creating gender equity, highlighting the positive changes for all that can result.
- **Promote men's role in caregiving**: Positive nurturing and collaborative images of male engagement in fatherhood can be used as an entry point for engaging men in care-giving and envisioning alternate masculinities that enable more equitable distribution of household tasks and decision-making.

366. Walrath, 2011.

COMMUNITY

Use male role models and advocates: Recruiting male role models from intervention communities is effective in catalyzing norm change and bringing gender equitable views out into the open. Often men are part of the "silent majority," who may believe in or "buy into" at least some tenants of gender equality. Still, they allow inequitable gender norms to persist, in part because they perceive that other men in their communities do not subscribe to gender-equitable views. Using male role models —such as peer mentors, celebrities, and community leaders—to advocate for gender equality undermines that perception and begins to change overall gender norms that lead to inequitable outcomes for women. While the use of male role models has been extremely effective in male engagement programming, it is important to note that not only men can work with men. Programming using female facilitators and spokespeople has also been successful in challenging and transforming gender norms, and in fact, shared, collaborative leadership among people of all genders can help to catalyze changes in gendered norms.

Unpack gender norms among male facilitators and role models: Men and boys brought into leadership trainings and engaged as community advocates tend to take ownership of gender equality efforts because they feel engaged as change agents, rather than gatekeepers pressured to stop gender-inequitable behaviors. Engaging local men as champions is a common strategy for increasing local buy-in. However, if these men are not properly trained, monitored, and supported, this can unintentionally do harm, communicating and reinforcing hegemonic notions of masculinity. To prevent this issue, programming should place efforts on recruiting and training facilitators and role models who fully embrace gender equity themselves and will be able to effectively convey messages related to alternative masculinities and gender equity. Additionally, it is important to ensure that male leaders and advocates do not see themselves as "saving" women from inequality—part of training male leaders should be ensuring that they recognize the significant work that has been and continues to be done by women's groups and that they are comfortable with and work effectively under women's leadership.

Identify and work with community influencers: There is often a small subset of men in a community who are perceived as thought leaders and key influencers in creating, shaping, and upholding community norms, including those around gender. These same community influencers have the power to transform harmful gender norms. These men are often religious leaders, elders, or other traditional authorities whose words can take precedent over those of foreign implementers, peer activists, and in some cases, even statutory law. Doing preliminary research to identify and collaborate closely with thought leaders and influencers of all genders can boost the effectiveness of interventions that engage men and boys.

Photo Credit: Robyn Hayes

INSTITUTIONAL

Focus on norm change among powerful individuals within institutions: For programs that seek to transform gender norms around masculinity at the institutional level, it is important for program designers and implementers to remember that institutions are comprised of people, and that these individuals have complex identities. Programmatic components should address this nuance, working with the "whole person," including their personal identity (as a father, brother, husband, etc.) as well as with them in their professional or traditionally-defined role.

Engage male leaders to create more gender equitable workplace policies: To create more gender equitable societies, women need to have equal opportunities to enter, stay in, and thrive in positions of employment and/or entrepreneurship. Men in leadership roles within companies should craft policies and procedures that promote a more equitable workplace. These polices can both directly impact gender equity—equal pay for equal work, parental/family leave, equitable hiring and promotional practices, as well as indirectly—by providing flexible hours, childcare, or the ability to telecommute. In addition, most directly, men should be involved in creating and enforcing anti-sexual harassment awareness and policies.

POLICY

Promote the voices of female policymakers, but also listen to voices "from the ground:" Policy-based male engagement programming should seek to strengthen the visibility and agency of women in decision-making bodies where female policymakers exist. However, policy interventions would be remiss if they did not recognize that women often are not present in political bodies, and even when they are, their views may not necessarily reflect those of female constituents as a whole. Or their individual views may reflect the internalization of a lifetime of subjugation to men. Therefore, interventions should aim to ensure that gender-focused civil society groups are included in policy formation and implementation to avoid a top-down approach. These programs should also explore working across both traditional and more formal, national-level systems.

Overarching

Ensure that programs move from gender sensitization towards gender transformation: Simply increasing men's knowledge of gender disparities and creating more gender-equitable attitudes among men is not enough, as gender sensitivity in knowledge and attitudes does not necessarily equate to behavior change. Rather, program evaluations show that behavior change comes from gender transformation, where participants reflect on gender norms, question them, discuss them, and decide for themselves that gender equality is beneficial to them, their families, and their communities.

Acknowledge and address the intersectionality of other systems of oppression: While dismantling the patriarchy is commonly the focus of male engagement interventions, it is also important for programs to explore how other forms of oppression—such as racism, classism, heterosexism, etc.—may be at play and how these other systems intersect with and reinforce patriarchy and power structures. Programming should consider the diversity in power and privilege that men experience in various contexts, and address the ways in which men may feel disempowered; these dynamics may be exacerbated in conflict-affected settings, for example.

Create mechanisms that allow interventions to regularly assess whether programming is accountable to women: As discussed throughout the report, it is critical that male engagement programming does not work in isolation. Instead, interventions should create opportunities to collaborate with women and women's groups to ensure that their work is accountable to women's rights and empowerment, women's organizations, and women themselves throughout the process. This is not only important during program implementation; accountability should begin in the design stage and should continue through all phases of the project life cycle, including in monitoring and evaluation efforts. While measuring changes in men's knowledge and/or attitudes is important, for example, programs should also seek to track men's behavior change, as well as women's perceptions of changes in men's attitudes and behavior.

GAPS

While there are clearly many best practices that are emerging from the field of male engagement work, many gaps remain. Gaps in programming include:

- **A lack of programming that goes beyond the interpersonal**: Most male engagement programming focuses at the individual level—with some work also being done at the community level—without addressing the broader structures of patriarchy within which individuals and relationships operate. While understanding how to change individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors is necessary, in order to create more sustainable gender norm transformation, simultaneous male engagement efforts need to occur at the institutional and policy levels to create more systematic and sustainable changes.
- **A lack of programming that addresses sexuality and gender diversity**: Programmatic efforts that use group-based training and discussions to talk about positive masculinities often do not touch on sexuality or on transgender and gender non-conforming identities. It is important for men to link positive masculinities to equitable sexualities and gender identity consciousness. Doing this helps arm men and women with self-confidence and control over their own bodies, as well as with equitable decision-making and negotiation over sexual behaviors. As sexual behaviors are often rooted in gender and social norms—such that sexual intimacy is frequently acted out in male dominance/female submissiveness—it is necessary to specifically discuss and reconstruct these norms to create more equitable sexual behaviors. Additionally, most of the work on positive masculinities and gender equity are built on the assumption of heterosexual gender relations. This heteronormative framing neglects the discrimination and violence experienced by people of diverse sexual orientations within the LGB community. It also neglects the gender binary bias and related transphobic prejudices that can lead to violence and discrimination in the transgender and intersex communities. Programmatic efforts should instead attempt encourage people of all genders and sexual orientations to interact in an equitable way in the context of mutually respectful sexuality and authentic gender identities.
- **Insufficient gender norm transformation within schools:** Schools provide a valuable opportunity to reach a large cohort of students (and indirectly their parents) at a time in life when they are still forming their moral beliefs and social norms. School-based programming also creates spaces for students to question gender norms and begin to explore and test out alternative norms. Schools' policies, curriculum, and teaching practices also provide opportunities to create more equitable institutions and infrastructure to help foster a process of gender norm transformation. While some gender norm transformation work has been done in schools, this represents an opportunity for much greater efforts.
  - Efforts the explore gender roles may be a good entry point into school-based programming. Furthermore, where possible, comprehensive sexuality education provides a specific entry point for discussing more equitable sexual behaviors. At a time when adolescents are beginning to think more about and practice their sexuality, teaching them how to be respectful and equitable in sexual decision-making and their approach to each other's bodies is an important aspect of gender-equitable norms. School-based sexuality programs will also need to consider the sexist and inequitable world in which these youth live, and help to provide them with the skills to resist these pressures, such as the need to prove one's masculinity through engaging in sexual activities with multiple partners.
  - However, as these efforts are attempting to shift deeply entrenched norms, programming should both work with the broader community and also with these students as they age into adulthood, so that the burden of norm change isn't inappropriately placed on youth who are not yet able to influence social structures.
- **A disconnect between theoretical framing and accountability to women's movements/rights on the ground**: From a theoretical perspective, all male engagement programming should aim to contribute to greater gender equity. It would make sense, then, for these programs to be accountable to women's movements and women's rights through creating more equity and in a variety of spheres (i.e. health, violence prevention, economics, public policy, care work, land and asset ownership, etc.) in which men and women operate. However, in reality, this often isn't the case. Those who fund, design, implement, evaluate, and advocate for male engagement programming may not frame their ultimate objectives in this way, and therefore may not be incorporating women's needs and outcomes throughout their programming. Even those who do recognize gender equity as the ultimate goal may miss the mark in failing to recognize important complementary work by

women/women's groups, which may lead to decreased effectiveness and duplicated efforts.

- There is also a gap between institutions that have the capacity to do this difficult, nuanced work of gender norm change, and the grassroots organizations that have relationships in communities, but lack the capacity. The literature and our key informants emphasize the importance of having well-trained facilitators on the ground, but skilled people are often difficult to find in rural settings characterized by traditional values. Experience on the ground shows that local people with good aptitude to become facilitators can be identified over time, and trained, but that this cannot happen in a short time frame.[367] Programs should take this into consideration when staffing projects and plan accordingly to mitigate unintentional harm that may result from having the wrong facilitators.

- **A lack of focus on building organizations' capacity for advocacy and campaigning**: Many male engagement programs focus on individual-level attitude and behavior change. However, to create sustainable change, male engagement efforts need to focus on transforming gender norms in communities and changing policies, laws, and institutional practices to create more gender -equitable environments. Achieving this requires building the capacity of organizations on how to engage individuals in collective action through campaigns and the media, and how to advocate for policy change. It is important to note that these interventions are only successful when carried out at scale, over an adequate time period (e.g., 3-5 years), with significant local participation from the communities affected.

Gaps in knowledge include:

- **A lack of understanding about the relationships between shifts in attitudes, behaviors, and norm change:** With social norms, we sometimes see that behavior changes first, and then attitudes later shift to align with those behaviors. Better understanding the relationship between this change in attitudes and behaviors—including more evidence on how and when these changes occur and in what order—could shed light on how to transform deep-seated gender norms. This will likely require long-term programming and measurement, as sustainable norm change within a community only happens over an extended period of time.

- **Insufficient measurement around outcomes for women**: Most programming focuses on measuring male knowledge and attitude change—with some programs also seeking to measure behavior change – and assumes that these shifts will translate into outcomes for women, which may not be the case. Moving forward, the lived outcomes for women should be a major focus of programmatic monitoring and evaluation efforts and future investment. Also, program data collection should not rely solely on self-reported behavior changes among men as evidence of outcomes for women; rather, this data should also be collected from the women themselves.

- **A lack of robust and transparent accountability mechanisms and little data around their effectiveness**: While accountability to gender equity, women's movements, and women themselves has gained increased recognition in theory, whether this is the case in practice is unclear. Little information exists on how programming is incorporating mechanisms for accountability—such as feedback loops that allow women to safely give both positive feedback and constructive criticism; partnerships with local and larger scale women's movements; and program design, monitoring, and evaluation systems that include the voices of women—and the effectiveness of these mechanisms. This represents a gap in both research and programming.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

367. ICRW Key Informant Interviews, 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH AND PROGRAMMING

In addition to the best practices highlighted in the report and the need to fill the identified gaps, the following recommendations provide high-level considerations for male engagement programming and research operating at any level, across any sector. These recommendations provide guidance for donors and implementers on how to use investments to advance the field of male engagement programming.

Fund programs that seek to shift gender norms and that employ innovative measurement techniques to better understand if and how male engagement contributes to gender equity.

Thus far, programs that include elements of male engagement have primarily measured impacts related to changes in knowledge or attitudes or to sector-specific behaviors such as health behaviors; they seldom identify, measure, or monitor incremental shifts in underlying social norms and values. However, if male engagement approaches are to be used to contribute to greater and more sustainable shifts in gender equity, additional and "deeper" social norms measurement and evaluation is necessary to understand what types of approaches can truly and sustainably move the needle on gender equity. With this evidence, donors and implementers will better understand where to invest efforts to contribute to both sector-specific goals and as well as broader gender equity. Below are some programming and measurement strategies that could help to build this evidence base:

- Rather than focus solely on the individual level, male engagement programming should also **look at relational aspects of masculinity and femininity, exploring and addressing how these play out in people's relationships with one another**. Individual level gender norm change is defined by how men and women relate and make decisions within their relationships. (Note that the most common male/female relationships are that of a husband and wife, although other important relationships, such as father/daughter and brother/sister should be considered as well). Programming that works with individuals and/or couples should look beyond changes within an individual's attitudes and behavior, and rather measure changes in how couples interact by looking both at relational changes as well as similarities/differences in data reported by each member of a couple. Understanding a couple's perspective could be particularly important for efforts related to family planning and economic empowerment.
- **Utilize more holistic and intersectional measurement** to understand how male engagement approaches contribute to a diversity of gender equity outcomes, beyond the sector-specific focus of a particular program. Male engagement programs within a particular sector may measure outcomes that are relevant to that sector. However, to understand whether this programming is indeed contributing to gender norm transformation—and declining rates of GBV, for example—beyond simple changes in behavior or attitudes, programs should measure broader equity outcomes. These are what will show sustainable transformations in the relevant underlying social norms. In the case of GBV, a project might also seek to measure outcomes related to decision-making, acceptance of GBV, access to resources (beyond those promoted through the program), control over resources, voice, participation in community leadership and decision making.
  - At a minimum, male engagement programs should measure outcomes experienced by women as well as by men to validate and produce more accurate and nuanced results.
  - Programs should also seek to identify any possible unintended consequences of male engagement programming. For example, in one scenario provided to us by a key informant, a male engagement program sought to increase men's participation in women's prenatal visits. While this goal in itself is not harmful, the way in which the program was carried out unintentionally created additional challenges for women in the community. Those who did not bring their husbands to prenatal visits, for example, were shamed and served last, and many resorted to bringing male relatives to the clinic just to be able to see the doctor. In this case, measuring these outcomes allowed implementers to see that the program needed to be adjusted to better benefit women, instead of unintentionally making their lives more difficult.
- **Include social norm change programming in male engagement initiatives and create mechanisms to better understand how such programming may lead to gender equity**. Our research and framing of the ultimate

objectives of male engagement programming revealed that male engagement should be conceptualized as an approach to contribute to gender norm transformation, which can lead both to women's empowerment and improved standards of gender equality and equity for all people. In the literature and through our conversations with experts, the challenge of conflating changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors with gender norm change was apparent. Even when implementers theorize their activities as contributing to broader social norm change, they often are unable to measure whether activities are actually leading to sustainable norm transformation as opposed to short-term (and often superficial) changes in attitudes or behaviors.

» **Implement long-term programming and conduct complementary longitudinal studies to track incremental progress towards social norm change**. Social norm change takes time. Therefore, it would be beneficial for donors to consider funding longer-term programming (at a minimum of five years) to allow time for sustainable changes to occur. To understand what changes are happening, why, and how sustainable they are, programs should always include a rigorous measurement component to allow for panel or longitudinal data that would track norm change among a cohort over time.

  › Programs need to determine whether their efforts are transforming patriarchal relations, norms, and institutions or whether they are unintentionally reinforcing such structures or values. At a minimum, male engagement programs should consider building in a strong evaluation component (ideally by an external evaluator, whenever possible) to continue to build the evidence base around what works.

» **Compare the effectiveness of different platforms for male engagement**. From the literature and interviews, consistent best practices in male engagement programming include developing context-specific programs and leveraging existing institutions and platforms to facilitate male engagement activities. It would therefore be beneficial for donors to fund interventions that use different types of institutional platforms (e.g., religion, school, sports, local leaders). These could be complemented by an analysis of the differential impacts and best practices in leveraging existing platforms to work with men to enhance gender equity. Such an assessment could also weigh the benefits and harms of working within existing structures—for instance, religious institutions, which are often defined by patriarchy—in their ability to truly transform gendered social norms. This study would provide a deeper understanding of how to best leverage existing structures as an entry point for male engagement, and how to ensure that programs remain accountable to women's organizations and movements.

Explore the impacts of male (and female) engagement on social movements

The rapid rise of civil society (globally, in-country, locally) is one of the most influential and effective mechanisms for transforming societal norms, governance institutions, human rights accountability, and political accountability to pursue the common good. Civil society often accomplishes this through broad-based coalitions that take the form of social movements. Women typically participate in these social movements, but frequently struggle to achieve the type of leadership roles so often dominated by men in society. Even where women make enormous sacrifices within successful social movements, they may find themselves sidelined or excluded when the movement prevails, as was the case with the Arab Spring movement in Egypt. Social movements provide ideal environments for conceptualizing societal, political, and cultural changes, and new institutional forms of governance that recognize the importance of and reinforce gender equity. However, the explicit goals of women's empowerment and gender equality often are missing from the priorities of such movements. Even when they are included, engaging men as part of the process is frequently ineffectual or even absent.

Studies should explore recent and current social movements focused on women's empowerment and gender equity to uncover the roles of men and women in these movements. This effort should look for examples where male engagement in these movements helped to heighten the voices and concerns of women and achieved outcomes that were beneficial for women—without men dominating the process. These findings could be used to shape programming efforts that give support to current social movements and provide recommendations and guidance for future movements.

Explore how media can be used to transform gender norms

Media—including print, radio, TV and social media—is a powerful medium to share information, raise awareness, encourage reflection, and initiate discussions on beliefs and norms. Media can extend the reach and sustainability of a campaign or project by enabling programs to reach people in remote locations and provide them with repetitive messages that promote reflection and generate dialogue among family and friends. And as youth are consuming more media than

ever before, this is a powerful way to reach them through platforms they are frequently engaging with. Across the world, different forms of media are effectively being used to initiate conversations and interrogate widely held beliefs, but little is known about how media can be used to transform gender norms. Programs and research should test the types of messages and delivery format that are most effective in generating valuable dialogues and beginning to shift gender norms. In addition, we know that media campaigns are most successful when combined with complementary community-level programming that engages community members in discussions and helps to establish and reinforce concrete plans for how individuals can act out these alternative beliefs and norms. Therefore, it is important to explore what complementary programming with both men/boys and women/girls is most effective in translating media messages into changes in attitudes, behaviors, and ultimately norms.

Uncover best practices for gender norm transformation in contexts where gender norms may be under extra pressure or quickly shifting, such as in conflict/post-conflict settings

In conflict-affected areas, pressure on individuals to ascribe to gender norms or their lack of ability to carry out defined roles related to masculinity or femininity may be accentuated. Due to shifting social structures, there may also be unique opportunities to test alternative gender roles. Programming should therefore seek to better understand how gender norms shift in these contexts as well as how programs and policies can reconstruct more gender-equitable norms. In addition, efforts should specifically aim to understand how to engage men to help promote and achieve more equitable norms.

» This may be of particular interest and urgency given the current refugee and migration crisis in Syria and the ripple effects being felt throughout the Middle East and Europe; the need, attention, and funding for work in this area are at the forefront of international priorities.

Create programs that focus on gender norm transformation within the workplace, and seek to understand how this can help prevent sexual harassment

The pervasive experience of sexual harassment has leapt onto social media and across televisions and on radios with the recent allegations that surfaced in Hollywood and through the #MeToo campaign. Indeed, an October 2017 poll by The Wall Street Journal and NBC News found that 48 percent of currently employed women in the United States say they have personally experienced an unwelcome sexual advance or verbal or physical harassment at work.[368] Gendered power inequalities enable these occurrences of sexual harassment. To call attention to these incidences and prevent future harassment, companies need to think about gender norm transformation within the workplace. Engaging men in this process can create an environment in which women not only feel safe, but are empowered to excel professionally. Additionally, as with all male engagement initiatives, involving men can create a better work environment for them as well, increasing innovation and productivity. Research and programming initiatives should seek to explore how efforts to transform gender norms and create more equitable power balances within the workplace can reduce the incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace. Programs should seek to move beyond legal responses to allegations of sexual harassment, and rather involve men in preventative efforts to create more gender-equitable work cultures.

Build coalitions and share knowledge related to male engagement work

While this paper highlights the plethora of male engagement approaches that have been implemented and studied, this is still a nascent field that could benefit from greater collaboration and information sharing. Forming partnerships to address various levels of social norm transformation and sharing insights around what works will help to accelerate promising programmatic approaches that can transform norms and contribute to gender equity. Below, we offer additional recommended strategies:

» **Focus on building partnerships and networks**. It is important to recognize that no one organization can or should do everything on its own. Working through networks of organizations ensures that efforts can address the various levels of the ecological framework (individual, community, institutional, and policy) and still be targeted, effective, and responsive with limited resources. In addition to partnering with other male engagement programs, organizations in this field should look to partner and build synergies with women's organizations and movements. Doing so helps to ensure that male engagement efforts are accountable to other women's empowerment and gender equity work. This effort could include a detailed mapping at the program

368. Radnofsky, L. (2017). Poll: 48% of Employed Women Say They Have Been Sexually Harassed at Work. Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from https://www.wsj.com/articles/poll-48-of-employed-women-say-they-have-been-sexually-harassed-at-work-1509361201

inception phase to identify organizations working on gender norm transformation programming, and specifically, male engagement.

» **Create opportunities for learning and sharing**. Since male engagement is still a relatively young and growing field, it is important to create opportunities to learn and share what works and what doesn't. Organizations should be open, honest, and willing to broadly disseminate their successes as well as their failures to continue to improve the field. Alternatively, it could be extremely beneficial to collaborate with and leverage knowledge from the sectors of gender norm transformation and women's empowerment, which have a longer research and programming history. Meanwhile, efforts such as this project (literature review, key informant interviews, and expert convening) provide the opportunity to compile and synthesize findings and share valuable insights with key implementers in the male engagement field. This also allows various players in the field to learn more about what each other is doing and how they might be able to collaborate in the future. Future projects should build in time and money for this type of critical knowledge sharing whenever possible.

Photo Credit: David Snyder

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