

Working with Men and Boys to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Approaches, Challenges, and Lessons

Sector Brief: Economic Growth, Trade, and Agriculture

February 2015

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is the most widespread form of abuse worldwide, affecting one third of all women in their lifetime [1]. It is widely acknowledged that men and boys have a key role to play in eliminating VAWG. However, not only does ending VAWG require the engagement of men and boys, but it also requires coordinated work with men and boys across multiple sectors [2, 3].

Such approaches are grounded in understanding the links between social constructions of masculinity and men's use of violence. Social constructions of gender almost always confer a higher social value on men than women and privilege the masculine over the feminine. Male VAWG is born of this privilege. The term "positive masculinities" has emerged in recent years as a way to characterize the values, norms and practices that gender-based work with men and boys seeks to promote in order to end VAWG.

Background and Methodology

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) commissioned a literature review to investigate documentation of work with men and boys on VAWG outside the health sector in the Global South and to identify promising approaches to, and emerging lessons from, this work that can guide future funding priorities and program development. The review covered the following five sectors:

- 1- Economic Growth, Trade, and Agriculture
- 2- Education
- 3- Governance, Law Enforcement, and Justice

Systems

4- Conflict, Post Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance

5- Social Development

Search Methods. A broad definition of violence was used, including physical and sexual violence against intimate partners and non-partners as well as harmful traditional practices such as child marriage, bride abduction, honor killing, acid throwing, burning, and female genital mutilation. The review conducted a search of general online sources, published literature databases, and relevant organizational websites and research platforms. Email queries to select key informants were also used to gather information.

Inclusion Criteria. The review focused on interventions that seek to be "gender transformative," in that they seek to transform gender norms and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women. Programs were included in the review on the basis of evaluated impact, lessons learned documentation in the absence of evaluated impact, and/or innovative program design that can guide future programming.

This brief summarizes the findings from the **economic growth, trade, and agriculture** sector.

Economic Growth, Trade, and Agriculture

The increase in numbers of women in the formal and informal economy is often characterized by high job insecurity, low pay, and minimal bargaining power [4]. This enhances women's risk of sexual harassment and exposure to other

forms of violence in their workplaces and in public space. Men have a key role to play in reducing the vulnerabilities to male violence that women face as they engage in formal and informal economic activity. The report identified four approaches to working with men to end VAW: **1)** engaging men in women’s economic empowerment (WEE); **2)** targeting men in key occupational groups; **3)** working with men on VAW in public space; and **4)** working with men on safe migration and mobility.

Under each approach, this brief highlights the context within which male engagement work is conducted, identifies the areas of work with men and boys used to address VAWG, touches on select program examples, and summarizes relevant evidence base findings for the areas. The brief concludes with a list of the key challenges and lessons learned to help guide future programming and implementation.

Approach 1 – Engaging Men in WEE

Areas of Work
(1) Group-based gender education and reflection
(2) Male peer role models on positive masculinities
(3) Mobilizing men for community action on WEE

As women’s economic circumstances improve, some men may react violently against their perceived or actual loss of economic authority and control [5, 6]. Developing male engagement strategies with men as allies or partners in WEE initiatives is a promising approach to fostering greater cooperation between women and men and reducing the risk of men’s violence.

Group-based gender education and reflection work with men within WEE initiatives shows promise as an approach to engage men in support of WEE and reducing VAW. Programs generally worked with men to change their attitudes and practices regarding sharing decision-making and the gendered division of labor within the household more equitably with their wives. Key

components of the program reviewed include group-work with men-only and/or couples using curricula that utilize skilled facilitators and emphasize participatory methodologies.

Supporting male peer role models on positive masculinities has also emerged as a promising approach to male engagement. Programs such as The Abatangamuco in Burundi and the COVAW Initiative collaborate with and complement existing male role models to normalize gender equity, demonstrate the positive use of male power in communities, and provide support to men who challenge norms that reinforce violence.

Mobilizing men for community action on WEE uses peer education and gender dialogues to engage men. Components of this work include training of male champions to advocate with female activists for land access and improved wages and training at the organizational level on gender equality and positive masculinities.

The evidence base generated by evaluations of some of these interventions is mixed. Men shared decision-making and household tasks with their wives, but it is less clear how programs affected women’s vulnerability to and experiences of violence. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the role of peer networks in normalizing and encouraging men to adopt positive masculinities is promising. Nevertheless, evaluation results also noted the challenges of effecting deeper change on the gendered inequalities in power between husbands and wives that underpin intimate partner violence (IPV).

Approach 2 – Targeting Men in Key Occupational Groups

Areas of Work
(1) Education on gender and violence with male contract workers
(2) Education on gender and violence with male transport workers

Links between the increase of single and migrant men at infrastructure development sites and increased risk of women and children being sexually exploited make a case for working with men in key occupational groups to end VAWG [7].

Education on gender and violence with male contract workers is an innovative area of work that shows promise in working with men to address sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Petrobras, a Brazilian energy and petrol company, collaborates with Instituto Promundo to educate workers on gender, violence, and the vulnerability of children. Petrobras is also working to establish company-wide standards against sexual exploitation and recommendations for public officials for child and adolescent protection.

Education on gender and violence with male transport workers contributes to the role men have in ending VAW in public transport spaces. In Thailand and India, the review identified programs that utilized sensitization and trainings sessions for bus and train transport workers on gender, women's right to safety, and sexual harassment. In some cases, campaigns focusing on the problems women face with sexual harassment on public transport, linkages to crisis hotlines, and further training on how to support women who have been sexually harassed complemented these sessions.

There is no evidence base for these programs yet. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence points to an improved understanding about sexual harassment and women's right to safety among project participants and to the potential benefits and enhanced effectiveness of complementing individual level behavior change with campaigns and services linkages.

Approach 3 – Working with Men on VAW in Public Space

Area of Work

- (1) Men's activism to respond to sexual VAW

Women's experience and fear of normalized male violence, sharply reduces women's mobility in public space and as a result affects their participation in public life, economic opportunities, access to essential services, and their physical and emotional wellbeing [8]. Thus, men have a crucial role to play in taking action to respond to VAW in public spaces.

Men's activism to respond to sexual VAW included training of male youth and street dwellers as 'active bystanders' who conducted rescue operations during public incidents of VAW. In Egypt, these innovative examples of men's activism included collective action with men and women that fueled anti sexual violence campaigns, street rescue operations, and advocacy to influence policy. In Fiji, wheelbarrow associations trained members to make citizen's arrests of perpetrators of VAWG in the streets. Key components included training, enforcing standards and policies against VAW, and constituency building through collective action.

While the evidence base for this work is not clear, project documentation attests anecdotally to their impact on men's understanding and commitment to the roles they can play in addressing VAWG in public spaces.

Approach 4 – Working with Men on Safe Migration and Mobility

Areas of Work

- (1) Engaging migrant men
- (2) Working with male stakeholders on trafficking and safe migration

There is a growing recognition of the violence faced by women migrants at all stages of their 'journey' [9]. As women's economic opportunities increase, many are subject to IPV as men's

'breadwinner' status is threatened. They are also often employed in work that is gender segregated, low paid, unregulated and not covered by labor laws. Migrant women are therefore exposed to exploitative working conditions such as long working hours, non-payment of wages, forced confinement, beatings, rape, sexual abuse, and/or other forms of violence [10]. Working with male stakeholders to prevent and respond to VAW in the context of migration is thus an important area for male engagement programming.

Engaging migrant men focuses on building migrant men's awareness of gender equity and VAW and encouraging them to adopt and advocate for alternative and non-violent masculinities [11]. An IOM program in Vietnam used a training curriculum, trained and mentored facilitators, promoted non-violent masculinity and supported feedback between men and women's self-help groups to ensure men understood women's experiences with violence.

Working with male stakeholders on trafficking and safe migration focuses on training programs for male immigration officials, border guards, and police officers. A documented example from Nepal worked in transport areas to strengthen protective services for survivors of trafficking and built capacity of judiciary and law enforcement officials to handle human trafficking cases using a rights-based framework.

Initial evaluation results contributing to the evidence base for this work found changes in attitudes and behaviors of male self-help group participants and increased value of the female self-help groups as sources of knowledge to deal with GBV [11]. Anecdotally, judiciary and law enforcement trainings in Nepal, which may not have covered gender justice and masculinity issues, were reported to have increased the number of convictions and landmark cases.

Challenges Faced

The review identified the following challenges faced by the broad array of programs:

- Sustaining behavior change beyond the end of interventions
- Striking a balance between appealing to men's interests AND addressing women's interests
- Equipping staff with adequate technical capacity and emotional support
- Engaging men in response to GBV incidents as well as prevention
- Institutionalizing prevention of and response to VAW through training and establishment of well-monitored policies and guidelines on VAW

Lessons Learned

Although more research and evaluation is necessary to better understand actual impact, applying the following lessons learned from this review may prove beneficial from programs working through economic empowerment to address gender inequality, change violent forms of masculinity, and end VAWG:

- Work with men and women together
- Link material interests with positive masculinities
- Link positive masculinities to culturally compelling gender identities
- Nurture male peer groups that reinforce positive masculinities
- Highlight men's roles in care work
- Build men's skills for taking action against male violence
- Engage men in collective action to improve women's economic conditions

To read the full report—*Working with Men and Boys to End Violence Against Women and Girls: Approaches, Challenges, and Lessons*—please visit [<http://www.usaid.gov/engaging>].

References

1. Pinheiro, P.S.r., *World Report on Violence against Children*. 2006, United Nations Secretary-General ' s Study on Violence against Children: New York.
2. Fergus, L. *Prevention of violence against women and girls*. in *UN Women In cooperation with ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO Expert Group Meeting: Prevention of violence against women and girls*. 2012. Bangkok, Thailand 17-20 September 2012.
3. Heise, L.L. *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence An Evidence Overview*. in *UN Women In cooperation with ESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO Expert Group Meeting: Prevention of violence against women and girls*. 2012. Bangkok, Thailand 17-20 September 2012.
4. Chappell, D. and V.D. Martino, *Violence at work*. 2006, International Labour Organization: Geneva.
5. Ahmed, F.E., *Microcredit, Men, and Masculinity*. *Feminist Formations*, 2008. 20(2): p. 122-155.
6. Ahmed, F.E. and S. Woodruff, *Oppressive Masculinity as a Public Health Problem: Microcredit and Domestic Violence Prevention in Rural Bangladesh*. 2012.
7. Wanduragala, R., *Infrastructure and Construction Projects: The Hidden Cost to Children*. *Background Paper for Save the Children UK Global Meeting, in Protecting Children from Exploitation and Abuse in Infrastructure and Construction Projects*. 2011, Save the Children UK: London.
8. Taylor, A., *Women and the City: Examining the Gender Impact of Violence and Urbanisation*. 2011, ActionAid.
9. Piper, N., *Feminization of Labor Migration as Violence against Women*. *Violence against Women*, 2003. 9(6).
10. IOM, *Working to Prevent and Address Violence Against Women Migrant Workers*. 2009, International Organization for Migration: Geneva.
11. IOM, *Taking Action against Violence and Discrimination Affecting Migrant Women and Girls*. 2012, International Organization for Migration: Geneva.