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BURUNDI

SNAPSHOT

Transforming Norms to Prevent Sexual Violence in Burundi

Miner educates peers about sexual violence



A. Jackson/EngenderHealth

Through USAID support, RESPOND held MAP® workshops at tea plantations and mines for men confront harmful gender stereotypes in Kabarore Township, Burundi.

“Lots of violent people are violent by ignorance and tradition. We thought a normal man behaves that way.”

—Manweri, mine worker and participant in MAP® training

Manweri*, 46, works at a mine in Kabarore Township, Burundi, where he leads a team of 1,500 miners who dig for coltan, a metallic ore used in electronic products. Manweri has a wife and six children between the ages of 1 and 19. He had never received any type of training or education on sexual and reproductive health until January 2013, when he and 24 other male miners participated in a Men As Partners (MAP) workshop conducted by the RESPOND Project.

The project—funded by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and led by EngenderHealth in partnership with Burundi’s Ministry of Public Health and Fight Against AIDS—aims to address sexual violence in the country. Over the course of a four-day MAP workshop, men confront harmful gender stereotypes, discuss the concept of sexual consent, and practice healthy communication in relationships through role playing, case studies and other interactive activities. A total of 488 men who work at mines and tea plantations participated in the workshops in 2013. Their employers paid their wages while they attended, recognizing the value of the workshops in reducing HIV transmission.

In the workshop, Manweri said he learned “how to have dialogue and live in peace in the family. Now we make joint decisions Before, if my wife said no, I’d take her by force. Like many, I’d say, ‘That’s what she’s there for.’ Now, we agree before having sex. I ask for her consent. If she’s not interested that day, I control myself.” He added that, “Communication with my wife has significantly improved.”

Manweri shares what he learned with others. At the mine, groups of around 100 miners frequently wait together for small teams to strike coltan. During this downtime, Manweri raises awareness of the harmful effects of sexual violence through exercises from the workshop. He tells them, “When you abuse alcohol, you become violent.” In addition, Manweri goes door-to-door to tell couples what he learned in the MAP workshop.

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<http://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories>

As of September 2013, he had spoken with 31 couples in his community about sexual violence.

"Lots of violent people are violent by ignorance and tradition. When you tell them this tradition is no longer valid, and that it hurts the well-being of their families, they change. Before, we often threatened our wives because we didn't know it was bad. We thought a normal man behaves that way," said Manweri.

In 2014, RESPOND will continue to engage men and women, health providers, social workers and community leaders in preventing and responding to sexual violence.

USAID, through RESPOND, provides technical assistance that strengthens health sector response to sexual violence (SV) survivors; promotes gender equity in the community to prevent SV; and better links SV survivors to local services.

*Full names withheld to protect privacy.