

# Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-based Violence: Principles, Lessons Learned, and Ways Forward

Men and Masculinities

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## Abstract

In spite of tremendous progress toward including gender equality as a global goal—included in numerous UN conventions and the Millennium Development Goals—much progress remains to be made. Men's violence against women remains a pervasive feature of life in every country in the world. Increasing attention is being paid to engaging men and boys to end men's violence. Programs and policies have been successfully piloted by nongovernmental organizations across the world and shown to promote important and positive change in men's gender-related attitudes and practices, including in reducing men's use of violence against women. Since the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, national governments and UN agencies have steadily adopted and implemented policies and community-based interventions intended to change social norms about gender and masculinities. As cross-pollination happens across countries and regions, work with men and boys for gender equality has become more complex, ambitious, and visible, generating important synergies and successes, and some resistance. This article examines the rationale for that work; describes key findings from multicountry studies about the relationship between

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notions of masculinities and men's gender-related practices; documents key principles guiding much gender equality work with men and boys; identifies emerging strategies and proposes key next steps to increase the scale, impact, and sustainability of gender transformative work with men and boys.

### **Keywords**

gender equality, men and boys, masculinities, gender-based violence

### **Context**

In spite of tremendous progress toward including gender equality as a global goal—included in numerous United Nations (UN) conventions and the Millennium Development Goals—much progress remains to be made. Indeed, gender inequality continues to undermine democracy, impede development, and compromise people's lives in dramatic and devastating ways.

Across much of the world, rigid gender norms and harmful perceptions of what it means to be a man or a woman, encourage men to engage in high-risk behaviors, condone gender-based violence, grant men the power to initiate and dictate the terms of sex, and make it difficult for women to protect themselves from either human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or violence and to seek health services. Indeed, a growing body of research shows that these gender roles contribute to gender-based violence, alcohol, and drug abuse and exacerbate the spread and impact of HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS; Barker and Ricardo 2005).

Globally, women and girls continue to carry out the majority of domestic activities, two to ten times more than men depending on the country—even though women now represent 40 percent of the paid work force worldwide (Budlender 2008; World Bank 2012). Men's limited participation in care work continues to be a major barrier to gender equality and women's empowerment by keeping women's income lower than men's (Mínguez 2012).

Data from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), the largest ever comprehensive survey of men's attitudes and practices,<sup>1</sup> find men's reports of having used physical intimate partner violence (IPV) ranging from 18 percent to 46 percent (see Levtoev et al., in this issue), with women in most of these settings reporting slightly higher rates of having experienced violence from a male partner. Factors associated with men's use of violence were rigid gender attitudes, work stress, experiences of violence in childhood, and alcohol use (Barker 2011). Men's reports of perpetration of sexual violence against women and girls ranged from 2 percent to approximately 25 percent. In India and Brazil, the majority of violence is against wife or girlfriend. In a multivariate analysis of the IMAGES data, the single strongest factor across countries of men's use of IPV was having witnessed violence during childhood against their mother (Fleming et al. 2013). The United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the

Pacific (referred to as the P4P study), using many of the same questions as IMAGES and carried out in six countries, reached similar conclusions that violence perpetration was largely driven by factors related to gender inequality, the enactment of harmful masculinities, and childhood experiences of violence (Fulu et al. 2013).

This combination of factors that contribute to individual men's use of violence is exacerbated in the context of conflict: IMAGES data from the (post) conflict settings of Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Bosnia found that men who reported being affected by conflict (e.g., men who were displaced, wounded, witnessed, or experienced violence) were more likely to report lifetime use of IPV suggesting again a cumulative effect of trauma and the creation of a sense that violence—and IPV—is normal (Slegh and Kimonyo 2010; Dušanić 2012; Slegh, Barker, and Levtoev 2014).

The World Health Organization (WHO) multicountry study found that women's lifetime reports of physical IPV were between 10 percent and 70 percent among the 10 countries studied (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). In IMAGES, IPV was measured using a slightly modified version of the WHO methodology. Men were asked about particular types of physically violent acts perpetrated against their female partners, and women were asked about their experiences of the same forms of violence.

In terms of men's reports of sexual violence, IMAGES analysis indicates that holding gender-inequitable attitudes, experiencing or witnessing violence or neglect in childhood, abusing alcohol, paying for sex, and having more sexual partners are factors that are associated with sexual violence perpetration. There is also substantial overlap between physical and sexual violence, such that men who reported perpetrating IPV were significantly more likely to report sexual violence as well (Heilman, Hebert, and Paul-Gera 2014).

IMAGES findings contribute to a growing literature showing the important role of gender norms in the prevalence and patterns of violence around the world. Research has found that incidents of sexual violence are often more common in settings where social norms condone or ignore men's sexually coercive or aggressive behaviors (Katz 2006; Schwartz and DeKeseredy 2008) including, for example, "by maintaining power structures and practices that have the effect of blaming victims, rather than holding perpetrators accountable, such cultures tacitly support perpetrators and their crimes" (Ahrens 2006, p. 744, as cited in Langhinrichsen-Rohling 2011). At the individual level, research has found that the extent to which men internalize/adhere to rigid or negative norms about gender and sexuality may influence their own behaviors (Murnen, Wright, and Kaluzny 2002; Sugarman and Frankel 1996; Schumacher et al. 2001; Stith et al. 2004). IMAGES also reaffirms findings about the harmful effects of experiences of violence in childhood: multiple studies have suggested that children who witness or experience violence are themselves more likely to perpetrate violence as adults if they are men and to experience violence if they are women (Abrahams and Jewkes 2005; Hindin, Kishor, and Ansara 2008; Koenig et al. 2006; Martin et al. 2002; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006).

We now have evidence from multiple countries that the majority of men who will perpetrate sexual violence will do so for the first time in their teenage years. Available data (mainly from North America, but now also through IMAGES and P4P) indicate that a significant proportion of male sex offenses is committed by persons under the age of eighteen and that many men report that their first sexual offense occurred during adolescence (Heilman, Hebert, and Paul-Gera 2014; Fulu et al. 2013). Additionally, many men who perpetrate sexual violence will do so more than once in their lives. The P4P study showed that between 41 percent and 69 percent of men, depending on the country, reported perpetrating rape more than once (Fulu et al. 2013). A study with university male students in the United States found that the “strongest predictor of sexual coercion was past sexual coercion, and men who had been sexually coercive at the first assessment were nearly eight times as likely as those who had not been sexually coercive to show recidivist behavior during the 1-year interval until the second assessment” (Hall et al. 2006, p. 741). A key challenge in primary sexual violence prevention, therefore, is to intervene before the first perpetration of rape or sexual violence occurs and to reach boys and young men when their attitudes and beliefs about gender stereotypes and sexuality are developing.

While never minimizing individual responsibility for men’s use of gender-based violence, the evidence base suggests that one of the strongest and most consistent factors in men’s use of gender-based violence is early exposure to violence (including experiencing as well as witnessing violence), all of which suggests that engaging men and boys to end gender-based violence requires attention to the ways that boys and men experience and witness violence as children and in other settings, and to identify ways that primary prevention can break cycles of violence by interrupting violence as experienced and witnessed by boys.

## **Engaging Men as Part of the Solution**

The scale of men’s violence against women is enormous and its impact is devastating. Across the world, women’s rights activists have succeeded in getting their governments to enact laws and policies to criminalize it. Due to their efforts, the UN and its member states now have an extensive set of commitments and corresponding policy architecture to encourage member states to take action to address and prevent gender-based violence. Over the last two decades or so, these efforts have been augmented by an additional focus on engaging men and boys as potential allies and proponents for gender transformation.

These efforts to engage men and boys as part of the solution recognize that men also have many strong motivations for ending men’s violence against women and promoting gender equality. First, as Jackson Katz (2003) writes, “Many men have suffered directly as a result of violence done to them or to their female loved ones. Consider boys whose mothers have been murdered, or fathers whose daughters have been raped, or male partners of women who have been sexually harassed

in the workplace” (p. 2). Second, rigid norms related to gender and power differentials between groups of men mean that many men also feel pressure to prove their manhood by using violence against other men such that the leading cause of death for young men worldwide is violence perpetrated by other men. Third, pervasive intimate partner and sexual violence casts all men as potential perpetrators and infuses fear and distrust into men’s daily interactions with women. Of course, it is also in men’s interest to change because relationships based on equality and mutual respect are far more satisfying than those based on fear and domination.

### *Principles Informing Gender Equality Work with Men and Boys to End Gender-based Violence*

We argue here, drawing extensively on points we made with colleagues in a WHO policy brief published in 2010 (Flood et al. 2010), that efforts to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality should be informed by a clear set of principles and offer the following:

- a) Frame policy and programming with men within an agenda that promotes human rights and social justice, including women’s rights

Policy on men and gender equality must:

1. promote human rights, including the rights of women and girls;
2. remain accountable to and in dialogue with women’s rights movements and organizations;
3. enhance boys’ and men’s lives;
4. be inclusive of and responsive to diversities among men; and
5. address the social and structural determinants of gender inequalities and health inequities.

These five interrelated commitments should guide the positive engagement of men in gender equality and health equity work:<sup>2</sup>

First, policy and program approaches to involving men in achieving gender equality and gender-based violence prevention must be framed within a human and women’s rights agenda and be intended to further women’s and men’s full access to and enjoyment of their human rights. They must be guided by the primary goal of furthering gender equality. Gender equality and gender-based violence prevention work with men should seek to challenge those aspects of men’s behavior, constructions of masculinity, and gender relations that harm women. They should encourage men to develop respectful, trusting, and egalitarian relations with women and with other men, and to promote positive constructions of masculinity or selfhood. Care must be taken to ensure that engaging men for gender equality does not detract from efforts to empower women and is supportive of and furthers

progress toward strengthening the commitment of national justice systems to end gender-based violence.

Second, programs working with men to prevent gender-based violence and promote gender transformation should be developed and implemented in ongoing consultation with groups working to promote and protect women's rights. This might include board positions for women's rights organizations or requesting women's rights organizations to inform strategic planning processes, for instance, and to identify concrete ways that interventions that work with men can include and dialogue with interventions working with women, either as survivors of violence or in prevention.

Third, policies and programs must also be committed to enhancing boys' and men's lives. They should embody support for men's efforts to change positively and affirmation of positive and health-promoting formations of manhood, and in reducing the impact and harm of violence in men's lives.

Fourth, approaches to engaging men in gender equality work must be sensitive to diversities among men. Men have differing needs that must be taken into account in policy design. Factors such as class and caste, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, literacy, and age shape expressions of manhood, and produce differing experiences of power and marginalization for different groups of men.

Fifth, gender equality work with men should address the social and structural determinants of gender inequalities, violence, and health inequities. Changing the attitudes of individual men is not enough; policy and programming targeting men must also include understanding the social, economic, and political forces constraining the health and well-being of many women and girls and men and boys—from migration and changing labor markets to climate-related social crises, as well as the social institutions where gender norms and power imbalances are constructed and reinforced. On this basis, work with men must draw attention to the need for a more just economic and social order.

### *A Growing Evidence Base That Work with Men Can Bring about Change*

A growing body of research increasingly shows that well-designed programs can bring about significant changes in men's gender-related attitudes and practices.

- In Brazil, for example, Promundo's intervention with young men promoting healthy relationships and HIV/sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention showed significant positive shifts in gender norms at both six months and twelve months (Pulerwitz, Barker, and Segundo 2004).
- Similarly, a study of nearly 150 Nicaraguan men who participated in workshops on masculinity and gender equity revealed significant positive attitudinal and behavioral changes according to both partner reports and self-evaluations in a wide range of indicators including use of psychological and physical violence, sexual relations, shared decision making, paternal responsibility, and domestic activities (Welsh 2001).

- In the Stepping Stones initiative in South Africa, male participants reported having fewer partners, higher condom use, less transactional sex, less substance abuse, and less perpetration of IPV (Jewkes, Wood, and Duvvury 2010).
- Also in South Africa, Sonke Gender Justice's One Man Can Campaign has demonstrated significant positive impact: 50 percent of participants reported taking action to address acts of gender-based violence in their community, 25 percent accessed HIV voluntary counseling and testing services, and 61 percent reported increasing their use of condoms. More than four of the five participants also reported having subsequently talked with friends or family members about HIV and AIDS, gender, and human rights (Colvin, Peacock, and Human 2009).

A WHO review of interventions with men in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, gender-based violence, fatherhood, and HIV/AIDS documents that such programs, while generally of short duration and limited research, have brought about important changes in men's attitudes and behaviors. Of the fifty-seven studies included in the analysis, 24.5 percent were assessed as effective in leading to attitude or behavior change, 38.5 percent were assessed as promising, and 36.8 percent were assessed as unclear. Programs that were "gender transformative"—those that sought to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women—were more likely to be effective than programs that were merely "gender sensitive" or "gender neutral" (WHO 2007).

This report identified the key features of successful interventions as follows:

- Use positive and affirmative messages;
- Encourage men to reflect on the costs of hegemonic masculinity to men and women;
- Are evidence-based and theoretically informed—use formative research, begin with or develop a theory of change, and carry out ongoing monitoring and evaluation;
- Recognize that men are not homogenous and develop interventions that reflect men's different life experiences;
- Use an ecological approach that recognizes the range of factors shaping gender roles and relations; and
- Use a range of social change strategies—community education, community mobilization, media, policy development, and advocacy for implementation.

These and other studies are increasingly affirming that engaging men and boys in well-designed programs, that include men, women, girls, and boys as partners as well as beneficiaries, can be effective in leading to improved outcomes and better gender equality. Furthermore, a growing number of interventions are beginning to include men and boys as target audiences or participants in their prevention work

and rigorously evaluating the impact, with mostly positive results. Recent studies that have shown such impact include the evaluation of the SASA! Community mobilization intervention in Uganda (Abramsky et al. 2014), and the International Rescue Committee's impact evaluation to engage men as partners of women-focused economic empowerment in Burundi and Cote d'Ivoire (Iyengar and Ferrari 2011; Gupta et al. 2013).

The key conclusion is that programs show that men and boys can and will change attitudes related to gender and violence, as well as their use of violence against female partners—both when reached in interventions mostly focused on men, and via interventions mostly targeted at women and also including men.

## **Global Commitments to Engaging men and Boys for Gender Equality**

The gradual growth and strengthened sophistication of gender equality work with men is reflected in a growing number of UN commitments to engage men and boys to achieve gender equality. Relevant international commitments were made at or are embodied in the International Conference on Population and Development (1994),<sup>3</sup> the Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development (1995) and its review held in 2000,<sup>4</sup> the Beijing Platform for Action (1995),<sup>5</sup> the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (2001),<sup>6</sup> the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 2004 and 2009, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Action Framework on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV (2009), and the UNAIDS Operational Plan for Action Framework (2009). In 2009, representatives of governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the United Nations cited these commitments, urged their fulfillment, and called for action on various dimensions of working with men and boys to achieve gender justice in a declaration emerging from the Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys on Achieving Gender Equality.

The language of more recent international commitments is noteworthy for its recognition of the role men and boys can play in bringing about gender equality, preventing gender-based violence, and achieving health equity. The CSW (2009) recognized “the capacity of men and boys in bringing about change in attitudes, relationships, and access to resources and decision making which are critical for the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women,” (p. 8) and called for action to “ensure that men and boys, whose role is critical in achieving gender equality, are actively involved in policies and programs that aim to involve the equal sharing of responsibilities” (“Commission on the Status,” 2009, p. 8).

Importantly, these international commitments both require policy makers in signatory countries to develop policies and programs and provide civil society activists with leverage to demand rapid implementation.



## *An Urgent Need to Increase the Scale, Sustainability, and Impact of Work with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-based Violence and Achieve Gender Equality*

Despite this growing body of evidence showing that gender transformative interventions can change men's attitudes and practices, and despite many international commitments, the majority of the interventions with men and boys have until recently remained NGO led, small scale, and short-term and have usually failed to reach significant numbers of men and boys. Government initiatives have often been ad hoc, events-driven, and all too often poorly conceptualized. As a result, a range of efforts have been made to increase the scale, impact, and sustainability of gender equality work with men and the need to consistently apply the "good practices" listed previously.

These efforts to strengthen the scale, impact, and sustainability of gender equality work with men and boys have taken a number of forms, including policy development and integration, political advocacy and community mobilization, the use of mass media and organizational capacity building and reaching out to large sector-wide partners (e.g., schools or the workplace) to implement activities or change policies and protocols. Much of this work is still embryonic, but it does provide useful ideas about how to significantly increase the impact of gender equality work with men and boys.

### *Legal and Policy Approaches to Taking Gender Equality Work with Men to Scale*

In a number of countries, efforts have been made to take gender work with men to scale by integrating it within laws, policies, and national plans. In South Africa, NGOs have worked together to ensure that the 2012–2016 National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS has strong commitments to engaging men and boys to address the gender inequalities and gender roles driving the spread of HIV. Building on this, the MenEngage Alliance has worked closely with the Athena Network and with UN partners to provide training and support to nearly seventy country teams on how to integrate gender-based violence and masculinities work into their AIDS plans—and preliminary research shows that this has translated into new commitments to address gender-based violence and involve men in a number of new national AIDS plans. Similarly, In Brazil, for example, NGOs have been involved in direct dialogue with the Ministry of Health to develop protocols for men's health, and with Brazil's National Congress about the possibility of increasing policies relating to paternity leave and engaging men in maternal and child health as well as making violence prevention with men and boys part of the national Women's Policy Ministry.

## *Challenging Backlash and Increasing Men's Support for Gender Equality Laws and Policies*

Not surprisingly, given the enormous heterogeneity among men, men react in complex and uneven ways to national and international legal and policy efforts to advance gender equality. Research conducted by Sonke Gender Justice indicates that some men in South Africa perceive national efforts to advance women's rights with great suspicion and sometimes as an attack on "men's rights" (Dworkin et al. 2012, p. 99). Similarly, data from the IMAGES show that men's reaction to gender equality legislation is often a mix of supportive, superficial, ambivalent, defensive, and resistant (see Levtov et al., in this issue).

At one level, men's resistance to gender-based violence laws is positive: it means that these laws have left men with the impression that they no longer have the impunity they once had for how they treat female partners. Actions and practices that men could at one point carry out with relative confidence that no one would stop them can now be questioned. Men in the countries studied so far showed this opposition to gender-based violence laws even though the number of men actually charged and held legally accountable for using violence against women is minimal. However, at another level, this resistance sometimes represents real threats to women's rights and can increase men's use of violence. The threats this backlash represents to women's rights has led some NGOs working with men and boys to implement campaigns that aim to increase men's support for gender equality legislation and other efforts to advance gender transformation. In addition to evidence-based group education, these organizations now focus on educating men about the ways in which gender equality laws and policies are not antimale and should be supported by men:

- In collaboration with women's rights organizations, Men's Action to Stop Violence against Women (MASVAW) based in Lucknow, India, coordinated the 2007 Ab To Jaago! (Wake Up Now!) Campaign in forty-one districts across the State, and provided rights-based education about the provisions of the 2005 Domestic Violence Act to ensure that men and women alike understood the act and that men saw it as advancing human rights rather than as an attack on men. In addition, MASVAW's many chapters staffed by rural and urban men convened tribunals to maintain pressure on the government for full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act ("Domestic Violence Act U.P Campaign 2007 Lucknow India" 2010).
- Similarly, the Sierra Leone's Men's Association for Gender Equality united with a coalition of civil society organizations, known as the Task Force, to lobby for three new laws known as "The Gender Acts."<sup>7</sup> They have used various creative communication and media tactics to popularize the Gender Acts across the country and worked with traditional and religious leaders who have often opposed gender transformation (Lowrey 2009).

- In South Africa, Sonke Gender Justice has worked closely with women's rights organizations through the Shukumisa Campaign to educate men about how they can support survivors to access the provisions of South Africa's revised 2007 Sexual Offences Act and has conducted research to monitor whether police stations comply with the regulations laid out in the law.

### *Political Advocacy*

In addition to this work to support implementation of gender equality laws, some organizations working with men and boys have engaged in political advocacy and activism to challenge the political backlash that all too often occurs when men feel their privileges are being challenged. In South Africa, Sonke has used high-profile political advocacy to directly confront men in public office when they have made statements that contradicted the values articulated in national laws or in the South African Constitution. Sonke has issued many press statements and organized demonstrations to condemn public officials, including the speaker of parliament and the President, for sexist statements or for statements that contribute to gender-based violence. Sonke played an active role in challenging, albeit unsuccessfully, the nomination to the position of Chief Justice of a man whose prior rulings on gender-based violence were deeply problematic.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the organization successfully litigated against a prominent youth leader in the Equality Court for comments that were ruled discriminatory against women, leading to a public retraction and apology. In addition to forcing a public apology and putting male public officials on alert that they would be challenged by other men if they undermined gender equality, this political and legal advocacy led to widespread media coverage with hundreds of radio and television interviews generating a national conversation about the roles and responsibilities of male political leaders.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, men of all walks of life were encouraged to think about their own gender-related attitudes and practices and how they might speak out against gender discrimination (Keehn 2010).

### *New Directions in the Evolution of Work with Men for Gender Equality*

IMAGES results suggest a generational shift: while there is some variation, in general younger men and men with higher levels of education showed more support for gender equality, less use of violence, and higher rates of participation in the early life of their children. IMAGES data and other studies also found that men who support gender equality or have more equitable attitudes are more likely to report a range of positive practices, including higher satisfaction in various domains (Barker 2011). In other words, men who believe in and live equality are for the most part happier and healthier men. And, not surprisingly, women (who are also interviewed in IMAGES) are happier when they report that their male

partners show equality in their interactions: results from several countries found that when men did a greater share of domestic work, women reported that they were happier overall with their relationships. Rather than seeing “change” as something that must be forced on men, these data suggest that many men are living relationships with some degree of equality and without violence and that their lives and life histories need to be made visible and serve as a source of prevention. But advocacy efforts so far have largely failed to reach out to the men who already see that gender equality makes sense and are living it and who could, if encouraged in appropriate ways, become more visible spokespersons to other men of the benefits of gender equality.

All of these findings confirm (1) the importance of engaging men as full partners in gender equality and including messaging directed specifically at men, (2) reaching out to men on themes such as fatherhood and caregiving in addition to and as part of work in HIV and gender-based violence prevention and realization of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and (3) building on and speeding up the generational shift that is already happening in some settings by targeting more work toward young men and boys.

Some new and less developed potential interventions to engage men and boys in gender-based violence prevention warrant the investment of resources and support, including operations research:

### *Addressing Exposure to Violence, Especially Violence in Childhood*

As previously noted, IMAGES and other studies affirm that boys who grow up exposed to violence in the childhood home are at far greater risk of perpetrating IPV later in life than those who did not. Similarly, women who witnessed such violence growing up are more likely to experience it as adults. Despite this, very few children—boys or girls—exposed to violence have access to ameliorative psychosocial support; such services are seldom available in schools or in communities. The effectiveness of such programs has seldom been evaluated and seldom implemented in large ways, but a large-scale effort, called Expect Respect, implemented with the Austin public school in the United States is currently being carried out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There is a good reason to believe that such efforts could decrease men’s use of IPV (Ball et al. 2012).

### *Decreasing Alcohol Consumption*

Reducing men’s abuse of alcohol is an important policy option for potentially reducing men’s use of gender-based violence and decreasing other high-risk behaviors, including those related to the spread of HIV. Across the world, men are likely to drink more heavily than women and more likely to be habitually heavy drinkers, in part because of the strong association, fostered by the alcohol and advertising industries, between alcohol consumption and manhood (Capraro

2000). While alcohol abuse does not cause men's gender-based violence, it can be a contributing factor. Indeed, alcohol consumption and overconsumption are associated with harmful behaviors including domestic violence, unsafe sex, and road traffic accidents (Abbey et al. 2004; Stith et al. 2004; Gil-Gonzalez et al. 2006). A range of policies have demonstrated success in reducing harmful drinking, including alcohol taxes (Xu and Chaloupka 2011), raising the minimum legal drinking age, reducing legal blood alcohol concentration limits for drivers, installing breath-testing checkpoints, banning alcohol advertising (Carpenter et al. 2007; O'Malley and Wagenaar 1991; Voas, Tippetts, and Fell 2000; Saffer 1991; Saffer and Dave 2002), reducing the availability of alcohol (Barbor 2010; Center for Prevention Research and Development 2009), training those who serve alcoholic drinks to detect and manage excessive alcohol use (Shults et al. 2001), and community mobilization to educate the broader community about the health consequences of alcohol, and to demand that local authorities and government implement liquor laws and policies (Holder 2002), as well as efforts to shift gender norms that encourage men in particular to take risks with their health (Sen, Ostlin, and George 2007).

### ***Restricting Access to Guns***

Another important example of efforts to change men's violent behavior concerns guns. Internationally, small arms and light weapons play significant roles in maintaining and reinforcing gender-specific imbalances of violence and power between women and men (Farr 2006). Gun use is dominated by men, and men's gun violence in a wide variety of contexts, is sustained by widespread cultural constructions of masculinity as aggressive, cultures in which guns are symbols of male status and the means to manhood, and male-dominated nation-states and militarism (Buchanan et al. 2005; Connell 2000; Myrntinen 2003; Nagel 1998). Across the world, guns dramatically increase the lethality of men's violence against both women and other men (Farr 2006). Decreasing access to small arms and light weapons is an important strategy for decreasing men's use of violence, including against women. As part of this, strategies for gun control and disarmament must "demobilize" the militarized and violent conceptions of masculinity that sustain arms violence and undermine weapons collection processes (Buchanan et al. 2005; Farr 2006).

### ***Engaging Men via Women's Economic Empowerment***

Reaching men in women-focused economic empowerment program, with an impact evaluation currently underway in Tanzania building on the IMAGE study in South Africa, and a recent operations research carried out by CARE-Rwanda and Promundo in Rwanda affirming men's interest in being partners and showing changes in couple conflict as a result of efforts to engage them to support women's economic

empowerment. Given that such programs reach between 100 and 125 million individuals worldwide, more than 90 percent women, they could be a tremendous point of entry for engaging men. The recent operations research project carried out in Rwanda with CARE-Rwanda and Promundo using a control group (of a community savings club focusing on women with no deliberate inclusion of husbands/partners) and an experimental group in which husbands/partners participated in a combination of men-only groups and couple groups, found that engaging men led to (1) more equitable household decision making, (2) increased couple communication and decreased couple conflict, and (3) higher income gains for families. While the sample was too small to measure differences in IPV, qualitative findings suggest that greater participation by men in care work and greater couple communication was also witnessed by children and was much more prevalent in the intervention group when men were included than the control group that focused only on women.

### *Engaging Men as Fathers*

The IMAGES data also found that between 40 percent and 80 percent of men have seen some campaign or advertisement on gender-based violence at least vaguely targeting them as men in the first five countries where IMAGES was carried out. But only 12 percent to 23 percent of men have ever seen a campaign about fatherhood and men's roles as fathers, in spite of the fact that some 80 percent of the world's adult men will be or are fathers (Barker 2011). These data suggest that men might be more inclined to support gender equality policies if those policies were more integrated—that is including violence, but including other themes as well—and if they perceive gender equality policies as good for them as well. To capitalize on the concern many men express for the well-being of their children, Promundo and Sonke and other partners recently launched the global MenCare campaign in collaboration with the MenEngage Alliance to encourage men to become more active in the lives of their children, including by establishing respectful, egalitarian relationships with the mothers of their children (see [www.men-care.org](http://www.men-care.org), for additional information on the campaign). Thus, father training programs and parent training interventions are currently being implemented in multiple countries as another potential, effective means to both reduce violence against children by parents as well as engage men as supportive partners for maternal and child health and more equitable caregiving.

### *Scaling Up School-based, Gender Equality Curricula that Include Discussions of Gender-based Violence*

Well-designed group education processes have repeatedly led to attitude, and in some cases, behavior changes associated with gender-based violence. Training teachers and community-based workers to facilitate group education and school-based campaigns on gender-based violence should be universally adopted within

school curricula, and can be combined with sexuality education. Civil society should be engaged in developing these curricula, and minimum standards must be created and disseminated for implementation. Available evidence affirms that ten to sixteen sessions of participatory group education with well-trained facilitators that includes discussions of gender-based violence can lead to attitude and behavior change (WHO 2007). Recent experiences have also affirmed that such approaches can be effectively implemented in schools (Barker et al. 2012). Such approaches should be rolled out at the national level with monitoring and input by civil society and with adequate resources for evaluation. In a few countries, including Brazil, online teacher training is being used as a way to scale-up and speed up the reach of such programs.

## **Conclusion**

A growing evidence base is confirming that well-designed program interventions, sometimes mostly focusing on men and sometimes reaching women and men, can lead to measurable changes in violence-supportive attitudes and self-reported use of violence. The key question on the cusp of the post-2015 development goals and twenty years since the Beijing International Conference on Women, held in 1995, is how the lessons from such generally small-scale interventions can serve as a base for achieving society-wide impact. These lessons also highlight the need to combine well-designed program interventions with targeted advocacy—for changing laws, holding accountable those who implement laws and to achieve norm change to accompany laws.

In addition, we have in this article mostly talked about prevention of men's use of gender-based violence. Comprehensive responses by governments and NGOs to gender-based violence must also include attention to survivors of violence, which also entails the need to discuss what to do about men who have used violence. Holding men accountable for the violence they have carried out must be part of comprehensive national strategies to end and prevent gender-based violence. In recent years, programs for men who have used violence against women (also known as batterer intervention programs) have been widely implemented with mixed results. There are challenges in implementation and much more evaluation of such approaches is needed; there is a particular need to develop the evidence base for programs in the Global South, as the majority of evidence and program models come from the Global North (Taylor and Barker 2013). However, limited research does affirm that when such programs are part of an effective justice system, connected to the community, and combined with adequate support and protection of women survivors of violence, they can be an important part of preventing future gender-based violence (Gondolf 2009). Furthermore, community approaches to hold men accountable for gender-based violence—in which survivors have the chance to hear and ask for justice from men who have used

violence—can be important elements in changing community norms and helping communities and individuals recover from violence.

Finally, it is clear that among governments, the donor community, the media, and the UN, there is increasing attention to reaching men and boys as part of the gender equality agenda (including UN Women's recent launch of He-for-She). All of these potentially bode well for changing gender norms among men and boys and building a base of funding and political support for programs and policies to engage men in gender equality. But such funding and support must always, as noted earlier, be connected to, in dialogue with and accountable to partners working to promote women's rights. NGOs working to reach men with gender equality must work with women's rights partners to build a larger funding base for effective approaches rather than compete for limited funding. Furthermore, we must ensure that such efforts to engage men are rooted in evidence, have strong theoretical bases to them, and are implemented with women and girls, and communities, and with men and boys rather than on them. The evidence cited here affirms that too many men and boys use violence against female partners, or are supportive of such violence. But many—probably the majority of men and boys—are opposed to it. As we create the next round of global development goals, the time is right to build indicators and goals to both aspire to and measure our progress toward a world in which no man or boy uses violence against women and girls.

### **Authors' Note**

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### **Notes**

1. As of September 2014, IMAGES has been conducted in ten countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Rwanda, and is ongoing in Mozambique and Nigeria. The results presented here generally capture six to eight of these countries.
2. Some of this discussion was first published in Flood (2007).
3. See paragraphs 4.11, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28, 4.29, 5.4, 7.8, 7.37, 7.41, 8.22, 11.16, 12.10, 12.13, and 12.14 of the Cairo Programme of Action, and paragraphs 47, 50, 52, and 62



of the outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly on Population and Development.

4. See paragraphs 7, 47, and 56 of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, and paragraphs 15, 49, 56, and 80 of the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly on Further Initiatives for Social Development.
5. See paragraphs 1, 3, 40, 72, 83b, 107c, 108e, 120, and 179 of the Beijing Platform for Action.
6. See paragraph 47 of the Declaration of Commitment on human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS): "Global Crisis—Global Action."
7. These were the Domestic Violence Act, the Devolution of Estates Act, and the Registration of Marriage and Divorce Act. The Acts were expected to provide protection for woman and address men's behavior toward women.
8. See, for instance, <http://m.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/Red-lights-flashing-over-Mogoeng-20110905> or <http://www.citypress.co.za/Politics/News/Civil-rights-groups-concerned-about-Mogoeng-judgments-20110826-2>.
9. See, for instance, <http://www.citizen.co.za/citizen/content/en/citizen/local-news?oid=204755&sn=Detail&pid=40&Juju%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98long-overdue%E2%80%99-apology-is-welcomed>.

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