

Implementation Tips for USAID Partners

Sharing Resources and Knowledge Among the Global CSO Community

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Definitions

Men's engagement is a process to recruit men as allies in women's empowerment by providing opportunities for them to improve their knowledge about issues that negatively affect the situation of women. This definition is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work hand-in-hand to achieve gender equality.

Gender equality involves providing 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 involves creating conditions of fairness that take into consideration the diversity of people across all genders and identities. It involves working in response to people's gender, not despite their gender.

Social norm is pattern of behavior in a particular group, community, or culture that is accepted as normal and to which an individual is expected to conform.

Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale measures attitudes towards gender norms to provide information about the prevailing norms in a community as well as a baseline for measuring the effectiveness of any program that hopes to influence them.

Men's Engagement Program

Q How do I design, plan, and implement an effective men's engagement program to support gender equity?

A Men's engagement is a process to recruit men as allies in women's empowerment by providing opportunities for them to improve their knowledge about health, social, and economic issues that negatively affect the situation of women. This definition is grounded in the idea that women and men are partners who should work hand-in-hand to achieve gender equity.

By educating men about women's rights and exploring issues related to masculinity and gender roles, men can play a positive role in improving their own and women's lives. When men see the benefits of men's engagement programming in other men's lives (for instance, better relationships with their wives and peace in the home) they are often motivated to join. In this view, women's empowerment is not solely the domain of women, but a social change effort that involves both men and women.

Follow men's engagement principles

Consider the following principles and approaches to include as part of a men's engagement program:

- Use an approach that promotes participation and a reflective process, rather than "top-down" teaching.
- Engage with community leaders to create structural change, since they are usually committed to upholding traditional norms.
- Consider a multisector approach, where different sectors from the community come together to work towards a common goal.
- Create positive profiles of masculinity that include images of men involved and collaborating in childcare and fatherhood. Programs should talk about how gender equality benefits men as well as women.
- Use male role models since they have influence in the community.
- Bring men and women together (e.g., in couple dialogues), providing an opportunity for men and women to talk about issues together in a facilitated manner.
- Pair programming with services because this helps equate gender equality with skill-building activities.

Resources

[How to Develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan](#)

[Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays](#)

[Promundo Program H](#)

- Optimal program length is one 2- to 3-hour session every week for 10 to 16 weeks.
- Focus on behaviors and attitudes, not knowledge alone, since changing behaviors and attitudes will have more impact and over a longer time. Programming should move from short-term gender sensitization to longer-term gender norm transformation.
- Use peers as instructors so that (male) participants can relate to them and instructors will not be seen as “outsiders.”
- The best age to introduce programming is with youth, but engagement at all ages is important.

Research on men’s engagement and social norms

The most effective men’s engagement programs include the following elements:

- Extend the length and intensity of the programming; this provides opportunities for more regular engagement for a longer period, thus increasing the impact of programming.
- Ensure the curriculum promotes benefits to men of gender equality, and particularly through fatherhood, because when men are involved in their children’s lives, they are not constrained by only so-called “masculine” roles and can explore other aspects of their personality.
- Engage men and women in discussion and reflection sessions in a gender-synchronized way (separately as well as together).
- Engage diverse community and institutional stakeholders and work at the institutional level to create more sustainable change.¹

As an example, Promundo—a non-governmental organization (NGO) that promotes gender equality and prevents violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls—designed a program called Program H (named after the words for men in Portuguese and Spanish). The program has been used in more than 34 countries and targets young men ages 15 to 24 to encourage critical reflection about rigid norms related to manhood. The Program H methodology supports group education sessions combined with youth-led campaigns and activism to transform stereotypical roles associated with gender (such as issues related to sexual and reproductive health and gender roles). Program partners usually implement 10 to 16 activities (one a week, over a period of several months) together with community awareness campaigns led by the youth. The program’s toolkit includes a manual with recommendations for implementing the different modules.

¹ ICRW Research, [Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays](#)

Measuring attitudes, behavior, and social norm change

To measure attitudes toward gender norms in intimate relationships or differing social expectations for men and women, the GEM Scale has respondents rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements across different domains (violence, sexual relationships, domestic chores, etc.).

The number and type of statements may be adapted for specific countries and contexts.

Some example statements:

STATEMENT	RATING SCALE
DOMESTIC CHORES AND DAILY LIFE	
A woman's role is taking care of her home and family.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids are the mother's responsibility.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
A man should have the final word about decisions in his home.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND DISEASE PREVENTION	
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
Men should be outraged if their wives ask them to use a condom.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
VIOLENCE	
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree
A woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together.	1 = agree; 2 = partially agree; 3 = do not agree

Design, plan and implement a men's engagement program

When designing a men's engagement program consider the following practical steps:

- 1. Community assessment:** Conduct a community assessment and explore the following issues: Is the community ready and willing to participate? Who are the main power holders in the community? How is the community comprised (in terms of ethnicity and religion)? If the community is interested in participating, what are the topics that concern them? (Ask them what their main issues are so the program is relevant to them.)
- 2. Partner analysis:** Consider if there are other local organizations working on men's engagement so that you can build on each other's efforts. If there is another organization already doing this work in the community, consider whether or not you want to work in another community or with another group.
- 3. Program design:** Decide topics to be included in the program, effective approaches (discussions, role plays, activities), length and duration of the training (how long will they meet, how often will they meet, when men are available), and whether or not a stipend or some other incentive will be included (like transportation allowance or refreshments).
- 4. Design curriculum:** Once the topics are decided, design a curriculum that is context specific and relevant to the community. For instance, if you are working with a community in which religion plays a significant role, work with religious leaders to identify religious texts/references that support gender equality. The training should be a mixture of new information, skills and capacity building, exercises/discussion or a lecture, and an assignment to be done outside of the training session.
- 5. Develop M&E plan:** A robust M&E plan includes a logic model and theory of change; indicators; roles and responsibilities of each staff member in M&E data collection; and a reporting and dissemination plan. When designing a men's engagement program, it is especially useful to use the GEM Scale. The scale includes indicators to measure attitudes, behaviors, and social norm change (*see left column*).
- 6. Hire staff/facilitator:** Choose the right facilitator for the program—someone whom the community respects and who understands the local context. The facilitator should believe wholeheartedly in the message of gender equality and women's empowerment. The facilitator should create an open and respectful environment in which the participants can feel comfortable sharing their own experiences and can learn from each other. The facilitator should not tell men how they should or should not behave, but rather encourage them to question and analyze their own experiences, attitudes, and behavior and come to their own conclusions.

For More Information

For this or other issues of Implementation Tips, please visit [NGOConnect.net](https://ngoconnect.net).

The Web site is a dynamic and interactive portal dedicated to connecting and strengthening CSOs, networks, and CSO support organizations worldwide.

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- 7. Selection:** Consider whether it will be helpful to first engage with male community leaders and train them (and they can in turn train other men), or more beneficial to train male leaders and community members together. Decide how the men will be selected. Will it be based on their roles in the community, whether or not they have the time and interest, or are the most influential members?
- 8. Roll out of activities:** Once you have decided how often you are going to meet, decide the best time to meet based on people's priorities and schedules. Decide on an appropriate location and time of the year. For instance, if you are working in an agricultural community, avoid the harvest season when many men will be busy.
- 9. Monitoring and reporting:** Collect data based on your planned timeline and according to your planned format for data collection and team responsibilities. The M&E plan should include plans for internal learning and discussion between the program and M&E teams, so you can make any changes to the program based on the results. Plan how to disseminate your learnings to wider audiences, including like-minded NGOs, donors, and other stakeholders, to exchange lessons learned and improve the program and impact.

Click [here](#) for more information on the GEM Scale and its use.

Examples of effective men's engagement programs

Below are three examples of men's engagement programs that address health, women's economic empowerment, and gender-based violence.

SASA - which means "Now" in Kiswahili and is an acronym for the four phases of the approach: Start, Awareness, Support, Action - is a great example of a men's engagement program that combines prevention of violence against women (VAW) and prevention of HIV. It uses a strong community-based model. The program follows a participatory approach through awareness raising, bringing together a wide range of community members who work together and take concrete action to tackle gender inequality.

CARE and Promundo's Journey of Transformation program is a 16-week program in Rwanda involving men in women's empowerment. It includes components on women's economic empowerment (such as business management) and incorporates men's engagement programming into Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) trainings. The program includes both group discussions and training and involves separate meetings for men and women, as well as bringing them together.

SCS Global thanks Consortium Partner Women for Women International for drafting the content for this *Implementation Tip*.

Women for Women International (WfWI) engages with men to address underlying societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. WfWI's program is specific to each country where it is implemented, with activities and training tailored to the cultural and religious contexts. All trainings promote participatory learning, include local facilitators, and are usually led by local community leaders. WfWI places particular focus on obtaining buy-in and support from community leaders (including religious, traditional, military, and civil society leaders) so they can use their influence to promote women's rights and gender equality. While topics vary based on the country, trainings always include modules on gender equality and prevention of GBV.

