



Engaging Men as Family Planning Clients and Women's Partners:

Use of Gender-transformative Approaches in Family Planning Programs

Elizabeth Salazar, Rebecka Lundgren, Kim Ashburn | Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University



BACKGROUND

This work presents lessons learned from a cross-case analysis of four programs in 8 countries designed to **engage men in family planning (FP) through gender-transformative approaches**.

A program review and technical consultation on male involvement in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programs showed:

- ✓ Practice of engaging men is not yet clearly defined
- ✓ Evidence of its effectiveness is still accumulating
- ✓ Gender-transformative approaches are a common element

Methods

- ✓ In-depth interviews with program managers
- ✓ Review of published documents, project reports and presentations



Engaging men in family planning is important.

- ✓ Directly addresses concerns about contraception that hinder their own use and that of their partner
- ✓ Creates more gender equitable attitudes that support FP use



Gender-transformative approaches:

- ✓ Aim to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships
- ✓ Seek to reflect upon, question or change institutional practices and social norms that create and reinforce gender inequality and vulnerability

World Health Organization (WHO) (2007). Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequality in health: Evidence from programme interventions. Geneva.

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES: GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES IN FAMILY PLANNING

Program	Intervention description	Essential Elements for Success
 Interactive Workshops Guatemala and Tanzania (FHI360)	Trained facilitators conduct interactive workshops promoting gender equity, FP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum includes gender, responsible parenthood, couple communication • Sex-segregated workshops (women, men, couples) • Referral to mobile clinics for FP/SRH services
 Male Motivator Malawi, with adaptations in Mozambique, India, and Nigeria (Save the Children)	Trained male peer educators conduct home visits to promote spousal communication, provide referrals for SRH/FP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum discusses FP practices, attitudes, couple communication, messages about financial benefits • Consistent one-on-one or couple visits • Motivators linked to community-based contraceptive distributors
 Promoting Male-Centered Methods Vietnam and India (HealthBridge Foundation of Canada)	Providers, NGOs and media outlets receive sensitization on gender equality, FP access Community groups discuss gender roles, impact on health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering links among journalists to promote positive gender stereotypes to complement mass media activities • Positive images of male engagement • Creation of a condom bank to increase FP access at community-level
 Standard Days Method (SDM) Integration Mali, India, Guatemala, Rwanda, DRC (IRH/GU and partners)	Address men and couples in FP counseling, provider training, reporting and outreach Include SDM in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building provider capacity to apply gender lens to FP counseling (e.g. engage men, address couple communication) • Materials/messaging on couple communication, male engagement, financial benefits of FP • Access to FP through community-based providers, including male/couple volunteers

8 WAYS TO ENGAGE MEN IN FP PROGRAMS

1. Provide a 'comfort zone' for discussion
2. Foster a sense of shared responsibility
3. Promote couple communication
4. Create opportunities to redefine inequitable gender norms
5. Offer services in the community
6. Provide models of positive male behavior and consequences
7. Integrate into other programming
8. Be flexible and adaptable

5 THINGS TO AVOID IN FP PROGRAMS

- ✓ Exploiting rigid gender norms and power imbalances
- ✓ Failing to provide ongoing support
- ✓ Sole focus on men or women
- ✓ Ignoring provider biases about men
- ✓ Negative messaging or messaging targeted only to women

WHAT YOU CAN DO



PROGRAM DESIGNERS, IMPLEMENTERS, PROVIDERS

- ✓ Design and implement programs that promote gender-equitable attitudes and access to services



RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

- ✓ Use mixed method approaches to research and evaluate SRH programs that engage men



POLICYMAKERS

- ✓ Develop policies that address gender inequality and prioritize male engagement in gender-transformative ways