

QUICK GUIDE TO...

MASCULINITIES, FAITH, AND PEACE

The goal of **Masculinities, Faith, and Peace (MFP)** is to see a reduction in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), an increase in the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP), and improved inter-religious relationships. It does so by addressing social norms that shape inequitable gender relations and prevent the use of modern methods of child spacing, in mixed Christian and Muslim communities in Plateau State, Nigeria.

MFP is carried out in one church and one mosque in each of the five implementation communities. It works with Christian and Muslim congregations to foster greater gender equality, positive masculinities, improved maternal health among young couples, and improved community relationships. MFP is a research-led project implemented by Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health and Tearfund in partnership with two local partner organisations, Faith Alive Foundation (FAF) and The ECWA Aids Ministry (TEAM).

The MFP intervention is designed to engage congregational leaders, young couples and their wider Christian and Muslim congregations. The intervention will last one year in the selected experimental congregations and comparison will then be made with the control congregations to assess its progress and impact. MFP includes one church and one mosque in each of the five control communities.

The intervention works with different groups. The approach is either workshops or structured small-group discussions, called community dialogues. It draws on scriptural reflections on gender equality, SGBV, positive masculinities, child spacing and inter-religious relationships.



RELIGIOUS LEADERS: 4-day workshops for state- and congregational-level religious leaders, to engage them in personal reflection and to provide leadership and support for the MFP intervention. Refresher workshop held after first cycle of community dialogues (3 months).



GENDER CHAMPIONS: Religious leaders select key members of their congregations to be trained as facilitators of these community dialogues. Reflective workshops last 4 days, covering key themes including SGBV and faith, power and status, and the benefits of child spacing, and also include facilitation training and practice. Refresher workshop held after first cycle of community dialogues (3 months).



COMMUNITY DIALOGUES: Guided 2 hour small-group discussions, meeting weekly for 8 weeks. They are facilitated by Gender Champions for young couples within their congregations.

Week 8 of the community dialogues includes a brief health talk about modern child spacing methods with a referral card given to each participant.



WIDER CONGREGATION: To bring about a change in social norms, MFP messages will be diffused beyond young couples involved in the community dialogues to all congregation members through:

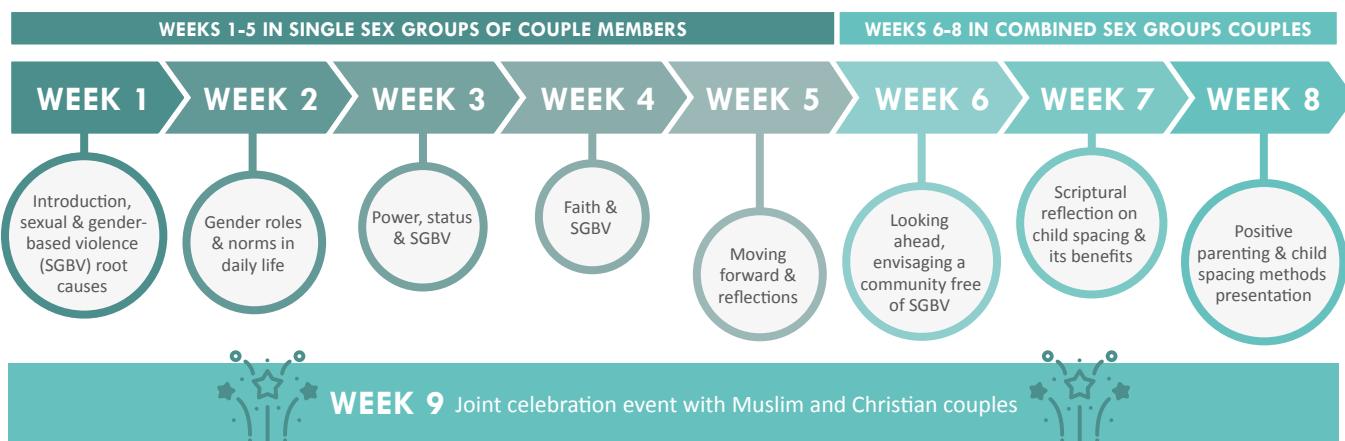
- Talks delivered by religious leaders at congregational meetings
- Group discussions led by religious leaders
- Couples sharing their stories of change in congregational meetings
- Community mobilisation events focused on MFP themes

Community dialogues

Community dialogues run for 8 weeks and follow key themes in the order described in the diagram below. In the last session, in Week 8, a family planning provider will make a presentation to the group on modern child spacing methods, their side effects and common myths and misconceptions. During this presentation, the health worker will also distribute referral cards to participants to access further counselling and methods, if desired, from local health centres. Thirteen health centres in the target communities are included in this intervention. Health talks and referral cards are also given in the control congregations.

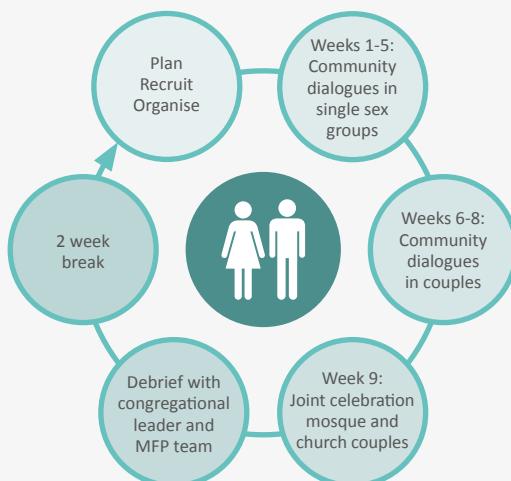
Gender Champions can refer individuals for additional support and care in relation to sexual and gender-based violence where needed.

The community dialogues close with a celebration event in Week 9 which brings together graduating couples from the mosque and church in each community, as an opportunity to share reflections and learnings together.



For each congregation, there is an equal number of male and female Gender Champions. Male-only sessions will be led by male Gender Champions and female-only sessions by female Gender Champions. Each Gender Champion facilitates a group with 10 members in the separate sessions. Combined sessions, when couples rejoin their partner, will be led by one male and one female Gender Champion and will involve 20 members.

Gender Champions recruit couples to their congregation's community dialogue groups and arrange a weekly meeting time with the group. They work closely with FAF and TEAM and are debriefed at the end of each cycle. Gender Champions also coordinate with family planning provider to arrange the child spacing health talk at the end of Week 8 during which the family planning provider distributes the referral cards.



Improved inter-religious relationships

MFP aims to improve inter-religious relationships between the participating mosques and churches through the following social cohesion activities:

- Joint end of community dialogues celebration with the participating mosque and church in each community
- Peacebuilding training for religious leaders
- Facilitated inter-religious conversations
- Community mobilisation events held jointly by the participating mosque and church in each experimental community to promote MFP messages to the wider congregations.

MFP toolkit

There are two key resources for the MFP intervention which guide scriptural reflections on the topics of SGBV, gender equality, child spacing, positive parenting and inter-religious relationships:

- **Transforming Masculinities** – Training manual used for faith leader workshops and to train Gender Champions
- **Community dialogues** – Guide used by Gender Champions to facilitate the community dialogues discussions.