

"We all suffer when women and girls are abused and their needs are neglected. By denying them security and opportunity we embed unfairness in our societies and fail to make the most of the talents of half the population. In too many countries we talk about democracy and deny the rights of women and girls... I call on all men and boys to throw their weight behind the campaign for equality."

**President Cardoso**

Former President of Brazil and a member of The Elders

"I remember the first time someone suggested to me that work around gender was something men could do. It came as quite a surprise, like, 'What?!' I'd always thought that was simply the domain of women, and perhaps I've even been defensive. But once it became clear that, no, this is, in fact, something that I can do and that I'm welcomed in doing, that was very helpful."

**South African Man**

"This report brings us new insights and the latest research on a key component to reaching girls – namely, reaching boys and men as allies. The analysis and recommendations are thorough and clear, as is the call to action. Most importantly, Plan asks the difficult questions about how to engage men and boys without losing sight of the end goal of gender equality."

**Gary Barker**

Instituto Promundo

"By exploring the roles of men and boys in advancing gender equality, Plan's prestigious 'Because I am A Girl' annual report is boldly changing the paradigm, from why should we work with men and boys, to how do we do it effectively. With this report, many more initiatives may benefit from the information here, inspiring, activating and informing the many positive roles men and boys can play in working towards a better world for us all."

**Todd Minerson, Executive Director**

White Ribbon Campaign

[plan-international.org/girls](http://plan-international.org/girls)

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*Members of a youth group from Brazil.*

PHOTOGRAPH: LEO DRUMOND



Because I am a Girl THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2011



# Because I am a Girl

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2011

## So, what about boys?



# Because I am a Girl

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2011

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So, what about boys?

# Because I am a Girl

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S GIRLS 2011

So, what about boys?



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Learning together at a kindergarten in Cambodia.

ALF BERG

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At school in Guinea-Bissau.

ROLAND GEISHEMER

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# Foreword



**President Fernando Henrique Cardoso**  
Former President of Brazil and a member of The Elders

Over the centuries many cultures and religions have tried to justify inequality and discrimination against women and girls. These teachings and practices have been abused by men to give them power over the female members of their families and women across their communities. Girls and women have been denied fair access to education, health, employment, property and influence within their own communities. But it is not just women who are paying an enormous price for this cultural and religious prejudice. We all suffer when women and girls are abused and their needs are neglected. By denying them security and opportunity, we embed unfairness in our societies and fail to make the most of the talents of half the population. In too many countries we talk about democracy but deny the rights of women and girls. But there are, too, signs of hope. During my lifetime in almost every society and in every area, women are breaking down the barriers which have held them and their daughters back for so long.

There remains, however, a long way to go until we reach true equality of opportunity. And this is not a fight which should be left to women and girls alone. It is up to all our leaders, particularly male political, religious and civil leaders, to challenge and change those practices and attitudes, however long-established, which allow and foster discrimination and unfair treatment. Men still hold many of the key levers of power and therefore have the power to bring

about change. This is true also within the family, where fathers in particular have a key role to play. Their attitudes and actions will influence how both their sons and their daughters behave, think and feel throughout their lives; as violence against women can be handed down from father to son so too can gentleness, fairness and openness.

I call on all men and boys to throw their weight behind the campaign for equality and to challenge those who oppose women’s rights and equality. The complementary skills and qualities of both men and women are needed to tackle the enormous challenges we face. This will not be easy. Men and boys will have to change their behaviour and thinking. Some women will, too. But we will all gain from such changes. Societies with greater equality between men and women, girls and boys, are healthier, safer, more prosperous and more truly democratic. We all need to step forward, to show the courage and determination which is needed to change our world for the better. This year’s ‘Because I am a Girl’ report will be challenging for all of us but the many stories and examples it contains will also help us find the way to change what needs changing and to work together – men, women, boys and girls from all walks of life – towards a world where equal opportunities and gender equality benefit everybody.



# Setting the scene

# 1

## The report series

'Because I am Girl' is an annual report published by Plan which assesses the current state of the world's girls. While women and children are recognised as specific categories in policy and planning, girls' particular needs and rights are often ignored. These reports provide evidence, including the voices of girls themselves, as to why they need to be treated differently from boys and from older women.

The reports also make recommendations for action, showing policymakers and planners what can make a real difference to girls' lives all over the world.

The first report was published in 2007 and the last will be in 2015, the final target year for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For the same period, in our 'Real Choices, Real Lives' study, we are also following a cohort group of girls in nine different countries born in the year of our first report.

In 2007, we gave an overview of the global situation of girls. In 2008, we looked at girls affected by conflict; those growing up 'In the Shadow of War'. The 2009 report focused on economic empowerment: 'Girls in the Global Economy: Adding it all Up.' In 2010, 'Digital and Urban Frontiers, Girls in a Changing Landscape' looked at adolescent girls in two of the most dynamic arenas in the world today – cities and new technologies – and examined the opportunities and the dangers that these present.

ALF BERG

## 1 Gender is a boys' issue too

*"Being a girl, I know that most boys don't understand how crucial the problems affecting girls are. Those who do understand, don't realise that they have the power to do something... gender equality, social injustice and reproductive and sexual health are boys' and men's issues too. That's why it is vital to look at how boys and young men can empower girls."*

Maneesa, 14, Canada<sup>1</sup>

*"I think getting young men and boys to empower girls is a good idea... No one, male or female, should ever be discriminated against, left out of school, be in poverty, or treated poorly by the rest of the human race."*

Daniel, 15, Canada<sup>2</sup>

It may seem strange to have a report on girls that focuses on boys. But during the course of the five years that we have worked on the 'Because I am a Girl' report, it has become increasingly clear that unless young men and boys work alongside girls and young women to challenge unequal power relationships, equal rights for women and men will remain a distant dream.

Research shows quite clearly that gender equality is one of the keys to breaking the cycle of poverty that is handed down the generations from parent to child.<sup>3</sup> Empowering and educating girls, and ensuring that they can engage as equal citizens, is in everyone's interest. But for many girls, equality is still a long way off:

- There are 75 million girls out of primary and lower secondary school.<sup>4</sup>
- A girl in Southern Sudan is more likely to die in childbirth than finish primary school.<sup>5</sup>
- As many as 150 million girls and young women under 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact.<sup>6</sup> The first experience of sexual intercourse in adolescence for a large number of girls is unwanted and even coerced.<sup>7</sup>
- Globally, young women aged 15 to 24 account for 64 per cent of HIV infections among young people. In sub-Saharan Africa young women aged 15 to 24 are more than twice as likely to be infected as young men in the same age group.<sup>8</sup>
- Girls who give birth before the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their twenties.<sup>9</sup> Pregnancy and childbirth are an important cause of mortality for girls and young women aged 15 to 19 worldwide.<sup>10</sup>
- Girls continue to be raised in households where they are expected to shoulder the burden of household labour alongside their mothers: they spend between 33 and 85 per cent more time on unpaid care work than boys.<sup>11</sup>
- Thousands of girls marry at a very young age, before their bodies are fully formed. For example, in Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea and Niger the figure is over 60 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

Ensuring that girls and young women are free from discrimination is a matter of justice. It is also a basic human right promoted by the United Nations Convention on Human rights, the Convention on the rights of Children (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). International legal standards like these, and those at a national level, are crucial if girls and young women are to be protected.

But they are not enough. This treatment does not happen in a vacuum. It happens within an established system of power where violence against women and girls is all too frequent – and is often condoned by society. So why do men behave in this way towards



JANE HAHN

women? And how can women and men work together to prevent it? *Girls at work in Ghana.*

Part of the answer lies in understanding why men and boys do what they do, and by working with boys and young men as their behaviour and perceptions of themselves – and of the opposite sex – are being formed. How can we ensure that a 15 year-old or 10 year-old or even a six year-old boy sees his sisters and mothers and aunts and friends who are girls as equals? How would this begin to make a difference to gender inequality?

This report will demonstrate that one way of doing this is to work with boys and young men directly. This can begin to break the cycle of inequality and violence that moves down the generations from father to son. Irma, from Pueblo Nuevo in the Dominican Republic, is part of a violence prevention programme in her community. She points out: “Men who have been victims as children go on to abuse their kids. We want to break this cycle.”<sup>13</sup>

This cycle does not just harm women and girls, it also damages men and boys. Concepts of ‘traditional’ masculinities force them to behave in ways that make them uncomfortable. They may not dare to express their emotions, or they may experience violence themselves and then take it out on others; or they may have to pretend to be heterosexual or homophobic when they are not.

But gender inequality is not just about individual attitudes and behaviours. It permeates our structures and institutions, where for the most part men are the primary authority figures. Women continue to have

less power than men in almost all societies and situations around the world – from parliament to business, from the home to the workplace. And both men and women continue to accept notions of masculinity that contribute to this imbalance of power.

Working with young men and boys for gender equality and women’s rights means challenging how this power operates between the sexes, and then reconstructing it for the benefit of all. Boys and young men need to have the time and space to be able to define what being a man means for them. Meaningfully engaging boys and young men in reframing healthy and non-violent definitions of masculinity is critical in promoting the rights of girls and young women – and ensuring that the goal of gender equality is reached.

#### GENDER EQUALITY: ALL ABOUT TRUST

*Nikki van der Gaag talks to young people in El Salvador about gender equality, homosexuality – and who does the washing up.*

Most conversations with young people about gender in El Salvador seem to start with a discussion about who cleans the toilet and washes the dishes. Young people see domestic labour as something that impacts directly on their lives. It is also a symbol of change in what both sexes acknowledge is a very ‘machista’ society.

Jenny, aged 17, from Opico, says indignantly that she does all the work,



NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

Juan Carlos

while her brother just watches TV. But Juan Carlos, from Ciudad Arce, says that if he does the housework or looks after his siblings his friends sometimes tease him and say that he is gay. The young men and women all agree that there is discrimination against gay and lesbian people in their society, and they link this directly to ‘machismo’. In the traditional way of looking at it, there is only one way of being a man – being tough, strong and probably violent. And certainly not wielding a broom or a dishcloth.

Jenny and Juan Carlos have been able to talk about these issues as part of a wider debate that Plan is generating among young people in El Salvador about parenting, about what it means to be a man or a woman, about equal rights, equal opportunities – and ultimately about how to build a more equal society, free of discrimination and violence.

El Salvador has a long way to go when it comes to gender equality. It is fourth from the bottom of the gender index in

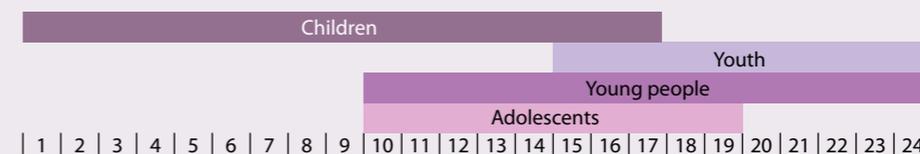
#### DEFINING AGES AND STAGES

Much of the work with young people does not distinguish by sex or by age: it is work with ‘women’ or with ‘children’ and sometimes with ‘youth’. We argue that differentiation by age and sex is crucial. Although there are other important distinctions – race, ethnic origin, religion, class – a 10 year old is very different from an 18 year old and often girls’ and young women’s needs are very different from those of boys and young men.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone under the age of 18, unless the age of majority is lower.

For the purposes of this report, a girl or boy is anyone up to the age of 18 and a young woman or man up to 25 years.

#### The common age labels applied to children and young people



Latin America;<sup>14</sup> only 10 per cent of those in positions of power at national or local level are women.<sup>15</sup> And girls and women still have much less access to education, healthcare and employment than men.

The young people who have been involved in gender work are clear about the positives – not just for girls, but also for boys. It may begin with discussions about housework, but quickly leads to other issues, as these young people from the Cabañas area point out. Luis, aged 21, says that as a result of the workshops, “I am more able to be trusted – because in our culture men are seen as those who deliver violence, trust is a difficult issue between the sexes.”

Cindy says: “I think after doing this work, young men are more able to show their affectionate side – they have the same opportunity as women to express what they feel – we can try to neutralise the typical phrase that ‘men don’t cry.’”

Christian, aged 20, agrees: “What is good about being part of a group that is getting training on gender is that as men we can learn to show affection and to feel close to our friends. I can see the difference between us and those who don’t know about gender equality – their relationships with young women are completely different.”

## 2 A shift in thinking: different understandings of gender equality

*“A man who doesn’t treat a woman well, I think he’s not a real man – if he beats women up, for example.”*

Josiane, 14, Plan Brazil girls’ focus group<sup>16</sup>

*“With a growing gender equality movement, it is possible that the next generation of young men will grow up in a society where mutual respect, support and a shared sense of responsibility between partners is the norm.”*

International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo<sup>17</sup>

The debates about involving men in gender equality programmes are not new – many projects and programmes have been running for a decade or more. But there is renewed interest in this approach. This may be the result of the economic crisis and its effects on both women and men in terms of employment. It may also be due to the realisation that despite real progress in some areas and major successes achieved by the women’s movement, little has changed for millions of women; and for some, the situation has even deteriorated.

There has been a significant shift in international development practice in its

work with women. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, working with women (WID – ‘Women in Development’) became working on gender (GAD – ‘Gender and Development’). The idea was to move from a focus on women to the social, political and economic relationships between the sexes in order to challenge inequality between men and women. This approach also recognises that inequality stems from gender stereotypes, for both men and women, and the social values attached to those stereotypes, rather than from the biological differences between the sexes. This was intended as a fundamental move away from programming with women in isolation to understanding the wider context of what sustains oppression and discrimination as the underlying causes of poverty.

What seems to have happened in practice is that programmes generally continued to work with women. This led to an assumption that a gender programme was ‘women only’. In some cases it led to men feeling marginalised and resentful. As one report notes: “gender was seen as an external and imported concept, divorced from people’s own analysis and understanding of gender in their communities and organisations. Men, and many women, felt alienated by the rather confrontational approach taken, and as a result many were hostile to the messages of gender equity.”<sup>18</sup>

Research in South Africa and Kenya backs this up; a research project led by the Institute



MARK PENGELY

of Education in London found that ‘gender’ is often “conceptually elided with girls” which can lead to backlash. The report quotes, for example, a participant of the Girls Education Movement in South Africa, who “was working with school kids from 15 to 19 years and talking about the girl child. There was booing from the boys.”<sup>19</sup> There have been similar reactions in the UK and Australia, where lack of gender awareness has led to boys feeling that attempts by teachers to redress a bias against girls has resulted in discrimination against, and lower exam results for, boys.<sup>20</sup>

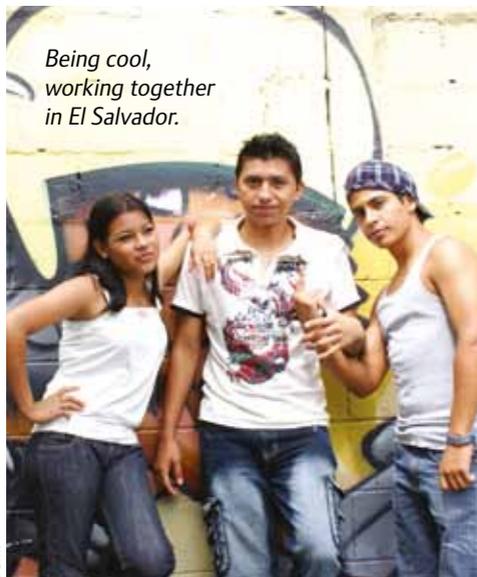
*Girls in the UK are now getting better grades than boys in public exams.*



Youth group from Ciudad Arce.

### DEFINITIONS

- **Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles, responsibilities, behaviours, activities and attributes, which society considers appropriate and expected for men and women and girls and boys. It includes the social organisation of women’s and men’s lives and relations.
- **Sex** refers to biological, anatomical and physiological characteristics that define men and women and girls and boys.
- **Patriarchy** (from the Greek ‘patria’ meaning father and ‘arché’ meaning rule) refers to a society in which men predominate in positions of power, and certain men hold disproportionate power (for example, fathers, religious leaders and political leaders).
- **Masculinity** refers to the meanings and expressions given to being a man and the social organisation of men’s lives and relations. There is no single version of masculinity but many different kinds of masculinities; in most cultures and countries, however, there are dominant themes about what being a man means. This is known as ‘hegemonic masculinity’. Its central beliefs are that men need to be seen to be strong and tough, that they are not responsible for caring for children, that reproductive health and family planning – and even healthcare in general – are for women, and that taking risks proves you are a man.<sup>21</sup>



Being cool, working together in El Salvador.

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Work on gender is complex. It questions who we think we are and how we perceive ourselves in terms of others. It is about social transformation – and social transformation is never a direct process of change: it involves conflict along the way. Work with men and boys on masculinities and gender equality challenges the perceptions that they may have of the world and even questions their sense of self. This may put them in conflict with their family, peers, teachers, the community, the media, and even institutions such as school and government.

As one South African man said: “I remember the first time someone suggested to me that work around gender was something men could do. It came as quite a surprise, like, ‘What?!’ I’d always thought that was simply the domain of women, and perhaps I’ve even been defensive. But once it became clear that, no, this is, in fact, something that I can do and that I’m welcomed in doing, that was very helpful.”<sup>22</sup>

Work on gender equality may also be problematic for men because they are presumed to be the ones with the power, the oppressors, and this is an uncomfortable place to be. They are going against hundreds of years of tradition and strong beliefs about what a man should be that still predominate in many cultures and religions.

In addition, the movement of men for gender equality does not have the backing of years of academic study and activism that supports the women’s movement.

As Todd Minerson, Director of the White Ribbon Alliance of men against violence against women, said:<sup>23</sup> “When you’re from the dominant group you don’t have that history of struggle and analysis that comes from the non-dominant group’s perspective... Very few men have that history or that analysis of those bigger pictures, the dynamics, unless they’ve been part of an oppressed group in one of those senses. It’s not a natural, or it’s not something taught. It’s not something that’s shared with us by our fathers.”<sup>24</sup>

Men may also face opposition from women’s groups who worry – rightly, at times – that scarce funding and attention may be diverted from working with women to working with men. It is important that this does not happen.

And they are operating in an arena where a number of men’s groups exist that clearly do not have a feminist agenda – and may even be working against gender equality.

The litmus test for engaging men and boys in gender equality work should be that this work is in support of a women’s and girls’ rights agenda, something that networks like MenEngage have made part of their core principles.

The struggle for gender equality is not easy. There are thousands of girls and women around the world who take personal risks every day in standing up to power. Now is the time for boys and men to join them.

#### A DIFFERENT KIND OF YOUNG MAN – PROGRAM H

First carried out in Latin America, Program H (H stands for ‘homens’ and ‘hombres’, the words for men in Portuguese and Spanish) has now been built on and adapted by project partners in more than 20 countries.

Program H supports young men aged 15 to 24 to help them engage and reflect on traditional norms of ‘manhood’ in a safe space. It uses a wide range of media, campaigns and youth-friendly education materials, and has an innovative evaluation model. The activities consist of role-plays, brainstorming exercises, discussion sessions, a cartoon video series, ‘Once Upon a Boy’, about gender socialisation and individual reflections

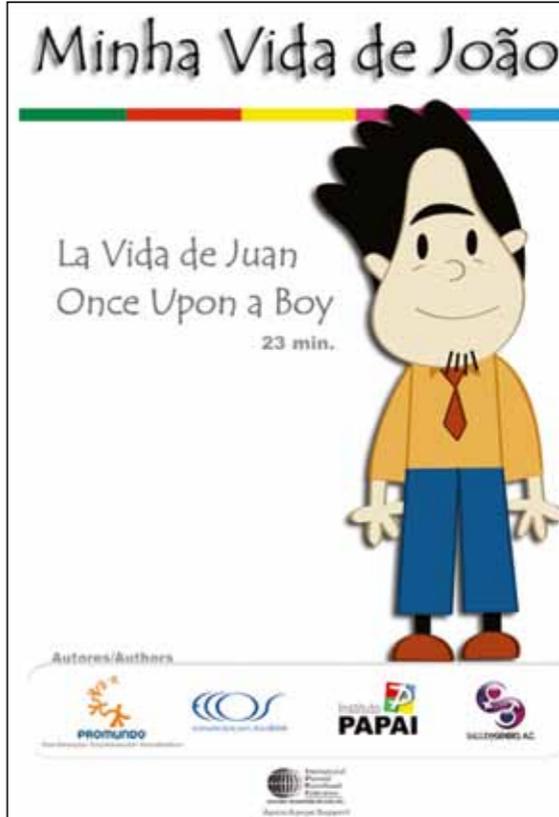
about how boys and men are socialised; positive and negative aspects of this socialisation; and the benefits of changing certain behaviours which lead to a different understanding of what it is to be a man. These interventions build directly on insights gained from listening to the voices of those young men who openly question gender injustice. Program H makes it ‘cool’ to be a young man who believes in and practises gender equality.

#### How Program H has been adapted

In Brazil, the campaign was called Hora H, which translates as ‘In the heat of the moment’. The phrase was developed by young men themselves who frequently heard their peers say: “Everybody knows you shouldn’t hit your girlfriend, but in the heat of the moment you lose control.” Or, “Everybody knows that you should use a condom, but in the heat of the moment...” Several major rap artists were engaged in the campaign and lent their voices to promoting gender equality.

In India, a community-based campaign was developed which included comic books, street theatre, posters, and a cap and t-shirt with the campaign slogan, developed by young men, called the ‘Real Man Thinks Right’. The logo shows a young man pointing to his head, as if thinking. Campaign slogans reinforce the message that it is possible for men not to use violence against women. One poster reads: “When Anju does not want to [have sex], Sandeep does not force her. This is possible!” These messages are acted out in street theatre.

After participating in these activities, young men have reported a number of positive changes, from higher rates of condom use and improved relationships with friends and sexual partners, to greater acceptance of domestic work as men’s responsibility, and lower rates of sexual harassment and violence against women. Girlfriends have also said that they feel the quality of their relationships has improved.<sup>25,26</sup> The numbers of those justifying violence against a partner in India declined from 25 per cent to 18 per cent; and in Mare, Brazil, the percentage of young men seeing their female



PROMUNDO/ECOS/SALUD Y GENERO/PAPAI

counterparts as equal to them increased from 48 per cent to 68 per cent.<sup>27</sup>

*“When I started going out with a girl, if we didn’t have sex within two weeks, I would leave her. But now, after the workshops, I think differently. I want to construct something, a relationship, with her.”*

Young man, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil<sup>28</sup>

Once Upon a Boy cartoon series.

The success of Program H led to similar work with girls and young women. Four Latin American NGO partners and one international NGO launched Program M<sup>29</sup> in 2003 to promote the empowerment of young women by getting them to reflect on stereotypes of masculinity and how they affect their lives and relationships with men. Program M (the M stands for ‘mulheres’ and ‘mujeres’, the Portuguese and Spanish words for women) aims to make young women more aware of oppressive beliefs and expectations within their relationships and to guard against reinforcing or reproducing them.

The programme encourages young women to develop positive ideals of masculinity among the men in their lives and communities and to engage men as allies in the promotion of gender equality. The programme's educational activities have been tried and tested in Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico and Nicaragua with positive results. One of the participants, from Brazil, commented:

*"Now I know that a young woman isn't obligated to do certain things. She can talk to her boyfriend, she can share things, discuss the relationship. A woman today doesn't have to stay at home taking care of the kids, the husband... She can study, have her own career... She can have kids, if she wants to have kids, and if she wants a husband she can have one... These days I see women as independent... I have changed... Even in my own family, there is a lot of violence with men, husbands, hitting their wives, and I work on this with them. Thank God, I have seen results."*

After taking part in Program M activities in Brazil and India, young women reported increased knowledge and communication with partners about sexual health, increased self-confidence in interpersonal relationships, decreased drug use and increased condom use.<sup>30</sup>

#### PUSHING THE ELEPHANT – SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*"We are taking action today to put an end to violence, one of the issues that most affects us as girls and young women. We know that together we can make the world a safer place for everyone. As girls and young women, you may call us the leaders of tomorrow; but we are also the leaders of today."*

Nefeli Themeli, WAGGGS delegate, Greece

In July 2011 the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) launched a new campaign to stop violence against girls and young women. This issue was chosen after a widespread consultation exercise, which involved thousands of young women all over the world.

At the Young Women's World Forum in 2010, the 100 delegates aged 18 to 25



BECKY TOMPKINSON/WAGGGS

participated in workshops on identifying the most important topics to explore within the broader topic of violence. The outcomes emphasised the truly global nature of the challenge and included:

- In Oman: the acceptance of abuse within marriage
- In the Philippines: violence against girls within school
- In Bolivia: patriarchal attitudes and 'machismo' meaning that violence against women is seen as socially acceptable
- In Brazil: women forced into sex work due to poverty
- In the Netherlands: the trafficking of girls and women for sex work; and domestic violence
- In Syria: child marriage, lack of access to sex education, including knowledge about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Within Africa: social and economic dependence on men leads to an acceptance of domestic violence and girls being abused on their way to school
- Within Europe: violence is more hidden and carries on behind 'closed doors', so it becomes more difficult to identify.

When asked how they could take action, delegates stated: "education is the key" but recommended also that education needs to extend to young men. As one delegate from the Philippines put it: "Though we have an all-girl organisation, it is also important to reach boys and do

WAGGGS delegates at the Young Women's World Forum 2010.

community projects." This was echoed by another young woman from the Netherlands: "We cannot exclude boys. They need to be informed too."

WAGGGS is using its power and influence to put an end to violence – "one of the issues that most affects us as girls and young women" – to make the world a safer place for everyone. They know that they have taken on an enormous task.

*"Someone once told me that making a difference at a global level was like pushing an elephant with one hand through a small door. I have to admit, I thought that was a bit funny because I knew I had at least 9,999,999 pairs of hands to push that elephant. Today, violence against women is the elephant in the room. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has the intention and momentum to push it out."*

Susanna Matters<sup>31</sup>

### 3 Why should boys and men engage with gender equality?

*"What motivates men who champion gender equality? In some instances it's a very personal investment in improving the lives of our daughters, making the world a freer and safer place for ourselves as men, for women we care about. I think there's something about creating models of masculinity that aren't as restrictive, that don't require that you only talk about sport."*

South African man<sup>32</sup>

*"Boys should understand that we... have the same rights."*

Girls aged 12 to 14, Nyakayaga, Rwanda<sup>33</sup>

*"I think that without the engagement of men it's impossible to achieve women's human rights... Men, after all, disproportionately have the power and the resources in society that determine the degree to which women are going to realise their human rights."*

Craig Mokhiber (Deputy Director of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)<sup>34</sup>

First, because girls' and women's rights are human rights. If men and boys believe in justice and fairness, they will be able to see that their mothers, sisters and girlfriends are often not treated the same way as they are, do not enjoy the same level of respect in the community, and do not have the same opportunities to make choices about their lives. If this is not true of their direct friends and relations, they may also be able to see that women in the wider world are often abused and discriminated against.

But often this is not enough. So the second point is that boys and men need to be able to see the benefits of this work themselves. They need to have an idea of what a more equal world would look like and how it would be good for them as individuals. So, for example, addressing how greater gender equality will help boys to succeed in school, to be comfortable with their own identity, to be confident in expressing emotions and to be equipped with the skills to build positive relationships of mutual trust and respect.

In societies where there has been significant movement towards equality, gender equality has too often meant more freedom for girls and women to define themselves in new ways, but little corresponding change for boys and men. A new perspective on gender is about a more productive way of viewing power relationships to the benefit of both sexes. It is about deconstructing the dominant norms of how power exists in gender relations, and then reconstructing power in new ways that benefit both sexes.

Third, when young men buy into rigid versions of masculinities, they may experience violence; especially, but not only, if they are perceived to be deviating from dominant masculine behaviour. The pressure to conform can leave many young men vulnerable to substance abuse, unsafe sex, school drop-out, risky behaviour like dangerous driving, and failing to seek help for health problems, be they mental or physical.

One man noted: "I think one of the disadvantages of being male is that I have bought the myth that I can do anything, if I dream it. And, as a result, it's taking me continued work to have to ask for help and support from others, particularly other men..."

I sit there and struggle with stuff when I really don't need to. I think that lowers my life expectancy and that of other men."<sup>35</sup>

A few facts and examples about the negative repercussions of gender stereotyping make the case very clearly.

- Young men have among the highest rates of death by traffic accidents, suicide and violence.<sup>36</sup> In Jamaica, Brazil, Colombia and some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, more young men die in these ways than in countries at war. Even in Western Europe, these external causes make up more than 60 per cent of mortality among boys and young men from birth to 24 years of age.<sup>37</sup>
- In countries of the North and in Latin America and the Caribbean, boys are now dropping out of school at a faster rate than girls. They are also doing less well academically. For example, in the US, the average grade-point average in high school is 3.09 for girls and 2.86 for boys.<sup>38</sup>
- Men are three to six times more likely than women to commit homicide. Over 90 per cent of gun-related homicides occur among men.<sup>39</sup> In some countries, gun-related violence leads to demographic imbalances. Brazil currently has nearly 200,000 fewer men than women in the age range 15 to 29.<sup>40</sup>
- Young men also have higher rates of alcohol and substance use. Studies in, for example, both the US and South Africa have found that young men who adhered to traditional views of manhood were more likely to engage in substance use, violence and delinquency and unsafe sexual practices.<sup>41,42,43</sup>
- Young men are less likely to visit a doctor or a clinic or to seek information about their health – as a result, 60 per cent of men and boys aged 15 to 24 do not have accurate and comprehensive knowledge about HIV and how to avoid transmission.<sup>44</sup>
- As we will see later in this report, young men who become fathers may find that they have little to do with, or even lose contact with, their children. These risks for young men need to be monitored and interventions shaped so that they are taken into account and addressed. We will outline what needs to be done in the final chapter of this report. Information

campaigns are important, but they also need to be backed by support systems to deal with the possible negative consequences for individual young men of going against current trends and beliefs.

The pressure to conform also needs to be understood within the structural and institutional factors that keep inequality in place and the challenges that this poses to individual action. As Todd Minerson of the White Ribbon Campaign against violence against women notes: "The notions of masculinity that we're taught to admire and that we're taught to strive for... Unless you really start to think about it, or you've had some kind of incident to bring it close to you in your life, it's so much easier to go along and be a part of it and not critically look at it, because it's not costing you anything on the surface... You're a beneficiary of it. I would argue that it is costing men on an emotional and psychological level."<sup>45</sup>

More men like Todd are realising this cost and have become inspired to work on gender inequality. Change is possible, especially for boys and young men – and as we reveal throughout this report, it is already happening.

#### 4 Taking a life cycle approach

*"Since I was a boy, I liked to follow my father's activities and ideas because my father was friendly and respected by many of the people in the village."*

Father of Sokhea, Cambodia<sup>46</sup>

Attitudes and behaviours about what it is to be a 'real man' or a 'real woman' are formed at an early age, internalised through childhood and adolescence, and made concrete in the transition to adulthood and the world of work. They are then passed on from generation to generation.

So it is important to work with boys and young men while their attitudes towards women are still forming. When boys become men, they will, in many cases, be the ones with the greater power to change the way that women are viewed and treated, both in their own households and in the community and workplace. Together with their sisters, mothers, aunts and other female relatives and friends, they can help ensure that

girls go to school, that they are safe from violence, that they are not married young and against their will, that they do not bear the whole burden of work in the household, and that they can earn a living where they are paid the same as men for the same work, and play their part in society.

Individuals do not operate in a vacuum, but within a society with its own structural and institutional systems that perpetuate social, economic and political inequality. So the life cycle approach that we take in this report in relation to individuals is complemented by what is known as

#### Growing up

The diagram below shows the different ways in which boys and girls, women and men, experience gender inequality throughout their lives

<b>Adulthood</b>	<p>Reaching adulthood includes both conformity and liberation for girls who begin interacting with wider social institutions, including the workplace. Women are restricted to certain low-paid jobs and are unable to break through the glass ceiling and make it to top managerial positions. Women are considered the primary caregivers for children and the family.</p> 	<p>Young men are expected to find work and are often still seen as the providers for their family. If they are unemployed, this can lead to feelings of worthlessness and depression and even violence. As fathers, they may be distant from their children.</p>
<b>Adolescence</b>	<p>With the onset of puberty adolescent girls begin to experience increased sexual discrimination. They may be married at a young age. At the same time they are internalising and reproducing the stereotypes which restrict them. Girls are far more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment and violence on the way to school and in the classroom, sometimes from their male peers.</p> 	<p>With the onset of puberty, boys are increasingly expected to behave in stereotypical 'masculine' ways – to be strong, tough, even aggressive and not show their feelings. They may engage in risky behaviour to 'prove' their manhood – dangerous driving, drugs, unprotected sex – that can have damaging effects on their health and serious consequences for the women they have relationships with.</p>
<b>Childhood</b>	<p>Girls begin to experience the world through social institutions beyond their immediate family, including the community and school. Girls are less likely than boys to have time to play as they are busy with household chores and caring for siblings. Social and cultural norms restrict girls' mobility, reducing the public spaces they may enter safely.</p> 	<p>Boys begin to experience the world through social institutions beyond their immediate family, including the community and school. Boys are likely to be more confident than girls. They are prioritised over their sisters at school. But in some countries in the North, and Latin America and the Caribbean, boys are doing less well at school than girls and some are dropping out altogether.</p>
<b>Early Years</b>	<p>Girls are born into a system of oppression that begins with the first institution they come in contact with: their family. Son preference means fewer girls are born in South East Asia. Legal discrimination deprives girls of property, land and inheritance rights. The devaluation of girls mean they will be fed last and least and are more likely to be malnourished.</p> 	<p>Boys are born into families where they are expected to play certain roles as they grow up. They are likely to be more valued than their sisters, but may not be allowed to express their emotions or behave in ways not considered 'manly'.</p>

## DEFINING MANHOOD

The MenEngage Alliance, a global network of NGOs working to engage men and boys in gender equality, is very clear about how they define manhood:<sup>47</sup>

### We believe that manhood is defined:

- by building relationships based on respect and equality,
- by speaking out against violence in your society,
- by having the strength to ask for help,
- by shared decision-making and shared power,
- and by how much you are able to respect the diversity and rights of those around you.

### We believe that manhood is not defined:

- by how many sexual partners you have,
- by using violence against women or men,
- by how much pain you can endure,
- by how much power you can exert over others,
- or by whether you are gay or straight.

an 'ecological' model that situates the individual within intra-personal, family, local community, and wider social, political and cultural arenas.<sup>48</sup>

In its work on gender and masculinities, Instituto Promundo in Brazil has identified the components of this 'ecological' model for transforming gender norms in its work on men and masculinities.<sup>49</sup> It notes that this approach "illustrates the importance of working not only with individuals, but also with diverse and interconnected social groups, systems and structures that influence gender norms and the behaviours of men and women." It can be used to assess impact. Through this report we will be using this model to look at the different layers of society – from individual through to institutional – and seeing how they shape what it means to be a man or a woman and therefore how it is possible to work with them on gender equality.

## 5 Stories of change

*"We must erode the cultural and collective supports for violence found among many men and boys and replace them with norms of consent, sexual respect and gender equality."*

Michael Flood, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University<sup>50</sup>

*"For me, my daughter is more important than anything else: more than shows, the*

*bar, anything. I prefer to be giving love, receiving affection and all that stuff than gossiping and drinking."*

Adolescent father, Brazil<sup>51</sup>

During the course of our research for this series of reports over the past five years, we have seen an increase in the number of much-needed programmes and projects for girls and young women. We have shown many examples of women and girls resisting violence and discrimination. It is vital to continue to support these projects and individuals in their struggle for gender equality, often against huge odds.

While many find their support from other girls and young women, and feel that their struggle is to challenge the way that the male members of their families behave towards women, some girls are supported by older brothers, fathers and uncles; by young men like Pascal (see page 24), who have seen all too clearly the results of gender inequality in their own lives.

In the last decade there has also been a number of mostly small-scale initiatives in various countries. These have mainly engaged in group work with boys and men to challenge stereotypes about what it is to be a man and how men behave towards women. This involves a process of self-examination, dialogue, reflection and redefinition of masculinity and femininity, adapted to what makes sense in the culture at the time. Because this field of work is relatively new, there has been little

evaluation of its impact. The evaluation that has been carried out has found that well-designed group education with boys and young men can lead to important and measurable changes in attitudes and sometimes behaviour.<sup>52</sup>

As this report will show, together with their female peers, many young men and boys are beginning to move beyond the straitjacket of traditional concepts of what it means to be a man.

For example, the Conscientising Male Adolescents project in Nigeria is run by men in the community and uses structured dialogues to encourage critical thinking in young men aged 14 to 20 who have demonstrated qualities of leadership. Discussion topics cover gender-based oppression and violence, power dynamics within the family, intimate relationships, sexual and reproductive health, human rights and democracy.

Or there is the simple but effective 'Ring the Bell' project in India.

### PROMISING PRACTICE: 'RING THE BELL' IN INDIA<sup>53</sup>

In 2008, men and boys started to break the cycle of violence against women in India with a simple, effective action: when they heard a man abusing a woman inside a nearby home, they rang the doorbell or found another way to interrupt the violence. They made their presence known. They halted the violence simply by lifting one finger.

### PROGRAMMING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- **Gender Transformative Approach:** is based on the understanding that gender is central to promoting gender equality and achieving positive development outcomes and transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment.<sup>54</sup>
- **Gender Neutral Approach:** whereby gender is not considered relevant to the outcome, and gender norms, roles and relations are neither worsened nor improved.<sup>55</sup>
- **Gender Relational Approach:** seeks to understand how gender relations shape, and are shaped by, institutions such as the labour market, the domestic sphere, trade unions and immigration. It is concerned with examining intersections between gender and social relations including 'race', ethnicity, sexuality, age and (dis)ability.<sup>56</sup>
- **Gender Targeted Approach:** where programmes and policies target a specific beneficiary group.<sup>57</sup> This approach has become popular recently, especially with regards to girls' empowerment, where we are witnessing a proliferation of programmes working in 'girl-only' groups and girl-friendly safe spaces. Some criticise this approach as a backwards move reminiscent of the 'Women in Development' approach which put the onus of women's empowerment on women, thus adding to their burdens.<sup>58</sup>



'Ring the bell' campaigners.

Where did they get the idea? From a series of powerful print, radio and television public service announcements that told true stories of men and boys stopping violence in their neighbourhoods with one ring of a bell. This campaign, produced by the organisation Breakthrough, known as 'Bell Bajao' ('ring the bell' in Hindi), has now touched 130 million people, won a Silver Lion Award at the Cannes Film Festival, and become a metaphor for stopping abusive behaviour in any form. In addition to inspiring thousands of people to 'ring the bell', Bell Bajao has led to an increased awareness of laws against domestic violence and increased reporting of the crime.

Today, more and more men and boys are ringing the bell. And around India, a conversation is happening. It is challenging social norms and changing behaviour. And it is making violence against women, which was once seen as acceptable, unacceptable.

Campaigns and projects against violence against women and for gender equality are a growing global phenomenon that needs to be built upon and supported. Most of this work is with young men – and there is still relatively little with the important 10 to 13 age group. Men’s work for gender equality is also becoming a small but significant global phenomenon – for example, the Men Engage Global Alliance<sup>59</sup> is a recent example of a coming together of experts and activists in this field. It is a network of non-governmental organisations and individuals that “seek to engage men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and promote the health and well-being of men, women and children”. But we are also clear that this work with men and boys means finding additional resources – it is vital not to take the focus or the resources away from the essential work being done with and by young women and girls.

## 6 Involving boys and young men for gender equality

*“Youth are the key to changing cultural attitudes for generations to come and they’re the most effective agents of change in society. If we can’t effect change in our generation, at least something will be different for the next.”*

Bandana Rana, young female director of SAATHI, a non-governmental organisation that works to prevent violence against women in Nepal<sup>60</sup>

Engaging boys and young men in working towards girls’ rights has huge potential benefits for everyone. Together with their sisters, they can help ensure that girls go to school, that they are safe from violence, that they are not married young and against their will, that they do not bear the whole burden of work in the household, and that they can earn a living and play their part in society.

The cost of not working with boys and young men is that programmes and policies with young women and girls will continue to come up against the barrier of male power and expectations, structures and beliefs that benefit men over women. The price that will be paid is simple: the continuing disempowerment of



PLAN

girls and young women down the generations – and the restriction of boys and young men to traditional ‘male’ roles.

Only when both sexes are involved in work on gender equality can we meet the challenge of building a more equal, violence-free world for all.

*Getting involved, dad helps with homework in Mali.*

### “NO ONE SAID ANYTHING”: PASCAL’S STORY

I’m Pascal Kelvin Akimana, born 27 years ago in a little village called Gatumba, 15 kilometres from Bujumbura in Burundi. I am the child of a teenage mother, who was forced to marry the man who impregnated her and later had three more children with him.

I was raised in a very violent home. Gender-based and sexual violence was the daily bread of my life. My father used to assault my mother every day, in front of the entire family, and no one said anything. Sometimes he would force my mother to have sex in front of me. This would happen often. It puzzled me because it didn’t seem normal, nor did my mother like it.

I decided to work with men and boys to address men’s violence towards women and children and the impact it has on them, talking from my own experience. I believe men can change and men are actually changing. I have changed and I know others who have changed. I work with other colleagues who have changed as well.

I have seen women that we trained, who went home, excited to share the information that they gained in training with their men. Then the violence started because the men themselves felt threatened. But when we trained those

men, those trained men left us with a pledge to change themselves and a promise to communicate better with their partners.

I realised that the problems are with the men – and if we engage more with men we shall get solutions. The shocking thing I hear from men when I conduct training is that they ‘didn’t know’ about violence against women. Later they recognise that their own sisters, mothers and daughters are going through this abuse and this violence. When they realise this, many men ask to join us in reaching other men and boys.

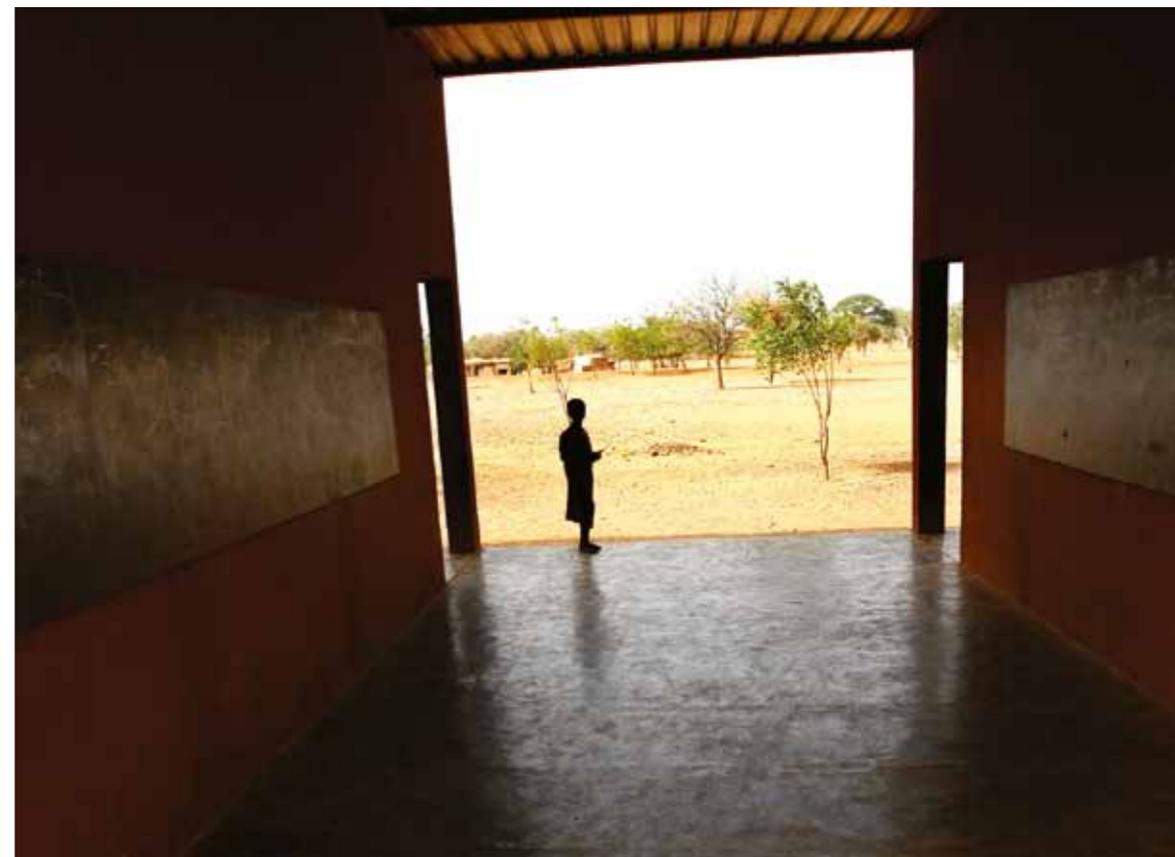
It was because I experienced all this violence and abuse in my family, in my community and in my whole country that I decided to work on advocating for women’s rights. Whenever I hear or see an abused woman I see and remember my mother, and I remember what my mother and I went through. It is for this reason that I have no regret or doubt

about advancing human rights, embracing gender equality, promoting healthy relationships and continuing to strive to end sexual and gender-based violence in my community, society and the entire continent.<sup>61</sup>

This report argues that there needs to be a shift in thinking from ‘men and boys as part of the problem’ to ‘men and boys as part of the solution’. Portraying young men as perpetrators, as people to be feared, does not help them to change. Threats and punishment have not worked. Young men need opportunities to experiment with different ways of behaving that affirm who they are, not what they feel they ought to be.

Like young women, they need to be listened to and to have their concerns and needs addressed. Only then can they grow into caring partners and fathers; only then can they learn to treat their children better than they were treated by their parents.

*Looking for a brighter future.*



FINBARR O'REILLY

# LEGAL FRAMEWORK – WORKING WITH BOYS AND MEN

Over the past two decades experts and policymakers have increasingly recognised that boys and men are critical partners in achieving gender equality. To ensure progress, international and national laws have evolved to require equal responsibilities and rights between men and women in all spheres of life, whether as caretakers of children, promoters of reproductive and sexual health, or as supporters working with women against gender-based violence.



The following legal standards are a short synopsis, providing a framework for the analysis in this report, and reflecting our rights-based approach to working with boys and men to achieve gender equality. Throughout the report we will continue to reference in greater detail the relevant national and international laws which have, or should have, real impact on relationships between men and women, girls and boys, at home, at work and in civil society.

## Major developments include:

### Sharing duties

- The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo and its subsequent five-year reviews identified the critical role of men in improving sexual and reproductive health and the need for their increased involvement in the care of children. The resultant ICPD Programme of Action calls on states to “promote the full involvement of men in family life and the full integration of women in community life” ensuring that “men and women are equal partners”.<sup>62</sup>
- The landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the Fourth World Conference

on Women, 1995, emphasised the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities. It encouraged men to share equally in childcare and household work; and it promoted male involvement in prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>63</sup>

Based on gains from the Beijing and ICPD conferences, the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held special sessions in 2004 and 2009 devoted to male involvement in achieving gender equality. The CSW urged governments to implement laws and policies to tackle occupational sex segregation, grant parental leave and flexible work arrangements, and promote greater male involvement in childcare and support.<sup>64</sup> The 2009 CSW called for government action to “ensure that men and boys, whose role is critical in achieving gender equality, are actively involved in policies and programmes that aim to involve the equal sharing of responsibilities with women and girls, so as to foster changes in attitudes and behaviour patterns in order to promote and protect the human rights of women and the girl child”.<sup>65</sup>

### Improving health

Global research, including by the World Health Organisation (WHO), illustrates that engaging men in reproductive health programmes and HIV prevention initiatives leads to better health outcomes and promotes gender equality.<sup>66</sup> States have increasingly recognised the critical role of gender and the need to engage men to improve sexual and reproductive health, including greater contraceptive uptake and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care.

- Several key international instruments and commitment documents require states to develop policies and programmes to ensure male involvement, especially in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, including the Special Session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (2001), the Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys on Achieving Gender Equality (2009), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Action Framework on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV (2009).<sup>67</sup>
- In 2004, MenEngage, a global alliance of NGOs

and UN agencies, formed to encourage men’s positive roles in building gender equality and improving men and women’s health.

- In 2008, the Ministry of Health of Mali, after years of consultation with experts and civil society organisations, approved a national programme to involve men in reproductive health. Known as constructive men’s engagement (CME), the strategies – also adopted by countries such as Cambodia – engage men as users of reproductive health services, as supportive partners to women, and as agents of change in the family and community.<sup>68</sup>

### Equal partners and parents

International standards on marriage and its dissolution emphasise that spouses have equal rights and responsibilities when it comes to marriage and its dissolution. Increasingly, courts and legislatures seek to ensure the equal rights and responsibilities of partners in marriages, or ‘marriage-like’ arrangements (such as cohabitation or informal marriages). Courts have also recognised the equal responsibilities of parents to their children, regardless of the parents’ marital status.

- The 2010 Kenyan Constitution ensures that mothers and fathers share equally in parental responsibilities, regardless of whether the child was born in or out of wedlock.
- In a 2007 precedent-setting ruling, the High Court of Namibia recognised that children whose parents are not married are entitled to inheritance from their deceased father. In *Franz v Paschke and Others*, the court decided that the common-law rule that prohibits children born out of wedlock from inheriting from their fathers who die without a will is unconstitutional because it discriminates against children based on their social status.<sup>69</sup>
- In South Africa, the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 stresses the role of fathers in the financial maintenance of their children, recognises unmarried fathers’ rights, especially when the



mothers are unwilling or unable to raise the children, and allows fathers who demonstrate involvement in their children’s lives to acquire full parental rights and responsibilities. It also sets shared custody as the default arrangement following divorce.<sup>70</sup>

- In Chile, a 2009 law institutionalised the Childhood Social Protection System (Chile Grows with You/Chile Crece Contigo) that promotes an increase in the participation of fathers in childcare, pregnancy and birth.<sup>71</sup>

### Workplace flexibility

To encourage more equitable sharing of childcare responsibility, a growing number of countries provide for leave and work flexibility for both mother and father, whether or not the child is biologically related to them. International standards strongly urge states to institute paid and parental leave, support work-family balance, and foster more equitable sharing of family and caregiving responsibilities.

- Out of 190 countries surveyed as part of a 2010 global study of workplace benefits, 178 guaranteed paid leave for new mothers, and at least 54 countries guarantee some form of leave for new fathers.<sup>72</sup>
- Spain’s 2007 Gender Equality Law, billed as the most important and ambitious law on gender equality in the country’s history, provides for 15 days of paternity leave for fathers, which will increase to a month in 2013.<sup>73,74</sup> An earlier law already allows the mother to transfer to the father up to 10 of her 16 weeks of paid maternity leave.<sup>75</sup>
- Based on the success of its 1992 policy offering a non-transferable month of leave specifically for fathers, in 2009 Norway increased its paid leave for fathers to 10 weeks out of 12 months’ total parental leave.<sup>76</sup>
- In 2007 Germany adapted Sweden’s model and reserved two out of 14 months of paid leave for fathers. Within two years, the proportion of fathers taking parental leave surged from three per cent to more than 20 per cent. Eight out of 10 fathers in Germany now take one third of the total 13 months of leave, and nine per cent of fathers take 40 per cent or more of the total; up from four per cent a decade ago.<sup>77</sup>
- In Brazil, several states now offer one month paid leave for fathers at the time of birth. In some states this applies to all men with full-time employment, and in others only to male civil servants.<sup>78</sup>

Lorianny  
and her  
father in the  
Dominican  
Republic.



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## ‘Real Choices, Real Lives’ – The Plan cohort turns 5

The ‘Real Choices, Real Lives’ study was launched in 2007 to follow 142 girls from nine countries around the world through their early childhood journeys, from birth until their ninth birthday. This year, many of the girls turn five, a key milestone in childhood. Not all of them have survived. Since the study began, five girls have died and this year another little girl, Mary Joy T from the Philippines, drowned. Mary Joy’s family have no sanitation facilities, so she was taken to use the nearby river by an older cousin. Both children then started to play and were drowned.

All the deaths in our study can be attributed to poverty – to patchy access to healthcare, lack of parental education, poor housing or lack of sanitation facilities. The study itself brings home to us the realities of life for families in many parts of the world and illuminates the decisions they face and choices they make as their daughters grow up – decisions and choices that many of these families face with amazing courage and resilience.

This year’s report focuses on the role of men and boys and on engaging them in the fight for gender equality. Our argument is that gender equality benefits both sexes; but in many institutions, including the family, men may be reluctant to change as they fear a loss of power and do not anticipate any gains.

This year when our researchers visited the girls and their families they also spent time with the girls’ fathers, conducting life history interviews. These detailed interviews reveal not only what has shaped the attitudes and behaviour of these 86 fathers, but also look closely at their roles and responsibilities. Our researchers also examined how the men define being a good father.

*“When I am next to my children I feel like a hero. I feel big when I am next to them.”*

Estefani’s father, Dominican Republic

One key factor to emerge from the interviews was that all but one of the men had been hit by his parents and many – the men from Vietnam, Togo and the Dominican Republic being the exception – had witnessed domestic abuse. Zaldy, father of Jessa from the Philippines, feared his own father throughout his childhood: “If I couldn’t go to him immediately when he called me, I got spanked. Or when I arrived late from school, I got spanked... I cried as he hit me. The following day, my body would ache. My father was cruel when he was drunk. Whenever I remember how he hit me then, my tears fall.” He also witnessed domestic abuse of his mother. It is a pattern he is determined not to repeat. He wants the best for his five children: “They each have their own dreams. I tell my kids if they want to have a good job, they should study well.”

It is also clear from the interviews that the gender divisions of labour the men observed in their childhood homes heavily influence how their own households are now managed. In fact, many of the men interviewed were uncritical as they remembered how household tasks were allocated while they were growing up. Lorianny’s father remembers, “I didn’t help with chores – I was allowed to be idle here [at home], ha ha. Only in the yard, I did a few things. My sister helped my mum. My brother and I helped my dad.” In the Philippines, Riza’s father had a similar experience: “I had to sweep the house many times. I did not like doing that, because I thought it was my sister’s job. It was my elder sister who forced me to do that when Mother was absent.” In Benin, however, Marcelle’s father was brought up by his own father after his parents’ divorce. As a result, he watched his father do household tasks throughout his childhood. For him, it was normal: “My father used to cook frequently because my mother left. He could take care of us very well.”

It is clear from these comments that since



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attitudes and behaviour are entrenched during childhood, gender roles can only be challenged successfully if we begin with families. The interviews with the girls' fathers confirm findings from elsewhere in this year's report. Despite acknowledging that attitudes towards gender equality are changing and that girls now have more opportunities than in the past, the vast majority of the fathers interviewed explained that their children are in fact being raised to fulfil the same gendered roles within the home as they did. In the Philippines, Jacel's father agreed that "yes, there are differences in the ways that our children are treated... the girls, they have to help with housework when they don't have classes. I don't want them outside the house. Girls are supposed to just stay home." In Togo, Walidatou's father stated, "It is more difficult to educate a girl than a boy. I pay attention to my daughters because I don't want them to be pregnant prematurely. Girls and boys do not have the same domestic chores. A boy may clean the compound with the hoe, but the other domestic chores, such as washing clothes and dishes and cooking meals, are done by girls. A girl does all that to be prepared to serve her future husband.

Children learn to do what adults do."

Evidence from the interviews also shows that although attitudes about who makes decisions within households differ within and across the countries taking part in the study, all the adults had a polarised view about the roles women and men, and girls and boys, play. The girls' fathers perceive their role to be the provider for the family, a decision-maker, an authoritarian and a protector. The girls' mothers are considered to be the carers of the family. The fathers interviewed routinely described their spouses using words like 'respectful', 'innocent', 'well-behaved' and 'courteous', indicative of the position of the women in their families. Fathers still 'have the last word' in most households. However, there are households where the men believe that decision-making should be shared, and boys and girls raised equally, though not necessarily in exactly the same way. Lorianny's father saw his own parents as equal: "They respected themselves and each other... one's opinion was worth the same as the other." And this early experience is reflected in his relationship with his own wife and children.

Overall, the men we interviewed were happy with their roles but many also reflected

*Jessa and her father in the Philippines.*

that there was space for men to be more supportive at home and to be more involved with their children. Rosybel's father in the Dominican Republic spoke passionately about how he feels about his children: "When you can't find anything to give your children, there is a pain inside when you want to, but you can't. That is the most difficult bit, when you want to do something but you can't, because you haven't got, but then you have to find a way, as they say. You have to fight to survive, to help them." In the Philippines, Girlie's father said that "the kids have been the most influential experience in my life so far. I used to be a drunkard when I was younger, but now no more. [Now] I have to think where to get their food..." In Togo, Hentou is being looked after by her uncle, who explained, "I want my children to treasure the education they are receiving today. I want them to say one day that 'thanks to their father, they have realised their dreams'. That will make me happy." Lorianny's father sums up his thoughts as "there are several stages of raising children. For example, their childhood, when you hold them and feel good, proud, you enjoy it. But then in the stage where they are big, they grow, you see that they are capable of defending themselves, that they are good professionals, you feel sort of satisfied. I always play with [Lorianny], even though I have a job that steals some of my time. Sometimes we make food together to be a bit interactive... I buy toys, videos that are educational, and spend time with her. Her intelligence makes me proud of her."

The fathers interviewed in the Dominican Republic and the Philippines, in particular, are beginning to move away from endorsing and perpetuating strict gender roles. In the Philippines, Jacky's father told researchers that "education is very important for the children, as long as resources are available. It is the same for both boys and girls. Girls can be policewomen, and boys can be policemen." In the Dominican Republic, Estefani's father stated: "They're all the same, the only thing is that they are different sexes, but they are all the same." His own father was absent. He helped look after his siblings and "they [society] said I was gay, because I washed up, cooked and looked after my brother and sold things in the shop". He is very aware that many people look down on a man who does the chores. He still cleans and cooks and does "everything for their mum". It is not a problem for him but he is not sure that society as a whole is ready for change.

A significant fact that emerges from the interviews with the 86 men is how many of them had never reflected on their childhood and on their attitudes in this way before. It was an emotional experience, summed up by the researcher who spoke to Jessa's father, Zaldy, in the Philippines. Zaldy had tears in his eyes during the interview. Asked how he felt answering the questions, he said it was sad remembering, but at least he was able to let his feelings out for the first time. Zaldy's wife and children have never seen him cry. He hides when he is upset because "real men don't cry".



# Learning your place: discrimination begins at home

# 2

## 1 “They only have praise for my brother”

*One son is children, two daughters are none.*  
Vietnamese proverb<sup>1</sup>

*To raise and care for a daughter is like  
taking care of somebody else's garden.*  
Nepalese proverb<sup>2</sup>

*What are little boys made of?  
Snakes and snails,  
And puppy dog tails,  
That's what little boys are made of.  
What are little girls made of?  
Sugar and spice,  
And everything nice,  
That's what little girls are made of.*  
Traditional British nursery rhyme

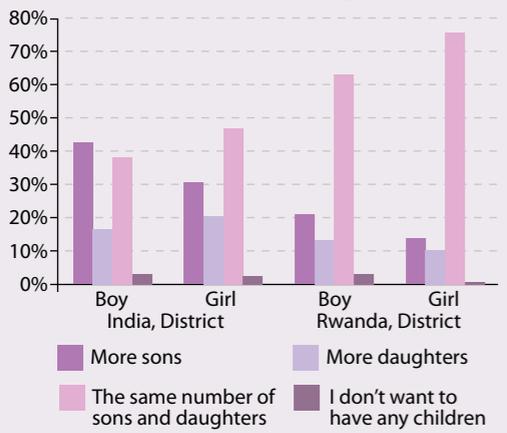
In this chapter, we examine how the roots of discrimination between girls and boys begin in the home. We look at how this impacts on children in their early formative years. We reveal the importance of attitudes towards gender in the family, and how gender-equal, early-years programmes can make a difference to these attitudes. We shine a spotlight on housework, and reveal

BONNIE MILLER

changing trends and attitudes towards boys and men doing the washing-up. We look at the importance of fatherhood and how some men are getting their hands dirty when it comes to childcare and other household tasks, providing important role models for their children, especially their sons. And finally, we show how programmes in specific countries are helping to break the cycle of gender inequality for future generations.

In many countries, it is clear on the day a baby is born that boys are more important than girls. Sometimes this begins in the womb, through sex-selective abortion. A 2006 household survey in India came to the conclusion that based on conservative estimates, the practice of sex-selective abortion means that half a million fewer female babies are born a year.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a recently released 2011 Indian Ministry of Home Affairs census has concluded that the female-to-male ratio for children under six years has slipped from 927 in 2001 to 914 girls for every 1,000 boys. This is India's lowest girl child gender ratio since independence in 1947.<sup>4,5</sup> It is also a phenomenon that has huge implications for social relations and partnering for future generations.

### If you had the chance to choose, would you like more sons or daughters?



Son preference is not confined to this generation of parents: according to Plan's research with 12 to 18 year olds in India, 36 per cent of both girls and boys when asked said they would prefer to have more sons than daughters, whereas in Rwanda only 17 per cent agreed with the same statement.

Again in India, research found that the birth of a girl child is celebrated in only two per cent of families.<sup>6</sup> The mother is treated with respect after the birth of a son and a 'puja' (thanksgiving prayer) is said. One mother who finally had a boy after three girls commented that she was "now finally at peace".<sup>7</sup>

Research in Ethiopia found similar preferences. An Orthodox Christian priest said: "The difference between a boy and girl starts at birth. When women express their pleasure at the birth of a child, a baby boy gets seven ululations, while a baby girl gets only three."<sup>8</sup>

Preferring a son to a daughter is not just a developing country phenomenon; asked how many children he had, former US heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali told an interviewer: "One boy and seven mistakes."<sup>9</sup> In Italy, a common salutation after someone sneezes is "health and male children". The idea that boys are somehow preferable to and 'better' than girls is deeply embedded in most societies.

This early discrimination sets the scene for the way a girl is treated throughout her life. Children quickly pick up these attitudes. By the age of two or three, children imitate the behaviour of same-sex family members and can distinguish whether someone is a man

or a woman.<sup>10</sup> By the age of six, children are able to recognise and understand the multiple gender cues all around them.<sup>11</sup>

Both boys and girls face pressure to conform to stereotypes that relate to their sex. A study in India noted: "The role of the girl child is to be a demure, accommodating and respectful homemaker. A 'good' girl of six is one who listens to and respects her adults, helps mother in household chores, and one who stays and plays at home. A 'good' boy, on the other hand, is expected to be naughty, to have many friends to play with (outside the home), and not always to listen to parents."<sup>12,13</sup>

The pressure to conform means that both boys and girls lose their individual identity and their real potential. Stereotypes are often reinforced by culture and by religion, as the box on page 35 shows.

## 2 Playing rough – boys' freedom also has a downside

In many countries, boys have a lot more freedom than girls, even at an early age. "Young boys... have fewer restrictions placed on them than young girls. They are taught to play rough, to stand up for themselves, not to walk away from a fight. They run out to play, while their sisters are kept indoors to care for younger children and to help with domestic chores," says one report on masculinities.<sup>14</sup>

As they get older, says Fadimata Alainchar, the Country Director for Plan Guinea-Bissau, "girls are also kept at home in order not to bring 'shame on the family' because they can be raped, they can have sex, lose their virginity or become pregnant".<sup>15</sup>

In many societies boys are also considered stronger than girls in every way. For example, in focus groups for this report, boys aged 12 to 14 from Nyakayaga in Rwanda said that: "Women are weak in their nature."<sup>16</sup>

These beliefs are not just held by boys, but by girls too. Girls aged 15 to 17 in Nyakayaga in Rwanda said: "Boys can choose to be in politics or doctors because boys have more powerful brains than girls." And 15 and 16 year-old girls in Gihogwe, Rwanda, said they thought "boys are more clever than girls. Girls are naïve."<sup>17</sup>

## FUNDAMENTALISM: REINFORCING TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES<sup>18</sup>

*"Religious fundamentalists want everyone to think their way. I can debate with people that disagree with me but not with people who think they have a direct line to God."*

Rev Debra W Haffner, United States

Research by The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) found that religious fundamentalist groups (defined for the purposes of the research study as those taking positions that are not open to debate, imposing a dogmatic vision and opposing democratic values, pluralism and dissent) are becoming increasingly powerful in shaping social norms and influencing international institutions and national decision-makers in some countries.

The targeting of women by religious fundamentalists is widespread. The study found that religious fundamentalisms may vary according to the global context in which they operate, but this global diversity is far outweighed by the core characteristics, strategies and impacts they share. In a global survey of 1,600 women's rights activists from countries which include Egypt, Nigeria, Brazil, USA, Israel and Pakistan, 77 per cent say women are frequently or sometimes targeted for verbal or physical attack: that is, women are exposed to violence simply because they are women. As an extreme example of the violence, some Hindu fundamentalists in India have encouraged the revitalisation of the practice of 'sati' (act of self-immolation of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres).

Some fundamentalist groups focus on sexual and reproductive rights, women's dress and mobility, women's 'morality' and freedom of sexual expression – although in different regions and religions they may emphasise one or other issue more strongly. In Uganda, for example, Pentecostal churches mobilised their congregations to sign petitions against ratification of the African Union



Domestic duties.

Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa in protest at its provisions around reproductive health and rights.

In Pakistan, religious fundamentalists led a vigorous campaign inside and outside Parliament to prevent the repeal of the highly discriminatory Hudood Ordinances governing rape, adultery and various other sexual crimes. These laws, introduced in 1979 by then President General Zia Ul Haq, were intended "to bring in conformity with the injunctions of Islam". Their effect has been to blame and punish women who have been raped; sometimes imposing the death sentence on them while the rapists have gone unpunished.<sup>19</sup>

In Malaysia, there is a campaign to introduce laws similar to the Hudood ordinances, while in Nigeria, virginity testing has been introduced as a precondition to academic scholarships or graduation by some Christian colleges; and in Nicaragua, one women's rights activist reports that due to campaigns against condom use and lack of information about sexuality, "AIDS among adolescent women has increased 175 per cent over the last four years".<sup>20</sup>

The research also found that religious fundamentalists promote a dominant, male-centred, patriarchal and heterosexual model of the family. According to the vast majority of women's rights activists surveyed, presenting rigid gender roles within the family on religious grounds as 'natural' is an important strategy for some groups across regions and religions.

The research is based on 1,600 women's rights activists who responded to AWID's Resisting and Challenging Religious

Fundamentalisms survey, as well as 51 key experts who were interviewed for the project. Together, they represent a diverse group: working at local, national, regional or international levels in various regions, and in organisations that range from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to government and multilateral agencies. They include academics, human rights defenders, youth and development workers, as well as members of religious organisations.



Chopping firewood in Rwanda.

### 3 “Following his path” – the importance of fathers

*“I talk to my daughters about their studies and about who they are involved with. Nowadays, parents are more affectionate than before... they care more about the children. We [fathers] didn’t use to talk a lot, we only used to work.”*

Father in Brazil, from focus groups for Plan research<sup>24</sup>

*“It is wrong when the father doesn’t want the daughters to study, because this will not do them any good. The father will just isolate them from the world, and they will not be able to see its many faces.”*

Young man, brother of one of the Plan cohort girls in Brazil<sup>25</sup>

A father’s role is crucially important when it comes to engaging men and boys to achieve gender equality. How he treats his wife and daughters will limit or enhance their potential and choices in life. But it will make a difference to his sons too. Because the family is where we learn how to be male and female, a father who does his fair share of domestic work, who values and educates his children equally, who cuddles his sons and daughters and treats his wife as an equal will have a powerful impact on how his son grows to be a man and treats his own family.

Being an involved and responsive father is good for both fathers and their children.

*Family life in Nepal.*



ALF BERG

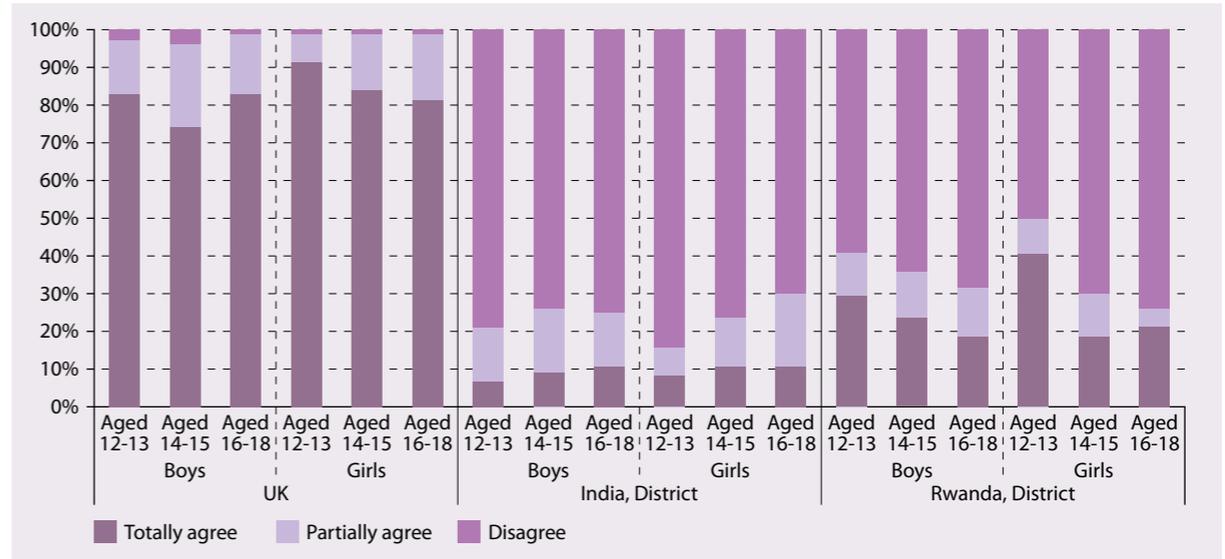
As we will see in the next chapter, these ideas held by girls about their intelligence will determine what they choose to study and what not to study.

These views of girls’ strength compared with boys’ are not based on fact. As Tanushree Soni, Plan’s Regional Gender Program Specialist in Asia, points out, in India there is a mismatch between perception and reality. “Although traditionally girls are perceived as only contributing to non-manual household chores, they are often responsible for extremely physical duties such as tending cattle or collecting firewood.”<sup>21</sup>

It is not surprising then that many boys develop a belief that they are more important than girls – and that girls internalise this too.<sup>22</sup> The belief that boys come first will underpin gender relations and impede equality for their rest of their lives. And it has a downside for boys too – it could be argued that because they are allowed to do what they like, they fail to learn about responsibility<sup>23</sup> and they may put themselves more at risk of injury or accident. We will be examining how this might impact on boys once they get to school in the next chapter.

### Parenting

Plan research shows that 97 per cent of children in the UK say ‘parents must take equal responsibility for their children’. In Rwanda 32 per cent of participants agree, while in India this figure drops to 24 per cent. These findings indicate that in the UK fathers and mothers do distribute responsibility more equally and the notion of rigid divisions of household roles are breaking down.



Research has shown that men who are positively engaged in the lives of their children or stepchildren are less likely to be depressed, to commit suicide or to be violent.<sup>26</sup>

They are more likely to be involved in community work, to be supportive of their partners, and to be involved in school activities.<sup>27</sup> Research also shows that boys with more involved fathers are less likely to take part in risky sexual behaviour<sup>28</sup> and are more likely to start having sex at a later age.<sup>29</sup> Boys who grow up around positive male role models are more likely to question gender inequities and harmful stereotypes, says the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).<sup>30</sup> A study of American, Australian, Colombian, Indian, Palestinian and South African 14 year olds found that adolescents who are well connected with their parents – who feel understood, are cared for and get along with their parents – have more social initiative, fewer thoughts about suicide and less depression.<sup>31</sup>

For many young men and boys, this role may be played not by the biological father, but another man who plays a mentoring

or fathering role. This might be an uncle, brother, grandfather, stepfather, faith leader, community leader, teacher or coach.

As Joao, aged 19, from Rio Janeiro, said:

*“I look to my uncle. He’s an engineer, a carpenter, does almost everything. He’s never out of work. At home, he has the function of doing everything. He’s always taking care of things, accepting responsibilities, and he always makes sure that nothing is lacking at home.”<sup>32</sup>*

Supportive male relatives have a big role to play in protecting girls – for example, from early marriage or female genital mutilation. In Sudan, for example, Plan carried out awareness sessions on the negative impact of traditional harmful practices such as child marriage. Community and religious leaders, teachers, parents, children and government officials were all involved. They held workshops, debates, discussions and open days using songs, drama, posters and video. Ahmed, aged 16, says: *“The key factor that can determine the eradication of traditional practices such as early marriage is the change of attitude and behaviour of people who practise them. It is essential*

*to raise awareness of people in our area through enlightening them about the negative impacts of such practices. We are so happy and proud to play a role in this initiative. I am glad to say that many families are convinced to stop this practice. They now allow their girls to continue their schooling.*"<sup>33</sup>

On female genital mutilation (FGM), for example, men may be able to convince the community in a way that is difficult for women.

Nasser is on the Gender Committee for his area, a slum in southern Cairo. "I lobby other men now about FGM. I say: 'God wants us to take care of our daughters'."

Mohamed, aged 14, says: "Now that we know about FGM it is very important to support girls in this."

Hoda, another member of the committee, says: "When they include men in the awareness sessions, it makes it easier for us women to convince others."

But negative role models are all too common. Boys and young men who observe fathers and other men being violent towards women believe that this is normal behaviour. A 2010 study of six countries by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Instituto Promundo found that the single most important factor for men who were violent at home was that they had been victims of violence when they were children: either abused and beaten themselves, or witnessing the abuse of their mother.<sup>34</sup> Other factors that contributed towards violence were low levels of education, work-related stress, inequitable attitudes, poverty and alcohol abuse.

Many separated fathers have little to do with their children, or even lose contact with them altogether – in the UK, one in three children whose parents separated or divorced over the last 20 years revealed that they had permanently lost contact with their father.<sup>35</sup>

#### **AND HOW WILL YOU REMEMBER ME, MY CHILD? REDEFINING FATHERHOOD IN TURKEY<sup>36</sup>**

Yusuf Akhan was making a life for himself in Istanbul. The grandson of a shepherd, Yusuf had left school to work at 13 and eventually became a barber. He was providing for his wife and young son's basic

needs. But he felt something was missing.

One evening, Yusuf attended a meeting at the local school where someone introduced the Father Support Programme. He says: "It was exactly right for me... just what I was looking for. My own father fulfilled his role as a father by bringing home food and protecting us. To him, that was fatherhood. But we lacked love. He did not play with us or spend time with us. He would beat my mother and us. I don't undervalue or disrespect him, but it made me feel some kind of weakness – that somehow, one has no power. And I had become a version of my father. Not exactly like him, but a kind of copy. My father could not express his emotions, his caring. I was the same. This is something I knew was a problem."

Yusuf enrolled in the programme, offered by the Mother Child Education Foundation of Turkey (AÇEV), a non-profit organisation supported by the Ministry of Education. It works with literate fathers with children between three and 11. The goal is a broad one: for fathers to play a more effective and positive role in the development of their children.

The idea for a programme for fathers came from women who were attending a 25-session mothers' support group run by AÇEV. These women were learning a lot about child development and parenting, but they still encountered problems at home with child rearing. According to AÇEV co-founder Sevda Bekman: "The women were happy with the Mother Support Programme but found the fathers to be the obstacles. The husbands were not supporting what the women had learned. The mothers kept telling us: 'We need a project for fathers!' They wanted their husbands to learn as well and to become more involved."

Yusuf was one of those fathers. Together with 16 others, he participated in 13 weekly sessions, led by an AÇEV-trained facilitator. It was not easy: "In my social life and at work my friends teased me about the programme. Our community doesn't accept such things; they think we know these things automatically from our culture. In Turkey, women can share

things among themselves, but some men don't share family problems with other men. I didn't take the teasing seriously. This is something that I believe in from my heart. My problem is my problem, with my family. So I carried on."

Yusuf says he learned many things, but perhaps the most important was good communication: "A child needs attention. If you build good communication, you can have good relationships. Problems can be solved by listening, by spending time. I needed to allocate time to my wife and child. I started to see and feel: 'Something is about to change.' Then my child started to talk a lot to me. A lot. And he noticed I was listening. Now, I try to show my son the love, attention and care that I lacked from my own father."

To date, 1,300 father groups have been formed and the programme has reached 32,000 fathers and children.

When fatherhood is supported as a positive aspect of masculinity, everybody benefits, especially girls. Njoki Wainaina, a gender activist from Kenya, notes: "My father was a strong believer in equal opportunities for girls and boys. I am therefore a product of a man's determination to achieve social justice because he believed that as a Christian to do so was divine command. My late father fought female circumcision with every weapon, including physical confrontation; gave us girls every opportunity he gave our brothers, including inheritance; refused dowry, defied society and patriarchy in all ways and left a legacy that laid a foundation for the women and girls in our family to claim equality. He also became a model which society could ridicule, envy, question, emulate or oppose, but which could not be ignored."<sup>37</sup>

Nihat Aydın, a father on the Fathers' Support Programme, Turkey, said of his father: "He was a great father. He did not know how to read or write, but he knew the democratic way. I want to follow his path."<sup>38</sup>

Instituto Promundo did a review of fatherhood programmes in Latin America which showed that "various studies have found that having a non-violent father or male figure in the household is important

for boys to moderate aggressive behaviour and to be able to question exaggerated, rigid forms of masculinity. Many studies have also found that father presence for girls in some settings is associated with being able to form healthier, less subservient relationships with men and higher sexual autonomy."<sup>39,40,41</sup>

Plan Philippines has been supporting a programme which has successfully managed to get many fathers more involved in their families.

#### **PROUD FATHERS – SHARING THE BURDEN IN THE PHILIPPINES<sup>42</sup>**

It is a sunny morning. Dirty garments fill the plastic basin. It is time to go to the stream. Arlyn places the basin on her shoulder and with her other hand, carries an empty plastic water container. This used to be her daily routine. But most days now, it is Onyo, Arlyn's husband, who takes care of the laundry. "Occasionally, we do the laundry together in the stream. I enjoy it. We talk a lot about our plans for our family," says Onyo. He believes that his marriage has grown stronger since he has started helping out with household chores.

Onyo and Arlyn are one of the 1,337

*Sharing the household chores.*





## 5 The right start – early childhood development and gender equality

*“Huge steps can be made to empower girls if we begin the movement for gender equality in those first years of a child’s life.”*

Rima Salah, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director<sup>53</sup>

*“What young children learn now and what happens to them now will influence them for the rest of their life. The earliest years are the most determinant of the child’s psychosocial and cognitive development.”*

Erma Manoncourt, UNICEF Representative in Egypt<sup>54</sup>

Going to pre-school makes it more likely that a child will go to and do well in primary school. It can also promote gender equality at an early age. For example, in Latin America, UNICEF notes that:

“Comprehensive early childhood initiatives have been instrumental in challenging gender stereotypes that reinforce ‘machismo’ and keep women powerless in the family and society. In Peru, for instance, Iniciativa Papa, an early childhood project, strengthens the bond between fathers and tots through intensive male participation in child-rearing.”<sup>55</sup>

This kind of initiative is particularly important because it is more likely to be urban and relatively well-off working parents who send their children to pre-school or nursery.<sup>56</sup> As a report from the Bernard van Leer Foundation notes, “the kinds of children who are left out or left behind tend to be... from poor families. They are girls. They are disabled. They are children who don’t speak the right language, or whose skin is not the right colour. They are children who live very far away from the city or live in urban slums. They are children who have experienced political violence and who have grown up with war.”<sup>57</sup>

For example, in Côte d’Ivoire, almost 25 per cent of children from the wealthiest households attend pre-school programmes, but almost none of those in the poorest homes attend.<sup>58</sup> In Ghana, children from the richest homes are almost four times as likely to attend as those from the poorest.<sup>59</sup>

It is encouraging that the numbers of children enrolling in nursery school are increasing. In 2008 the global figure stood at 148 million children – an increase of 31 per cent since 1999.<sup>60</sup> And yet figures for attendance at pre-school are low compared to those attending primary school, which at the end of 2007 was estimated at 694 million, and vary hugely from country to country.<sup>61</sup> The experience of Samuel and his friends, below, shows the potential of good nursery education.



Playing together in Peru.



Samuel hard at play.

NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

### RED BEANS AND HARD HATS – A GENDER EQUAL NURSERY IN EL SALVADOR

*Nikki van der Gaag reports from Cabañas, in northern El Salvador, on an initiative to instil ideas of gender equality at an early age.*

Samuel has put on a blue apron to protect his clothes and is standing at the stove cooking beans in a yellow pot. He carefully fills the pot from another metal container and then shakes the beans so they will not burn. This will be ‘frijoles refritos’ (a dish of cooked and mashed beans), he tells me.

Samuel is not a famous chef or – yet – a man who likes cooking. But he probably has more chance of being either of these than his father or brothers.

Because Samuel is only four. He attends a nursery in Cabañas, in northern El Salvador. He is lucky – nursery provision in El Salvador is minimal. Only 1.8 per cent of children from birth to three and 57 per cent of those from four to six attend any kind of nursery.<sup>62</sup> And the nursery that Samuel attends is not just any nursery, but one of 56 in the country that are trying to promote gender equality from an early age. “People don’t understand the importance of providing early years

services – but we believe that we can challenge the stereotypes of what it means to be a boy or a girl by providing different possibilities in our nurseries,” says Beatriz De Paúl Flores, Plan’s Adviser for Gender and Child Protection in El Salvador.

Together with Salomon Cruz, in charge of Plan’s education work, Beatriz designed a gender equal programme for the Centro Bienestar Infantil (Early Years Wellbeing Centre). The programme is new: it has only been running for two years, and Beatriz notes that it is “a slow process, which needs to be sustained through time”. It was surprisingly difficult to find books and films that did not stereotype boys and girls, toys that were not just pink and blue or designated only for one sex, and dolls with realistic shapes and genitalia.

Beeri Yem Sanchez Rivera, one of the teachers in the centre, says she came to this nursery because “I wanted to learn more about gender, about how to help girls and boys relate better and to accept themselves and accept others”.

The programme also works with parents so that they understand what the nursery is trying to do. For example, they talk about non-sexist language and discuss the ways that boys and girls are expected to behave. Beatriz says they meet little resistance, although it is easier to get mothers than fathers to attend the meetings. “The parents see that we also teach children to behave, to eat their food, to relate well to each other. They see the benefits of early years education,”



In the kitchen corner.

NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

says Alexia Abrego, Plan's Community Development Facilitator in El Salvador. "The fathers see that the boys talk to the girls with more respect and that both boys and girls can share toys and spaces and play together. They see this as a positive thing."

Beatriz says she recognises that outside influences also shape children's attitudes, so Plan also works with the government to look at the school curriculum. They are already training people and institutions such as the Government's ISNA (Instituto Salvadoreño Para El Desarrollo Integral de La Niñez y La Adolescencia – Institute for the Integral Development of Children and Adolescents) in gender and early education and working with them on a national gender policy for early years.

Samuel, after a period of banging drums with his friend, has now moved on to feeding a baby doll. Next to him, Fatima, in a sparkling white doctor's coat, is listening to Valeria's heartbeat through a stethoscope. She has an expression of concentration on her face and Valeria gazes trustingly up at her. Most of the children come from poor families; Valeria is much smaller than her peers and it has taken her some time to adapt to the nursery, but she has made huge progress in the past months, says Beeri.

Of course, some little boys still want to wear hard hats and bang hammers and be builders or truck drivers, and the girls still want to dress as princesses, but in this nursery it is acceptable for the children to try out whatever roles they feel comfortable with. In a country with a strong tradition of 'machismo' behaviour and high levels of violence and sexual abuse, it will be interesting to see if their grounding at this early stage of their lives will mean that Fatima and Samuel and their friends will be able to forge the beginnings of a more equal and violence-free society.

As this story from El Salvador illustrates, the role of nursery education in promoting gender equality lies not just in what goes on in the classroom but on the impact it can have on the whole family. By reaching out to parents, attitudes can be questioned and family patterns challenged.

## 6 "Boys labour for payment, girls labour for love"

*"Housework is to be done by girls. It doesn't feel good if boys do housework."*  
Kanchan, 10, India<sup>63</sup>

*"My brother... doesn't move a finger. My mother spoils him a lot. When he arrives from school, he watches television until around four, and then he goes to the field to play ball and when he comes back my mother still has to cook for him. If she doesn't cook for him, he doesn't eat. Then he takes a shower and goes to bed and that's it."*

Lana, 16, Brazil, in a focus group for Plan research<sup>64</sup>

While women have moved into the workplace in huge numbers, the division of labour in the home still means that they do the bulk of the housework and childcare in most countries,<sup>65</sup> a model which is then handed on to their daughters and sons.<sup>66</sup>

We will be looking at how this affects relationships between partners and husbands and wives in Chapter 5. In this section we will examine the effect on the way that children perceive their roles in the home and how this affects both their confidence and their expectations.

The gendered division of household work is accepted almost everywhere and is true in the North and the South. One study undertaken by Plan in India found that 95 per cent of children – both boys and girls – said that girls should do the housework.<sup>67</sup> In our recent primary research there was also agreement, apart from in the UK, that "a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family". While only 11 per cent of all children in the UK "totally agreed" with this, the figure rose to 66 per cent in Rwanda and 74 per cent in India.

"Male children do not collect firewood, only female children are involved in the collection of firewood... Boys do not do daily [household] works, it is mainly the activities of females... The male children keep the cattle. I do not like to send my daughter to keep cattle. She helps me in the home," says one mother from rural Ethiopia.<sup>68</sup>



ALE BERG

This division is reflected in the experience of the girls themselves: in the Indian study above, 95 per cent of girls spent at least one and a half hours every day on housework, and 33 per cent spent three hours or more. Many said that they would be punished if they did not. The experience of Sabiya, a nine year-old girl from Delhi, is typical. She wakes up at six in the morning and fetches milk from the dairy before going to school. When she returns home she does school work, housework, eats dinner and finally goes to sleep at around 10 pm.<sup>69</sup>

Vietnamese children also said that girls do more housework. Three-quarters of children said that girls have to do more housework than boys, while boys have more time to study. And parents explained that this was partly because boys are more clumsy and careless and girls simply do a better job.<sup>70</sup>

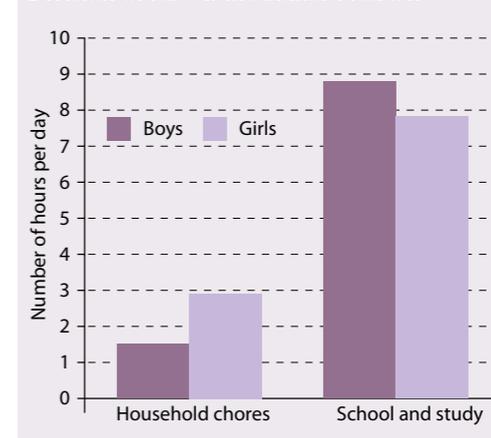
In one 15-year study of child poverty in Andhra Pradesh, research found that 14 to 15 year-old girls did more work in the home than boys, which left them less time for school and study.<sup>71</sup>

A gendered approach to work in the home teaches children not only that there

is a difference between 'men's work' and 'women's work', but also that the appropriate rewards are different for each. One expert notes that: "Children have reason to think that boys labour for payment, while girls labour 'for love'."<sup>72</sup> Research has shown that it is not just the amount of time spent but also the type of chores that parents assign to their children that helps create gender stereotypes.

*On the way home in Ethiopia.*

Division of labour in Andhar Pradesh<sup>73</sup>



Research on children's household chores in the US found that boys are typically given more independent outdoor tasks (mowing the lawn, shovelling snow) while girls tend to be assigned indoor tasks that must be supervised (helping to prepare food, cleaning the house or caring for younger children).<sup>74,75</sup>

Girls are also assigned more routine chores such as cooking and cleaning. Boys' chores, while encouraging their independence, also tend to involve less-frequent tasks, such as washing the car or taking out the garbage. And girls rarely earn money by doing domestic jobs, because these jobs are identified as female responsibilities. Infrequent tasks are seen by parents as ones deserving of payment, and therefore they are not likely to pay a daughter for washing the dishes, but they will pay a son for washing the family car.<sup>76</sup> Thus boys also learn that their work has monetary value, while girls' work does not. This domestic division of labour and the different values attached to men's work and women's work will follow these children all their lives. The gender pay gap is no accident, as we will see in Chapter 5.

## 7 Who should care for the baby? Responsibilities in the home

*"He complains that he is the only one who carries and looks after the babies. He says, 'Why is it only me who should care for the baby? Do you think that I am a girl?' He says, 'You should recognise I am a boy.' He says, 'Let the girls carry the children.'"*

Mother of 12 year-old Dibaba, Ethiopia<sup>77</sup>

*"I like to do outside work. It is good if the man does housework."*

16 year-old married girl from Rajasthan<sup>78</sup>

Findings from research carried out by the ICRW and Instituto Promundo in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico and Rwanda found that many men did not see work in the home or with children as their responsibility. For example, while only 10 per cent of men in Brazil agreed with the statement "changing diapers, giving kids a bath and feeding kids are the mother's responsibility"<sup>79</sup> it rises to 61 per cent in Rwanda and more than 80 per cent in India. The research found that younger men, men with more education and men who



Carrying the baby.

PLAN

saw their fathers do domestic work are more likely to carry out domestic duties.<sup>80</sup> When Plan researchers asked the same question of 12 to 18 year olds, 67 per cent of boys and 71 per cent of girls in Rwanda agreed, as did 83 per cent of boys and 87 per cent of girls in India.<sup>81,82</sup>

It is very clear where young children, both girls and boys, are learning their roles, and the following examples illustrate how hard it can be to cross the divide.

Girls from Shyamkat village in Uttar Pradesh said: "Boys should not do housework, it is wrong. A boy can't make 'rotis', he will not know how to do so and he will not be able to learn. We will do the housework."

"Girls should do housework; boys should earn outside," said a girl aged 10 from Bihar.<sup>83</sup>

"My sisters make fun of me when I say I will help in the kitchen. Even my mother laughs at me," said a 10 year-old boy in a school in Gorakhpur, India.<sup>84</sup>

In Gihogwe, Rwanda, focus groups of boys aged 12 to 14 said: "The majority of men fear to do home activities because they think they will be laughed at."<sup>85</sup>

Tufa, aged 12, from Ethiopia, says that he will not bake 'qita', a kind of bread, "because other children laugh at me if I bake. They say that I am acting like a girl." He says that being seen to bake qita is "shameful" and only boys with no parents would do it.<sup>86</sup>

But he is happy to do other household tasks – fetching firewood, making coffee, even cooking stew. Once, he says, he even did the washing with his father. Ranjana, age 12, says: "Whether it is housework or outside work, work is work. If the boy does housework and the girl does outside work, both are working. They are not forcing one another to do anything." Basanti, age 10, says: "It really feels good when a brother does some housework."<sup>87</sup>

Tufa is right to worry about being laughed at – boys who do 'girls' work' may be ridiculed, not just by their male friends but by their female friends as well. Cordelia Fine writes: "Cross-gender behaviour is seen as less acceptable in boys than in girls; unlike the term 'tomboy', there is nothing positive

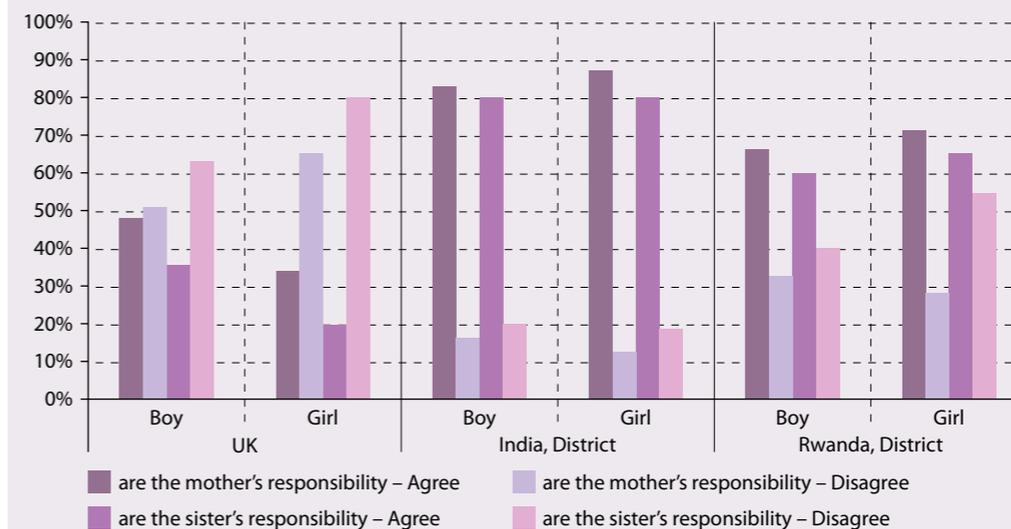


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Bedtime in Guatemala.

implied by its male counterpart, the 'sissy'." She notes: "Parents were aware of the backlash their child might, or indeed had, received from others when they allowed them to deviate from gender norms."<sup>88</sup>

## Changing diapers, giving kids a bath, and feeding the kids



### SANTHI THE WORK THIEF<sup>89</sup>

Santhi is from an adivasi or tribal family in Andhra Pradesh. She has always wanted to be a doctor and is criticised by her mother for spending time on studying and not on housework. Mothers can be as determined as fathers to make sure their daughters conform and do what is seen as appropriate for a girl.

*“Since my childhood I had the desire to become a doctor. I can help all if I become a doctor. Doctors treat some people differently. If they get an illness, doctors should treat them well, help them all equally. That is my wish.”*

Santhi spends lot of time studying at home in the evenings and prefers to help her father with his teaching preparation rather than doing household chores.

*“Sometimes I do help my mother; if I feel like helping I will help them. I don't do it daily but I help my father: he is a teacher, so I help him in preparing his teaching material. I enjoy doing that work; I don't like household work. My sister helps my mother; she does all that work, I don't.”*

This causes conflict with her mother, who feels that Santhi “does not bother about others” and is neglecting her responsibilities to the family. She compares Santhi unfavourably to her other two children:

*“[The] younger daughter shares everything [chores] with her brother. Those two are alike. Even if she does not know how to do it she will come forward to do it. This girl [Santhi] evades work. She is a work thief.”*

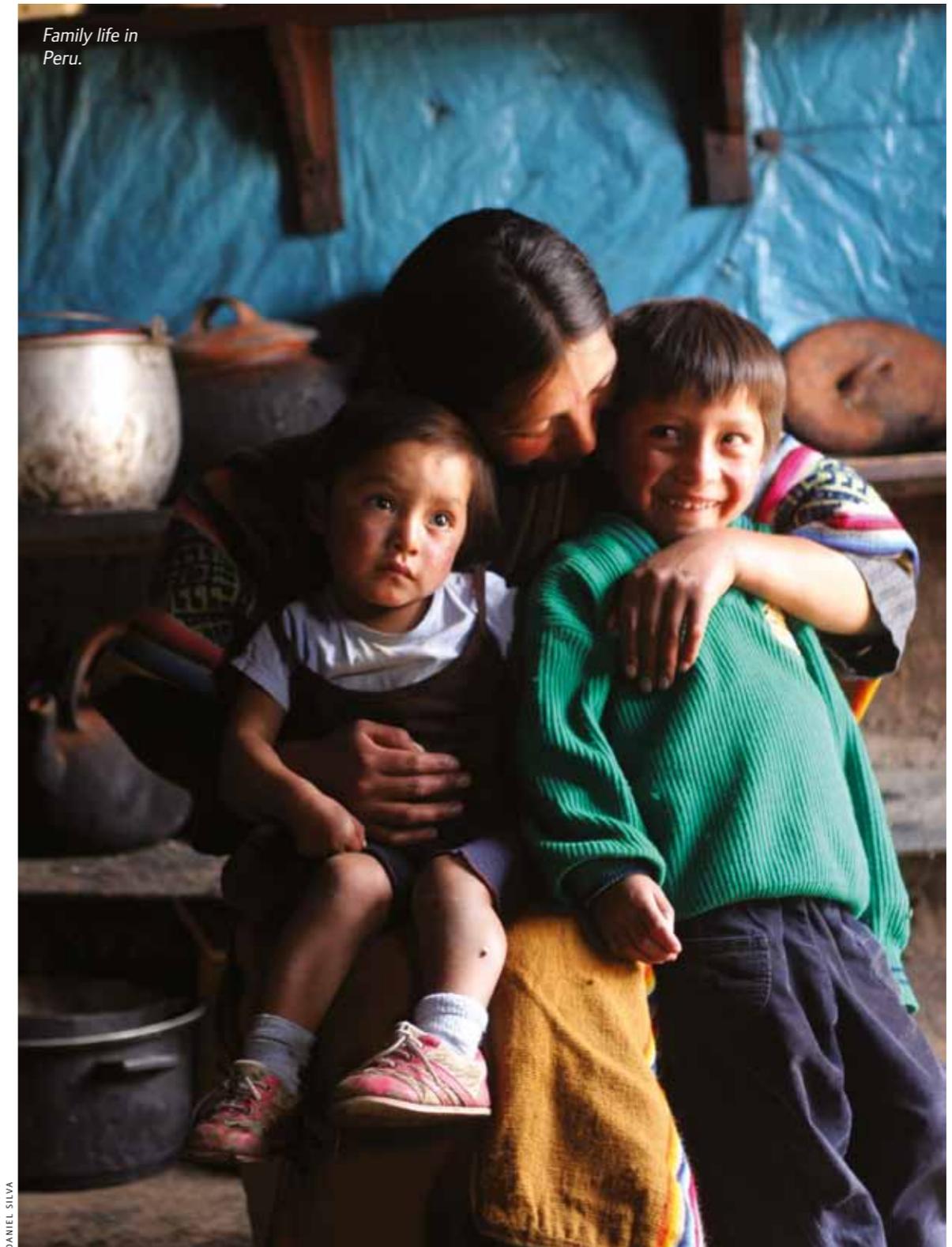
This chapter has shown how boys and girls are socialised from a very early age to conform to certain ideas of what it means to be male and female, and how this has an effect on how they behave throughout their lives. We have seen positive examples of how fathers have supported their sons and daughters, but we have also seen how violence in particular is passed on down the generations.

We have also seen the importance of early years education, and how positive models of learning at this age can build a firm foundation for the future. But we have revealed how even very young children face

a barrage of advertising, which increasingly forces them and their parents to choose stereotypical toys. We have shown how some children have successfully challenged these stereotypes.

We have also heard from boys and girls who question the roles that they find in the home, and who are working to behave in ways that share tasks more equally. Primary research for this report has found young people in many countries who are questioning what they learned as small children. Boys like these ones from Gasange in Rwanda, who say that: *“Parents should play a greater role in showing their children that they are equal both in the home and outside.”*<sup>90</sup> Or girls like Lana, aged 16, from Brazil, who says: *“If I were President I would enact a law for equal rights, a law saying that women and men could do the same things. If she cleans the house, he can do it too; and if she can cook, he can do it too!”*<sup>91</sup> These young people believe that they can do better than their parents in building a more equal world.

In the next chapter we will look at the influences children face when they move from their first institution, the family, to the next: school.



Family life in Peru.

DANIEL SILVA

# Moving Forward – Standing Still

## Primary Research, Plan 2011

*“A man has to do the same things that a woman does, and a woman can do the same things as a man... things are not for men or for women, they are for both of them, right?”*

Kelly, 16, Plan Brazil focus group<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Working with boys and men for gender equality requires an analysis of the different ways in which society socialises both girls and boys. By unpicking the messages that society sends girls and boys about how they should behave, what they should aspire to become and how they should behave towards one another, we can better understand how these messages can be challenged.

Plan's research with over 4,000 adolescent children aims to draw out the differences in attitudes and behaviours between boys and girls across different countries and contexts. We collected data through qualitative research methods (focus groups and interviews) in seven countries and conducted quantitative research (school-based surveys and online questionnaires) in Rwanda, India and the United Kingdom.

### Main Findings

Our research shows that although gender attitudes that are learned at a young age are internalised by both girls and boys, girls are more likely to hold transformative and progressive attitudes when compared to boys in the same country. This is especially so in the UK. Our research also reveals that the dynamics between girls and boys in India reflect a rigid social structure that has been internalised by both sexes. Children in Rwanda exhibited quite equitable attitudes, especially with regards to 'traditional masculinity'.

Economic advancement, legislation and other 21st century processes might prove instrumental in

shifting many entrenched social norms. However, evidence is not always encouraging. In India, a strong emerging economy, both boys and girls still reflect traditional gender stereotypes. Even in a high-income country like the UK our research found that a significant proportion of boys and girls still express traditional gender behaviours and attitudes.

### Key research findings

There are variations from country to country but the overarching conclusion must be that our families and schools are handing gender inequality, and violence against girls, down through the generations.

- 65 per cent of participants from India and Rwanda totally or partially agreed with the statement 'A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together'. A further 43 per cent agreed with the statement: 'There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.'
- 'A woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family'. While only 11 per cent of all children in the UK 'totally agreed' with this, the figure rose to 66 per cent in Rwanda and 74 per cent in India.
- 'Changing diapers, giving kids a bath and feeding kids are the mother's responsibility.' 67 per cent of boys and 71 per cent of girls in Rwanda agreed, as did 83 per cent of boys and 87 per cent of girls in India.
- Our survey showed, however, that children are actually happier when they see their parents sharing household responsibilities (eg when dads cook and do the laundry, both parents make decisions and when their mums spend their time in and out of home).
- Over 60 per cent of children interviewed in India for this report agreed that 'if resources are scarce it is better to educate a boy instead of a girl'.

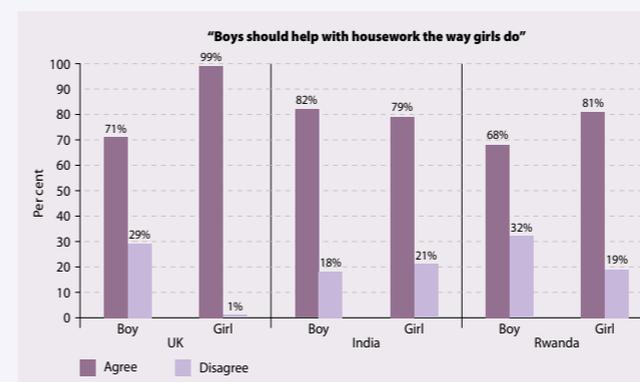
### Results

#### Making the private public

Attitudes about women's participation in politics and the labour force are very much linked to both legislation and wealth creation. In Rwanda, legislation has ensured women's parliamentary participation by stipulating that they make up at least 33 per cent of the legislators, although in the recent elections over 54 per cent of elected parliamentarians were women.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, increased economic development across all surveyed countries has meant opportunities for women to enter the workforce. Both these processes influence the ways in which boys and girls view women's participation in public life.

However, traditional attitudes can still be found among boys and girls in these countries. In Rwanda, which has the highest number of women legislators in the world, 33.68 per cent of boys and 30.17 per cent of girls agree with the statement 'women politicians are not as good as men politicians', which reflects how entrenched gender stereotypes can be, even in the face of robust and arguably successful legislation. In India, 55.18 per cent of boys and 55.52 per cent of girls agree, indicating that both sexes are equally split in regard to women in decision-making roles. Boys in the UK demonstrated similar attitudes to boys in Rwanda, while girls in the UK hold the most equitable attitudes – only 15 per cent of them agree with the above statement.

With regards to women's participation in the business sector, it seems boys are not convinced that women belong in positions of economic power. Only 49 per cent of boys in the UK, 52 per cent of boys in Rwanda and 61 per cent of boys in India agreed with the statement 'It would be good to have the same number of men and women leading top companies'. Girls, on the other hand, showed more support, with



67 per cent of girls in the UK, 51 per cent of girls in Rwanda and 73 per cent of girls in India supporting the statement. At the same time, over 80 per cent of boys and 83 per cent of girls in Rwanda agreed that 'women are taking jobs away from men'. In the UK, this percentage drops to just 17 per cent of boys and only 10 per cent of girls.

#### Burden of chores

*“The boys in my family don't do much of the housework. I do most of it as I am the only girl in my family, so it is expected of me.”*

Marian, 16, Timor Leste<sup>3</sup>

Household chores take up much of a girl's time, both in wealthier economies where working mothers rely on their daughters for support, and in the context of poverty, economic shock or deprivation. What is clear is that these chores are unevenly distributed amongst girls and boys. Indeed, girls spend anywhere between 33 and 85 per cent more time per day on chores around the house.<sup>4</sup> In India, almost half of girls of school age are engaged in household work.<sup>5</sup> As we show in Chapter 5, the ways in which girls are encouraged to take on responsibilities in household duties will continue to have a detrimental effect on their future wages. In the UK, 99 per cent of girls think 'boys should help with housework the way girls do'. It seems boys in the UK are equally aware of the unfairness of the situation, with 71 per cent agreeing with this statement.

At the same time we see that rigid norms about women's responsibilities have shaped children's attitudes across all three sample countries. Our survey shows that 11 per cent of all children in the UK, 66 per cent in Rwanda and 74 per cent in India 'totally agree' that 'a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family'.

When it comes to life satisfaction, it seems children's views are rather more equitable. Our survey showed that children are actually happier when they see their parents sharing household responsibilities (eg when dads cook and do the laundry, both parents make decisions, and when their mothers spend their time in and out of home).

#### Being a boy, being a girl

This study confirmed that attitudes regarding the value of educating girls is affected by gender socialisation. So much so, that girls

themselves believe their education is less important than that of their brothers. More than 50 per cent of girls and almost 68 per cent of boys in India agree with the statement 'If resources are scarce, it is better to educate a boy instead of a girl'. Boys also get their fair share of negative messages from society. According to our survey, 78 per cent of girls and 76 per cent of boys in Rwanda either partially or totally agree with the statement 'Boys don't cry', while in India only 65 per cent of girls and 73 per cent of boys agree with this statement.

These rigid ideas of masculine behaviour continue throughout adolescence and are further reflected in boys' and girls' attitudes toward relationships. Sixty-five per cent of boys and 66 per cent of girls from India and Rwanda think 'males should ask females to start a relationship, not the other way around'.

## Violence in the home

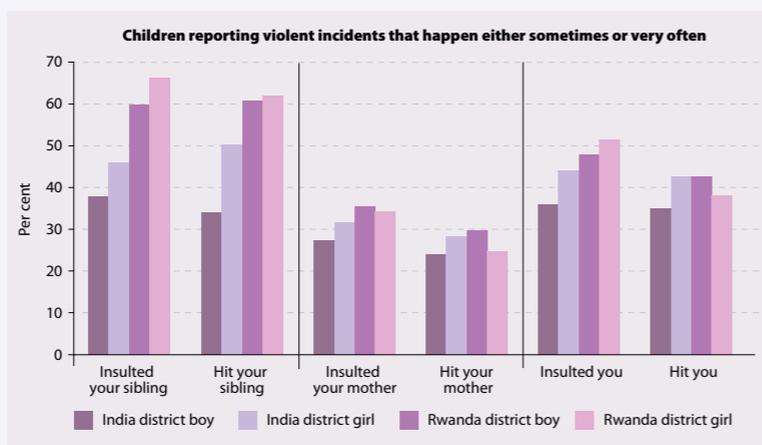
*"When I know that I have made a mistake and my parents beat me, I assume they are right and it doesn't make me angry."*

Girl, 9, Benin

Domestic violence is highly prevalent across the globe. One in four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime and studies in the UK estimate that domestic violence costs the economy £5.8 billion each year.<sup>6</sup> According to US studies, this phenomenon also has a severe impact on children there:

- Witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behaviour from one generation to the next
- Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults
- 30 to 60 per cent of perpetrators of intimate partner violence also abuse children in the household.<sup>7</sup>

In our survey we found that 40 per cent of participants in India and 50 per cent of participants in Rwanda are normally insulted by at least one member of their family. Half of the participants in both Rwanda and India said their siblings are insulted and hit either sometimes or very often.



Of the two countries, Rwanda showed higher prevalence of both physical (41 per cent) and verbal (49 per cent) violence.

Domestic violence affects more girls than boys across the globe – a fact that is verified in our study. Girls reported being more often affected by insults (44 per cent in India and 51 per cent in Rwanda) than boys (36 per cent in India and 48 per cent in Rwanda). However, more boys than girls report being subject to physical violence in Rwanda (43 per cent of boys compared to 38 per cent of girls). While in India this trend reverses, with 43 per cent of girls and 35 per cent of boys reportedly 'being hit'. This violence will continue to affect these girls throughout their lives. In fact, three out of 10 girls in India and Rwanda reported that their mothers are insulted or hit by someone at home.

Rigid gender norms serve not only to perpetuate power imbalances between the sexes but also to bolster deviant behaviours, making them acceptable. This is evidenced by the large percentage of children – 65 per cent of participants from India and Rwanda – who totally or partially agreed with the statement 'A woman should tolerate violence in order to keep her family together'. Indeed, a further 43 per cent agreed with the statement: 'There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.'

## Conclusion

Although the countries selected for Plan's study are vastly different in terms of economic, social and geographical location, many of the rigid gender norms that continue to disempower girls and boys are equally shared across the study. In the areas of violence against women, domestic responsibility, and the stereotyping of boys as hard and tough, many of the 12 to 18 year olds interviewed hold

views that might be described as traditional. A significant proportion of both girls and boys in India and Rwanda, for example, thought that a woman should tolerate violence if that would keep the family together, and the majority in those countries also agree that a woman's most important role is her domestic one. In the UK, where equal opportunities legislation has been in place for some years, only 49 per cent of boys agreed that it would be good to have the same number of women as men leading top companies. It is girls in the UK who are the most likely to challenge traditional roles, though interestingly in Rwanda there is a robust rebuttal from both girls and boys of the stereotype that 'to be a man you have to be tough'.

While we must understand that these findings reflect the views and experiences of a relatively small group of children, their attitudes and behaviours for the most part support the analysis in this report – both in terms of the stereotypes assigned to girls and boys, and in terms of their harmful implications.

It is also interesting to note, however, that the children interviewed for this study would prefer to live in less traditional families, with jobs and roles shared out more equally. It is this that should point the way forward. The younger generation may be affected by the stereotyping that surrounds them but they would prefer not to be. They have a vision of a different way of life that could be built on.

## Methodology

Due to time restraints and the availability of services, it was not feasible to collect nationwide representative data in India and Rwanda. For these reasons, we selected one district in each country. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for both selection processes prioritised population diversity, availability of child protection mechanisms and travel costs. To increase the variability in the sample, randomisation of schools was carried out after stratification on socio-geographical criteria of the selected district. This list was provided by the Ministry of Education. The selection of schools inside the stratum was shaped by school (random), grade (five grades assuming mean ages of 12 to 16) and whole-class groups.

UK participants were recruited through their parents – who are members of an online research panel managed and incentivised to comply with ESOMAR and the MRS (UK) standards. For our study, the proportions of participants match those of the wider UK population. More specifically, at 95 per cent confidence level, the margin of error for the whole sample is 3.5 per cent. Due to the format, the questionnaire used in the UK was shorter than in the other two countries. For this reason, some of the results shown in the next section do not include the UK.

As an international child-centred community development organisation whose work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Plan is committed to promoting the rights of children, including their right to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation.

Aiming to preserve the well-being of all

participant children, Plan refined an earlier child-friendly methodology based on the input of a number of colleagues as well as WHO (2005b) and Population Council (2005) guidelines.<sup>8</sup>

The quantitative component collected the opinions of 3,810 children from three countries: India (825 boys and 747 girls), Rwanda (677 boys and 550 girls) and the UK (506 boys and 505 girls). Their ages range from 12 to 18. Sixty-five per cent of them are between 14 and 16 years old. In terms of religious groups, 96 per cent of all participants from India are Hindu; 85 per cent of the children in the UK are Protestant, Catholic or other Christian; and 69 per cent of participants from Rwanda are either Catholic or Protestant.

## Aims

The study aimed to explore how children from different countries describe their life experiences, as well as their personal and family views on:

- Attitudes and behavioural intentions towards gender equality and parenting
- Masculine gender norms
- Use of time
- Different types of violence
- Life satisfaction

## Research instruments

This study used qualitative and quantitative instruments which greatly benefited from the following instruments and scales: the Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) Scale<sup>9</sup> and the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)<sup>10</sup> that is part of the Men and Gender Equality Policy Project (MGEPP) project.<sup>11</sup>

# Through the lens: family life in Benin

This year, members of cohort families in Benin were given disposable cameras and asked to photograph their daily lives, documenting who does what in their homes and in the wider community. These photographs were then used to promote group discussion about personal and community issues. They demonstrate how entrenched the division of labour between the sexes is.

The photographs were taken by both sexes of varying ages, and show the domestic details of cooking, fetching water, looking after children, lighting fires and, for the boys, playing football.

The commentary is illuminating and we can see that the project has given family members an opportunity to think about the ways they organise their lives and the traditions they take for granted.

*"A daughter's daily domestic tasks include washing dishes before going to school, whilst boys do not have any chores... If it is only the daughters doing the domestic work in a family, it is because parents believe cooking and cleaning is only a job for girls."*

Paterne, Ange's male cousin



Here we can see young boys and girls at school studying together. If girls do not attend school, it is because they are expected to stay at home and take care of their brothers and sisters. I myself believe that girls as well as boys should be sent to school, so I sent all of my children to school, without distinction between the sexes. Today, the current policy of our government calls for all girls to be sent to school.



This photo shows several women and girls cooking a family meal while the man is lying in his wheelchair and impatiently awaits the meal. Traditionally, it is the woman who does the domestic work and is responsible for cooking. I personally don't cook when my wife is available and healthy.

*Jonas*  
Charnel's father



In this photo, we can see a young girl carrying a basin containing small bags of water on her head to sell at the market, when she should be at school like other children of her age. It is surely a maid child. Here, many girls are sent away by poor families to more influential people hoping that they will be better taken care of, although this rarely ends up being the case. This is a very big problem because people have large families, and they prefer to take care of sons more than daughters.

Many people in our communities believe that to educate a girl is a waste, because when she grows up and gets married, her education will benefit her husband and the parents of her husband only.

*Florence*  
Ange's mother

The man in this picture has accompanied his wife to our local well. After having helped to draw water, he helped her to load a large bowl of water on her head. He also carried a bucket of water by hand, because men here do not carry things on their heads.

I never saw my father carrying objects on his head and I don't want to do it because it is not accepted here, and when I do people laugh at me. Girls and women make fun of boys and men who carry things on their head, which really puts us off doing it. If they didn't laugh, perhaps we would be less embarrassed to help carry packages on our heads, like Nigerian men for example.

*Remi*  
Albine's father



In this picture, we can see girls and women washing and peeling cassava, and a girl is also washing the pan that we use to make the soft paste of ground cassava in order to process it into flour.

In our communities, men and women's roles are clearly divided. It is women who peel the cassava and wash it, whilst the man's role is to help women dig up cassava and carry it home. During all my free time I help my parents, and even though I am a boy, I do lots of the cooking.

In our community, collecting cassava and producing the flour takes place mainly during the dry season, and sometimes during the rainy season. Nowadays, men are taking more of an active role in helping women with these activities.

*Sodjinin*  
Judith's cousin

In this picture, we can see a young girl preparing the evening meal while at the same time the young boys are playing football. Here girls cook and young boys play. Traditionally in our culture, women and girls cook whilst us boys play and help out with farming activities. Generally, only when women are sick or physically unable to cook can a man take over.

*Sulgence*  
Charnel's brother





# Changing our destiny – learning for life

# 3

## 1 Introduction: seeing the world as mine

*“My attitude towards girls has changed. In the beginning, families did not allow girls and boys to work together. Now we have learned how to deal with each other and we are a team. We don’t distinguish between boys and girls.”*

Mohammed, 14, Egypt<sup>1</sup>

*“If I weren’t educated, I would have been married early and had tons of kids. Education changed that destiny for me by teaching me my right to choose to marry the person I love. To also choose what I want to do; to see the world as mine, where I can go anywhere and do whatever I want as a human being.”*

Angélique Kidjo, Benin, musician, singer and performer and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador<sup>2</sup>

The next stage of the life cycle for girls and boys takes them out of the home and into school. There they encounter a whole new set of ideas and messages about what it is to be a man and a woman, and they meet peers who may challenge or reinforce what they have learned at home and in pre-school. The years of education are a crucial stage in their journey through life, and if children complete secondary education they are more

likely to believe in and to promote equality of the sexes.

The benefits of educating girls are clear. We know that this is probably the single most important factor in combating gender inequality. It has a direct impact on girls’ future prospects – building self-esteem, independence, and the possibility of making decisions about their own lives.<sup>3</sup> We know that educated women are more likely to send their own daughters to school and to be able to look after their families.<sup>4</sup> And research has shown that investing in girls’ education may also be good for a country’s economic prospects.<sup>5</sup>

What is perhaps less well known is that men who have completed secondary education are less likely to use violence against women, more likely to be present during childbirth, to be involved in childcare and hold more gender equitable attitudes.<sup>6</sup> Gary Barker, International Director of Instituto Promundo, says: “In other words, education for boys and men is good for men and boys themselves but also good for women.”

At this stage of a child’s life, as this chapter illustrates, education should be tackling gender equality head on, teaching boys and girls to question stereotypes, to respect difference and to support each other’s human rights. But first we have to ensure that all children, and particularly girls, make it to school in the first place.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK – ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Education is the cornerstone for the progress and advancement of a nation as a whole and of girls and women individually. The right to education is enshrined in key regional and international laws, as well as national legislation. The United Nations Millennium Development Goal 2 seeks to achieve universal primary education by 2015, with the target that “children everywhere, boys and girls alike... [are] able to complete a full course of primary schooling”.<sup>7</sup> Despite great strides towards universal education by 2015, persistent gender inequality undermines this progress, while fear of physical and sexual violence is keeping some girls out of school.

Recent court decisions highlight the need for greater state involvement and commitment to giving girls equal access to education by fighting discrimination, child labour, early marriage, bullying and sexual violence in schools. For example, in countries with higher rates of marriage, child labour, and harmful traditional practices, girls have poor access to education. This results in lower literacy rates, poorer health for girls, young women and their children, and unrealised potential.

Sexual harassment and violence against school-girls has been widely documented. Apart from deterring girls from attending and succeeding in school, sexual violence damages girls’ mental and physical health and well-being, and exposes them to HIV/AIDS and falling pregnant. In Zambia, after police refused to investigate the case of a teacher who raped a 13 year-old schoolgirl, the girl brought her case to the High Court to seek reparations and a better response from the authorities. The school had no policy for addressing sexual violence. Another girl abused by the same teacher had simply been transferred from the school. In 2008, the girl, RM, won a landmark victory against the teacher and the school. The decision became final after the Zambian government dropped its appeal to the case in August 2009. Apart from awarding RM significant damages for the “enduring psychological brutalisation” she had endured, the court also referred the case for possible criminal prosecution of the teacher and called on the Ministry of Education to issue regulations to prevent such conduct in the future.<sup>8,9</sup>



BONNIE MILLER

Paying attention in Nicaragua.

## 2 “School is a good thing” – so what prevents girls and boys going to school... and staying there?

*“School is a good thing. However, many parents say that it is not good to send girls to school. I have many things to do when I come home and even if I am tired, I sweep the floor, go to buy things for my mother. I do not have much time to do my homework.”*

Balovi Eliane, 10, Benin<sup>10</sup>

*“Teachers look down on us and treat us like we are bad.”*

Boy, Jamaica<sup>11</sup>

In the past, there was a huge gap between the numbers of girls and boys going to school. This gap still exists in many countries, but it is closing, thanks to international initiatives such as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and a push by national governments to increase the numbers of girls in school. This section will look at the different reasons why girls and boys do not go to school, or drop out along the way, and what this means for gender equality.

If you are a girl from a poor household and living in a rural area, you are 16 times less likely to be in school than a boy from a wealthy household living in a town.<sup>12</sup> In South and West Asia, girls account for 59 per cent of children not enrolled in school.<sup>13</sup> There are important disparities here between primary and secondary school, because it is at secondary school where girls tend to drop out. In India, data from between 2004 and 2008 demonstrates that the secondary school attendance rate for girls was just under 54 per cent compared with just over 61 per cent for boys.<sup>14</sup> This is important, because many of the skills needed to operate in a globalising world – international languages, critical thinking skills – are learned at this stage. It is also the stage that has the most impact on attitudes towards gender and the future behaviour of a young man or young woman once they become an adult. There are many reasons why fewer girls go to school than boys. A report from Plan Asia notes six key factors:<sup>15</sup>



ALF BERG

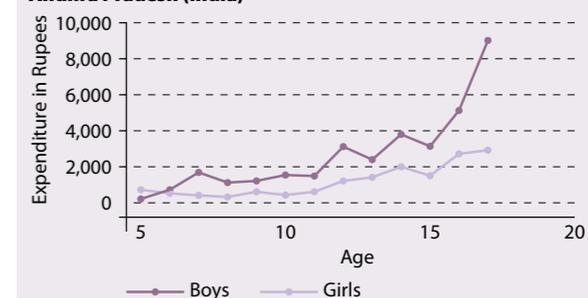
- Poverty
- Child labour
- Early marriage
- Dowry
- Illiteracy
- Son preference

*Not much time for studying in El Salvador.*

Of these, poverty is key. One mother from India noted: “How can I send my daughter to school when I can’t even buy her a notebook for two rupees?”<sup>16</sup> In an ideal world, most parents would like both sons and daughters to go to school but many are faced with hard choices. It is not just parents: over 60 per cent of children interviewed in India for this report agreed that “if resources are scarce, it is better to educate a boy instead of a girl”.<sup>17</sup> When money is short, it is often sons rather than daughters who are sent to school because parents believe they will support them in old age, while daughters will be married and live in their husband’s home.<sup>18</sup>

‘Young Lives’ is an international study of childhood poverty, involving 12,000 children

Mean expenditure on fees and extra tuition, Andhra Pradesh (India)



Note: includes all children within each household (ie Young Lives sample child plus siblings)



Preparing supper in India.

CONNELLY LA MAR

in four countries over 15 years. It is led by a team in the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford in association with research and policy partners in the four study countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam.<sup>19</sup> It found that in Andhra Pradesh, India, parents tended to send their sons to private school, which they felt provided the best education and where they could learn English and therefore have better employment prospects. Girls, however, were more likely to go to government schools if parents had to make the choice.

In 2002, when the first round of data was collected, 11 per cent of boys and nine per cent of girls aged eight in rural areas were in private education. In 2009, the figures were 39 per cent of boys and 23 per cent of girls. Kirrily Pells of 'Young Lives' notes that: "This illustrates not only the growth of private education, especially in rural areas, but that the gender gap is widening. This puts a large strain on household finances, with parents reporting taking out loans to pay for fees. These debt traps will inevitably impact on equality and in turn on poverty reduction."<sup>20</sup>

Boys, valued as future wage earners, are often seen by parents as a priority when

it comes to schooling. Girls may be kept at home to do the housework and look after younger siblings. Takliti Walet Farati, a non-governmental organisation fieldworker in Mali, who tries to persuade girls' parents to let them go to school, said that the opportunity costs are a significant barrier to girls' education. "I'd go and check why girls weren't attending school, to be told by their mothers, 'We can't let our daughters go to school. We need them in the home. They are our hands and feet!'"<sup>21</sup>

Fadimata Alainchar, Plan Country Director for Guinea-Bissau, notes that in many parts of Africa: "There is the mindset that girls don't need education to succeed in life; they need a wealthy husband. Many teachers don't see the need for the girls to be educated at all."

Pupils' own views are shaped at home from an early age. Changing parental attitudes remains really important, and the family decision-maker, more often than not the father, will need to be convinced of the value of educating daughters.

#### "DADDY, SEND ME TO SCHOOL!"

Haydi Kizlar Okula, a programme in Turkey, has reached 120,000 girls since 2003.

Volunteers, including teachers and community leaders, conduct door-to-door interviews with parents.

The volunteers go prepared with scripted answers to parents' objections to sending their daughters to school – poverty, long distances to travel, fear for girls' safety, early marriage, lack of school relevance, need for her labour in and out of the home, and religious prohibitions. Each protest is met with an answer that supports enrolling girls in school.



MARK HENLEY/PANOS PICTURES

On the way to school in Turkey.

The interaction not only advocates girls' education, it also identifies hidden barriers to schooling. Parents reported that they sometimes failed to enrol their children in school because of late or incorrectly filed birth registrations; fines for late birth registrations have since been abolished.

Neighbourhood mobilisation is reinforced by television spots featuring celebrities urging girls to go to school, public announcements about education in print and electronic media, and the distribution of promotional fliers, posters, brochures, booklets and videos. Offshoots from the Haydi Kizlar Okula campaign include a newspaper's independent push for girls' education, pleading the case with the slogan "Daddy, send me to school!"

Additionally, the Willows Foundation, a non-governmental organisation, has visited 120,000 homes and enrolled 9,000 out-of-school girls. The Foundation has developed a registration system with colour-coded cards based on the obstacle that has hampered school attendance. There is a follow-up visit by teachers in a parallel system to the national campaign.

Coffee-house projects have also sprouted in parts of Turkey, building on the tradition of hospitality and conversation. Volunteers lead discussions about girls' education in local coffee houses, usually with men. In a relaxed, supportive environment, men speak about their concerns with advocates, who then reassure them that sending their daughters to school is a good decision.<sup>22</sup>



DANIEL SILVA

#### Boys doing badly

*"The girls are more motivated, because we see at school that girls want something more than the boys: the boys just want to play, the girls don't, they're interested when the teacher tells about the homework. The boys don't, they just play, 'Ah, ma'am, I didn't do it'; and they lie, 'I didn't do it because I went to work'. I think this is why girls achieve more than boys."*

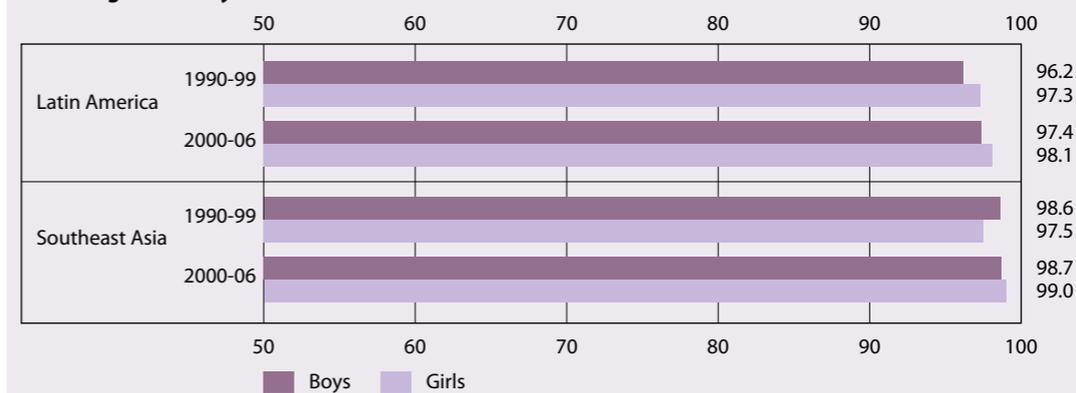
Having a laugh in Peru.

Thais, 11, from Brazil, taking part in a focus group for Plan for this report<sup>23</sup>

A gender gap has been emerging in schools in some countries in recent years, and it is not what the general public might expect. In the past, it was always boys who did best at school. But in the Global North and in Latin America and the Caribbean, girls are now overtaking boys, both in terms of their exam results and of how long they stay in school, as the chart below shows.

In the same regions, the study found that girls were also achieving the same or better

Percentage of 13-15 year olds who have ever attended school<sup>24</sup>



grades than boys. This is also true in the Global North – recent results in the UK revealed that the gap between boys and girls in terms of academic achievement is widening. In 2010, the pass rate for girls at General Certificate for Secondary Education level (age 16) was 72.6 per cent at A\* to C, compared with 65.4 per cent for boys. In 2009, the rate was 70.5 per cent for girls and 63.6 per cent for boys.<sup>25</sup>

#### BOYS ARE DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Take Juan, 17, from the Dominican Republic. He says: *“There are a lot more girls than boys in my school. Some of my [male] friends are already working, others don’t like to study. But I like studying and I would like to do something in music when I finish school.”*

Juan is the youngest in the family. He has one brother, Tony, and three sisters. Tony left school in Grade 7, but their older sister has just graduated from university, another sister is just about to start studying, and a third sister has just finished high school. His mother Ramona, aged 50, has gone back to studying because she wants to be a nurse. The women in Juan’s family have done much better than the men in academic terms. And this pattern is repeated throughout the country. Only 64 per cent of boys stay on to the last grade of primary school compared with 74 per cent of girls.<sup>26</sup>

“There is no doubt in my mind that male alienation from the school system does contribute to all the social problems that we have come across. To put it another way, if they were educated, I think that the negative trends that we have been emphasising – violence, irresponsible sexual behaviour and so on – would be much less,” says Barry Chevannes, professor of social anthropology at the University of the West Indies.<sup>27</sup>

Boys’ education makes a major contribution to gender equality. A multi-country study by the International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo involving 11,000 interviews found that men with secondary education showed more support for gender equality. They were less likely to be violent towards women, and more likely to participate in the care of children.<sup>28</sup>



BEN DEPP

Playtime in Haiti.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, notes the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI): “The region has substantial work ahead to make school, especially at the secondary level, attractive and welcoming to boys and young men. The consequences of illiteracy and under-education for boys and men have dire consequences for society. Courageously breaking the silence, many community leaders are calling attention to the phenomenon of gender disparity among boys and the resulting spike in violence and crime. This has been particularly problematic in Jamaica, where domestic abuse, gang lawlessness and crime are on the rise.”

In the North, there is increasing concern about the phenomenon of boys dropping out of school. A number of theories have emerged about why this might be. These include:

1 **Learning styles** Some educationalists think that there has been increasing emphasis on improving girls’ education; the curriculum in some countries – but clearly not in all – has become ‘feminised’<sup>29</sup>; for example,



DAVID ROSE/PANOS PICTURES

Making the grade, girls at school in the UK.

promoting learning styles that are about sitting quietly and getting on with the work rather than more active ways of learning that might suit boys better.<sup>30</sup>

#### 2 Teachers’ expectations of boys and girls

Teachers may have their own stereotypes about boys and girls and how they should behave which they transmit in the classroom. One study in Finland found that more than half the teachers had traditional views on gender, and brought these into the workplace.<sup>31</sup> In addition, there is often little about gender in teacher training curricula that helps teachers to be more aware of their own preconceived ideas.<sup>32</sup>

#### 3 Good results are ‘a girl thing’

Boys feel that succeeding at school is a female rather than a male aspiration. Appearing weak or too keen or asking for help is seen by boys as ‘feminine’. “Part of why girls are really kicking boys’ butts is it’s become feminine to be smart, or it’s become feminine to have a strong work ethic. And to counter, it’s become masculine to be a bum or to be lazy or to not appreciate work,” says B Lesley Cumberbatch, of CW Jefferys Collegiate Institute, Canada.<sup>33</sup> The pressure on boys in these countries is not to achieve – but to fail. This also leads to teachers themselves expecting boys to be disruptive and not to work – see the next section on teachers’ expectations. A survey in Canada found that “parents of 15 year-old girls are more likely to expect their daughter to complete a university degree than parents of boys of the same age, and that boys are less likely to report that all their friends intend to go to university.”<sup>34</sup>

#### 4 Lack of role models for boys in school

In some countries, there are very few male teachers, except in leadership positions. So boys do not have good male role models in school, particularly in early years education. In England, for example, between 2009-10 there were only 44 male full-time nursery teachers registered, and in 2010 there were no male trainee nursery teachers registered at all.<sup>35</sup> This trend is prevalent in Brazil as well, where only one in 1,000 daycare workers are men.<sup>36</sup>

5 **New technologies** Boys’ work and study time may be more affected than girls’ by new technologies. A 2007 Harris poll found that teenage boys in the United



STEFAN BONES/PANOS PICTURES

Engrossed in video games in Germany.

States spend an average of 18 hours a week playing video games – girls spend about eight. Mr Weis, an assistant professor at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, undertook a study that found that boys aged six to nine who owned a video-gaming system at home spent less time doing homework, reading for fun or being read to by their parents. After barely five months, their scores on reading and writing assessments were significantly lower than those of the boys who didn’t own a console.<sup>37</sup>

#### 6 Child labour

Boys are more likely to be withdrawn from school in order to work on the family farm or to earn money for the household.<sup>38</sup> While girls are also withdrawn to help with younger siblings



PLAN

Earning a living in Haiti.

or domestic tasks, they may sometimes be able to juggle these chores more easily with school than boys who work outside the home.

Experts do not necessarily agree on all these factors, so more work needs to be done on examining this issue. Class, with poverty and ethnic origin as well as gender, may also have a role to play. In many countries where boys are failing, working-class boys, those from ethnic minorities, and those from poor neighbourhoods, are more likely to see school as something for girls and to state that it is not cool for boys to be seen to be keen on education.

### JAMAICA: CHANGING SCHOOLS TO CHANGE BOYS' BEHAVIOUR<sup>39</sup>

Jamaica has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, mostly committed by young men. Their socialisation begins at home but continues in a society that holds strong stereotypes about male behaviour: homosexuality, for example, is still illegal in Jamaica. The dominant culture in many of the country's comprehensive schools reflects the attitudes and expectations of wider society rather than presenting an alternative to it. As a result, boys also learn to adopt a 'macho' and disruptive attitude within school.

Boys' underachievement is evident at all levels of schooling. According to a recent World Bank assessment, 30 per cent of boys were reading below their grade level by Grade 6, and this proportion continued throughout their schooling. This trend in schools may not be helped by teachers permitting boys to play and be ill-disciplined, thus excluding them from the learning that the girls, who are expected to be more 'domesticated' and 'docile', are getting on with.

In this context, the Jamaican education system has a key role to play in addressing the problem of youth violence and fostering socially and emotionally well-adjusted children.

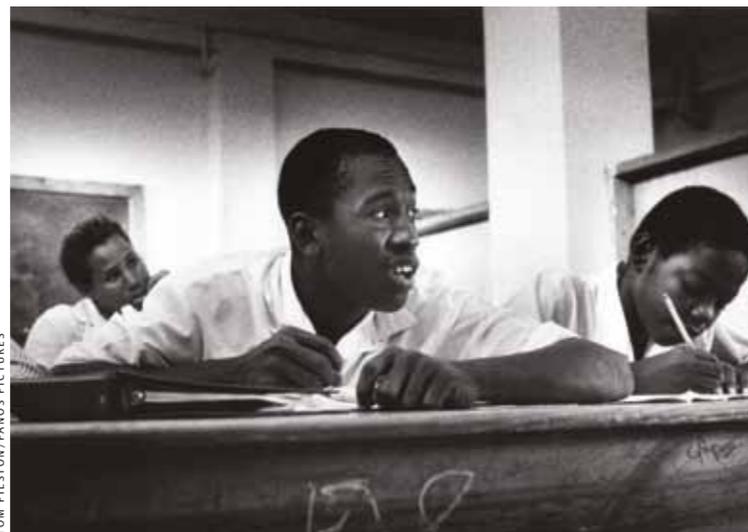
The 'Change from Within' programme attempted to move beyond an exclusive focus on academic performance – for example, test scores and 'chalk and talk' teaching. The programme started

a new initiative aimed at promoting and intensifying boys' achievement in Jamaican schools. The programme has two strands. One is a participatory action research strategy involving the community, students, teachers, administration and parents. The second is the adoption of strategies to promote change and build cooperation among the schools. A review of the programme found that it succeeded in reducing school violence "by identifying and building on positive features in schools, and by changing a culture of dependency on external interventions to one of self-reliance".<sup>40</sup>

There is a clear divide between the countries where boys' educational achievement has become a problem – mainly upper- and middle-income countries, including Latin America and the Caribbean, and those countries where girls still struggle to get an education equal to that of their brothers. What is clear, however, is that completing secondary education for girls and for boys is associated with better livelihoods, higher incomes, better health and more empowered girls and more gender equitable boys.

For both girls and boys, education is important not just for what they learn at every stage of their schooling, but for the social skills and experience they also acquire as part of the package. Education has huge potential for building a positive

Adolescents in school in Jamaica.



TOM PILSTON/PANOS PICTURES

foundation for their adult lives – but negative experiences of school may also put children off learning forever and reinforce negative stereotypes of the opposite sex that are then hard to shake off.

### PARIVARTAN – USING SPORT TO CHANGE BOYS' ATTITUDES<sup>41</sup>

*Sport is an effective way of engaging boys and young men. Parivartan uses cricket to work on gender equality in India.*

Parivartan, which means 'change for the better', aims to help boys and young men to see women and girls as equals, and treat them with respect, and in doing so reduce gender-based violence. It does this by working with men and boys through cricket, which is hugely popular in India. Launched in March 2010, the programme enlists cricket players, coaches and community mentors to serve as positive role models for school-age boys in more than 100 Mumbai schools. It teaches that aggressive, violent behaviour doesn't make them 'real men' – nor does it help win cricket matches.

"I've learned how to be polite, how to talk, how to be respectful to girls and women," said Jadhav.

"I've learned that controlling is not a way to love a girl, but [the way to love] is to give her space in her life," said Parivartan mentor, 20 year-old Rajesh Jadhav.

Leena Joshi, director of Apnalaya, one of the main local partners in the Parivartan programme, told Gillian Gaynair from the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) that she believes the effort is timely – if not overdue. "We have all worked – NGOs, governments – on women's issues very specifically," Joshi says, "and I think in the whole process, the men have been left behind."

The Parivartan programme is an initiative of ICRW in collaboration with Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF), Mumbai School Sports Association (MSSA), Apanalya and Breakthrough.



MICHAEL BISCEGLIE

### 3 Quality as well as quantity – how to teach about gender in maths lessons

Adding it all up in Bolivia.

*"Boys are better mathematicians because they think in [sic] deeply and try to find better solutions."*

Study in Pakistan<sup>42</sup>

*"If teachers and others, consciously or unconsciously, falsely communicate that boys are less able to learn languages, or that girls are less capable of mathematics and science, the students' self-confidence may suffer, and they may lose interest for such subjects."*

Norwegian White Paper<sup>43</sup>

While many Northern countries are struggling with the reasons for boys' underachievement, they may at the same time continue to reinforce gender stereotypes in the classroom and in the way schools are run and perceived by the children. UNESCO's 2007 Education for All Monitoring Report notes that: "Teaching materials tend to promote gender-specific roles, for instance portraying male characters as powerful and active and females ones as sweet, weak, frightened and needy. Game playing can often conform to stereotype, with boys playing with blocks and girls in the 'housekeeping corner', and with girls in general having less access to the larger and more active toys and playground space." An Australian study noted that: "Teachers' simplistic and essentialist understandings of gender drive much of the curriculum and pedagogy in our schools, and more

specifically many of the programmes designed to address the educational needs of boys."<sup>44</sup>

Specific subjects may also be seen as 'more appropriate' for girls or boys. Maths and Science, for example, may (both consciously and unconsciously) be perceived as boys' subjects, while English or History are seen as female. Students make their choices accordingly – in England in 2006, for example, only 37 per cent of 16 to 18 year-old students taking A-level mathematics were young women, but they made up 65 per cent of modern foreign language students.<sup>45</sup> A Norwegian study found: "Boys are more positive in their assessments of their own facilities for mathematics than girls with similar achievements in maths. Girls seem to need to perform about half a grade better than boys before they have faith in their facility for the discipline of mathematics."<sup>46</sup>

A Norwegian White Paper noted that a study of 15 year olds found that: "Boys show more interest in 'hard topics' such as technology and space... girls tend to show more interest in topics that have more possibility for mystery, wonder and philosophy."

Answers by Norwegian youth were compared with results from other countries: "The results show that the gender differences are actually greater in modernised than in traditional societies. Norwegian students were more obviously choosing typical 'girl topics' and 'boy topics' than students in Malaysia, for example."<sup>47</sup>

In Pakistan, there are socially and culturally rooted issues which influence teachers'

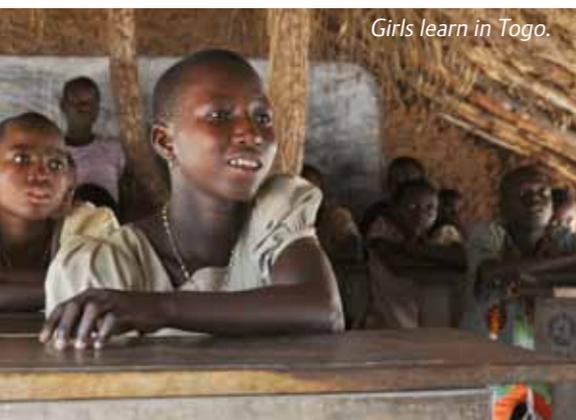


ROLAND GEISHEIMER

views about girls and boys as learners of mathematics. For example, one survey of a cohort of in-service teachers comprising 80 per cent women and 20 per cent men asked teachers to respond to the statement: "Boys are better mathematicians! Do you agree? Why? Why not?" Almost 86 per cent agreed that boys were better mathematicians.<sup>48</sup> In developing countries, lack of resources and entrenched traditional views may also mean outdated textbooks and an old-fashioned curriculum. For example:

*In many countries, teachers struggle with outdated curricula.*

- In Togo, fewer than one in three of the teachers is trained, exposed to contemporary educational theory or gender issues or encouraged to think creatively about what and how to teach to promote human rights and gender equity. Some of the girls interviewed by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) commented that the textbooks they are using "are full of negative stereotypes of women".<sup>49</sup>
- In Nicaragua, educational authorities recently approved a module on sexual education, popularly known as the 'catechism of sexuality', to be used at schools. Far from challenging violence and gender discrimination, it reinforces gender roles and stereotypes.<sup>50</sup>
- In Guinea, teachers were found to express familiar stereotypes about women and men and to believe boys typically learned lessons well, gave good responses, and manifested ambition; while girls were seen as timid and not as hard-working as boys.<sup>51</sup>



Girls learn in Togo.

FABRICE BOULAIS

- In Kosovo, one of the legacies of war is a lack of resources to train all teachers or replace outmoded textbooks. Students are still confronted with schoolbook images of passive girls and women in traditional roles and only boys and men depicted as leaders.<sup>52</sup>

There are huge challenges here, with some countries struggling with boys' under-achievement and others still working with materials and methods that treat girls as the inferior sex. But there are some examples of good practice where governments are working towards a more gender equal approach in the classroom and outside it. They are showing that taking a gender sensitive approach benefits both girls and boys.

For example, in Cambodia, children's rights and gender have been integrated into the national curriculum and the government has adopted a child-friendly school policy. Children's rights and positive discipline are being included in the teacher training curriculum across the whole country, based on government directives on the rights of the child.<sup>53,54</sup> Other countries, including Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone, capitalising on post-conflict momentum, have included peace and conflict resolution, human rights and gender equality issues in the national curricula.<sup>55</sup>

In Somalia, Mohammed Abdirahman Jama, a 39 year-old teacher trainer, says: "Gender training is a key issue. In the past,

male teachers – and even bigger boys – harassed the girl students and teachers. Now we discuss how to involve girl students and how to encourage women headteachers and community leaders."<sup>56</sup>

While educational institutions often mirror and replicate the traditional gender roles and identities that are found in the wider society, schools can support children's capacity to challenge these roles. But in order to do so, everyone in the school, from the head to the youngest pupil, needs to be involved. Only then can they build a foundation that truly addresses gender inequality along with other social injustices.

#### 4 "I tried to fight him" – violence in school

*"Since joining this group, I have been advocating in my school to stop the use of abusive language to girls and women."*

Mohan, 16 year-old boy, India, involved in boys' group on gender equality<sup>57</sup>

*"I tried to fight him, but I do not have strong feet [due to polio]. He raped me... I was not able to attend school since then. The exam is going on and I am missing it. I ranked first in my class in the first term..."*

12 year-old girl, Sierra Leone<sup>58</sup>

All too often, the violence that is learned at home is perpetuated once a child goes to school. Plan research for this report found that 35 per cent of children in India and 16 per cent in Rwanda have at some point stopped attending school due to fear of being attacked by others.<sup>59,60</sup> In Ghana a study revealed that 14 per cent of rape cases committed against girls had been perpetrated by school fellows, while 24 per cent of boys in the study admitted to having raped a girl or to have taken part in a collective rape.<sup>61</sup> In Norway, a government White Paper noted that "as many as 10 per cent of Norwegian girls had experienced at least one incident of sexual intercourse against their will. For 19 year olds the statistic is 17.5 per cent." The paper goes on: "These are frightening statistics that indicate that schools must work seriously with students' attitudes towards sexuality, body image and boundary setting."<sup>62</sup>



Surviving at school.

MARK READ

Keeping her safe.



ALF BERG

#### LEARN WITHOUT FEAR

*"After the war, when I was 14 years old, my mother decided to send me back to school in Kolahan town. I had to drop out one year later. The 45 year-old teacher approached me and I became pregnant. I have a baby now but apart from my mother no one helps me take care of it. The teacher denies what happened and refuses to pay for the child."*

17 year-old Liberian girl<sup>63</sup>

Research done across four countries, using data from child helplines, shows that one in every 30 children who contacted the helplines was affected by sexual abuse.<sup>64</sup>

There is increased evidence that male students are largely responsible for sexual violence in schools, especially against girls.<sup>65</sup>

- In the Central African Republic a study revealed that 42.2 per cent of secondary school boys in Bangui admitted having perpetrated sexually violent acts in or around the school.<sup>66</sup>
- In Ghana a study revealed that 14 per cent of rape cases committed against girls had been perpetrated by school fellows, while 24 per cent of boys in the study admitted to having raped a girl or to have taken part in a collective rape.<sup>67</sup>

Male teachers or school staff can also in some circumstances take advantage of their position of authority and trust to abuse children. Although the large majority of teachers are not to blame, there are reports of abuse of authority.

- In Democratic Republic of Congo 46

per cent of schoolgirls taking part in a study confirmed being victims of sexual harassment, abuse and violence from their teachers or other school personnel.<sup>68</sup>

- Similar findings emerge from a Senegal study where schoolgirls identified teachers as the main authors of sexual harassment, at 42 per cent.<sup>69</sup>

Girls are the primary victims of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation perpetrated by men and boys. Sexual violence of boys by teachers (both male and female) appears to be marginal. The phenomenon reflects socially ingrained gender-based power disparities which exist both inside and outside the classroom.

In general the vulnerability of children, girls in particular, increases when the traditional protection mechanisms by families and communities are unavailable, or disrupted in the case of conflict.<sup>70</sup>

In some countries (for instance Burkina Faso), studies revealed children were more at risk of sexual abuse in rural and suburban areas.<sup>71</sup>

Evidence from Nigeria and Ghana indicates that adolescent girls are more vulnerable than pre-adolescents,<sup>72</sup> revealing the importance of age as a vulnerability factor. Girls are seen as women as soon as they have reached puberty, making them more vulnerable to sexual violence perpetrated by men.

The UN Study on Violence against Children found that children with disabilities were frequently the victims of violence, including sexual violence, in and around school.<sup>73</sup> They are particularly at risk on their way to and from school.<sup>74</sup> Sexual abuse of children with a disability also occurs in special needs residential schools, both in dormitories and classrooms.

Sexual violence can have particularly harsh health consequences. Girls and boys are both at risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV infection. For girls, a dramatic consequence of sexual abuse is unwanted early pregnancies. These can be detrimental to both maternal and child health, or can lead to unsafe abortions or infanticide,

and death of girls through early childbirth.

There are currently no estimates for the number of people who die each year as a result of sexual abuse in school. But given the scale of the problem and the dangers posed by sexually transmitted infections, illegal abortions and mental health problems, it seems inevitable that sexual violence in schools takes the lives of many children each year.<sup>75</sup>

In Nigeria, a study reports that girls live in fear of sexual harassment which is often combined with verbal abuse from boys and teachers. Girls are thus unable to relate to their classmates in an atmosphere of trust. This fear is accentuated by the prevalent belief that the victim of sexual harassment or assault 'did something to bring it on'.<sup>76</sup>

Sexual harassment and violence form a major barrier to girls' and young women's access to education and their ability to benefit from it.<sup>77</sup>

In the UK, Keir Starmer, the Director of Public Prosecutions, warned that teenage girls between 16 and 19 are now the group most at risk of domestic violence, closely followed by young women aged between 20 and 24 – all victims of a new generation of abusers who are themselves in their teens and early twenties.<sup>78</sup> A recently published report highlighted the disturbing prevalence of extreme violence used by boys against girls in Britain. One 18 year-old girl from Manchester told her interviewer: "My boyfriend broke my nose when I was 15 and no one helped, no one has ever helped and I don't know what they would have done to help anyway; he watched me all the time, especially in school."<sup>79</sup>

Both boys and girls may be victims of violence and bullying in schools. In general, boys are more likely to face physical violence, while girls are more likely to be verbally abused or face sexual abuse, although boys too can face this. For example, the Norwegian study also found that eight per cent of boys and 10 per cent of 19 year-old youths had experienced sexual intercourse against their will.<sup>80</sup> While sexual harassment and violence is perpetrated almost exclusively on girl students by male

teachers and students, corporal punishment and bullying affects both boys and girls, with boys being hit harder.

All forms of 'difference' will also exacerbate bullying, and homophobia is prevalent amongst both teachers and students. Plan's research in India, for example, found that 89 per cent of all participant boys and girls in India thought that: "Homosexuals should not be allowed to work with children."<sup>81</sup>

Homosexuality seems to threaten the status quo of the traditional male norm in a way that other boys and men find particularly threatening. In the US, one study found that lesbian, gay and bisexual youth were nearly three times more likely than their peers to have been involved in at least one physical fight at school, three times more likely to have been threatened or injured with a weapon at school and nearly four times more likely to be absent from school because they felt unsafe.<sup>82</sup> Addressing these prejudices is therefore key to challenging ideas about masculinity that continue to prop up gender inequality. As the case of Phillip (below) shows, they can lead to violence. In the UK in 2008, 65 per cent of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people aged 18 and under experienced homophobic bullying in schools. Some of those experiences were crimes, including death threats and serious physical assaults.<sup>83</sup> Phillip was one of these.

#### HOMOPHOBIA: PHILLIP'S STORY

*Phillip is gay. His mother Jane tells how from an early age he faced taunts from his peers:*

*My son's journey through the education system: at the age of three, a rather sweet, ever-smiling little boy entered a world that for years would result in him experiencing rejection from many of his peers, and the reason was ignorance.*

*Phillip experienced his first bullying at nursery school with taunts of 'girl' and physical violence. The hurt, confusion and tears he shed were simply heartbreaking. I might add that Phillip was always taller by a year than his actual age: hence 'girl' could only have been due to his gentleness. Phillip went on to primary school, where he still had to endure taunts of 'girl' and some violent*

attacks. Phillip recalls this time as when he realised how nasty people could be. Phillip remained gentle and kind, so as a mother the pain he suffered was unbearable. By late juniors I knew my son was different, I was already thinking much about his sexuality.

Within weeks of starting secondary school the homophobic remarks began with taunts of 'queer' and 'girl'. Phillip suffered a physical attack resulting in a black eye. This attack resulted in Phillip too receiving a detention and, appallingly, the teacher from the class it happened in told Phillip the incident was 'the highlight' of his day! Year 8, Phillip recalls as awful, the 'gay' and 'queer' taunts became more frequent, people regularly stole his belongings. I made sure he knew he could walk out if he couldn't cope. During this year he was punched in the eye for not touching a picture of a vagina. As a parent I spent every day scared for his welfare. After complaints to the school I informed them any more physical attacks would be reported to the police.

By year nine he'd formed some good friendships that lightened his life, giving him much-needed support. Fortunately some of his friends were also gay. These friends supported him through the gay taunts. This continued until the end of Year 10; during one of many verbal attacks from a group of boys, they asked: "Are you f\*\*\*ing queer?" Phillip replied "YES!" They were shocked and said "really?" and "you are alright, really". He became everyone's favourite gay; his peer group finally left him alone.

During all this time I wrote letters regarding my child's welfare to the school. They assured me they would try to help, but at no time was the homophobic intimidation challenged. Against all odds Phillip worked very hard; he now attends college.

Since leaving school Phillip has suffered three assaults, each time by gangs of lads out gay-bashing. Each attack resulted in hospital treatment, including stitches to repair his mouth.

My belief is in the education of young people and adults. Homophobia must be treated as the crime it is. It is only

when homophobia becomes publicly unacceptable that our children can be safe and fulfil their potential. School is where they spend much of their waking day, and where teachers can and MUST play their part. For all our children the education system must sit up and take notice! There is a lot of work to be done; together we can and must achieve it.<sup>84</sup>

One study notes that: "Power relationships – particularly those based on age and gender – between teachers, staff and students and among students themselves, are at the root of violence in school settings. Victims are targeted because they are perceived to be different from the perpetrator and less likely to fight back or complain – those who are already discriminated against are unlikely to have others to turn to to report a violent incident. These processes tend to exacerbate the exclusion from school of girls, poor children, children with disabilities and ethnic minority children, and undermine the capacity to learn for those who do remain in school."<sup>85</sup>

At the same time, violence in school does not happen in isolation from the wider community and other institutions that young people come into contact with throughout their adolescence. There is a clear intersection as well with traditional notions of masculinity. Boys who face violence in school are not supposed to show that they were affected by it. In the 'Young Lives' study in Peru, "boys discussed how they became 'used to' violence and that hiding pain in front of their peers [was] an important part of being considered 'cool'."<sup>86</sup>

*Don't get used to violence.*



ALF BERG

One researcher argues that "in this way, peer relations end up reproducing the authoritarian and masculine system of the school, where power relations are closely associated with the control of physical strength."<sup>87</sup>

**Interviewer:** What do you think of being chased or hit with a stick? Is it OK, is it useful or not?

**Felipe:** It doesn't hurt.

**Interviewer:** It doesn't hurt?

**Javier:** It depends on who is hitting you.

**Interviewer:** For example?

**Sergio:** When they hit you in the hand [it hurts].

**Felipe:** When others get hit, they run. I stay there and take it, but it doesn't hurt.

**Peter:** Yes, right? They always stay there, standing.

**Felipe:** You get used to it.

Plan Togo points out<sup>88</sup> that "violence against children in schools occurs in a broad social context that tolerates and very often encourages it." It is rarely punished – least of all sexual violence against girls, because of traditions of 'honour' and shame in many societies about these issues. The danger could be that the girl is blamed and her life is ruined.

The report notes: "Lawyers they interviewed say parents don't bring charges; teachers told them cases rarely go outside the school: 'professional solidarity' among teachers ensures pressure is put on the girl to keep quiet, and the matter dies. A patriarchal 'esprit de corps' among teachers is inevitable when only 12 per cent of teachers in primary schools, and seven per cent of teachers in secondary schools, are women."<sup>89</sup>

Once again, it is often not until the men who are fathers or teachers realise that such violence is wrong that things begin to change. In the Plan Togo report, Chief Jannoh Abaliya noted: "I was badly beaten when I was at school. When I became a father, I realised beating my children didn't help them develop. I keep suggesting to our headmaster that it would be better not to beat the children."<sup>90</sup>

Young people too can make a difference: "One day in class, one of our colleagues was at the blackboard, and the teacher hit him.



MARK READ

*'We don't need to be beaten.'*

We all shouted, and the teacher stopped. We know what we want from school, and we don't need to be beaten to make us understand," said one young woman of 18, who is determined to be a lawyer.<sup>91</sup>

#### "NOW WE KNOW WHAT ABUSE MEANS" BOYS IN SCHOOLS IN INDIA<sup>92</sup>

Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW) is a network of individuals and organisations that functions as a large grassroots campaign, active in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. These men and boys have decided to bring about a change within themselves and in others in order to remove gender injustice.

The MASVAW campaign offers a chance for boys and men to raise their voices publicly against violence against women and gender inequality. MASVAW is also a watchdog, working with the police, doctors, lawyers, boys and men in universities, schools and the media.

Three young men – Mohamed Anas, aged 16, Ashutosh Bhatt, aged 17 and Sri Prakash, aged 18 – from Lucknow College share their experiences of combating violence in their school.

*"Initially, MASVAW came to our school every two weeks and held discussions, but we didn't pay much attention. We*



Signing up to stop violence against women.

MASVAW

*used to treat these group discussions like a free period, happy we didn't have to study. But over a period of time we thought, these people are working so hard on this issue, there must be something to it, we must try and listen...*

*"Today, if we have any free time we use it for discussions on gender equality and violence against women and girls. We needed to show that not all boys are violent, and that is why we formed a group. Because of some men, all men cannot be labelled as violent. Today we are a group of nine boys. We speak to other boys, taking guidance from MASVAW staff.*

*"The biggest change we see in ourselves is that now we know what abuse means. The way we define abuse has changed itself. Today, we feel so connected to this work that we know we will continue to spread the message when we go to university. This work won't stop when we finish school."*

As we saw in the 2010 report, this violence today is not necessarily face to face, but can also be conducted through the internet or via mobile phones:

"I am Vice-Principal at an urban high school in Canada. Recently I addressed a male student who cyber-bullied a female classmate through instant messaging with her while at home... I met with the student in my office and he took responsibility for the bullying. During the interview it became apparent to me that the student had fine qualities and values that conflicted with his behaviour towards the female student. I

asked how his parents were going to react to his behaviour when I informed them. We spoke about his sister and how he would feel if he learned that there were male students treating her or his mother the same way he treated his female classmate. He became emotional. At that point I ended the conversation. I learned that upon returning to school, from a suspension, he apologised to the student."<sup>93</sup>

The issue of violence, including sexual violence, and bullying in schools has to be dealt with at a more structural level as well, by governments, policymakers, and those in charge of and working in schools, such as teachers and teachers' unions. "Working together with teachers' unions can help us to increase political pressure on governments to improve living and working conditions of teachers, which are often at the root of frustration and physical and verbal aggression against children," says Anastasie Koudoh, Plan West Africa's regional campaign coordinator. In fact, out of 49 countries, only seven have a national data collection system for school violence.

"If we are seriously to address the issues of school drop-outs and improve school enrolment, we have to ensure that our children learn that violence is never allowed and that they can lead their lives in non-violent ways too," says Raja Mohammed Anwar, chair of the task force on education in Pakistan.<sup>94</sup>

## 5 School matters: "being strong in their education"

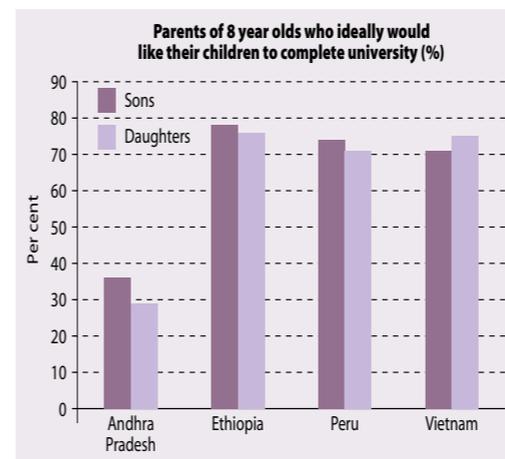
*"To be honest, before I joined these meetings I thought girls were useless and couldn't do anything. Now I realise this is not true and they can do as much as boys. In fact, I went and talked to my parents about this. At first they were surprised but then they agreed with me."*

Farouq, 12, Cairo, Egypt<sup>95</sup>

We have seen how important it is to send girls to school and how important school can and should be in promoting equality between girls and boys; not just in terms of equality of opportunity but in finding new ways of relating to each other, undermining stereotypes and challenging discrimination.

All the elements of a good education that improve school life and learning for girls and young women also benefit boys. Gender justice and gender equality need to be specific goals in the education system – eradicating violence and discrimination, ensuring that schools do not continue to promote gender biases and stereotypes, building in quality education for all children. Education should provide for both boys and girls the opportunity to be the best they can be, to work together, not to reproduce the oppositional notions of gender that in many societies still dominate our institutional structures and individual lives.

Addressing these issues for both boys and girls is not a short-term goal. It requires support at all levels, from parents to teachers to the government and, crucially, from young people themselves. Most parents want their children to go to school, and many poor parents have high aspirations for their daughters' futures as well as their sons', as this chart (below) from the 'Young Lives' study of 12,000 children from poor families in four countries shows.



Mothers who are educated themselves are more likely to send their children, including their daughters, to school.<sup>96,97</sup> The percentage of children in school increases with each grade their mother has attained. Research for 'Young Lives' in Andhra Pradesh, India, found that only 68 per cent of the older cohort whose mothers received no formal education were in school, compared to 92 per cent whose mothers had received secondary education.<sup>98</sup>

Fathers also play an important role, as so often they are the final arbiter in any decision about sending a child to school – or taking them out. Though mothers (and sometimes older brothers or uncles) are usually the key to persuading them, it is often fathers who make the decision about whether a girl can go to school.

## BOY SCOUTS IN PAKISTAN SUPPORT GIRLS' EDUCATION

Half the boys in Baluchistan attend school. But only five per cent of girls do. Baluchistan is the largest province in Pakistan, covering around 45 per cent of the country. It has a population of 7.5 million people. It is also one of the least developed regions, with a literacy rate of around 27 per cent.

Now, 40,000 Scouts in Baluchistan have joined forces with UNICEF to help improve the situation for girls. They are being trained to help local communities understand the importance of educating girls. This has resulted in an increase in the female literacy rate, an increase in the immunisation rate and a reduction in diseases due to a lack of hygiene. The project is called 'Brothers Join Meena' and it now runs in 23 of Baluchistan's 27 districts. 'Meena' is a cartoon character; a nine year-old girl created by UNICEF in 1990. She promotes girls' education and is popular throughout South Asia.

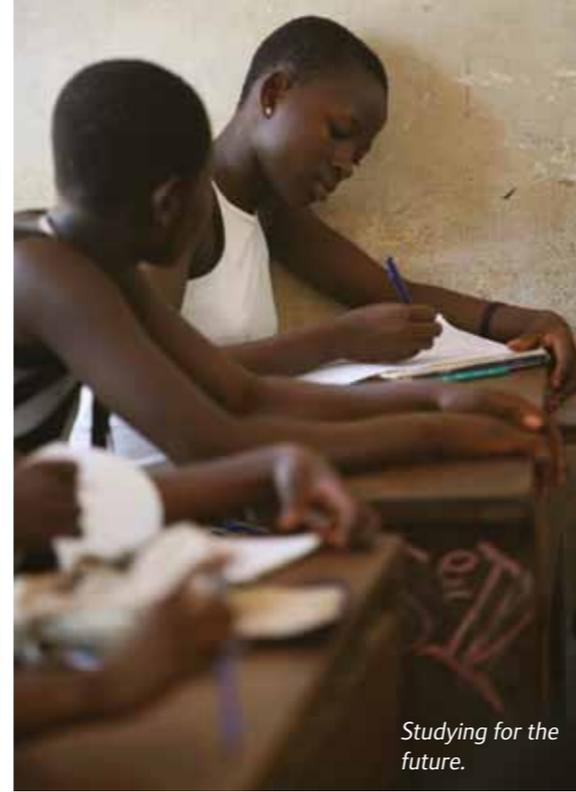
The Scouts receive training on children's rights and data collection. They are also helped to develop interpersonal communication skills. Once they are trained, each Scout goes out into his local community and collects information on 10 homes with children under nine. They help parents in each of these homes to understand the importance of girls' education. They also help the parents to understand the need to have their young children immunised. In addition, they may help each family in a very practical way; constructing latrines in every home that does not have one.

Ghazanfar Mashkoo, International Commissioner, Pakistan Boy Scouts' Association, says: "Through Scouts and the 'Brothers Join Meena' project a



PLAN

Girls at school in Pakistan.



ALF BERG

Studying for the future.

debate has been stimulated on gender discrimination. Within local communities fundamental issues relating to culture have been explored and attitudes and practices have begun to be changed... The Scouts involved in this project will take their learning into their adult lives, helping attitudes to be changed in the long-term and contributing to the sustainability of the work."<sup>99</sup> Starting co-education in a traditionally conservative society is a significant step forward for the community and Scouts in Baluchistan have played an important role.<sup>100</sup>

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) notes: "In the case of girls' education it is becoming clear that men who have realised the value of taking girls to school need to be heard speaking loudly and frequently on this subject. The fact that many men with influence shy away from the issues touching on women's rights, and girls' education in particular, has helped perpetuate and transmit negative traditions."<sup>101</sup>

This girl from Togo explains: **"I wanted to go to school, but my father refused; he said that in his day, women didn't go to school, only men... But I asked my mother for a bit of money, and**

**registered for primary school... When I progressed to the second year, my father beat me and insulted me every time he saw me going to school... In the third year, the threats got worse. My father confiscated all my exercise books and my school documents, and I had to abandon school... When I think about it, I want to cry... My mother left my father, and I spoke to my father's third wife, who's had some schooling – but she said my father is a wicked person and there's no point discussing it with him."**<sup>102</sup>

Another eight year-old girl told Plan Togo that although she'd registered for the first class, her father "confiscated my exercise-books, and used them to roll cigarettes with".<sup>103</sup>

But the FAWE report also notes signs of hope: "Attitudes are changing. All over Africa there are men – some men, at least – who recognise the importance of women as partners in development and understand that educating girls is the first critical step. Fathers who care and are actively involved in their daughters' educational development have an impact far beyond their immediate family. Their progressive attitude will affect their clan, their community, their local authority. It will influence the school administrators and teachers, the media,

government administrators, even the highest office in the country."<sup>104</sup>

Naomi lives in a rural area in Ethiopia. She is 10 years old. She would like to become a teacher and be able to support her parents financially. She does not want to marry until later, as she feels that "education is better for me". Naomi's mother says that her brothers (Naomi's uncles) will help her persuade her husband not to marry Naomi until she has completed her education. She also explains that Naomi's brothers, "particularly the elder one... advise her to be strong in her education" and persuaded Naomi to continue when she considered dropping out in order to work to support the household.<sup>105</sup>

#### THE BOY WHO CAMPAIGNS FOR GIRLS TO GO TO SCHOOL

Nixon Otieno Odoyo, 16, lives in Nairobi. His campaign, 'Keeping Girls in School', is aimed at providing schoolgirls in Kenya with free sanitary towels. He explains how important this is:

**Our father abandoned us when I was three, which was one of the things that made me want to help girls stay in school. [My mother] never went to school and when my father left she had no money to look after us and she became stressed. My older sister has not been to school**

**either; she married when she was 15 and now has four children. Her husband drinks too much and she struggles to provide food for her family on her own. I think that girls should have the chance to go to school so that they can earn the money to look after their families if they need to.**

**When I started in school there were plenty of girls in my class, but by the third term there were only four left. Now I am 16 and there are only two girls in my class. One of them is having a baby soon, so I'm not sure if she'll still be there when I go back to school. It's a problem that is very common where I live.**

**I am a member of the Teens' Watch club, which is made up of students from about 40 different schools across Nairobi. It's a group of girls and boys who meet in the holidays to discuss issues that affect us as teens: issues like poverty, HIV and AIDS, young pregnancies and marriage, and drug abuse. The idea for my 'Keeping Girls in School' campaign came from these discussions.**

**The girls in the group said that during their period they weren't comfortable being in school: they couldn't afford to buy sanitary towels and because of this they were embarrassed and unable to work in class. Sometimes, if they had a boyfriend he would pay the money for sanitary towels, but after a few months they would ask for all the money back**



HARMIT KAMBO/SHEILA MCKECHNIE FOUNDATION

Nixon receives his campaigning award from Terry Waite.

*and the girls would be in debt. As a result they were missing a lot of classes each month and their studies were suffering.*

*We decided to write a letter to the people who founded the Teens' Watch group, the Daretti Youth Network, to suggest some ideas for fundraising so we could help. Some of the group suggested a music festival or doing a drama. I said that maybe we could do a football tournament: it would attract lots of villages to get involved and we could invite plenty of parents and teachers to donate money. This was a great success and we were able to raise 50,000 Kenyan shillings (£418).*

*With the money we bought 1,000 sets of sanitary towels which we supplied to 500 girls over 10 schools in the slums across Nairobi. The pads are very expensive and we found the cheapest ones we could get in the supermarket were 50 shillings (41p) each. The schools were very happy and have said that the girls' school attendance has since improved greatly. One girl I spoke to has recently got the second-highest grades in her class. We did this for one month, but it proved to me that girls can perform and compete with the boys in the class if they can get the sanitary towels and attend school.*

*In the future I want to have a programme so that 5,000 girls in 50 schools in Nairobi can get free sanitary towels every month. I have to start small and then if I can support them well enough I can begin to help more. It is hard to get my voice heard by older people – they do not listen much to youngsters where I live – that's why we have the Teens' Watch group, because we can work more effectively together to arrange projects. It is difficult to organise things and communicate because we can't afford mobile phones or computers, but if we can talk to the government, NGOs, even companies, and get the information to them, then we can help improve the situation.<sup>106</sup>*

It is clear from the analysis in this chapter that gender inequality in the education system is failing both boys and girls.

Violence in school, stereotypical curricula, lack of access for girls and in many places an increasing trend of underachievement amongst boys are among the many factors that we need to tackle.

'Being strong in their education' is something that many girls and boys – and their parents – can, and do, aspire to. We have seen that boys and men as fathers, brothers, scouts and schoolmates have crucial support to offer in helping break down the barriers to educational equality that girls and young women face. Nixon Odoyo found it hard to get his voice heard but his work has already helped 500 girls in 10 schools in Kenya and he is ambitious to do more. As he says: "If I, a 16 year-old boy, can achieve this, how much more can companies, NGOs and governments do?" He has a point. It is up to those in charge of education to make sure that both sexes have the same opportunities to build the skills they need to make a real difference in the world.



ALF BERG

Building the skills.



# Becoming a teenager: listening to adolescents

# 4

## 1 Introduction: becoming a man, becoming a woman

*"Young people can really make a difference if they have a good vision and they can unite to meet the vision. In my country, young people have been making a difference. They have made changes, they have initiated ideas that have affected my country."*

Boy, 16, Nigeria<sup>1</sup>

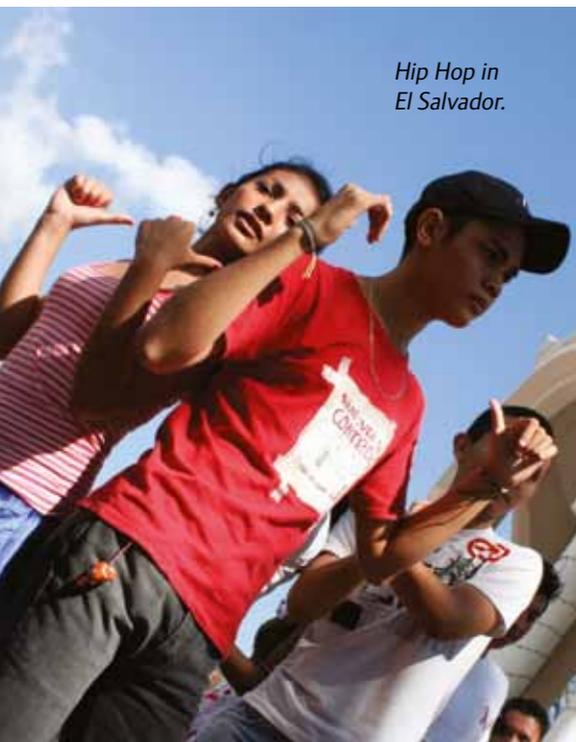
This chapter looks at the different needs and experiences of adolescent girls and boys as they grow up. It examines the idea that 'boys don't cry' and comes up with some surprising insights. It looks at sex and relationships and how attitudes to homosexuality are closely linked to attitudes to traditional masculinities. It examines how the relationship between gender and health impacts on HIV and AIDS. And it argues that adolescent girls and boys have a right to be heard.

There are more adolescents<sup>2</sup> in the world today than at any time in history and 88 per cent of them live in developing countries.<sup>3</sup> They are the first generation with the opportunity to be part of a truly global world, linked by social media to their peers worldwide and with access to news and information coming from far beyond their

immediate environment. In general, they have a better education than their parents and grandparents, and arguably also better health. Their opportunities for productive work are greater and they live in a world that is more equal and democratic than ever before. These adolescents of today will shape the future.

But many young people miss out on the opportunities that are theirs by right.

- **Poverty** In sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of adolescents who live in poverty continues to be extremely high. It is estimated, for example, that over 90 per cent of Nigerian and Zambian youth (almost 40 million) live on less than US\$2 per day.<sup>4</sup>
- **Child Labour** Between eight and 20 million children, the majority of them teenagers, are reported to be involved in the worst forms of child labour: forced and bonded labour, armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and trafficking.<sup>5,6</sup>
- **Early Marriage** Millions of young girls become wives and mothers whilst they are still adolescents. In Andhra Pradesh, India, the mean age for marriage for girls in rural areas is just 14.7. Studies reveal that between 20 and 30 per cent of girls in India give birth by the time they are 17.<sup>7</sup>



Hip Hop in El Salvador.

young people. The peer group – whether real or virtual or both – becomes paramount. Adolescence also often signals a widening of the gender gap. In many cultures the lives and experiences of young men and young women become increasingly divergent.

For most boys, adolescence is a time of exploration and excitement, of learning what it is to be a ‘man’ in order to prepare for the world of work. But it may also be the time when negative attitudes towards girls and women are reinforced and when they may feel pressure to behave in more stereotypical ‘male’ ways and are particularly exposed to violence. A national survey of adolescent males in the US found that boys thought that to be truly manly, they must “command respect, be tough, not talk about problems, and dominate females”.<sup>11</sup>

Being seen as ‘tough’ has negative implications for young men themselves. As one study notes: “A man who does gender ‘correctly’ would be relatively unconcerned about his health and well-being in general. He would see himself as stronger, both physically and emotionally, than most women. He would think of himself as independent, not needing to be nurtured by others. He would be unlikely to ask others for help. He would face danger fearlessly, take risks frequently, and have little concern for his own safety.”<sup>12</sup>

A young man from Sarajevo comments: “The Balkan man should be like a machine and not show weakness.”<sup>13</sup>

This chapter will show that these attitudes can lead to teenage boys not seeking help when they have health problems, whether physical or emotional, and how this can have fatal consequences for both sexes, especially when it comes to HIV and AIDS.

There are variations by region, social class and girls themselves, but for many girls, reaching adolescence and puberty has a profound impact. It is the point in their lives where families start to protect their sexuality vigorously and when gender inequalities really begin to emerge. In many parts of rural Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, parents frequently want to protect their daughter’s reputation because it reflects on the family as a whole. So girls may be confined to the home, kept out of school, or married early.

- **HIV/AIDS** Half of the 14,000 new infections that occur each day are in young people aged 15 to 24.<sup>8</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa more than two-thirds of those newly infected were young women between the ages of 15 and 19.<sup>9</sup>
- **Maternal mortality** Globally, girls aged 15 to 19 are twice as likely to die in childbirth as women in their twenties. Save the Children estimates that 70,000 adolescent mothers die every year in the developing world because young girls are having children before they are physically ready for parenthood.<sup>10</sup>
- **Substance abuse** The social and economic pressures faced by teenagers lead many to resort to drug, alcohol or substance abuse – often resulting in long-term addiction. Or they take health risks, such as smoking tobacco, that will affect their health in later life.

Adolescence is a turbulent time. It is a time when bodies are changing, when sexual identity is developing, when life should be full of promise. In many countries, it signals the beginning of a move away from parents and other supportive adults towards other

Kareena is one of the ‘Young Lives’ cohort. She is 12 and lives in urban Andhra Pradesh, India. She describes the changes in her life which followed puberty:

*“When I was small I used to go anywhere but now it is restricted. Mother gave me restrictions that you should not go outside, you should take care of your younger siblings... you have to wear a burkha when you go outside, you should not talk to anybody, now you are a grown-up child, you should not play outside the house.”*

Kareena’s mother explains that she will not allow her outside because “the locality is not good. Not only that, boys will make comments about her.”<sup>14</sup>

Adolescence is a period when both girls and boys need support from adults and from institutions in order to grow and develop into mature and rounded adults. Young people need positive role models. They need to be able to discuss difficult issues around sex and growing up.<sup>15</sup> They need to be reached in ways that interest them, such as the media and music. They need to build the skills and the assets they will need to enter the world of work and to become parents. The 21st century may be an exciting time to be growing up, but it is not an easy one. We should give young women and young men all the support they need to thrive today and to grow into the adults of tomorrow.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK – SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Information about and access to health services are not only rights in themselves but are indispensable for the exercise of other human rights.

In outlining the scope of states’ obligation to the health and development of adolescents under the Children’s Rights Convention (CRC), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child called states to give “sufficient attention to the specific concerns of adolescents as rights holders and to promoting their health and development”.<sup>16</sup> This includes attention to “developing an individual identity and dealing with one’s sexuality”.<sup>17</sup>

The CRC Committee identified the main human rights that must be promoted and protected to ensure adolescents enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. These rights – to be applied consistently with adolescents’ evolving capacities – include:

- non-discrimination, which covers adolescents’ sexual orientation and health status (including HIV/AIDS and mental health)
- participation by expressing views freely and having them duly taken into account
- access to information and materials, including on family planning, protection from harmful traditional practices, such as early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), and services and information on prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS
- privacy and confidentiality and providing informed consent to services
- protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. In providing health services to youth and adults, states must consider

the key principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality.

In line with greater access to accurate and comprehensive information to enable more informed decision-making about sexual and reproductive health, in 2006 Argentina approved the National Programme of Comprehensive Sex Education. The law recognises that “all students have the right to comprehensive sex education” in public and private schools in every province in the country, and stipulates that sex education must be incorporated into the curriculum imparting “relevant, accurate, reliable and up-to-date” information to enable responsible decisions about sexuality and the prevention of general and sexual health problems.<sup>18</sup> In Colombia, an Education Programme for Sexuality and Citizenship-Building has since 2008 been aiming to generate teaching practices that foster an understanding of sexual and reproductive rights.<sup>19</sup>

Backed by international consensus documents highlighting the critical role of boys and men in improving sexual and reproductive health, policymakers and health advocates have called for greater involvement of boys and men as partners. In 2008, the Ministry of Health of Mali approved a national programme involving men in reproductive health. Known as constructive men’s engagement (CME), the programme’s methods have been adopted by other countries around the world.<sup>20</sup> The past few years have seen progress in recognising the importance of health rights, but also attempts to curtail the reproductive rights of women and girls.

### PHANN'S STORY

Phann, who is 14 years old, was born to a poor couple in Cambodia. His mother is a farmer and his father is a soldier. Phann is the oldest brother. His younger brothers are 10, seven and three years old.

Because of family problems, Phann only started school when he was 11. Now he is a Grade 3 student in the local primary school about 400 metres from his house. Among all the subjects, he likes maths most. Although he is good at maths, his irregular class attendance makes him an average student among his 35 classmates.

Phann's family owns two small rice fields of less than a hectare. The yield from these feeds Phann's family for a third of their meals each week, for half the year. Last month some of the rice was sold for medicine for Phann's younger brother. This will mean the rice harvested this year will not be enough for six months and Phann and his mother will have to work even harder.

Phann's soldier father is violent and does not like it when Phann plays with friends instead of helping with housework. Only four days have passed since Phann was last beaten by his father. His father is often away from home. He visits for a couple of days, two or three times per month, and hardly brings any money. To Phann, it is both good and bad for his father to be away. It is good in the sense that Phann feels less pressured when his father is away. It is bad in the sense that he needs to do more, in addition to the work which is already too much for him (though he feels it is normal) at this age.

Since the family's rice fields are about two kilometres from the house, Phann's mother often spends the whole day in the fields during farming seasons, leaving all the household work to Phann. In the morning, Phann usually gets up at the same time as his mother, around 5am. He helps to fetch water from the well at his neighbour's house, and with cooking and washing dishes.

If it is the rainy season, he goes to the rice fields in his village to find 'kantea touk' (edible aquatic insects feeding in the rice field). He can sell these for 1,000



Phann at work.

to 1,300 riels (about 10 US cents) per insect. Most of the time he finds very few. On good days, he can earn around 10,000 riels (about US\$2.50). However, this is at the expense of getting to school late, around 9am (the morning session is from 7am to 11am). He gives the money to his mother to buy rice.

If his mother is not around when he comes back from school, Phann has to cook as soon as he can because his younger brothers are waiting for food. Otherwise salt is the only thing they have to eat. After lunch, Phann tells his two brothers to look after the house so he can go to find rattan deep in the bushes, taking his youngest brother to make sure he is safe. The rattan thorns give him a lot of tiny scars on his hands and body but it is another source of income. An afternoon's work can earn him around 3,000 riels (about 75 US cents).

If he is not going to find rattan, Phann goes looking for 'ang krong' – large red ants that live in fruit trees. The ants can be fermented into food. They are hard to find but they can be sold for around US\$2.50 per kilo. If he is lucky, Phann may find half a kilo a day.

Until around 3 or 4pm, Phann will also put out fishing nets into a small river 25 minutes from his house. He will collect the fish at dawn the next day. It is vital to Phann's family because it is their only source of protein. Sometimes, Phann catches enough fish to sell as well. Phann hardly has any free time to enjoy with friends. His duties have made him old for his age and he rarely smiles. He says he is too busy to spend much time on his studies and he does not know what will happen to him when he grows up.

## 2 Boys don't cry? Young men and the crisis of connection

*"Society treats you tough – like we don't have emotions."*

Young boy in a rural school in Jamaica<sup>21</sup>

The story goes that boys are brought up to feel that they have to be strong and tough and not show their emotions. This means having to repress the sides of their character that are seen as 'feminine' – showing emotion, weakness or uncertainty. Much research shows that boys often find it harder than girls to express their feelings. This starts at an early age. By the age of six, one study in six countries showed that girls had overwhelmingly more words for emotions than boys.<sup>22</sup>

Few boys are taught to express with words what they feel, when they feel it. And even when they are able to express feelings in early childhood, they learn as they grow up that they are not supposed to feel – and shut down. Plan's survey in the UK found that only 54 per cent of boys talked to their friends about their feelings more than once a month, compared to 77 per cent of girls.<sup>23</sup>

However, evidence is emerging that the story that 'boys don't cry' may be more complex than it seems at first. Niobe

Way has just spent 15 years interviewing teenage boys in the US. She found that: "Boys between the ages of 11 and 15 are just as sentimental and emotional about their friends as girls and have no problem expressing their importance. But around 16 or 17 is the age when they can no longer resist the ideology of what it is to be a man in American and British culture, and that means being stoic, unemotional and self-sufficient. Intimate friends fall by the wayside and those lovely emotional boys turn into the stereotypes we've come to expect – sport-mad, inarticulate, only interested in sex."<sup>24,25</sup>

As Michael Kaufman, renowned expert on masculinities and co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, says: "Boys are often raised through humiliation, and often taught to repress their emotions, causing an inability to empathise."<sup>26</sup>

Niobe Way's research shows that many boys do value friendship, and that being forced to disassociate themselves from these friendships at the risk of being called 'gay' or 'girly' as they grow up is a huge loss that is not good for their mental health or for relationships. As we will see in Chapter 6, it can also lead to violence. "Much of the anger boys express is itself a response to the demand that they not show any other emotion," says one expert.<sup>27</sup>

### You need to be tough

Not all boys appear to agree. Our research in Rwanda and in the UK illustrates that the older they get, the less convinced they are that 'to be a man you need to be tough'.



## WHEN CAN MEN CRY? RESEARCH WITH ADOLESCENTS IN BRAZIL

For this report, Plan undertook original research with young people in Brazil, India, Rwanda and the UK. In Brazil, adolescent boys and girls were asked: "What are the moments and circumstances when men can cry?" These were some of the responses from Brazil. They showed that on the one hand both young men and young women thought it was ok for men to cry, but also that there was some ambivalence about it, especially in public, in case it damaged your tough image.

### Young women:

- **Dana, 16:** *"I have a friend who knows how to express when he's sad: when his grandmother died he came to talk to us, saying that his grandma had passed away and crying a lot. Even when he likes a girl he knows how to show it. He used to like my sister and he used to say: 'Ah, Nati, you know how much I like you, but you like some other guy.' He always shows his feelings."*
- **Kelly, 16:** *"They're afraid to get hurt, I think. My brother shows his feelings a lot, he talks, he calls practically the whole family to talk [laughs]. When he's at home he talks, says he likes this and that girl, he really expresses his feelings little by little, but he talks about what he feels. But sometimes he doesn't..."*
- **Lana, 16:** *"There are some boys who, you know, have feelings but they want to look tough and then they don't demonstrate what they feel, they want to be 'men'."*
- **Mariane, 16:** *"Because they are not made of stone, I think every human being cries, even the animals cry. Why wouldn't men cry?"*

### Young men:

- **Matheus, 14:** *"Men cry when they go travelling, and they have to leave their mothers, their wives and children, some men cry."*
- **Jean, 14:** *"When a person loses a family member."*

- **Marcelo, 14:** *"When they feel a sadness in their heart – 'ah, she has left me' – and then they start to cry."*
- **Pedro, 14:** *"Sometimes men cry, and then people ask them why they are crying, and they wipe their tears and say they're not crying."*
- **Marcelo, 14:** *"When there's news about someone who's suffering, you feel like crying, and then you have to run to your bedroom because people ask you why you're crying."*
- **Guilherme, 14:** *"I cried because my dad promised to buy me a computer and because I did not behave well, he did not buy it. I've spent one month without talking to him."*

As well as learning not to show their feelings, boys develop a belief that they are or should be in control, seeking out ways to get the things they want and assert their needs.<sup>28</sup>

One study in Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Morocco and Mali noted: "We found in all the cultures studied, that there is less socialisation and education of boys into clear roles and behaviours than of girls. Traditional practices included a tendency to privilege boys – giving boys wider leeway in behaviour, and excusing non-social behaviours by saying 'boys will be boys'. This does not teach boys responsibility, nor clarify what will be expected of them. When they are asked to take on responsibilities in their adult life, in increasingly complex contexts, they have little support or preparation for the task."<sup>29</sup> This indicates clearly that traditional understandings of masculinity let boys down and reduce their ability to be adequately prepared for adult life.

In another study, in the Western Balkans, young men in Sarajevo noted that: "Communication and intimacy with their girlfriends was a characteristic they wanted to develop. Yet, some young men expressed fear that such emotional intimacy could allow young men to be manipulated by women. When one participant in Belgrade said: 'Your girlfriend will expect you to be open and tell her things about your emotions', other participants responded: 'No, don't do that, she will take advantage of you'.<sup>30</sup>

In most Western countries, eight out of



PLAN

10 pupils with serious behavioural problems in schools are boys.<sup>31</sup> This violence can be turned outward, towards others, or inward. Around 2.8 million adolescents attempt suicide each year. Around 71,000 die.<sup>32</sup> While three times more young women than young men attempt suicide, three times more men than women are successful.<sup>33</sup> This is at least partly because they are less likely to seek help. Research for the IMAGES report in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico and Rwanda found that there were stark differences between women and men seeking help for mental health problems. In India only 11 per cent of Indian men sought help compared to 93 per cent of women.<sup>34</sup>

This is why programmes like Salud y Genero to support young men in discussing the issues that are important to them are so crucial.

### THAT'S NOT US – HEALTH AND GENDER IN MEXICO

The Mexican-based NGO, Salud y Genero (Health and Gender)<sup>35</sup> seeks to generate new ways of being a man or woman by highlighting the health consequences of rigid gender norms. Through workshops

and awareness-raising activities, Salud y Genero helps men to understand the relationship between traditional masculine behaviours – risk-taking, low involvement in childcare, denial of sickness or vulnerability – and men's shorter life expectancy, their failure to form intimate relationships with partners and children, and their inattention to their own mental, physical and reproductive health.

Workshops held by Salud y Genero use a number of exercises to deal with the problems that male socialisation pose for men's health. One such exercise – 'The Male Body' – involves participants writing down what they associate with being a man. The idea that 'men are strong' is most prominent. Hats, belts, pistols, machetes, mobile phones and alcohol all tend to feature highly. References to emotions are rare – with the exception of 'loneliness'. In eight years of working with men's groups, the word 'father' has been suggested only eight times. Yet many men, after seeing the male image they have created, say: "But that's not us".<sup>36</sup>

*It's good to talk.*



### 3 Trusting each other: relationships and sex

*"Support should be mutual. They [women and men] should be equal and trust each other."*

Young man, Banja Luka, Bosnia<sup>37</sup>

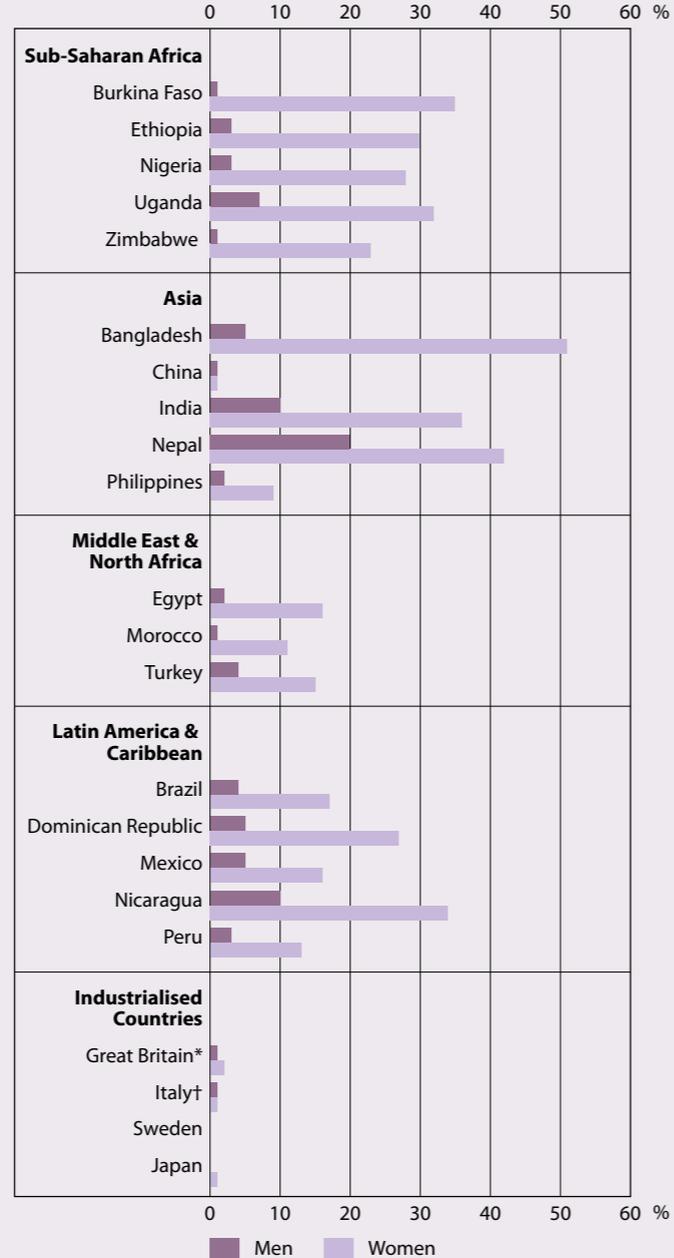
*"If he [a man] really likes the woman, truly, he treats her more carefully, he's more romantic."*

Mayara, 14, from Plan research in Brazil<sup>38</sup>

Adolescence is when young people are defining their sexuality and start to think about sexual relationships. Global data from all countries except China found that around 11 per cent of young women and six per cent of young men aged 15 to 19 said they had sex before they were 15.<sup>39</sup> Young women generally have sex earlier than young men, and also marry earlier, as the table (right) shows. Most young women marry older men. One study in 23 countries around the world found that in sub-Saharan Africa, in Egypt and in parts of Asia, men are on average four to nine years older than the women they marry. The report notes that: "A wide age gap between a man and his wife can skew the balance of power and can foster unequal gender relations in a marriage. In conservative cultures, men prefer to marry young women because husbands are expected to have more experience than their wives and to be able to exert authority over them."<sup>40</sup>

Millions of girls are married under the age of 18, and some are as young as 10. In 20 countries more than 40 per cent of

**Percentage of men and women 15–19 who have ever married<sup>41</sup>**



\* Based on men 16-19

† Men 20-24 who had married by age 20

Note: Marriage includes cohabitation and consensual union

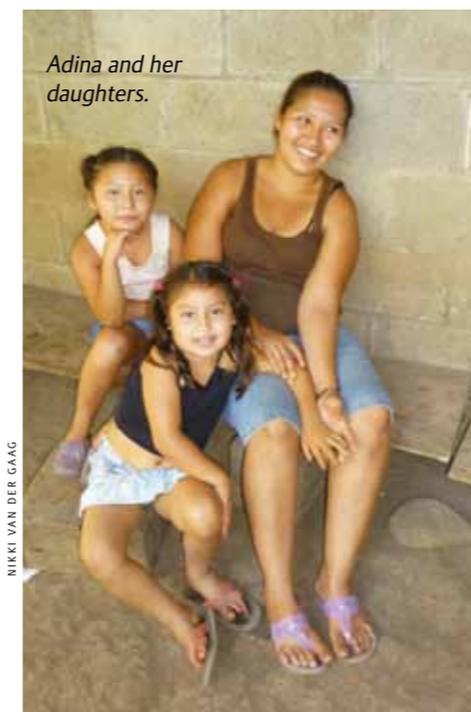
young women are married early and in Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea and Niger the figure is over 60 per cent.<sup>42</sup> About to be married, Vaishali, from Maharashtra, India, says: *"Surely I'm too young to be thinking of a husband and definitely too young to be married. But I have to tie the knot with a stranger in just a few days. The fact that I am just 13 is of little consequence as child marriage is very much part of our tradition."*<sup>43</sup>

Men can play an important part in ensuring that girls and young women are not forced into marrying as young as 13 and having their first child before 15. Pregnancy is a leading cause of death for young women between the ages of 15 and 19. And, as Adina's story illustrates, it takes girls out of school and perpetuates poverty.

#### "A MAN COMES ALONG AND TALKS PRETTY"

Nikki van der Gaag looks at the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy in El Salvador – talking to Adina, who is part of the 'Real Choices, Real Lives' study.

Adina was only 14 when she fell pregnant by a man who was already married and has three children. After her daughter Catherine was born, the father moved to the coast and now makes a living selling coconuts. Then, a year later, Brenda was conceived, the child of a local man. Both fathers say the girls are not theirs.



MIKKI VAN DER GAAG

Adina does not seem particularly surprised by this. She says she loves her daughters but wants nothing to do with the fathers. She says she has seen enough examples of relationships where the man dominates and abuses his partner and she is better off living with her parents and grandmother. And there is no point in chasing either of them for child support because neither has any money.

But life is hard for Adina and her daughters. They live in a very remote area which is cut off in the winter because the river below them floods. There are also avalanches from the hills above. They have no electricity and go to bed when it gets dark.

School is an hour away and only goes up to Grade 7. Adina herself left school in Grade 3, which makes it hard to find work or even to study again – you need Grade 7 for any distance education. She tried selling from catalogues but found it difficult and hard to understand.

She then found a job through a friend in the capital, San Salvador, as a domestic worker. But that meant worrying about her daughters when she went to live in the city. In any case she earned very little – US\$50 for two weeks' work. Her employers treated her badly and then sacked her when she broke a glass. So now she is back home and wondering what to do next. But her options are not great. She says she would like to be a beautician but the obstacles sometimes seem insurmountable.

Poverty is one reason why young women seek partners that at the time they hope will support them. Another mother of a three year old explains: *"We are all really poor, there is no work, only families living on the land and selling their products in Chalatenango. But sometimes what you grow does not come, and there is no work for anyone, and you have to walk about three hours to find a spring... well, then, suddenly a man comes along and talks pretty, and says he will support you..."*<sup>44</sup>

The culture of 'machismo' means that it is not uncommon for men, both young and old, to father children who they then refuse to acknowledge. This 13 year-old

girl says: *“My father left my mother when he found out she was pregnant, and always said that I was not his daughter. He has had two other women and has had sons and daughters with them too. I think he is a bad man, because he refuses to acknowledge his children and so we do not have a father who loves us.”*<sup>45</sup>

Fear that their daughters might become pregnant at a young age leads many parents in El Salvador to restrict their daughters’ movement outside the home. Jasmine, aged 20, says: *“Girls have more difficulty even going to school because girls are more vulnerable – our parents may not send us to school because of the risk of becoming pregnant.”* She says this is particularly true once they reach adolescence: *“From Grades 1 to 9 parents are ok about it but the most difficult stage comes when they reach high school – girls have to leave rural areas for urban ones [because there are no local secondary schools] and parents are afraid.”*

Jenifer, aged 17, from a youth group in Opico, says: *“I am not allowed out because they think I am at risk. It is different with boys.”* Guillermo, aged 16, agrees: *“Boys get to go out because there is no risk of pregnancy. But girls get their freedom restricted.”*

Parents may be right to worry. Nationwide, 21,534 girls under 19 had babies in 2009. Just under a thousand were girls between 10 and 14, while the rest were between 15 and 19 years old.<sup>46</sup> This is why Plan El Salvador’s training for young people on gender work is so important. Alma Salmeron, who works as a Girls’ discrimination project coordinator for Plan and is responsible for 94 vulnerable children, says that out



NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

of 94 children, only 10 have fathers who are present. “Men want lots of sons; women want protection.” But she says many young mothers are depressed. “The only way to stop this is to work with children and young people, both male and female.”

Christian, aged 21, from Cabañas, feels that the discussions in the Plan programme have changed his view of what it means to be a father: *“If I didn’t have this training I would have another way of thinking. I want to be a responsible dad but I see other cases where young men don’t know anything about this and become macho and don’t care about women. They leave a girl pregnant with no support.”*

The country has a long way to go before most men are like Christian, and young women like Adina no longer have the responsibility of being a parent on their own when they themselves are still children. Absent fathers and teenage mothers mean a daily struggle both economically and emotionally for the wider family and the children left behind.

Christian in full flow.

The attitudes that young women and men have about what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman shape the way that they behave at this critical time. One study with young men in the Balkans found that they felt a young woman’s view of ‘an ideal man’ was very different from that of a young man.<sup>47</sup>

Many young people still hold very polarised attitudes towards sex, perhaps not surprisingly given how entrenched these become at an early age. The prevailing norm in some countries is that men are ‘studs’

### The ideal man

Man’s man	Woman’s man
Cool guy	Makes her feel safe
Macho	Charming
Knows everyone in the neighbourhood	Intelligent
Smokes	Witty
Fights/aggressive	Gentle
Has a lot of women	Faithful
Stubborn, not changing his opinion	Knows how to listen
Never shows emotion	Shares his emotions

and should be free to have as many sexual partners as they can, whereas teenage girls behaving in a similar way would be labelled promiscuous. More than six out of 10 young people interviewed by Plan in India and Rwanda agreed that “men need sex more than women do”.<sup>48,49</sup>

Many teenage men are socialised to believe that they have to prove themselves sexually. As this young man from India said: “My friends challenged me. They said ‘If you are a Real Man, then engage that girl [to get her to have sex] within eight days.’”<sup>50</sup> Njoki Wainaina, a gender expert from Kenya, notes that: “Boys and men are socialised to believe that sex is their right and that they are entitled to it whenever they want it.”<sup>51</sup>

This is an attitude that is hard for a young man to challenge. And young women in their turn may have learned to believe that their role in heterosexual relationships is a passive one. They may also find that they have little power – not even the power to say ‘no’. One study in South Africa found that “young women identified their ideal relationship as one in which the male made the decisions, including the use of condoms and the timing of sex”.<sup>52</sup> In Jamaica, 69 per cent of boys and 32 per cent of girls aged 11 to 15 said they agreed with the statement that “if you really love your [partner], you should have sex with them”. Thirty per cent of girls and 58 per cent of boys said that a girl should have sex with a boy if he spends a lot of money on her.<sup>53</sup>

Of course, not all young women agree with this. “A man who doesn’t treat a

woman well, I think he’s not a real man – if he beats women up, for example,” said Josiane, aged 14, from Plan research in Brazil.<sup>54</sup>

And this young man from Zagreb, Croatia, said: “Marriage is about asking help from a woman to go through life together, with mutual respect.”<sup>55</sup>

But negative attitudes may lead to high-risk behaviours, which not only affect the young men involved, but also obviously affect their partners as well, as we will see in the next section.

### ENTRE NÓS – YOUNG PEOPLE WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN BRAZIL<sup>56</sup>

The media and new communications technologies such as the internet and mobile phones play a major part in young people’s lives as they grow up. Jackson Katz argues in his film ‘Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity’ that media images have a primary influence in shaping perceptions of what it is to be a man. He notes that this makes it of crucial importance to look critically at these ideals of masculinity, because merely questioning these images can start a whole debate on definitions of manhood.<sup>57</sup> Entre Nós (Between Ourselves), an innovative multi-media campaign, aims to do just this.

Entre Nós’ flagship is a radio-based soap opera about a young couple, Beto and Jessica, and their friends. The storyline addresses first sexual experiences, condom use, unplanned pregnancy and adolescent parenthood

The ‘Entre Nós’ campaign in action.



JON SPAULL

through the lenses of women's empowerment and gender equity. The choice of soap opera for the campaign was strategic – soap operas are a big part of popular culture in Brazil and have a wide appeal across different social groups.

The radio provided a low-cost alternative medium, both for production and dissemination (as opposed to television, or street theatre, for example). The soap opera is played on local radio stations and in diverse settings where young people hang out – schools, community centres, beauty salons, cyber cafés, snack bars, mobile sound trucks and at large community events.

Lately, more work has been done in school settings and three to four different schools will be involved in implementing the campaign over the next two years. Advocacy and training based on the campaign and its themes will also be provided for teachers in 10 to 20 other schools.

Following the airing of episodes, peer educators facilitate discussion groups in which youth talk about the storyline and its link to their lives and relationships. The soap opera is also accompanied by a set of comic books and a soundtrack with songs set to popular music styles, from samba to rap, and lyrics inspired by the campaign themes.

In four local communities where the campaign has been implemented, approximately 1,600 youth have participated in organised discussion groups and about 4,500 copies of each of the three issues of the comic books have been distributed. About 9,000 youth and adults have heard the soap opera through public airings (radio and mobile sound trucks). The project expects to reach 5,000 to 7,000 school students. The campaign was developed and implemented by Promundo, a Brazilian NGO based in Rio de Janeiro, and a group of young women and men peer educators known as JPEG (the acronym in Portuguese for Youth for Gender-Equity).



Brian.

NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

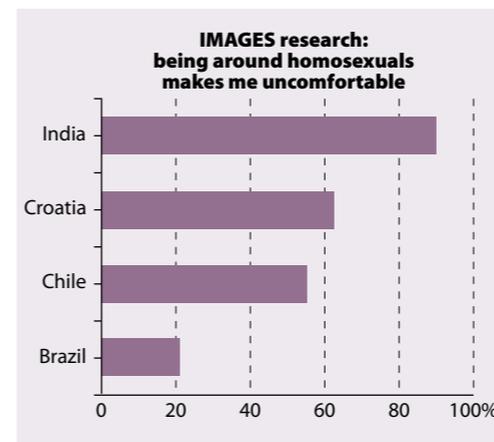
#### 4 “It’s their problem” – working against homophobia

*“I help my mum even if people say I am gay – if they think I am gay it is their problem, or they are jealous because they are limited.”*

Brian, 17, Ciudad Arce, El Salvador<sup>58</sup>

Homophobia and prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people (LGBTQ) is still a strong force in many countries. In 2010, homosexuality was still illegal in 77 countries and punishable by law.<sup>59</sup> In a 2010 public opinion poll, 43 per cent of Americans surveyed believed that homosexuality was morally unacceptable.<sup>60</sup> In Europe, reported hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people have increased in recent years.<sup>61</sup> The EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights does explicitly include the term ‘sexual orientation’ and is the first to do so. However, only 13 EU member states prohibit incitement to hatred towards LGBT people, and only 11 EU member states classify homophobic or transphobic intent as an aggravating circumstance in criminal law.<sup>62</sup> According to Joel Le Deroff, Policy and Programmes officer at the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA Europe), these figures are likely to be much higher in reality, despite legislation against such behaviour. “All our member organisations agree that there is a very high rate of under-reporting of hate-crimes.”<sup>63</sup> In Turkey at least eight transgender people were murdered between 2008 and 2010.<sup>64</sup>

As we have seen, there is a clear link



between attitudes to LGBT people and traditional views of masculinity and femininity. Research for the IMAGES report found that attitudes varied enormously from country to country and context to context. For example: “Men who said that being around homosexual men makes them uncomfortable, ranging from 21 per cent in Brazil to 89 per cent in India. Among the four countries where these questions were asked, Brazil and Chile had the least homophobic responses, while Croatia and India had more homophobic responses.”

Young men in Brazil, Chile and Croatia held less homophobic attitudes than older men and likewise those with higher levels of education in Brazil, Croatia and India,<sup>65</sup> which serves to emphasise the importance of high-quality, gender equitable education and the ramifications this can have for society.

But the attitudes of some young heterosexual men and women towards homosexual men and women may be changing in some countries. We look here at attitudes in the UK and Brazil.

Mark McCormack is a Lecturer in Education at Brunel University in the UK. He spent a year with 16 to 18 year-old boys in three schools. He found that “heterosexual male students explicitly support gay rights. I was surprised not just by these students’ pro-gay attitudes, but also by the passion and intensity with which they held them. In fact, all the boys I interviewed at Standard College publicly supported gay rights... Matt suggested that if someone were to express homophobia, he would be policed by his peers: ‘He wouldn’t keep at it for long,’ he said, ‘it’s just childish.’ Furthermore, when

discussing my own homophobic school experience, Nick said, ‘...that’s just excessive. It’s like racism used to be.’ Ian agreed, saying, ‘That’s out of order, you wouldn’t find that here. It’s just not acceptable anymore.’”<sup>66</sup>

Plan research in Brazil for this report found similar views about homophobia.<sup>67</sup> One focus group of girls and one of boys were asked to react to the statement: “I will never have a gay friend”. The majority disagreed strongly, although a few in each did not reply. Pedro, Matheus and Jean all said that they thought this was prejudice. Jonathan said: “It’s wrong, because everyone has to be what they want to be.” And Pedro noted: “It’s not because someone is gay that we will be gay.”

They then went on to talk of a 12 year-old cousin of Marcelo who wears women’s clothes, but does not identify as gay, and Pedro’s brother, who is gay but has not come out. Only two members of the group of 27 young people said they would never have a gay friend.

In the girls’ group, all the girls said they would have gay friends. Dani, a young woman aged 16, said: “If I had a woman friend they would say ‘ah, she’s a lesbian’, but, well, I do have a gay friend and I like him and the way he is, because he’s extroverted. When the other boys call him gay he defends himself.” Natalia says she has a gay cousin whose mother found it hard to accept at first. Thais, aged 11, has two gay cousins, “and my aunt said ‘this is not my nephew, he’s gay and I don’t have gay nephews; my nephew is a man’, and I thought that was bullying.” Elsewhere the story is slightly



Gay Pride parade in Oslo.

FREDRIK NAUMANN/PANOS PICTURES

different. Eighty-nine per cent of all boys and girls interviewed for Plan's research in India thought "homosexuals should not be allowed to work with children" and in Rwanda 30 per cent of boys and 24 per cent of girls would "never have a gay friend".<sup>68,69</sup> Greater acceptance of sexual diversity in some countries and environments among young people is beginning to undermine the traditional ideas of masculinity which, as we have seen, can often lead to harmful and violent behaviour. This breaking down of rigid concepts of what a 'real man' is and does is good news for gender equality.

## 5 Pornography: "only interested in sex"?

*"Adults have got to know what teenagers are doing, and if you're caught, you get told off. But I never had a serious discussion with a teacher or anyone about it."*

Young man in the UK<sup>70</sup>

In the context of relationships between young men and young women, it is important to acknowledge the increasing influence of pornography. Thanks to the internet, pornography has become readily available – for example, a quarter of all search-engine requests are porn-related. Research in the UK has found that 60 per cent of boys under 16 have accessed pornography, accidentally or deliberately. And "the average age at which they first saw porn has dropped from 15 to 11 in less than a decade".<sup>71</sup> In another study of 13 and 14 year olds in Alberta, Canada, 90 per cent of boys and 70 per cent of girls said they had accessed sexually explicit media content at least once, and figures were higher for rural



One click away.

NICHOLAS JACKA

than for urban areas.<sup>72</sup>

Natasha Walter, a British journalist who has written a book called 'Living Dolls', talked to one young man who said that all his friends had watched pornography on the internet.

"It's when you're 13 and 14 that everyone starts looking and talking about it at school – before you're having sex, you're watching it. Everyone watches porn. And I think that's entirely down to the internet; not just your home computer, but everything that can connect – your phone, your BlackBerry, whatever you've got – everyone's watching porn."<sup>73</sup>

An Australian report found an alarming link between viewing porn and attitudes towards relationships. Violence, very rough sex and even rape would be seen as 'normal' by children and adolescents viewing porn.<sup>74</sup> Michael Flood, who carried out the study, says: "There is compelling evidence from around the world that pornography has negative effects on individuals and communities... porn is a very poor sex educator because it shows sex in unrealistic ways and fails to address intimacy, love, connection or romance. Often it is quite callous and hostile in its depictions of women. It doesn't mean that every young person is going out to rape somebody but it does increase the likelihood that will happen."<sup>75</sup>

### YOUNG MEN WHO HATE PORN<sup>76</sup>

*A new website (antipornmen.org) set up by a young man in the UK, aims to get men to face up to the brutal trajectory of the \$100 billion global porn industry and the self-destructive effect on the millions who consume it.*

It was in the cerebral setting of a university library that Matt McCormack Evans noticed how pornography was shaping his life. He was watching a female librarian stack books on shelves, stretching for the highest recess, when it occurred to him he "should look up some librarian-themed porn that evening," he says. "I remember making that mental note, and then catching myself."

McCormack Evans was 20 at the time, and he had been using pornography regularly for a year or so, since starting



Only interested in sex.

JEZ COULSON/PANOS PICTURES

university and having private access to a computer. At first, he didn't think this was a problem.

It was something he did alone; no one had to know. The habit need never bleed beyond his student bedroom. Then he realised his male peers were using porn too, openly, frequently – almost celebrating it – and it started to make him feel uncomfortable.

He had glimpses of how it might influence their lives. There was the librarian moment: a flash of how porn might shift the way he responded to women in the real world. There was the moment he noticed a male friend struggling not to ask the stupid, inappropriate question about oral sex that had occurred to him when a female friend mentioned her sore throat.

McCormack Evans, a thoughtful, articulate young Londoner, was a philosophy student at Hull University in the northeast of England, and he had never been part of a particularly laddish crowd, but he noticed that the "relatively well-rounded young men" he knew were changing.

"They came to uni, got their first computer, were alone a lot, and everyone became much more laddish. It got to the point where someone groped a woman's bum in a club, and I completely flipped out."

McCormack Evans, now 22, has just co-founded an online project to get men

talking about their use of porn. Other such projects have often come from a religious standpoint but the Anti-Porn Men Project is grounded in feminist principles, in the notion that pornography is an important social issue and has a bearing on violence perpetrated against women and wider inequalities.

In setting up the site, McCormack Evans is one of the few men worldwide to discuss publicly pornography from a feminist perspective – positive about sex itself, open to the idea of people engaging in the widest range of consensual sex acts, but concerned about the industrialisation of sex and where this leads.

## 6 "Real men don't get sick" – health and HIV/AIDS

*"It is not possible to halt and reverse the HIV epidemic or achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health, without reaching and involving men and boys."*

International Planned Parenthood Federation<sup>77</sup>

*"Many young people are afraid of having this virus, and being excluded by society. Society today is very discriminatory, and so today, people need to be more active to seek out those young people and give them moral support."*

Tiago, 15, Codo, Brazil<sup>78</sup>

When it comes to their own health, and knowledge about sex and family planning, young men tend to lag behind young women. They rarely attend health clinics – they see them as women's places; they may

Taking the test.



ADAM HINTON

not see it as 'cool' to go to a doctor, or may see health clinics as something for girls.<sup>79</sup> As one Zimbabwean man put it, "real men don't get sick".<sup>80</sup> Contraceptive use by young men between the ages of 15 and 24 varies enormously: for example, in the North and parts of Latin America and the Caribbean it is between 63 and 93 per cent, while in most sub-Saharan African countries, it is less than 50 per cent.<sup>81</sup> One study in the US found that "more than four out of five male Grade 7 to 12 students engaging in unprotected intercourse also participate regularly in one or more additional health risk behaviours. One in five young men report having been drunk or on a drug high the last time they had intercourse."<sup>82</sup>

We have already seen the effects of traditional masculinities on young men's mental health and on risk-taking behaviour. One national survey of US adolescent males aged between 15 and 19 found that young men who adhered to traditional views of



SVEN TORFINN/PANOS PICTURES

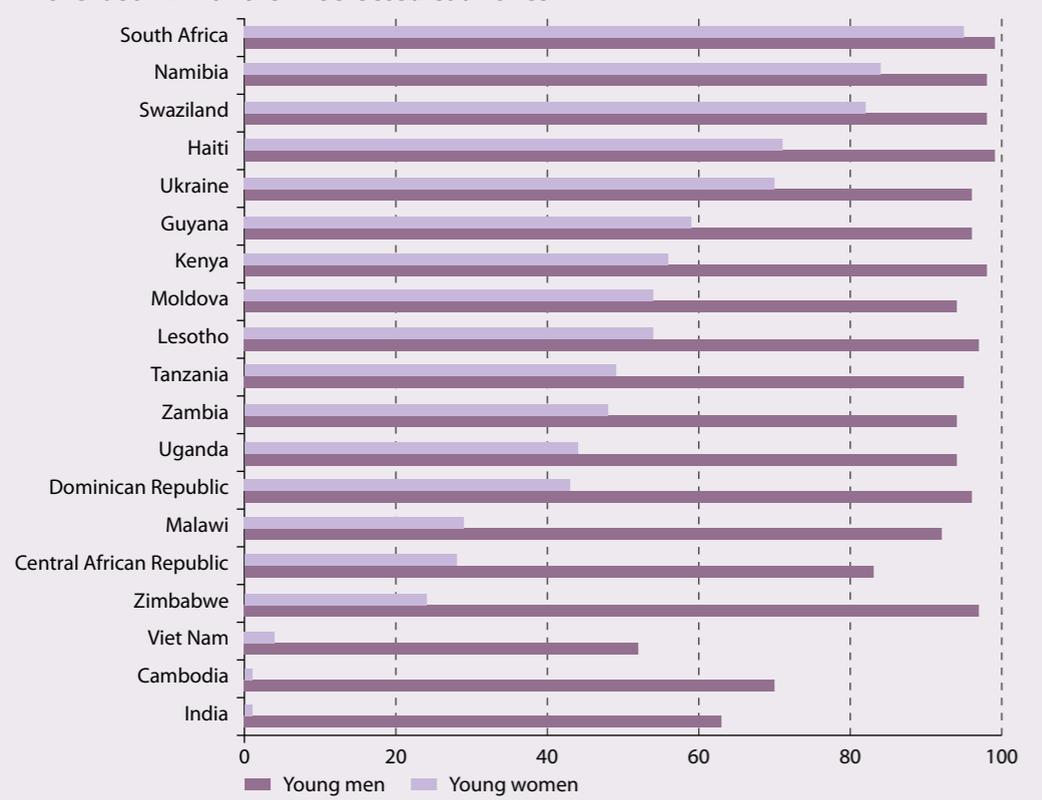
manhood were more likely to experience substance use, violence and delinquency and unsafe sexual practices.<sup>83,84,85,86,87</sup>

This section will focus on one particular aspect of such behaviour when it comes to sexual and reproductive health: HIV and AIDS.

In many parts of the world, HIV is a young person's disease. Over 50 per cent of those

School campaign in Kenya.

**Percentage of young people aged 15–19 who had higher-risk sex with a non-marital, non-cohabitating partner in the last 12 months in selected countries<sup>88</sup>**



newly infected are between 15 and 24 years old. Adolescent girls are particularly at risk, both because they are physically more susceptible and because socially they have less power to negotiate safe sex than their male peers. They are also more likely to contract HIV from older, more sexually experienced men who have had multiple partners.

*"The hope for winning the fight with the HIV/AIDS pandemic lies in changing the attitudes and behaviour of the boys of today, the men of tomorrow, who will not be afraid of equality with women and who are willing to change their behaviour and attitudes."*

Njoki Wainaina, Gender Activist and Advisor, Kenya<sup>89</sup>

When it comes to HIV and AIDS, focusing just on young women is clearly not a solution. But neither is it useful simply to blame young men. The roots of the epidemic lie in the structures that cause unequal relationships and emphasise men's power over women; in the attitudes that we have seen in the earlier chapters and sections of this report. In many societies, these dictate that it is men who decide when to have sex, how many partners they have, and whether they use condoms.

Research shows that men who believe in traditional masculine views of relationships with women "are more likely to practise unsafe sex, treat women violently and abuse substances – thus placing themselves, their partners, and their families at risk of HIV".<sup>90</sup>

For example, men in Malawi boasted about the possibility of being HIV positive, as this would be seen as a 'badge of

Community play about HIV/AIDS.



JANE HAHN



NICHOLAS JACKA

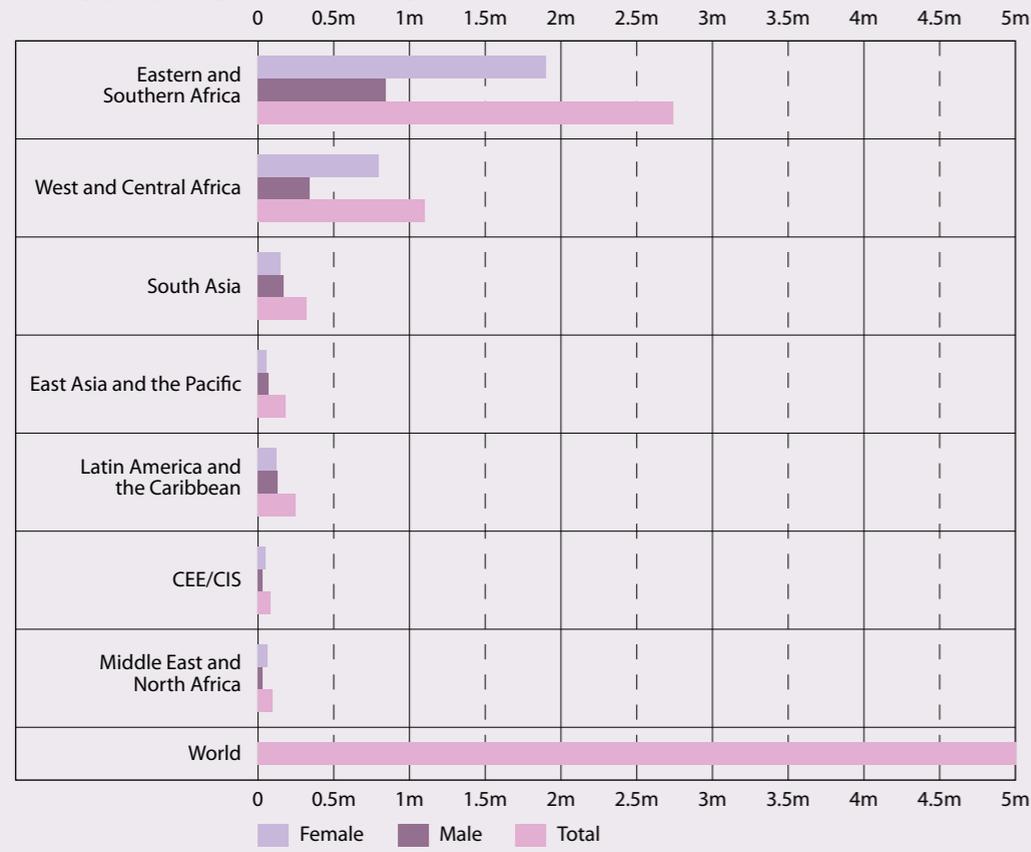
manhood'.<sup>91</sup> The International HIV/AIDS Alliance notes that: "Prescribed masculine traits, such as the notion that men's sexual needs are uncontrollable or that men should have multiple sexual partners, also have serious consequences for men's health, placing them – and thus their partners – at high risk of HIV infection."<sup>92</sup> In order to tackle these attitudes, interventions must start at an early age when these views are being formed, especially through sex education both at school and at home.

As we saw briefly in Chapter 1, there are important gender dimensions to the course of the epidemic for young men and young women. While, overall, those infected divide pretty equally between men and women, in the 15 to 24 age group young women now make up 64 per cent of those infected with HIV, and 70 per cent of those infected in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>93</sup> where they are more than twice as likely to be infected. In three regions – South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean – there are more young men than women who are HIV positive.

Young women tend to be at greater risk than young men for a number of reasons – having sex early, having unprotected sex, or sex with a much older partner, transactional sex and violent sex. Additionally, women and girls are not only more likely to be carrying the disease, they are also more likely to be caring for ill relatives. Globally, 90 per cent of the world's HIV care providers are women and girls.<sup>94</sup> The World Health Organisation notes that: "Social and cultural norms, practices, beliefs and laws can also reinforce the relative powerlessness of young women,

Learning about safe sex in Vietnam.

### Young people aged 15-24 living with HIV by sex (2009)<sup>95</sup>

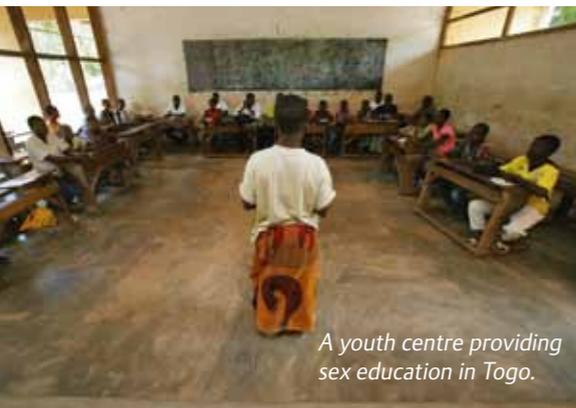


and their susceptibility to HIV infection.”<sup>96</sup>

The epidemic may also be perpetuated by the fact that young men may be reluctant to seek help. “Going to the clinic is regarded as a sign of weakness, of being ‘not man enough,’” says Patrick Godana, of South African NGO Sonke Gender Justice.<sup>97</sup> This means that young men may access treatment

later than women, by which time it may be too late for them, and they may have infected a number of women. In South Africa, twice as many women as men are on antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), and two-thirds more get tested.<sup>98</sup> In Botswana, 52 per cent of women have tested for HIV compared to 44 per cent of men; in Swaziland, 25 per cent of women had tested compared to 18 per cent of men.<sup>99</sup>

In his book ‘Sizwe’s Test: A Young Man’s Journey through Africa’s AIDS Epidemic’, South African journalist Jonny Steinberg maps in detail the reasons why Sizwe is reluctant to be tested: shame, fear, culture – and male identity. He recounts his first meeting with Sizwe: “‘I have not tested,’ he said. ‘My girlfriend is pregnant and she went to the clinic to test. She’s negative. Do you think that means I am definitely negative?’ ‘If you want to know, you must test,’ I said. ‘I know,’ he replied. ‘But I’m scared.’”<sup>100</sup>



A youth centre providing sex education in Togo.

ALF BERG



Y.E.A.H.

### THE ‘BE A MAN’ CAMPAIGN – UGANDA

The ‘Be a Man’ campaign was started during the soccer World Cup in 2006. It is part of the YEAH (Young, Empowered and Healthy) initiative formed in 2004 in response to the Uganda Aids Commission’s call for a decrease in HIV/AIDS and adolescent pregnancies. The campaign challenges male gender norms that put men and women at risk of HIV, by delivering messages on the following issues: faithfulness and partner reduction; non-violent resolution of conflicts within couples; active involvement in parenting; and couple HIV counselling and testing. The campaign uses posters, the media and community outreach and training.

There were ‘Be a Man’ Campaign advertisements on television during the World Cup, which were followed by training for youth and workplace peer educators on men and HIV/AIDS, interactive community drama, and group discussions sparked by silent ‘trigger’ videos. In addition, the ‘Rock Point 256’ radio drama series (part of the YEAH initiative) helped to reinforce the ‘Be a Man’ messages.

As a result of the ‘Be a Man’ campaign, the top four actions taken by men

were: 1) staying faithful to one partner, 2) abstaining from sex, 3) advising someone against transactional sex and 4) disapproving of violence against women. Those men who knew about or had been involved with the campaign improved their knowledge about HIV and increased condom use from 25 per cent to 45 per cent.

While stigma is still a huge issue for both men and women who have AIDS in many countries, men who have sex with men in particular face stigma that may prevent them seeking treatment. And yet they are at high risk of HIV. Between five and 10 per cent of new HIV infections worldwide each year are men in this category. Many men who have sex with men may at the same time be having sex with women, thus spreading the risk of infection. For example, in Venezuela, 65 per cent of people living with HIV in 2006 were men who have sex with men. And yet 41 countries have policies that prevent effective HIV services for men who have sex with men, and as we have seen, many others have prejudices against gay, bisexual and transgender men that make it very difficult for them to seek healthcare when they need it.

Sexual and reproductive policies that support young men to be healthy, to use contraceptives and to inform them about family planning and HIV prevention are urgently needed. The World Health Organisation found that only about 31 per cent of young men and 19 per cent of young women (aged 15 to 24) in developing countries have a thorough and accurate understanding of HIV.<sup>101</sup>

Use a condom.



ADAM HINTON

## To be young is not a crime

Nikki van der Gaag talks to young people in three towns in El Salvador about youth participation.

"We are a very 'machista' society here in El Salvador – this is experienced by children as well as youth. This work with young people represents an opportunity to break down these barriers and to show that girls and young women are as capable as boys and young men." Sulma, who is in her twenties, works with the young people in Ciudad Arce.

'To be young is not a crime' reads the poster the young people carried down the streets of Ciudad Arce as part of a young people's cultural festival.

"Sometimes young people face a lot of stigma," says Hector, aged 20, from Cabañas, in the north of the country. "Just because you are young, adults do not respect your opinions. And we face many difficulties in accessing employment." Javier, also 20, agrees. "Just being young brings problems," says Diana, aged 18, from Ciudad Arce. "We want to support young people to decide for themselves and to keep their thinking positive so that they don't get involved in gangs or get lost in difficult situations. That is why we have been organising in our own communities."



NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

The young people are all volunteers in the community. Some are involved in radio projects, some with youth clubs, others are part of youth groups that work on local policy issues and lobby their local councils. Others have taken part in workshops on family violence or programmes on sexual and reproductive health. Many are involved in several projects at the same time.

So they are not representative of all young people in the country. But looking at them, they could be a group of young people anywhere in the world. The majority are wearing jeans, though some of the young women are in skirts with high-heeled shoes, shiny blouses and belted waists. Luis and Javier have gel in their hair. They use Facebook, argue about which music they like and enjoy watching movies.

El Salvador has a young population; 35 per cent of its people are under 14 and the median age is 23.9.<sup>102</sup> And because it is young people, in particular young men, who are involved in the violence in the country's notorious 'maras' or gangs, it is easy to see why young people feel stigmatised.

Hector, aged 20, a confident young man with lots to say, said that he thought it was important to work with young people because they were still at the stage when their identities were being formed: "If young people lead other young people, then they are more likely to get motivated."

One way of challenging the stereotypes has been to create spaces where young people can meet and talk and change the way they see the world.

The new government is interested in the participation of children and young people. In 2007, it ran a youth consultation on a wide range of issues that included 317 young people from five different areas of the country. Some young people have also fed into the official National Youth Code.

Others have joined the 'Adesquitas', a junior version of the adult 'Adescos', which operate in the community but also form a network that lobbies at a municipal level. In many municipalities there is now a budget for work on children's rights.

In the municipality of Ciudad Arce, youth participation has been a strong theme. The young people here make a PowerPoint presentation about the Cultural Youth Festival that they have organised. They begin with a quote from Jose Marti, the 19th century Cuban national hero: "Young people are happy because they are blind: this blindness is also their greatness, their inexperience is their sublime confidence. How beautiful is this generation of young activists..."

In Ciudad Arce, the FMLN slate for the city council has affirmative action for youth representatives. It also has a 35 per cent quota for women's representation. Cindy Romero is an elected youth councillor. She says that she has been working with a group of young people for more than a year. Diana, aged 18, says that as a young woman, the work has helped her develop her skills and her confidence: **"This work helps you to grow as a person as well as learn new skills – for example, I didn't know I have the personal strength to do public speaking or to organise groups or many other things..."**

Knowledge about HIV and prevention is slowly improving. So good sex education is crucial. It needs to go beyond biological discussions of reproduction and contraception and address the real questions that young men and women need to have answered. "Adolescent boys and young men frequently say they want to discuss masturbation, penis size, sexual relations and its various forms, sexual 'performance' and female sexuality," says Gary Barker, International Director of Instituto Promundo, in his book 'Dying to be Men'. The vast majority of young people learn about sexual matters and HIV through their friends, who may know very little themselves. "Boys are crying out to be heard!" says Kunle Onasanya, from Nigeria. "Most teenage boys get information concerning sex from their friends or pornographic films and literature. Some don't speak to anyone at all, and are not told anything. Those that do speak, especially to adults, are often ignored or told to 'act like a man' without being told what it is to be a man."<sup>103</sup>

### CHALLENGING AND CHANGING ATTITUDES

There are numerous examples from around the world where young people, both men and women, have taken part in programmes that successfully challenged behaviour around HIV.<sup>104</sup> For example:

- In Nepal, an interactive radio programme, 'Chatting with My Best Friend', is produced and hosted by and for young people, to encourage them to discuss the issues and problems of growing up. The programme offers an avenue to discuss common problems such as boy-girl relationships and communication with parents. Since the launch of the programme, the young hosts have received an average of 100 to 200 letters a week.<sup>105</sup>
- The Mathare Youth Sports Association in Nairobi, Kenya, trains its footballers to be peer educators and role models for HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and counselling programmes. The members of the senior squad, better known and therefore better able to influence their peers, were the first to be trained. They stress abstinence from



JENNY MATTHEWS

sex, but for those who are sexually active, they emphasise the importance of using condoms and staying faithful to one partner.<sup>106</sup>

Stepping Stones youth group in Nicaragua.

- In South Africa, 'LoveLife' uses television and radio to give adolescents an opportunity to talk about what many consider to be taboo subjects, such as adolescent sexuality. A survey of 1,000 people revealed that 63 per cent felt that 'LoveLife' was very effective, and 86 per cent felt that open and frank communication is "very important" in preventing HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and STIs.<sup>107</sup>
- 'Stepping Stones' is a successful participatory HIV-prevention programme. Established in 1995 in Uganda, it aims to improve the sexual health and knowledge of local communities. The programme builds stronger, more gender equitable relationships by tackling men's patriarchal domination of women. The manual has been implemented in over 40 countries, translated into 13 languages, and used with hundreds of thousands of individuals on all continents.<sup>108</sup> One father from an indigenous community in Ecuador said: "The other day my son came to me and hugged me... I said to him, 'my son, what do you want?' He replied, 'Nothing, Papa, I just wanted to hug you and tell you that I love you'... I couldn't hold back the tears. How hard

it is for us to show our emotions. This I have learnt in the workshop."<sup>109</sup>

- In Poland, young people have been trained as 'field counsellors', visiting cafés, youth clubs and other gathering places to educate their peers who



Sex education in Vietnam.

NICHOLAS JACKA

are experimenting with drugs on the risks posed by substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and STIs. The young counsellors are trained to assess individual needs and offer appropriate information and referrals.<sup>110</sup>

- The HIV-prevention project 'Young Men as Equal Partners' works in districts in Tanzania and Zambia to motivate young men to adopt healthy and responsible sexual behaviour. Teachers, church leaders, medical staff and young leaders are all involved in encouraging young men to engage in HIV-prevention and sexual and reproductive health-seeking behaviours through activities such as peer education and counselling, gender awareness workshops, and drama performance. Use of condoms among young men increased from 55 per cent to almost 78 per cent during the three-year project period.<sup>111</sup>

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK – ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTIVES AND PREGNANCY OPTIONS

*"All countries should take steps to meet the family planning needs of their populations as soon as possible and should, in all cases by the year 2015, seek to provide universal access to a full range of safe and reliable family planning methods and to related reproductive health services which are not against the law. The aim should be to assist couples and individuals to achieve their reproductive goals and give them the full opportunity to exercise the right to have children by choice."*

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994

International standards require that states ensure access to accurate and comprehensive information about contraceptives and pregnancy options, as well as to related reproductive health commodities and services. Countries across the globe have been making contraceptives more widely available and affordable. In 2009, following a court decision, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the sale of the Plan B (levonorgestrel) 'morning after' contraceptive pill – which prevents pregnancy if taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex – without a prescription for anyone 17 years

or older.<sup>112</sup> Women's health advocates hailed this greater access to emergency contraception as a responsible approach to addressing women's health and tackling unintended pregnancies in the US, which has the highest rate of teen pregnancy among the world's most developed countries.<sup>113</sup> This year, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare approved the distribution of the first emergency contraceptive pills to be available in Japan.<sup>114</sup> Provision of emergency contraception (EC) is also standard practice in global protocols treating women who were subject to sexual violence.

Because EC is a form of contraception, many countries that permit it – such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Kenya, Pakistan, Thailand and Venezuela – have highly restrictive abortion laws.<sup>115</sup>

Yet, in 2000, the Constitutional Court of Peru prohibited the sale or distribution of the morning-after pill. The Court decided that emergency oral contraception could be considered an abortive substance if there is a possibility that this would inhibit implantation of a fertilised ovum. The court banned the Minister of Health from launching a distribution programme to benefit economically disadvantaged women with free EC pills.<sup>116</sup>



LARS SCHOLTYSSEK

### 7 Conclusion: paving the way to a better world

*"If I were President of my country, I would write a rule which said: whatever women do men have to do too. Equal rights!"*

Dani, 16, Brazil, from Plan research for this report

All too often, say adolescents, their needs and skills are not recognised and their voices not heard. The focus is on younger children or older youth. There is little recognition of the fact that girls and boys at this age are developing differently and require different kinds of support at different stages of their adolescent lives.

This chapter has dealt with some of the increasing pressures on both girls and boys as they reach adolescence. For boys in particular, the straitjacket imposed on them by notions of toughness and the effort of keeping their vulnerabilities to themselves undermines their physical and mental health. Both young men and young women would

benefit from a society with less rigid notions of masculinity.

Adolescents, as we have seen in this chapter, have a lot to say about gender and how it plays out in their lives. And girls and boys, young women and young men, have a right to have their voices heard. We would do well to listen. As Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa and champion of young people, said, they are the future: "My dear young people, I see the light in your eyes, the energy in your bodies and the hope in your spirit. I know it is you, not I, who will make the future, will fix our wrongs, and carry forward all that is right in the world."<sup>117</sup>

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus by the international community on adolescent girls. This is important work and needs to be translated into many more programmes on the ground, building girls' skills and capabilities, and ensuring that their environment supports them as they grow into women. But unless there are also programmes for boys, the struggle for gender equality will never be won.

*Looking to the future.*



# Hopes and fears: the transition to adulthood

# 5

## 1 Introduction: a changing world

*"The world is changing a lot and now we see women doing jobs which used to be done just by men, so I think a woman can work in a man's profession and a man can also do a job that is normally for women. So, men say, oh, it used to be like this, women were the ones who cleaned the house, and it has to be like this, it's the women's obligation. I don't agree, because a man can do the same jobs as a woman."*

Lana, 16, focus group for Plan research in Brazil<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the 21st century, the road to adulthood is not an easy one for young people of either sex. Work can be hard to find, relationships need to be formed, the move away from parents negotiated, and an increasingly complex world dealt with on a daily basis. There are some powerful institutions influencing the lives of girls and boys as they move into adulthood. As they enter the world of work, young men and women will come up against rigid barriers and engrained prejudices that limit their choices. In order to overcome these structural inequalities, young people must engage beyond their peer group and their family with a much wider range of people and

institutions, both public and private.

This chapter examines the different steps along that route, and looks at how the challenges vary for young men and young women. We look at young men as fathers, and the different expectations of men and women as both partners and parents. And finally we show how the world is changing for young men and women, and how they are adapting to new ideas and new circumstances.

Young men and women are not just the products of the early conditioning we have seen at play. As they emerge into the adult world of work and begin to build relationships and families there are many signs, as this chapter will demonstrate, that they will also build a world with better and more equal relationships between the sexes.

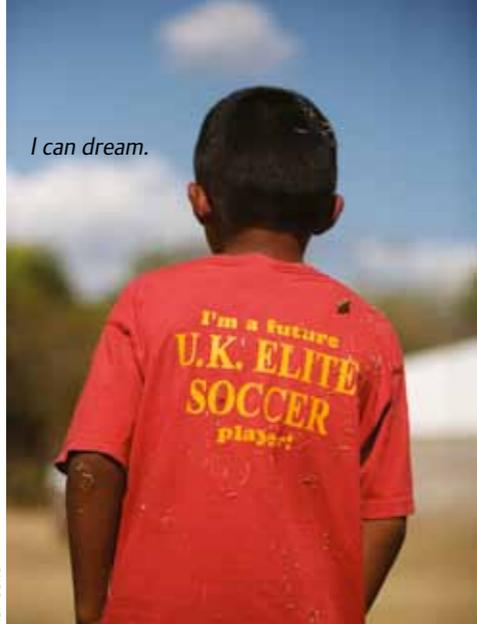
## 2 Hopes and expectations

*"My hopes for the future are to get my own house, have a family, and have a good future by completing school to help my parents and the whole family."*

Boy from Plan cohort study in Masbate, the Philippines

*"I think when I grow up, when I'm older... I think I'll be a prosecutor, or a police chief."*

Natalia, 15, from Plan focus groups in Brazil



I can dream.

in primary school to perform a task and pay themselves the amount they believed they deserved. In every grade girls paid themselves 30 to 78 per cent less than boys. Girls who identified more with 'male' jobs (firefighter, astronaut) paid themselves more than girls who preferred 'female' roles (secretary, nurse, teacher).<sup>2</sup> Long before girls enter the workforce they have learned to undervalue their worth and economic contribution.

As the study's author asks: "How do well-loved little girls, given every material advantage and offered opportunities never dreamt of by their female ancestors, grow up to display the same lower sense of entitlement felt by their mothers and grandmothers?"<sup>3</sup>

### What do you want to be when you grow up?

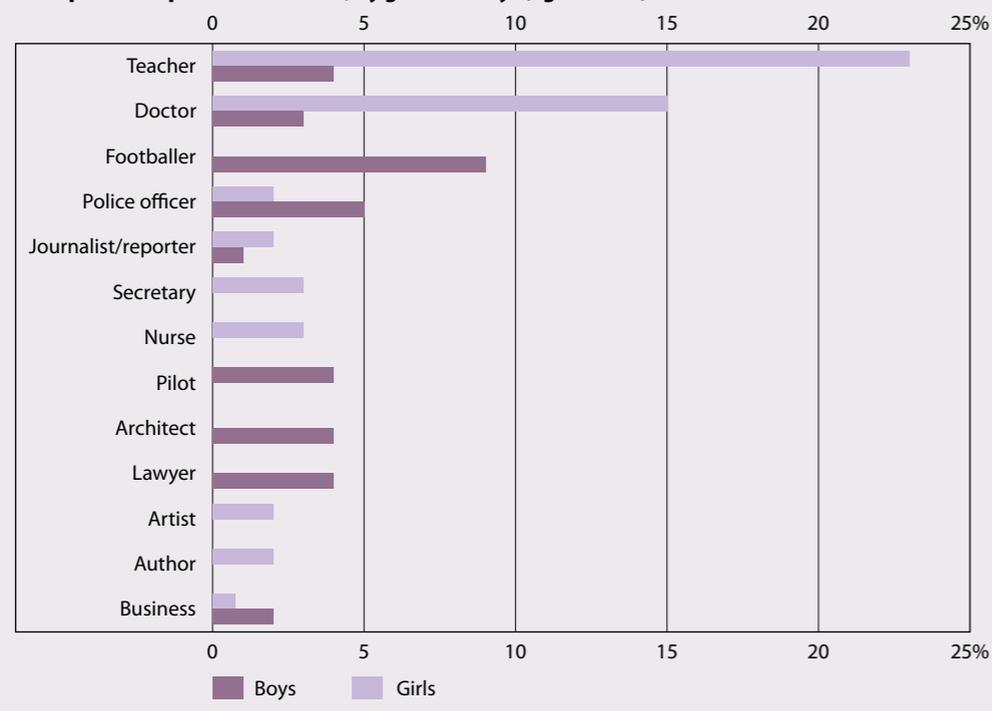
These testimonials were collected from Egypt, Ecuador, El Salvador, Timor Leste, Tanzania, the UK and US by Plan around the world to provide a snapshot of the kinds of futures boys and girls dream for themselves.

The table below demonstrates that girls from all over the world have largely chosen

We have seen in Chapter 2 how children's upbringing may condition them to see boys as superior to girls. One of the results of this can be that girls and young women have come to expect less of themselves than boys and young men. Combined with expectations of what jobs men and women do, this may limit girls' ability even to imagine themselves in certain jobs.

For example, one study asked children

Most prevalent profession chosen, by girls and boys (aged 11-16)



roles that are considered traditionally 'female' and that include an element of care work – such as teacher, doctor or nurse.

There are some notable exceptions, which indicate that gender roles are not set in stone, and social attitudes regarding female and male work roles can change over time.

Whatever these girls grow up to be, unless domestic roles change radically, they will continue to shoulder most of the care responsibilities and are therefore likely to spend the rest of their lives working double and triple 'shifts': first at work, then in the home and finally in their community.

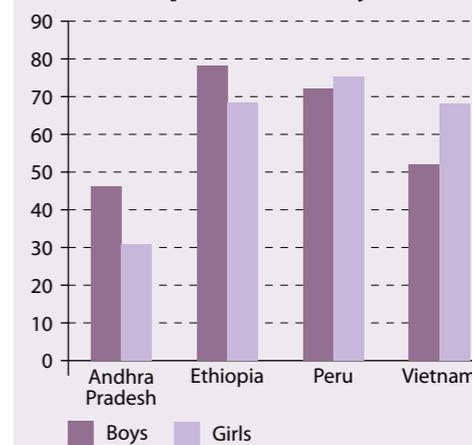
However, interviews with girls and boys show that attitudes and expectations may be slowly changing in some countries. Indeed, as girls begin to do better than boys at school and they see role models like a female President of Liberia or a woman Secretary of State in the US, girls' expectations – and those of their parents – are often as high as those of boys.

In the focus groups for this report, Plan found that girls in Brazil and Rwanda wanted to be lawyers, firefighters, police chiefs (not policewomen), doctors, vets, nurses, accountants, journalists, teachers and singers – not all traditional 'female' professions and very similar to what boys aspired to. Boys too expected that girls would also do paid work when they grew up: "Things are changing; this is good, because now the women have more opportunities to work, more access to technology"; "Nowadays, women even play football"; "Before, men had more power and the women, poor things, did not have any rights."<sup>4</sup>



Not just for boys.

14-15 year olds who ideally would like to complete university (%)



Young people today – even if they come from poor families – have more ambitious expectations. 'Young Lives' is a 15-year study of child poverty in four countries which has shown that a high percentage of 14 and 15 year olds say they want to go to university. In India and Ethiopia more boys than girls said they wanted to go, but in Peru and Vietnam it was the other way round.

The problem is that, in many cases, their expectations are not likely to be realised – even finishing secondary school is a major challenge. Some parents already recognise that this is an issue. "There are many youth that are trained in different activities but they do not have job opportunities," said one parent from urban Ethiopia. "There is no spare land in this 'kebele' [local administrative unit] even for youth who are trained. They are interested in work but they do not have opportunities."<sup>5</sup>

### 3 The transition to work

"Before, women couldn't even get out of the house. Now we see women driving lorries, working as mechanics, being important executives, managing banks, and so many other things."

Father in Brazil, from Plan focus groups for this report<sup>6</sup>

More women are working outside the home than ever before – and the majority of men see this as positive. But this changes traditional gender roles and leads both

women and men to question their attitudes and behaviour both in the home and outside. We will see that this has its own challenges, as 14 year-old Guilherme from Brazil rather nervously explains: *“Today, there is not much difference: men do women’s work and women do men’s work and today women are already doing more things than men and women are about to dominate the world.”*<sup>7</sup> Guilherme is still not sure whether this is a good thing and what it might mean for him. It will in any case be a long time before “women dominate the world”. They may be working, but it is often in low-paid, part-time work and they are still paid less than men. As the 2011 ‘Education For All’ report notes: “Women’s pay and their employment conditions are influenced not just by the supply of labour and demand for skills, but also by social barriers, cultural practices and discrimination.”<sup>8</sup>

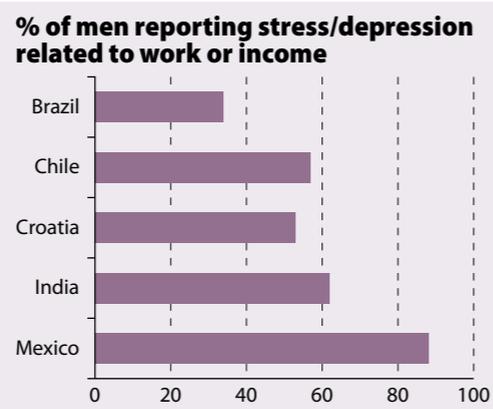
Doing better at school than boys does not translate into better opportunities for girls in the workplace. Women still earn between 16.5 and 22 per cent less than men in most countries in the world.<sup>9</sup> Globally, young people are three times as likely to be unemployed as adults.<sup>10</sup> They are also more likely to be among the ‘working poor’ – those who are earning the most minimal living. In most regions, young women are in a worse position than young men, and have been more affected by the financial crisis, despite the fact that they may be doing better at school.<sup>11</sup> This is not true, however, in the Northern countries, where the increase in the male youth unemployment rate between 2007 and 2009 was 6.8 per cent compared to 3.9 per cent for young women.<sup>12</sup>

Young people this age who are not working may be in this position for positive reasons – they may be still in education or training. But they also may be out of work simply because they have become so frustrated that they have given up looking.<sup>13</sup>

### No work, no manhood?

For young women who are out of work, there may be more opportunities to join the informal market, or to be useful at home. Not having a job is still an economic problem but has less impact on a young

woman’s status and self image. This may be because they are less defined, both by themselves and by society at large, by their job and their ability to earn money. But many young men still see providing for the family as their role and find it very difficult if they can’t find work – this jeopardises not only their ability to earn an income but to marry and start a family.<sup>14</sup> It also affects their image of themselves as the man, the provider. The IMAGES study of men across five nations, conducted by the International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo, found that work-related or economic stress had other negative effects on men, including depression, ideas of suicide, arrests, and use of violence.<sup>15</sup>



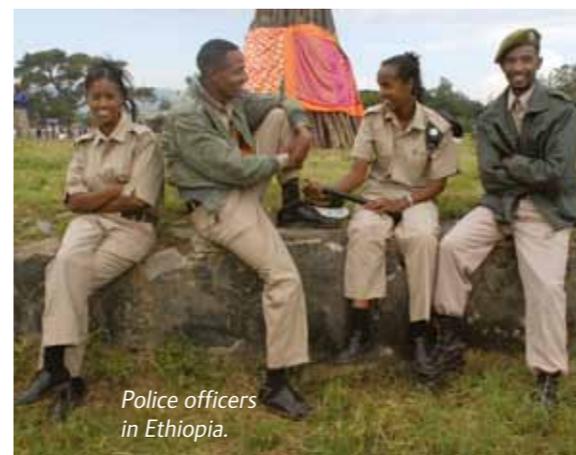
In another study, young men from poor areas of Brazil described what they felt about being unable to find work and how it can lead to crime.<sup>16</sup>

- *“My mother insists that I find a job. Sometimes I run away from her so I don’t have to answer [when she asks me if I have found a job]. I look and I look and I can’t find a job. It’s hard.”*

Arturo, Brazilian, Rio de Janeiro

- *“[Work isn’t] everything but almost everything. You know [if you work] you’ll have some money in your pocket. I mean, if you don’t have work, you see men get involved in all kinds of trouble. I have seen a lot of hard workers get a weapon and start to rob buses just to make ends meet... When a guy is working, he’s not gonna get rich, but he’ll get by.”*

Anderson, 21, Brazilian, Rio de Janeiro



Police officers in Ethiopia.

JENNY MATTHEWS / PANOS PICTURES

- *“I mean, unemployment is rough. Then the money you get is not enough to make ends meet. Then a guy will start to get desperate. If he’s a guy without a head [meaning that he does not think for himself] he’s gonna rob, gonna become a gangster.”*

Jeferson, 19, Brazilian, Rio de Janeiro

Gary Barker, International Director of Instituto Promundo, notes that this area of young men’s unemployment needs more discussion: “If work is an imperative to achieve a socially recognised version of manhood, the syllogism is that no work

means no manhood. It means that women will not find you attractive as long-term partners. It means the police will harass you. It means your parents will hound you to find work. As a result, some young men turn to other ways to achieve respect or recognition – ranging from gangs to domestic violence and substance use.”<sup>17</sup>

This view is echoed in another study: “Poverty places a heavy burden on many fathers, husbands and sons, because in most societies men are expected to be the major providers in the family. Some poor men might ask themselves: ‘If I cannot provide for myself, should I have a family?’ or ‘If I cannot provide for my dependants, am I a man?’”<sup>18</sup>

### 4 Young men as fathers

*“Imagine my girlfriend and I had a child. Do I have the right to change its diapers? I can already picture the looks on my friends’ faces if they saw me with a dirty nappy in my hand. They’ll make fun of me. Still, that is how I’d want to relate to my child. I want to be a caring dad. For most of my friends, that’s worth a good belly laugh.”*

Dikitso Letshwiti, 23, Botswana<sup>19</sup>

Getting a job and becoming financially independent is one way that adolescents



PLAN

Making time to play.

## Boys will be boys?

Nikki van der Gaag speaks to boys in a Plan supported project in Senegal about their hopes and fears for the future.

The boys are silent with concentration as they make drawings of their lives. Many are illiterate, but all can draw. Some of their art is beautiful, intricate and colourful. Ishmail, a 16 year-old apprentice mason, does a detailed drawing of the centre where he and the other members of the Association of Working Children and Youth meet. He draws each brick and colonnade, the woodwork on the door and windows, and colours it in carefully. Salif, 22, an apprentice carpenter, draws a wooden bed, complete with mirror and side tables and swirling patterns on the headboard. "I made this myself," he says proudly. Bacary, who is only 12 and sells mangoes, rattles through drawing after drawing, showing his home, his rich neighbour who owns a car, and his grandfather; and expresses his undying love for Mai, who is 24, and is the Secretary General of the national office of ENDA, a non-governmental organisation working with children.

The young men come from different villages and towns in different parts of Senegal. They are aged between 12 and 22. They all believe that having a trade gains them greater respect. They are proud of what they do, though as apprentices they don't earn a wage. They can make a little money by doing extra work. For example, a carpenter can make carvings from offcuts that his boss might throw away, or a mason can do a small job for a neighbour.

"As an apprentice, you start by fetching and carrying, bringing food, sweeping the workshop, and then gradually you learn how to do things that are more skilled," says Ishmail. "A good boss is a bit like

a second parent: they look after you when you are sick, and give you a birthday present."

There is general agreement that work is as much about respect as money: "If apprentices were paid, they would be more interested in the money than in the work," says Salif. "Once my boss realised I was serious about the work, he started to give me some wages," says Ishmail. "I gave half to my mum."

Their views on the differences between boys and girls reflect a changing world. Most expect their future wives to work outside the home, though perhaps not as apprentices in trades that require physical strength.

"Poverty means that girls have to work too," says Ishmail. "As the eldest son of four, with no sisters, I help my mother by doing the kinds of things that girls used to do, like going to the market. But I don't think a girl could do the kind of work I do as a mason. It involves a lot of physical strength."

All the boys say that if they have children, whether boys or girls, they would ensure that they were educated. This is despite the stories that some of them tell about friends who went to university and still couldn't find a job. In fact, most would send their girls to school and their sons to be apprenticed.

"As a parent, I would say that daughters need to have good jobs," says Papa Sidou, "because they give their wages to their parents, while sons spend them on their girlfriends!"



NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

make the transition to the adult world; becoming a parent is another. Yet we hear far more about young mothers than young fathers. This may be because there are fewer young fathers – as we have seen, young women are likely to marry and have children with older men.<sup>20</sup>

It is also possible that reported levels of fatherhood among young men are low because some men do not know that they have fathered a child, choose not to report the fact (perhaps because they do not live with the child's mother) or do not want to acknowledge paternity.

But lack of information about young fathers may also be because there is little research in this area. Or because prejudices against young men mean that people assume they are not involved in their children's lives. As one study noted: "The young father is generally seen as absent and irresponsible: 'It's no good looking for him, he doesn't want to know about it!'"<sup>21</sup>

And yet many young fathers do want to support their partners and children. In Brazil, Cameroon, Jamaica, Sweden, Uganda and elsewhere, initiatives have been set up to promote greater participation by fathers and future fathers in caring for their children.<sup>22</sup>

But young men themselves need support to engage in childcare and domestic chores and take on more of the burden of care borne by teenage mothers. This is not easy, and they may face teasing and even hostility from their peers.

Young parents in many cultures do not have a positive image. There is good reason, as we have seen, for delaying parenthood, whether you are a young woman or a young man. Being a parent is hard work, and doubly so if you are missing out on the education and exploration that most of your peers seem to be enjoying. But whatever your age or sex, you can learn to be a better parent with the right support, as this project demonstrates.

### YOUNG FATHERS IN JAMAICA

For over 20 years, the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation has encouraged more than 26,000 teenage mothers to continue their education and to learn a skill. Recognising, however, that addressing the problems associated with

teenage pregnancy requires working with adolescent boys as well as girls, in 1999 the Centre began a programme for teenage fathers.

Both girls and boys benefit from the Young Men At Risk Counselling Programme. 'Baby fathers' learn how to become better parents, and at the same time increase their employment skills and opportunities. The teenage mothers and babies benefit from the additional emotional and financial support the boys are able to give.

The programme operates in all seven Women's Centres throughout Jamaica. Each centre has a part-time counsellor and teachers who conduct evening classes in English, mathematics, electrical installation and technical drawing. During the day, the young men receive counselling in legal matters and in resolving personal problems. Speakers are invited to discuss career choices, parenting, reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections.

According to Pamela McNeil, founder of the Women's Centre, fear had kept many young men from becoming better fathers. "For some, it's gangs," said McNeil. "Others are afraid of the parents of the girls; some fear the police. This fear causes some of them to run away from their responsibilities. Most of them want to be good fathers but they are not sure how." Over 1,000 'baby fathers' and other young men aged 16 to 25 have participated in the programme.<sup>23</sup>

A young father in Liberia.



ALF BERG

## 5 Working women, working men: changing role models?

*"In my house my father works and when my mother isn't working she gets upset because she doesn't like to depend on him. She always finds something to do, and both of them work."*

Dani, 16, Brazil, from Plan research for this report

*"My father had an authoritarian style. A child did not have the right to voice an opinion. I was beaten because of my mistakes. I think my father's generation lacked knowledge of fatherhood. He applied what he had seen from his father."*

Erol Dündar Deveci, group leader, Fathers' Support Programme, Turkey<sup>24</sup>

So has the fact that more women are working than ever before changed male attitudes towards women in the home? In some cases the answer is definitely not. For example, a study by Naila Kabeer found that married women working in garment factories in Bangladesh reported that they woke before dawn to make a start on their household chores and went to bed after other family members in order to complete them. Similar findings are reported in

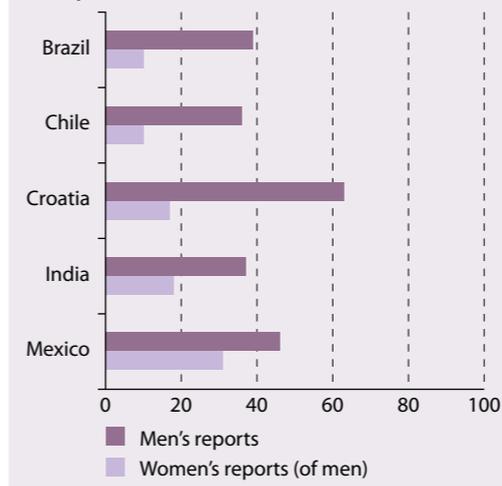
Chile's agro-export sector, where wives and mothers had to convince husbands that their paid employment would not disrupt the fulfilment of the household responsibilities. In Mexico, the 'offer' to ensure the housework got done was one of the ways in which wives and daughters obtained permission to work. As one woman explained, her job made little difference to her husband as long as the house was clean and his meal ready when he came home.<sup>25</sup> Working outside the home does not seem to change this division of labour; in fact, when a husband is unemployed and his wife goes out to work, he may well do less work in the home than when both are employed. For example, one study of a flower-growing area in Ecuador found that, in general, "women put in longer hours in domestic work if their husbands did not work than if they did". And "even in... those households where both women and men worked in the flower industry – the imbalance was striking: men worked 76 minutes a day [on domestic chores] while women worked 221 minutes."<sup>26</sup> Only in two households in which women earned *considerably* more than their husbands (121 per cent and 336 per cent more) did men assume a greater share of unpaid domestic work than women.

The IMAGES research by the International



Female breadwinners in Bangladesh.

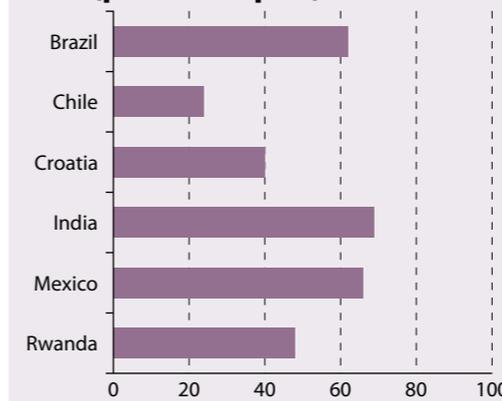
### % who participate in the daily care of a child



Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo found that 84 to 98 per cent of men in the countries of focus believe that a father's early involvement in his child's life leads to a better relationship later.<sup>27</sup> However, a significantly lower percentage of men actually take time off after a child is born. It is interesting to note here that men say they play a much larger role in daily childcare than their partners think they do – in Brazil, 39 per cent of men said they played an equal role in childcare, but only 10 per cent of women thought they did.<sup>28</sup>

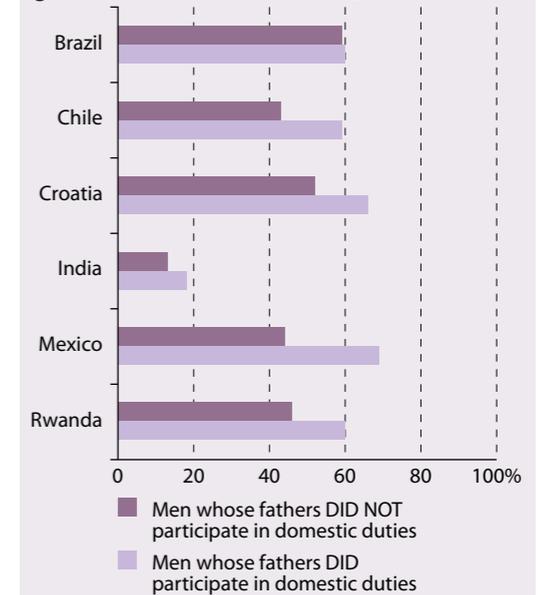
But involvement by fathers needs to begin at birth. In some countries, paternity leave (see Section 3) is now part of legislation, although practice still has a long way to

### Took leave after last child was born (paid and unpaid) %



go. In a 2010 study of six countries by the International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo,<sup>29</sup> the percentage of men who took paternity leave varied from 69 per cent in India to 24 per cent in Croatia. However, the average number of days taken was still small, ranging from three to 11 days of paid leave and four to 10 days of unpaid leave. This reflects the fact that legislation in most countries still does not allow men to take more than a few days off when their baby is born.

### Links between fathers' and sons' participation in domestic duties (defined as playing an equal or greater role in one or more duties)



Paternity leave is only the start. Bringing up a child is not a matter of a few days or a few months, but the job of a lifetime. Many young fathers spend time with their children,<sup>30</sup> but working fathers with young children are also, at least in Europe, those who work the longest hours.<sup>31</sup>

So what influences change in relationships between men and women? We have seen that role models in the family make a difference. This may be positive – for example, young men who learned about how to do housework when they were boys "entered marriage with the expert knowledge of domestic tasks and took pride in it".<sup>32</sup> The IMAGES research by the

International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo found that younger men, men with more education and men who saw their fathers do domestic work are more likely to carry out domestic duties.<sup>33</sup> The boys who we interviewed for this report in Brazil were very much aware that the workplace was changing. As one boy said: “Our mother did not have the opportunity to study, and now she does. In the old times there were no opportunities for women. Now, women are lawyers, doctors...”

But positive change can also be a reaction to a negative upbringing. This young man in the US, whose father had been absent, said: “I just don’t want my children to grow up feeling the way I feel about my dad. That’s all. So, if I have to work two jobs and go to school at the same time, and sleep only two hours a day, that’s what I’ll do. To be sure that they don’t feel the way that I feel.”<sup>34</sup>

Sometimes unemployment can be an eye-opener, as this man from Zambia explains: “When I started work, I did not allow my wife to work and did not even teach her how to make money. But when I lost my job, we were

so desperate until my first-born daughter came to our rescue and helped us. The help from my daughter is what changed my perception about women working and my bias against having a daughter as a first born.”<sup>35</sup>

But what is absolutely clear is that this change is no quick-fix, because boys and young men are going against deeply engrained socialisation messages, from their families, peers, communities and the media.

Men and boys taking a stand against unhealthy and rigid notions of ‘being a man’ may feel too risky as they have been socialised and rewarded for following the status quo. Studies involving men in Brazil, Chile, Croatia and Mexico found that 87 to 90 per cent did not feel that they lost out when women’s rights were promoted; but in India only 47 per cent of men agreed.<sup>36</sup>

Research by the Pew Center in 22 countries found that in seven countries, there has been an increase in the numbers of men who agree with a model of relationships where roles and responsibilities are equally shared. In Jordan, in 2002, 37 per cent opted for the more egalitarian approach,

while nearly half do so now. In Russia, Poland, Lebanon, Mexico and the US, the numbers approving the more non-traditional arrangement have also gone up.

In China, Pakistan and Nigeria, however, “views of marriage have become more traditional since 2002”. This is particularly marked among Nigerian Muslims, where the figure has dropped from 70 per cent expressing approval to 47 per cent.<sup>37</sup>

The study noted that: “In 19 of 22 countries, majorities say that a marriage where both husband and wife have jobs and take care of the house and children is a more satisfying way of life than having the husband provide financially while the wife cares for the household.” Children appear to agree. Plan’s research with 12 to 18 year olds indicates that they are actually happier when they see their parents sharing household responsibilities – when both parents make decisions and when their mothers spend their time in and out of home.

## 6 “Equality makes me happy”

*“Having more equality makes me happy. I am a better friend, with closer friendships with both boys and girls, and better conversations.”*

Luis, 21, El Salvador<sup>38</sup>

*“If I think about my own experience, I’ve been doing work around these issues of gender and masculinities working with men for a little over a decade. And I grew up in South Africa, playing rugby... in a very conservative, racist society that was full of all sorts of hierarchies. And you know, certainly what was exciting about taking this on, was examining some of the assumptions I hold about gender, about myself as a man, and finding out that in fact I felt much freer challenging many of those gender stereotypes. And so, for me, it’s been at times... a struggle, but in many ways a very (liberating) experience.”*

Dean Peacock, South African activist and director of Sonke Gender Justice Network<sup>39</sup>

We show many examples of successful programmes and projects with boys and young men for gender equality throughout this report – those like Program H (see

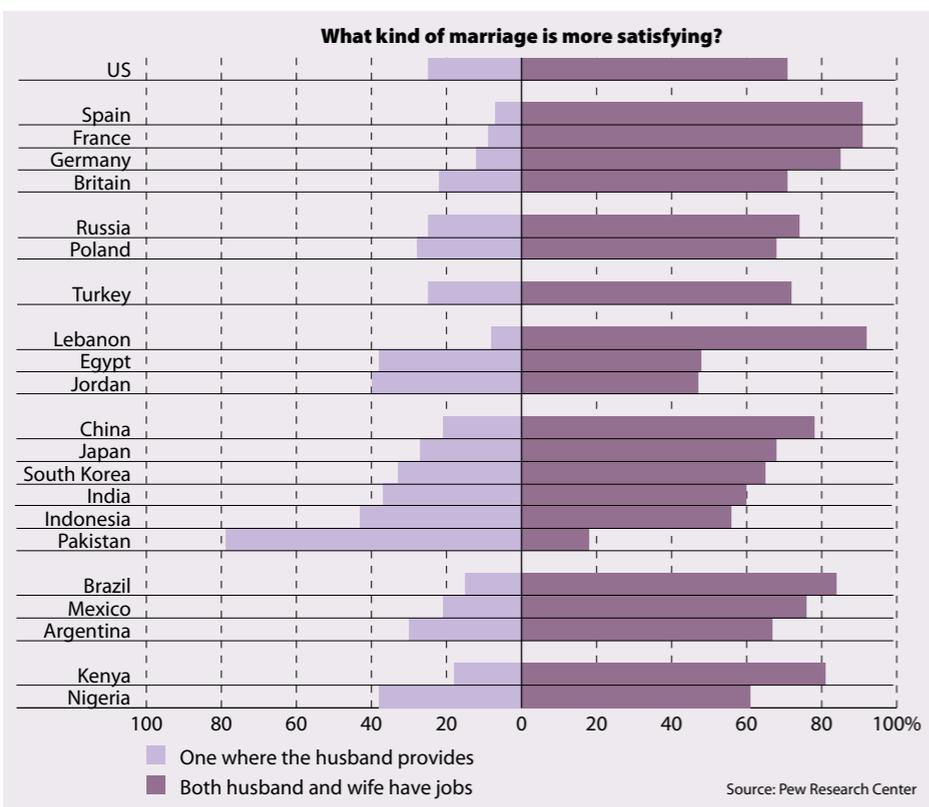


Chapter 1) which have proven so successful in one country that they have been adapted and rolled out in other countries and on other continents. But these are still only scattered examples which can influence, at best, thousands of young men and boys. Most of these programmes work with adolescents, who are at a crucial stage in their lives for intervention. But as we have seen, inequality begins at birth.

Every young man who stands up for gender equality has to face the difficulties of going against the prevailing norms which are reinforced day by day, minute by minute. Those who do work for gender equality do not have the many years of work that support women working on this issue. They may face ridicule and derision not only from other men, but from women as well.

For every man who supports gender equality, there are many more who continue to be trapped in dominant notions of masculinities which shut off whole sides of their personalities, and turn feelings into frustration, frustration into anger, and anger into violence. While these counter-productive notions are deeply embedded, they are never an excuse for violence. They may, however, help us to understand why this violence happens and therefore how it might be prevented. We will examine this question further in Chapter 6.

We have shown how these attitudes start at an early age. We have also revealed just how gender inequality intersects with other social injustices – not least poverty and unemployment. This chapter has demonstrated how little we understand and support young fathers, and how these young men and their children suffer as a result. But our research has also revealed young people in many countries challenging the way that their parents behave and wanting to build a more equal world for themselves and their children.



## Speaking from the heart

Nikki van der Gaag talks to a group of men in the Dominican Republic.

It takes us a while to find the right place and we have to stop and ask people along the way. Eventually we turn off the road and a few metres further down there is a school building. The men are waiting in a classroom and we all perch in a circle on tiny chairs. Children's drawings cover the walls. The group ranges from Wilman, the youngest, to Bienvenido, who could be his grandfather.

We are here to talk about the masculinities project that they have been involved in with Plan Dominican Republic. They come from different communities, so they don't know each other. They have only just begun the work, but during the two hours that follow, they are open, animated, thoughtful – and worried. It is clear that this work touches their hearts.

They talk first about why they became involved.

Cristobal, an older man in a red shirt, says: "I became involved because as a father myself I was interested in the relationship between fathers and children."

The other two main motivations are concern about rising levels of violence and abuse in the community, and teenage pregnancy. Patricio, who wears a Red Cross cap, a

Plan T-shirt and a cross around his neck, talks about violence: "I see every day how women suffer from violence – mostly verbal rather than physical, but there are lots of kinds of violence. In our community I see cases where a girl at home becomes pregnant because she has been abused by her brother, father or stepfather."

Wilman, the youngest in the room, has a very personal reason for wanting to do this work: "I am here to learn about not doing violence to women because I see this a lot in my family. Lots of men hit women if they don't do what they want."

The men all say they believe that violence against women is increasing. They are probably right; domestic violence in Santa Domingo is the single most reported offence, with 15,000 complaints reported over the last two years.<sup>40</sup>



RICARDO PIANTINI

And they agree that this is because women are starting to challenge some of the 'machista' assumptions that have always been part of the culture in the Dominican Republic. Manuel explains: "When women exercise their rights today, men are not educated about those rights. So when a woman starts to demand her rights, men get angry. Men need to know how to change their way of thinking."

Rudio, who is smartly dressed in a pale yellow shirt, notes that: "We ourselves need to understand the source of the violence. We can be violent without thinking about it or without meaning to – there are things that women do that in a society of equality would be normal, but in our society we react with violence. For example, a woman can't leave the house without asking the husband. Women can't make their own decisions. Even I take the decisions in my household."

He goes on to explain that migration means that women go abroad and learn about equality, but when they come back with new ideas, they get beaten. Some men, he says, don't want women even to be educated: "If a girl studies, some men worry that she will become superior to them." Rudio agrees: "If there is women's liberation, it is a shock for men's reality. And that is how the violence gets worse."

Cristobal says that it is all quite confusing: "We know that this is the world we hope for and work for. But we also worry that if women are educated and know there is a better life that they might leave their husbands."

Rudio adds: "Most women still depend on men for money – if a woman works she doesn't need money from her husband..."

The women in the community of Barreras, on the other side of the country, would agree with him. When Beda, who is one of 50 women belonging to the local microcredit group, says, "I feel very proud that I am part of this group. It is good for a woman to have her

own money", every single woman nods furiously.

Ronnie, the secretary of the group, says: "It was important to organise a group like this because before so many women stayed home and would have to wait for their husband to bring the money home, but now we don't have to do this. We have more security now – the amounts are small but the pot grows. We don't have to worry so much about something happening..."

The women of Barreras say that they haven't faced any resistance from the men, because often they are using the loans to help the family business – buying nets for fishing, for example. Ronnie says: "We believe that relationships between husbands and wives are also improving – before, men believed that women had to stay in the house – now it is not so easy for men to say 'I am the macho man'."

Back in Azua, Wilman laughs and says: "As a young man I am quite happy to marry a woman with money!"

There are clearly changes between the

generations. The men talk about their own childhoods, and know that they want more for their own children and grandchildren. Cristobal says: "In my case, this work has helped me think about my family – when I was young I wanted to make a different family from the one I was born into. My parents treated us as animals, we worked, we never went to school. I wanted to make a different family but didn't know how and so with my 'compadres' we have started to meet and exchange ideas. I hope my children will treat their children differently."

Emilio agrees: "I am a father. I have given confidence



RICARDO PIANTINI

to my children, I know that to teach them I must not hit them. Violence in the home can cause delinquency – if a child sees violence they will be violent."

The men in the room say they believe in equality, but it is not always easy to put it into practice. They know that nothing will change unless men are involved, because it is men who hold the power, and mostly men who are the violent ones. Rudio says: "We have a responsibility as men because women are more vulnerable – but men and women must work together. Every day I see on television cases of men killing women

and never women killing men. Those like me who belong to a church or a community must take the initiative because it is a problem that goes from generation to generation. It is important to work with men so that women can have equality and to protect children. Every man knows this but does not know how to put this into practice."

They say that it is important to work at an individual and community level, as they are doing, but also to involve institutions – for example, the justice system, says Patricio. Manuel believes the programmes need to be bigger, and also that: "We need to show the benefits in economic terms, for the better education of children and building a better society."

Manuel points out that it is important for men to be able to meet and talk together about these things, and for women to do the same, but also, as Freddy notes: "That men and women need to work on these things together."

"Yes," says Rudio, "and then the family becomes a team."



RICARDO PIANTINI



# A dangerous boy? Saying no to violence

# 6

## 1 Introduction: Pascal's story

*"As a child I asked myself why my father continued to fight with my mother every day. I could not get the answer. Then I found out that my father was cheating on my mother; that was the main cause of the fighting. Later I realised that women in the entire village were experiencing gender-based and sexual violence.*

*"To my father, beating and assaulting my lovely mother was the way of proving his manhood. He used to say every day that he was the man: all decisions should be directed to him and he would have the final say. He used to beat my mother nearly to death; but when she talked to her family and elder women they used to answer her, 'That's how you build the house! You must stay, he will change.'*

*"Sometimes she would wake up with a swollen face and fear telling the truth. She would say that she fell during the night because it was dark. All this beating that my father was doing to her, many times he would kick her against the wall or beat her with sharp objects. He would insult her in front of us, telling her that she was less than a woman; she was nothing, stupid, ugly, she didn't know how to cook.*

*"It affected me a lot because when he started beating my mother he would turn*

*to me and my sisters, beating us, chasing us away, saying that we are ugly like my mother, stupid, nothing..."<sup>1</sup>*

Pascal's story shows both the pervasiveness and the lasting effect of his father's violence, not only on those who were beaten, but on the whole family. For young men like Pascal, who have witnessed and experienced this from a young age, it leads to a cycle of violence which it is hard to break as they grow up.

Pascal himself tells how he went on to be a violent young man, using violence not just against young women, but against his male peers as well. He is quite clear that this had its roots in his childhood: "Before I started doing this work [for gender equality], I was a dangerous young boy. I think this is because of the violence that I experienced in my growing up time. I remember I used to be very angry at any child or person. Many times I would fight and this led me to join a bad group of people who were abusing women and girls... what my father did to my lovely mother had become what I was doing to girls. I became conscious and started to think about how I could change, though it was very difficult."

Perhaps this is one reason why young men's violence is one thing that does not seem to change. It continues because violence, particularly male violence against women, is strongly related to power and to

patriarchal systems. Violence against women is sometimes treated in isolation from the systems and structures that give birth to that violence, but in fact is an integral part of those systems. Inequalities of poverty, class and race are also forms of structural violence, and are themselves constructed in a way that is entirely gendered. UN Women defines gender-based violence (GBV) as “violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim and which arises from unequal power relationships between men and women”.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter begins by looking at the consequences of violence, first on young women, and then on young men, who may be both perpetrators and victims. We have seen how traditional norms of masculinity can undermine young men’s ability to show emotion or weakness. In this chapter we will show how this can also push them to be violent towards women and towards other young men, and examine the causes and consequences of this violence. What makes a boy turn into a violent man? What prevents him doing so? And what structures – legal, religious, cultural, economic and social – condone and even support such violence?

If we look at society as a whole, what is surprising is not that young men are violent, but that most are not. Young men are socialised and expected to be violent, if not actually going to war to fight, then proving themselves in other ways to be ‘real men’. Violence, being tough, is inherent to how we construct masculinity.

The focus of most work on gender-based violence has been on women and on supporting them when they flee from violent husbands or partners.<sup>3</sup> This work is absolutely essential. But what has been missing until quite recently is an analysis of why men – particularly young men – are violent, and what can be done to stop it. Until this work is recognised and expanded – and then joined up with the work with women – the focus will continue to be on the problem rather than the solution. “The more I work on violence against women, the more I become convinced that the real way forward is to redefine what it means to be male,” says expert Lori Heise.<sup>4</sup>

We show how these patterns of behaviour begin to be set from an early age. We

have seen the causes and consequences of violence in school in Chapter 3. And we will look at how violence can be prevented, using case studies of successful projects and programmes, and individual voices from young men and young women. We will look at the issue from the perspective of both girls and young women, and boys and young men; and ask: what can be done – at both structural and individual levels – to try to put an end to the violence so that men and women can live in peace with each other?

## 2 How violence affects girls and young women

*“A man of 27 forced me to make love with him. I felt a lot of pain. I lost my virginity to someone I did not know and who disappeared. My father gets angry very easily and does not care a lot about us. I did not dare to tell him because I knew he would beat me very badly. I also did not tell my mother, for fear that she would tell my father. I feel guilty and angry with myself.”*

15 year-old girl in Cameroon<sup>5</sup>

*“I was brought up knowing that if you want to have sex with a girl and she doesn’t want you, you just klap [hit] her two or three times and she will give you what you want. I grew up doing those things... After being in contact with [Men as Partners]... I realised that the way I grew up was actually wrong; it wasn’t supposed to be like that. If you want to have sex it should be a mutual feeling, both from your partner and you, and you agree on doing that.”*

Lee Buthelezi, a 25 year old from the Johannesburg township of Thokoza, South Africa<sup>6</sup>

International laws have made it illegal to use violence against women and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has made it obligatory for countries to take steps to end this widespread violation of human rights.

And yet it continues. And the facts are truly shocking. Six out of every 10 women in the world experience physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives.<sup>7</sup>

This violence takes no account of age, class, religion or ethnic origin. Young women,



Suffering in silence.

ALF BERG

*much out of me left ear, I’m partially deaf in that ear cos of him.”*

Woman, 20, Manchester, UK, reflecting on relationships between the ages of 15 and 19<sup>12</sup>

especially those aged 15 to 19, are at higher risk than other groups.<sup>8</sup> Sexual, physical and psychological violence, mostly by an intimate partner, causes women age 15 to 44 as much ill-health and death as cancer – and more than malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.<sup>9</sup> Violence against women includes physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse. It occurs in the richest homes and the poorest refugee camps. A World Health Organisation study<sup>10</sup> found, for example, that:

- In urban Bangladesh, 48 per cent of 15 to 19 year-old women reported physical or sexual violence, or both, by a partner within the past 12 months, compared with 10 per cent of 45 to 49 year olds.
- In urban Peru, the figure was 41 per cent among 15 to 19 year olds compared with eight per cent of 45 to 49 year olds.
- In South Africa, one study found that 27.6 per cent of the men interviewed said they had raped a woman. Asked about their age at the first time they had forced a woman or girl into sex, 62.9 per cent were between 10 and 19 years old.<sup>11</sup>

A recent UK study documented some horrific violence experienced by young women, and frightening levels of domestic violence directed towards 15 to 19 year-old girls.

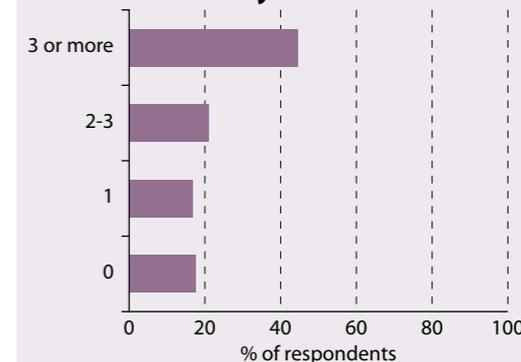
*“I’ve had some pretty bad injuries from both my exes and their mates: fractured eye socket, I’ve had me jaw broke, broken collar bone, broken hands, broken legs. R broke both of my legs six months into being with me, because we were at a party and his friend’s given me a hug, and as he’s done that he’s touched me bum, like on purpose, and R dragged me out of the party by me hair and snapped both me legs outside with a baseball bat. Had a metal pole round me head, dung bells, you know the weight bars, I’ve been knocked out I don’t know how many times, broken nose, they thought I had bleed on the brain I was bleeding so*

The same study also uncovered some extremely worrying attitudes amongst young men:

*“Some of them they do need to get hit. I don’t believe in that ‘oh, don’t hit a girl’. Even though I don’t like hitting girls, I don’t believe in it because sometimes they do need to get hit.”*

An online poll by US-based organisation Men Can Stop Rape, which mobilises male youth to prevent men’s violence against women, asked: “How many people do you know who have been sexually assaulted?”<sup>13</sup> Forty-five per cent said they knew three or more people.

### ‘How many people do you know who have been sexually assaulted?’



In the same way that young men are socialised to be violent, girls and young women are seen as compliant, and socialised to behave in non-violent ways. Gender is about relationships, and as masculinities expert Michael Kaufman notes: “Gender roles are constructed and reconstructed – and must be questioned – by both men and women. Girls and women can contribute to traditional harmful versions of manhood, just as boys and men can contribute to traditional, restrictive versions of womanhood.”<sup>14</sup>

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, RECENT LEGAL PRECEDENTS

Across the globe, national laws addressing violence against women continue to be updated and improve their scope and enforcement capacity. Brazil's Maria da Penha Law on Violence against Women (2006), the culmination of a lengthy campaign by women's groups and regional and international bodies, has been cited as one of the most advanced in the world. The law provides a variety of legal protections, including special courts, preventive detentions for severe threats, increased penalties for perpetrators, and affirmative measures to assist women, including vulnerable domestic workers, and to educate the public about the issue and the law.<sup>15</sup> In August 2007, the President of Brazil announced US\$590 million to implement the law. UNIFEM hailed the budgetary pledge as a leading example of "a substantial allocation for implementation of legislation".<sup>16</sup>

In 2009 the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) Law came into force in Afghanistan. A landmark achievement for a country emerging from decades of war and gender repression, the EVAW law is in line with the Afghan constitution and the principles of Sharia that seek to ensure the dignity and equality of all human beings. Due to strategic considerations, the law came into effect as a presidential decree rather than going through the parliament and risking its dilution or evisceration by conservative members.

By July 2010 over 90 women had come to the newly established unit in Kabul and said they wanted to prosecute their husbands, in-laws, or other abusers.<sup>17</sup> The special unit, with its 11 prosecutors, can only reach women who live in Kabul and surrounding areas. It lacks the resources to conduct extensive investigations and has to deal with a poor grasp of the

law on the part of police, prosecutors, lawyers and judges. A second unit is scheduled to open in 2011 in Herat Province, in northwest Afghanistan.

In 2006, neighbouring Pakistan amended Section 8 of the Offences of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) Ordinance, 1979, which required as proof of rape four Muslim adult male witnesses to "give evidence as eye-witnesses of the act of penetration necessary to the offence". However, while this requirement no longer applies to rape, it continues to be in force with respect to adultery and other extramarital sexual relations ('zina').<sup>18</sup>

In Fanuel Sitakeni Masiya (2007), a 44 year-old man had forced anal sex with a nine year-old girl, which the law classified as indecent assault rather than rape. In response, the South African Constitutional Court ruled that the definition of the crime of rape should be prospectively developed to include non-consensual anal penetration of females, as such violence is no less invasive or degrading to the victim than the current rape element requiring vaginal penetration. Anal rape of males remains outside the definition of rape.<sup>19</sup>



Seeking help in Venezuela.

PAUL SMITH/PANOS PICTURES

### 3 "Guys who fight are cool" – resisting the pressure to punch

*"I was always the youngest in my neighbourhood. They always bullied and molested me. My dad told me to ignore it, but if they attack you defend yourself. And then one day I picked up a rock and hit them and the bullying ended."*

Young man, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>20</sup>

The reasons for men's violence against women are complex. They are both structural and individual. They are closely linked to struggles for power and status, and rage and frustration. They are at their most intense during youth and adolescence.<sup>21</sup> And in many societies such violence is perpetuated because it is seen as 'normal' behaviour.

We know that violence, or potential violence, looms large in every boy's life as he grows up. Having to prove yourself physically is often seen as part of the process of becoming an adult if you are a boy, and is intimately connected to power and status. As one young man in a study in the Balkans said, "Physical strength brings respect."

Another noted: "Guys who always fight are regarded as cool."<sup>22</sup>

As we have seen in Chapter 2, even as small children, boys are constantly given the message that they must be strong and tough and fight back. Gary Barker notes: "The majority of violent behaviour is explained by social factors during adolescence and childhood."<sup>23</sup>

At home, negative role models are all too common.

*"Violence in couple relationships is a problem of power and control. It is maintained by the social structures of oppression in which we live... based on gender, class, age and race inequalities. A national history of wars and a culture of settling conflict through force also maintain it. Both men and women learn and practise this logic of human relations based on power and control over others; however, for men the exercise of this power-over-others model becomes almost an obligatory criterion to our male gender identity."*

Oswaldo Montoya, Nicaraguan anti-violence activist<sup>24</sup>



Playing not fighting.

BEN DEFP

A 2010 study of six countries by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and the MenEngage Alliance found that the single most important factor for men who were violent at home was that they had been victims of violence when they were children, either abused and beaten themselves, or witnessing the abuse of their mother.<sup>25</sup> UNICEF reports that boys who see their fathers beating their mothers "are twice as likely to become abusive men as are the sons of non-violent parents".<sup>26</sup> And this violent model may then be passed on from father to son. It takes a strong young man to move away from a violent childhood – although sometimes boys who have experienced violence at home are those most opposed to any kind of physical punishment: "I don't agree that a man should beat his wife. I've seen my father slap my mother," said one young man from the Balkans.<sup>27</sup>

In a study in Uganda and Nigeria, young men in a variety of settings generally saw violence against young women as a socially sanctioned extension of male authority at home.<sup>28</sup> Young men in India reported group support for acts of coerced sex; and clearly categorise girls into those seen as sex objects and those seen as eligible for marriage. Many saw sex as contractual; if a young woman accepted favours or said she would go out with him, sex was expected. Otherwise, violence could be justified.<sup>29</sup>

A survey of 250,000 school-aged youth in South Africa indicated that young men were more likely than young women to believe that:

- forcing sex with someone you know is not sexual violence
- girls have no right to refuse sex with their boyfriends
- girls mean yes when they say no
- girls like sexually violent guys
- girls who are raped ask for it
- girls enjoy being raped.<sup>30</sup>

One study in the Balkans found that most young men see physical fighting as both unavoidable for a man (“nobody gets away without fighting”) and formative (“you cannot grow up to be a man without fighting”).<sup>31</sup> The young men identified a cycle of violence and pinpointed seven key causes of violence:

- 1 **Exposure to family violence** – “If you are raised well you will not behave violently.”
- 2 **Exposure to media violence**
- 3 **Individual feelings of inadequacy** – “He’s unwanted in a group and all groups reject and insult him. One day he’ll definitely be violent.”
- 4 **Sexual jealousy, and related feelings of insecurity** – “Jealousy leads to fear, which leads to powerlessness, which leads to [rage which leads to] violence.”
- 5 **Stress related to economic insecurity and jobs** – “Unemployment raises frustration which makes tension into the family, and

this transfers to kids who then are more likely to be violent.”

- 6 **Alcohol and drugs as a catalyst** – “Alcohol makes it possible to beat someone.”
- 7 **Expectations of what it is to be a man.**

The young men stressed how family, and fathers in particular, supported violent behaviour which was also encouraged by male peers. But this young man from Sarajevo noted: “Sometimes, words are not enough, and you must use physical power. But it’s always good to first try and resolve the situation with words.”

#### BREAKING TRADITIONS IN NEPAL

*Bandana Rana is General Secretary of SAATHI, a non-governmental organisation working to change traditional views on violence against women in Nepal.*

When Bandana Rana talks about growing up in Nepal, one particular morning often comes to mind. She and her brother were on their way to school and she was telling him how nervous she was about a big test she had to take that day. “It doesn’t matter if you pass the test,” her brother told her in a well-meaning attempt to comfort her, “you don’t have to get good grades or a job when you grow up; you’re just going to get married anyway.” Rana remembers feeling relieved, thinking he was right.

As it turns out, Rana did pass the test and did get a job (she also got married).

She’s come a long way since those days. “Violence, like wife beating, is considered a natural part of our society,” Rana says. “Many don’t even consider it a form of abuse. When we first started to work on violence against women, people laughed at us. ‘There’s no violence here,’ people said. It took a lot of energy and will for us to keep talking about it. But it’s much easier now, since we’re not alone in working on this issue anymore.”

SAATHI – which means friend in Nepalese – is sponsoring a series of youth camps to teach young people how to mobilise against gender-based violence in their society. Workshops were held on the effects of violence on health, safe motherhood, education and socialisation. Classes were also taught in leadership and communication skills. Rana remembers a young woman in one of the classes saying that she’d been taught that girls should be seen and not heard and that she always considered herself a ‘good girl’ for obeying. “Now, I’ve learned that I must speak out,” she told Rana.

Boys are taught to rethink the traditional gender roles they’re used to seeing at home. A young boy at the camp said he thought it was perfectly fine for his father, while watching television, to demand that his wife fetch him a glass of water, even though she was busy with something else. The boy told Rana that he thought he’d be like that when he grew up. “But the workshop taught him that there’s another, better way to live, by sharing the workload and thereby lessening the burden for both,” Rana says. “After the workshop, he told me that when he marries, he will look for someone to share his experiences as well as his work.”

Rana is optimistic about the future and believes that attitudes are changing in Nepal. She sees the changes reflected in her two daughters, who still face many challenging tests of their own. “I’ve noticed a shift in our society,” she says, “and I’m ready to break traditions to help push it along.”<sup>33</sup>

#### Men’s denial of violence against women

*“I had this sneaking suspicion that my feminist friends – including my esteemed co-mortgage holder – were blowing this whole violence against women thing WAY OUT OF PROPORTION.”*

Canadian man<sup>34</sup>

Many men say they are not aware that violence against women and girls is a major problem.<sup>35,36</sup> This denial and silence is one of the reasons why the violence continues. For example, in Spain, research showed that only 1.2 per cent of men said they were aware that violence against women and girls was a serious problem.<sup>37</sup>

This may be in part because men do not define certain acts or verbal abuse as violence. Sexual harassment, for example, may not be seen as violent. One report noted that: “In India incidents other than rape are dismissed under the inappropriate term ‘eve-teasing’... Eve-teasing degrades a girl or woman without affecting her physically and is considered by men as something ‘light in nature’ and ‘fun’, whereas for females it is a violation.”<sup>38</sup>

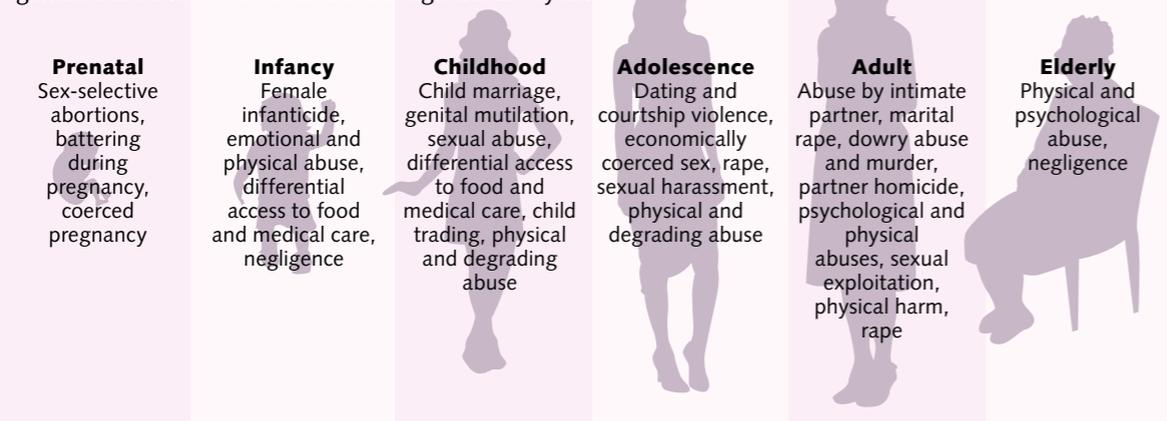
In the Balkans, while the young men in the study almost unanimously opposed violence against women (“a real man should not allow himself to beat his wife, should stay cool”) some felt that slapping and what they considered to be milder forms of chastisement was allowed: “Beating is not good, but slapping is sometimes OK.” “If you push her, it is not violence.”<sup>39</sup>

In the UK, a survey for Amnesty International found that more than one in four respondents thought a woman was partially or totally responsible for being raped if she was wearing sexy or revealing clothing, and more than one in five held the same view if a woman had had many sexual partners.<sup>40</sup>

Research in Scotland found that 50 per cent of boys and 33 per cent of girls thought that it was OK to hit a woman or to force her to have sex in certain circumstances. Thirty-six per cent of boys believed they might personally hit a woman or force her to have sex.<sup>41</sup>

#### Gender-based violence through the life cycle<sup>32</sup>

This diagram from Save the Children Sweden shows how gender-based violence continues through the life cycle.



While boys are socialised to believe they have sexual rights over girls, especially if the girl is perceived as sexually 'loose', girls are often socialised to accept male control of sexual decision-making and even violence.<sup>42</sup> A study in Nicaragua found that 25 per cent of rural and 15 per cent of urban women believed a husband was justified in beating his wife for neglecting the children or the house.<sup>43</sup> In Egypt, between 40 and 81 per cent of women felt beatings were justified for reasons including neglecting the house or children, refusing sex, answering back or disobedience.<sup>44</sup>

#### THE MEN OF STRENGTH CAMPAIGN<sup>45</sup>

'My strength is not for hurting' reads the slogan on the young men's T-shirts.

Men Can Stop Rape's youth development programme, the Men of Strength Club, is the US's premier primary violence prevention programme for mobilising young men to prevent sexual and dating violence. The Men of Strength (or MOST) Club provides young men with a structured and supportive space to build individualised definitions of masculinity that promote healthy relationships. The programme works in over 100 schools and has its own TV programme. MOST Club aims to:

- Provide young men with a safe, supportive space to connect with male peers
- Promote an understanding of the ways in which traditional masculinity contributes to sexual assault and other forms of men's violence against women
- Expose young men to healthier, non-violent models/visions of manhood
- Build young men's capacity to become peer leaders and allies with women
- Serve as a hub for social justice activism and non-violence.

Vincent Scott, a young man who has been through the MOST training, says: "I have a new-found respect for women and what they go through. I learned about the things that males do that are harmful to women everywhere. I now think of a woman as my partner and no more as an object."

## 4 Flashpoints and male violence

*"The answer to the youth challenge is not to further marginalise or paint male youth as fearsome security threats... It is, in fact, quite the opposite: unemployed, under-educated young men require positive engagement and appropriate empowerment, and participatory financial and programme support."*

Marc Sommers, South Africa<sup>46</sup>

While violence against women cuts across class, race, and geography, male violence – outside wars – tends to be most intense at the 'flashpoints' in a society. For example, it intensifies where there is poverty or unemployment, or where there has been conflict, or where men feel threatened in other ways related to religion or culture.

### Young men on the margins

Although male violence against women cuts across all social classes, young men living on the margins – in 'favelas' and slums and on poor housing estates, those with little or no education and few prospects – are more likely than others to be both the victims and the perpetrators of violence.

Being seen as tough and strong gives them status among their peers – and often with young women too. Reed, an 18 year old from Chicago, said: "I used to be in that stuff [gangs] but not anymore. And girls used to come up to me by the dozen because I had money and cars... I made a reputation for myself that will pass for myself over a long time."<sup>47</sup>

The lure of belonging, of having access to power and wealth, is too strong. Boys like Darwin, from Tegucigalpa in Honduras, who was good at school and wanted to become a doctor. But when he was 14, he joined the 18th Street gang. "Darwin met a girl from the 18th Street gang at a party. The gang was a new world. They promised clothes, shoes, gold chains, and the chance to be a leader, a boss," said his mother, Sarah. "But it was all a lie. When you start, the gang gives you a better identity, but when you try to get out you can't." Darwin started to get in trouble with the police, and was arrested several times. He died when he was 16, two days after being arrested and reportedly

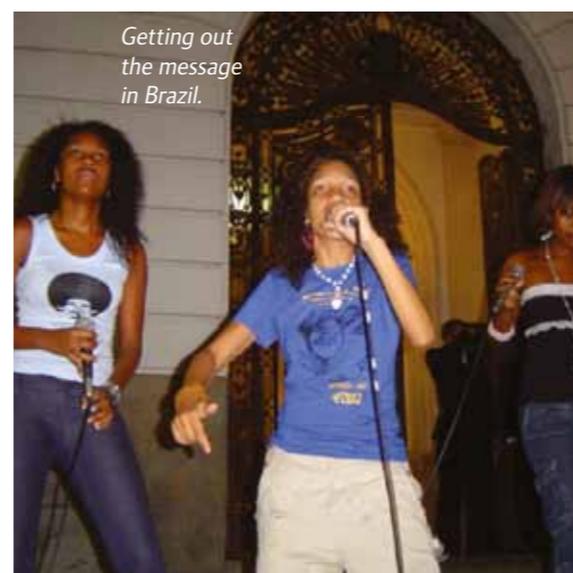
beaten by the police.<sup>48</sup>

Gangs like this are part of a drug culture, and as Darwin's mother said, once you are in, you can never get out. Of the estimated 10,000 people in the gangs in favelas in Rio in 2002, more than half were under 18.<sup>49</sup> But labelling young men, particularly those on the margins, as violent also contributes to that violence. What they need is support, alternative models of what it is to be a man – and gainful employment.

### BRAZIL: SPEAKING OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE THROUGH HIP HOP<sup>50</sup>

Janaina Oliveira is a young woman from a poor neighbourhood in one of Rio de Janeiro's suburbs with an alarmingly high rate of violence against women and girls. She is not only an advocate against violence, she is also a rapper. She belongs to a group of women who are part of a project called Minas da Rima (Girls of Rhyme), supported by the UNIFEM Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women.

Minas da Rima has been using hip hop music and dance to highlight issues related to gender-based violence, especially among youth. The group, made up of female hip hop enthusiasts, has been reaching out to young women to get them to share their experiences of discrimination and violence, in order to rebuild their confidence and empower



Getting out the message in Brazil.

FABIO ALEM

them to become activists themselves in their communities.

Janaina feels that the project has had a 'multiplier effect' on her and the other women in the group, encouraging them to want to reach out to more young women. She feels that her life has definitely changed for the better since joining Minas da Rima, and that it is an initiative that could really reverse the history of violence in her neighbourhood.

"The project brought access to information, something that didn't exist before," she says. "It is startling to see how the criminals are never punished, and how women end up without any rights. There are few actually aware of their right to denounce domestic violence, and it's easy to understand why. They're afraid, because even if the aggressors are caught, they can easily get out, and when they do, the situation gets worse."

Janaina says that her decision to join the fight against violence came from her learning through the project of the challenges facing women who are abused. She wants to do something about it: "It's important to demand from our members of congress to approve more severe laws that address this problem, because there are more women dying at home, as a result of domestic violence, than in wars."

The rapper will soon launch a video clip that condemns domestic violence, and she expects that its broadcast on TV will open up an important space for a more intense debate around the issue. "It is important that women have access to information, that they fight for their rights, so that in the next elections we can choose better and demand a more solid legislation, one that guarantees our protection," she says.

### Young men, gangs and guns

In this context, drugs come with guns. And with guns comes violence. A report on teenagers notes that: "Young people are particularly vulnerable to gun culture if they have grown up knowing no other way. The proliferation of guns across conflict and non-conflict zones, cities and countryside, continues. The phenomenon of youth gangs in El Salvador has spilled over into schools,

with coalitions of high schools fighting each other, using knives and modified belt buckles, but also guns. In South Africa, boys told interviewers that they felt girls prefer men who have guns. However, girls in the same community said that boys used guns to coerce them into sexual relations. Male violence against girls and women is reinforced by cultures of weaponry; the gun becomes an extension of male power. Wherever guns are present, in the home, at school or on the street, violence is more likely to be lethal.<sup>51</sup>

This is self-evident in actual conflict situations, but also post-conflict.<sup>52</sup> During war, young men are forced to display violent behaviour towards the 'enemy'. Once a war is over, this violence is often brought home and manifested towards sisters, mothers and daughters.

One study in the western Balkans after

the 1991 war – notorious for mass rapes as well as for the castration of men and boys imprisoned in war camps – found that, post-war, women and girls faced increasing levels of domestic violence.<sup>53</sup>



PAUL SMITH/PANOS PICTURES

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, IN THE HOME AND AT WORK

Many nations have passed specific laws to address domestic violence and intimate partner violence, adding particular circumstances relevant to their contexts. Some nations remain reluctant to abolish the marital rape exemption – where husbands who force their wives to have sex cannot be held liable, premised on the notion that once a woman marries she provides blanket consent to the sexual demands of her husband.

The 2007 Domestic Violence Act in Ghana is credited with bringing to the foreground discussions about domestic violence and its adverse effects on women and families. A coalition of civil society and government actors advocating for a Domestic Violence Bill was prompted by groundbreaking research in 1999 on violence against girls and women in Ghana that revealed that one in three women experienced physical violence and 20 per cent of women said their first experience of sexual intercourse was by force.<sup>54</sup>

The Act establishes a protective orders regime and establishes a fund for basic material support and rehabilitation of victims, and for building shelters in the regions and districts.

Georgia's new law on domestic violence, passed in 2006, explicitly defines abuse within the family as a crime and sets up a protective orders system

to arm police with a much-needed tool to deal with domestic violence. Under the new law, police may issue 24-hour restraining orders on the scene of a domestic violence incident. Victims can request courts to issue similar civil protective orders for up to three months. The law also calls for government funding of temporary shelters for victims, in addition to the one such shelter in existence at the time the law was passed. Supporters of the law hope it will encourage victims to refuse to endure violence and come forward seeking justice. In 2005 – the year before the law was passed – the Supreme Court reported only 11 cases throughout the country.<sup>55</sup>

In Jordan, after years of advocacy by women's rights and civil society organisations, the government enacted the Family Protection Law in 2008 and established a special court in 2009 to process cases involving so-called 'honour' crimes. The law outlines procedures for police, the courts and medical providers to follow when dealing with victims of domestic abuse, and prescribes penalties of fines and imprisonment for perpetrators.<sup>56</sup>

While international and regional legal standards move toward a global consensus about state duty to exercise due diligence to prevent gender-based violence, a 2005 US Supreme Court dismissed

Researchers worked with young men in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro to find out about how they understood masculinity, what they felt were the main influences on them as males, how they viewed women, what they thought caused male violence against women and what prevented such violence.

The young men felt that "sexual violence is one of the types of violence around which the most silence exists". They also said that abused women were unlikely to get help and highlighted the failure of the police and court system to bring justice to the victim.

The young men felt that laws relating to violence against women were not implemented and this could put women in danger once again. As one young man said, "because of the inability to enforce laws, criminals stay in jail for only two to three days or a month, and when they are out of

jail, they look for revenge."

Few of the young men referred directly to the war as a cause of current violence, saying that they were too young when it happened. But one noted that: "Lots of time needs to pass until we can accept the fact that we are a violent nation. I think a lot of effort and financial support needs to be invested in this issue."

Another pointed out: "Wars, blood revenge are a part of our history. I doubt you can eradicate them anytime soon."

And another said: "I think that war had some influence [on his development] because I was born in 1991. It also influenced my neighbours; there were many violent neighbours in the building. There was one neighbour who would carry a club and he liked to fight. He had beaten a few people... that really influences you when you see it."

the case by Jessica Lenahan (formerly Gonzales) against police in Colorado who failed to enforce her protective order against her abusive estranged husband, who abducted and later killed her three young daughters. Although Jessica repeatedly called the police, telling them of her fears for her daughters' safety, the police failed to respond.<sup>57</sup> The Supreme Court held that she had no Constitutional right to police enforcement of her restraining order.

After this dismissal, which critics deem to be in violation of US obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and related international human rights instruments, Ms Lenahan filed a petition before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the first individual complaint brought by a victim of domestic violence against the United States for international human rights violations. The case is currently pending before the Commission.<sup>58</sup>

### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment, defined as a form of sex discrimination by the CEDAW Committee, undercuts women's ability to exercise their human rights, in particular their right to education and employment. Sexual harassment in schools severely curtails girls' ability to succeed in their studies and severely affects their mental well-being and self-esteem. (See Chapter 3 for the Zambian High Court decision awarding civil damages to a schoolgirl

raped by her teacher and instructing the Ministry of Education to issue a policy addressing the phenomenon).

Without legal protection against sexual harassment and retaliation in the workplace, women can be abused, fired and overlooked in hiring and promotions with no recourse. In 2006, after 12 years of advocacy and negotiations, the government of Bangladesh passed a new labour code, which, while it applies to all workers, contains specific sections to protect garment industry workers, most of whom are women. The law provides explicit protections against sexual harassment, as well as other employment rights such as written contracts and identity cards, timely payment of wages, revised minimum wage, and paid maternity leave.<sup>59</sup>

To tackle directly persistent sexual harassment affecting women in educational institutions, NGOs, academia, media and factories, the Bangladesh Women Lawyers' Association filed a court petition in 2008 to require legislative implementation "to address the issue of abuse of sexual harassment, [to] protect and safeguard the rights of women and girl children at the work place, educational institutions/universities and... public and other places".<sup>60</sup>

Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled that every business and college must designate a process for women to complain safely about sexual harassment.<sup>61</sup>

## Fear among the 'maras'

*Nikki van der Gaag talks to young people in El Salvador about the country's notorious gang violence – and what can be done about it.*

El Salvador has one of the highest murder rates in the world. Up to 10 people die every day in this tiny country with a population of just over seven million.<sup>62</sup> The majority are young men who become involved in gangs, known as 'maras' or 'pandillas'.

Cindy Romero, who is an elected youth councillor in Ciudad Arce, one of the 20 most violent towns in the country, says: "In this municipality there are places that are fully controlled by gangs and where even the police don't go." The maras are known for their brutality. Murders, rapes and beheadings are common – in August 2010 a six year-old girl was beheaded on her way to school.<sup>63</sup>

Most Salvadorans will tell you that the gang violence comes from the United States: 1.1 million El Salvadorans emigrated to the United States in 2010, making up 2.7 per cent of the US's total foreign-born population.<sup>64</sup> El Salvador itself has an estimated 6.7 million population – thus the impact of emigration to the US must be strongly felt.<sup>65</sup> Many become involved in gangs there and bring a gang culture, driven by drugs and extortion, back with them when they return. The violence can also be traced to the number of guns in the country and to the history of extreme violence during more than a decade of civil war in the 1980s. Add poverty and youth unemployment into the mix and it makes an explosive cocktail.

Whatever its origins, the power of the maras lies not only in their physical presence, but in the fear that they spread. Residential areas in San Salvador look like mini-prisons, with metal security gates closing off every front yard. If they can, people drive rather than walk. And private security guards with guns patrol shops, businesses and restaurants.

Fifteen year-old Dinora from Cabañas,



STEFANUS VIKI K.

another very violent city, says the media don't help: "Often we are afraid to leave the house because the media projects violent images. Sometimes they are true and sometimes not. The media makes people very worried. Young people see other young people dead and this frightens us."

Rosario, aged 18, has seen that violence at first hand. She is a young mother with two small daughters. She lives in a poor and violent community. She makes a living for her whole family by selling vegetables on the street. Three months ago her brother was shot by gang members not 100 metres from her home. Her own father is an alcoholic who beats up her mother on the occasions that he turns up at their house. Rosario wants no contact with her girls' two fathers.

Javier, aged 20, from Cabañas, says: "We are the second most violent country in Latin America and in most cases it is boys that are affected – violence against young men is higher than violence against young women. We face pressure from the police and the authorities – the police search us and harass us just because we are young and male." His view is confirmed in a study which found

*Living in fear.*

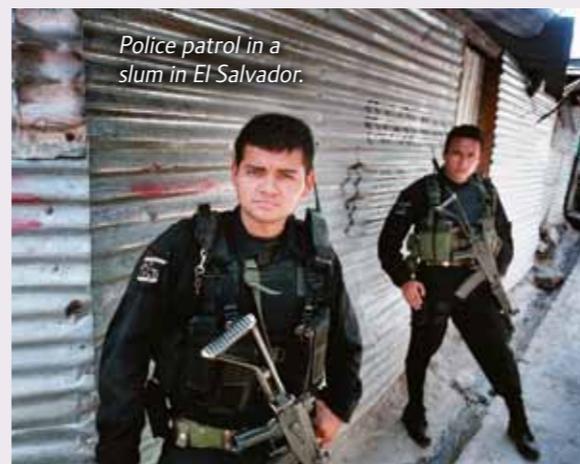
that victims as well as perpetrators of homicide were mostly young men, and that in 2004, 10 men were killed for every woman.<sup>66</sup> The same report notes that: "Youth seem to be the social group most prone to be the victims of any type of street violence, including violence from government agents or from representatives of private security companies. Thus, this data confirms the idea that youth are usually the victims of violence, rather than the victimisers."

There is a link between the violence in the streets and violence in the family. One study of El Salvador's gangs found that almost eight out of every 10 gang members came from a violent home.<sup>67</sup> Carla, aged 18, says: "The first education we receive is from our parents. If our parents are not violent in the home we are not going to be violent outside."

Some young people talk about witnessing parents abusing their children. Ana, aged 16, from Opico, says: "Close to my home there is a man who has a child and he chains him to the window and sometimes we can hear screams all the way from our house. Unfortunately, now he has another child too..."

Seventeen year-old Nelson says: "In my neighbourhood there is a kid who sells vegetables and if he doesn't sell them he gets hit. Last year the police came to talk to them because neighbours called the police. But they didn't take the kid away and nothing happened."

The government is trying to crack down



*Police patrol in a slum in El Salvador.*

PIET DEN BLANKEN/ PANOS PICTURES



NIKKI VAN DER GAAG

*Working to combat violence.*

on the gangs. Prisons are packed, there is a poster campaign against violence, and in September 2010 it introduced a law to criminalise the maras. In response, the maras brought the capital, San Salvador, to a halt for three days by forcing transport to shut down; 80 per cent of public buses stopped running and many businesses closed as well.<sup>68</sup>

Nonetheless, the law was passed. Among other things, it put into place measures to prevent young people becoming involved in crime. Non-governmental organisations like Plan play a key role here, working with young people on projects to prevent violence.

The young people themselves believe that active participation and education can help to prevent future generations becoming violent. Cindy, aged 20, says: "Violence is a wide topic because it is where all rights are taken away. We have to be honest and say that most families are not able to educate their kids about violence – it is passed on from generation to generation." Hector, aged 20, said that he thought it was important to work with young people because they were still at the stage when their identities were being formed and there was the possibility of changing their behaviour. In addition: "If young people lead other young people then they are more likely to get motivated."

In the meantime, the metal grilles remain on people's homes and the gangs continue to roam freely in many parts of the country.

## Young men, unemployment and violence

*"Since 1981 I have been involved in every riot there has been... I had no work. I had nothing to do. Why should I not get involved? Three months ago, I became employed as a civil servant. Now that I am getting my daily bread, why should I get involved [in such violence]? Lots of young men do not have [stable work]."*

Mohammed, now a civil servant in Nigeria<sup>69</sup>

Research has also shown that young men may turn to violence as a way to display power in the face of rising unemployment which has left many unable to fulfil traditional gender roles.<sup>70,71</sup> One study by Instituto Promundo in Rio de Janeiro found that a third of male partners of women victims of domestic violence were out of work. This was about twice the national average. Another expert noted that: "Becoming a man – generally defined first and foremost as being the provider – is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve for many low-income young men due to the instability of traditional sources of employment."<sup>72</sup>

As a result, young men may turn to gangs – or alcohol. The World Health Organisation notes that: "Drunkness is an important immediate situational factor that can precipitate violence. In a Swedish study which was part of the WHO report, about three-quarters of violent offenders and around half the victims of violence were intoxicated at the time of the incident; and in the same report's Cambridge study, many of the boys fought after drinking."<sup>73</sup>

Violence is also likely to mean that someone ends up in prison. Not surprising, then, that the prison population almost always includes more young men than women, and that many of these are from disadvantaged backgrounds or marginalised groups. In the US, women accounted for only 7.9 per cent of the prison population in 2008.<sup>74</sup> More young men of African American descent go to prison than university.<sup>75</sup> Among youth aged 20 to 24 in 2008, men were 11 times more likely than women to be in prison.<sup>76</sup>

Young men like Lee, aged 19, who went



ADAM HINTON / PANOS PICTURES

into care when he was nine years old: "My mum was drinking... my brother got adopted out. I started drinking right heavy. My dad was violent... Had my daughter when I was 16 but I haven't seen her for months. My mum died while I were inside and they wouldn't even let me go to the funeral."<sup>77</sup>

"Prison is a place of aggression in which a young adult learns even more about selfishness and violence as forms of survival," said Finola Farrant of the Howard League for Penal Reform in an interview with Yvonne Roberts of the UK's *Observer* newspaper. "Prison infantilises these 18 to 20 year olds at a crucial moment in their development. A vital opportunity to recast themselves as men with a non-criminal future is lost."<sup>78</sup>

### Culture under threat

Violence may also emerge strongly when men feel their religion, culture or authority is threatened, either at a societal or family level. As one report notes: "If men feel their authority is in jeopardy, they may attempt to tighten control over the women and girls around them, especially if it is perceived that female gains toward independence or equality mean a loss in their own entitlement as men."<sup>79</sup> And as Iqbal, aged eight, from Pakistan, notes, boys like him get involved in violence. "Because we are boys we are

*Young men may turn to alcohol.*

expected to protect our family honour. This involves us in fighting." He adds: "But we don't like it."<sup>80</sup>

Hence the increase in so-called 'honour crimes' where a young woman is seen to have transgressed traditional family codes. While there are no accurate statistics, many countries have documented girls who have been forced to marry or been murdered by their families in the name of family 'honour'.<sup>81</sup>

### ELEKTRA AND SHARAF<sup>82</sup>

Elektra is a programme of Fryshuset, which calls itself 'the largest youth centre in the world'. Elektra works in Sweden with migrant communities against 'honour' violence and oppression. It defines 'honour-related violence and oppression' as 'an archaic and cruel way to execute control over daughters (and sons) in order to preserve the family honour'. Elektra's goal is that nobody should live under honour oppression. Elektra therefore works with:

- Providing support, counselling and in acute cases a protected means of escape
- Prevention by changing attitudes among young people from affected cultures. This is done within the youth groups Sharaf heroes (boys) and Sharaf heroines (girls)
- Educating and giving advice to the authorities – schools, social services, police and other agencies
- Lobbying in order to make the whole society aware of and committed to extinguishing 'honour' oppression and violence.

## 5 The consequences of violence for young men

*"Whatever the complex social and psychological causes of men's violence, it wouldn't continue if there weren't explicit or tacit permission in social customs, legal codes, law enforcement and certain religious teachings."*

Michael Kaufman, Co-Founder of the White Ribbon Campaign<sup>83</sup>

Young men have [among] the highest rates of death by traffic accident, suicide and

violence, all of which are related to the way that they are socialised to be men.<sup>84</sup> In Jamaica, Brazil, Colombia and some parts of sub-Saharan Africa, more young men die in these ways than in countries at war. Even in Western Europe, these external causes make up more than 60 per cent of mortality among boys and young men up to the age of 24.<sup>85</sup> In the Americas, the World Health Organisation estimates that the risk of dying from homicide if you are a young man between the ages of 15 and 29 is almost 28 times greater than the average risk worldwide.<sup>86</sup> In Brazil, the 2000 census found that there were nearly 200,000 fewer men than women aged between 15 and 29 because of higher rates of mortality.<sup>87</sup>

### ONE MAN CAN: "SEE IT AND STOP IT"<sup>88</sup>

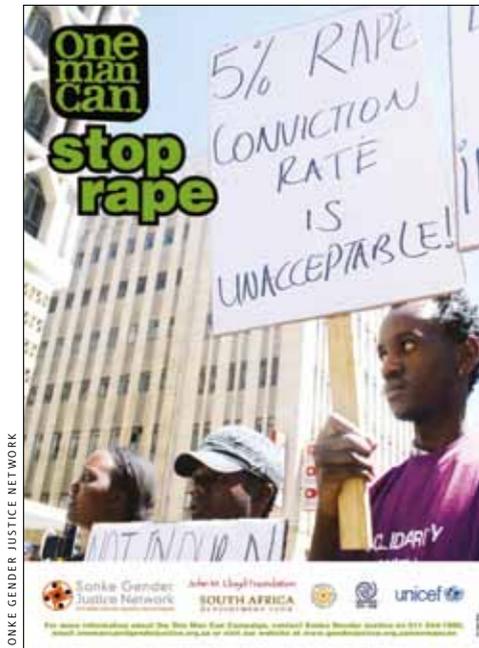
South Africa has amongst the highest levels of domestic violence and rape of any country in the world. Research conducted by the Medical Research Council in 2004 shows that every six hours, a woman is killed by her intimate partner. South Africa's National Injury Mortality Surveillance System also tells us that the rate at which South African men kill each other is amongst the highest in the world.

The One Man Can Campaign is run by Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa. It supports men and boys to take action to end domestic and sexual violence and to

*Ending up in prison.*



PIET DEN BLANKEN / PANOS PICTURES



SONKE GENDER JUSTICE NETWORK

promote healthy, equitable relationships that men and women can enjoy – passionately, respectfully and fully.

The One Man Can Campaign promotes the idea that each one of us has a role to play, that each one of us can create a better, more equitable and more just world. At the same time, the campaign encourages men to work together with other men and with women to take action – to build a movement, to demand justice, to claim our rights and to change the world.

One Man Can believes that young men have a particular responsibility to challenge violence against women and girls. Every day in South Africa young men and women as well as boys and girls face alarmingly high levels of domestic and sexual violence. One Man Can gives young men and women ideas about what they can do to change this. These include 'examining your own beliefs and actions'; 'supporting a survivor'; 'taking action'; and 'see it and stop it'.

## 6 "Everyone gains" – challenging male violence

Addressing violent behaviour is not a problem with simple solutions. It is not something that can be viewed in isolation,

whether from the structural violence that is part of society, or from other gender inequality. Most grown men find it difficult to challenge violence, and to acknowledge its roots in their own views of women. For boys and young men it is even more difficult. They are at a stage in their lives when being accepted as part of the group and fitting in with their peers – not to mention being 'cool' in front of young women – is important.

It takes a brave person to say: this has to stop. As one young man said of watching boys harass girls at his school: *"Some of the boys that I considered my friends even began to do it. It felt awful to watch, but if I said anything it would not stop them and would only hurt me."*<sup>89</sup>

Gary Barker, International Director of Promundo, who has written extensively on young men and masculinities, notes: "For every young man who recreates traditional and sometimes violent versions of manhood, there is another young man who lives in fear of this violence. For every young man who hits his female partner, there is a brother or son who cringes at the violence he witnesses men using against his sister or mother."<sup>92</sup>

*Traumatised by violence.*



PLAN

## "It took me 20 years to realise that I'd done something wrong"<sup>90</sup>

**Dumisani Rebombo** was 15 when he raped a girl at his school in South Africa in 1976. Twenty years later he met her to apologise. Now 48, he is a gender equality activist and is married with two daughters and a son. He says:

"I didn't have any goats or cattle, which brought a lot of ridicule from my peers. There was constant jeering that I wasn't a real boy. Some of them said: 'There's a girl who's full of herself and doesn't want to know us; you need to be party to disciplining her.'

"I made the decision to agree to it. I was given beer and I smoked. I remember that, after the act, it was reported to the whole soccer team and my friend and I were given a standing ovation. I moved away and it faded away from my mind.

"It took me 20 years to realise that I'd done something wrong. In my work in the HIV field I met unemployed women and every single week they reported violence from the men. I couldn't help but go back and say: this is something I did myself 20 years ago.

"I went to see my religious mentor and said I have to go and apologise to my victim. He said, 'You were only 15 years old, it's in the past; what if she reports it?' I said that would be justice for her.

Other young men point out that acting in a non-violent way is risky on a number of fronts. This applies to intervention: "It is not easy to stop a fight. The person who tries to is very brave... it is very hard to be against the majority."<sup>93</sup>

Boys and young men need support in order to take a stand against violence, especially if violence is considered the norm by all their peers. And while excellent programmes for young men do exist – many of them showcased in this report – there are not nearly enough of them to challenge the violence that is institutionalised and condoned in most societies.

This is why campaigns such as White Ribbon, the largest effort in the world to end violence against women, are so important. White Ribbon focuses on public actions and awareness-raising among men and boys. Campaigners use the white ribbon as a symbol that its wearer has

"When we met, she recognised me and was surprised. I told her: 'I realise I caused you pain 20 years ago. I understand how wrong this was and I came to apologise.' She was silent and she started crying.

"She said: 'After you, two other men raped me. I've never told anyone that. Every time I think of it my whole body shudders. I've never really been well. Sometimes, when my husband touches me, I cringe and he wonders why.'

"She said: 'The fact that you've come 600 miles to apologise helps me believe you and I'm grateful. Do me a favour: teach your son not to do what you did to me.'

"I thought I was going to leave behind one load but, when she said that, I had a new load to take with me.

"We live in a society that has known so much violence for so much time that it becomes normalised. People don't shudder and jump when they hear these things. There is a negative perception that if you don't treat women as second-class citizens, they will take over the leadership.

"We need a bigger movement. There are men who don't rape but when they see these atrocities around them, they remain silent. When they speak out, we will win the battle."<sup>91</sup>

pledged: "never [to] commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls. Wearing a white ribbon is a way of saying: 'Our future has no violence against women'."<sup>94</sup>

*Campaigners use music.*



PLAN

## THE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

*"From recent experience I understand how difficult it is for a woman who is abused to find real help. Being abused is usually not just a single action against a woman from an abusive man, but rather a result of several factors, including psychological, physical and economic combined together into a web, where women get trapped."*

Stanislav Kadura, street seller, involved in the White Ribbon campaign in the UK<sup>95</sup>

The White Ribbon Campaign aims to mobilise men and boys in support of working to end violence against women. Participants in the campaign wear or display a white ribbon or other white symbols to make a public pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women.

The first White Ribbon Campaign was launched by a group of men in Canada after the brutal mass shooting of 14 female students at the University of Montreal in 1991, and led to 100,000 men across Canada wearing a white ribbon in 1991 alone. The campaign has now spread to over 55 countries and has affected many men and women.<sup>96</sup>

The White Ribbon Campaign attempts to include men from across the social and political spectrum. It also works with women's organisations; conducts high-profile public campaigns with popular male leaders in speaking out against violence; and provides resources for work in schools. The campaign aims at encouraging men and women to partake in its activities at a local level, as it believes 'people know best' when it comes down to what will effectively reach men and boys in their community, school, workplace and country.

"Violence against women is an issue that is relevant to all men. All of us have friends who could be potential victims, and all of us know people who could be potential abusers. It is essential that all people work together to end domestic abuse now," says Adam Phillips, a student in Britain.<sup>97</sup>

## 7 Conclusion: what helps young men not to use violence?

*"I've learned to talk about my problems or if I can't talk about it, I listen to music. I tell myself I'll never hit her again."*

Armando, 19, Chicago, US<sup>98</sup>

Work that has been done with young men about violence has identified a number of factors that help them not to be violent. These include:

- **Maturity** as young men gain self control and recognise that their actions have consequences. "I sometimes wish to have a fight, when someone is being a jerk. But I stop myself. I think about consequences," says one young man from Podgorica, Western Balkans.<sup>99</sup>
- **Talking** about it. Having others recognise that working against the violence so prevalent in our societies is hard. Getting support from counsellors and others whom young men respect, and in particular having one individual who is there to help them through the difficult times, is crucial. It is important to be positive rather than foster a culture of blame.
- **Support** from mothers, and importantly, fathers, is needed to counter violent impulses and tendencies. As is support from a peer group that is interested in alternative views of what it means to be a man. Reach young men where they are – using activities that young men enjoy, such as sport, games and music.

In both Nairobi and Accra, young people described the benefits of schooling in relation to conflict reduction. The young men particularly spoke about needing to ensure peaceful coexistence as an outcome of school, not least by listening, by self discipline and keeping control, and by not forcing principles on other people. Key to that improved communication skill was interaction with the opposite sex. Mixed secondary schooling clearly had an effect of encouraging young men to see girls as their 'sisters' and for girls to redefine boys as their 'brothers'.<sup>100</sup>

While violence continues to be pervasive, there is hope for change. Programmes working with young men have shown that they are prepared to take up the challenge of



seeking alternative ways of being a 'real man'.

"Our task is to consider men and boys not just as beneficiaries of women's work or holders of privilege or perpetrators of violence against women; but also explicitly as agents of change, participants in reform, and potential allies in search of gender justice," says Raewyn Connell.<sup>101</sup>

Breaking the cycle of violence will take years of work by men who are not afraid to speak out and may be vilified by other men for doing so.

Jackson Katz, an American who works on men and masculinities issues, says: "We need more men with the guts to stand up and say abusive behaviour is abusive behaviour, and it's not right, and it doesn't make me less of a man to point that out."<sup>102</sup>

But together with young women, many young men are willing and able to envisage a world where they are able to be the kind of man they want to be; a world free from violence. We need to support them in building this world.

*'Hatred and anger don't live in my community'.*



# Changing our lives

# 7

## Introduction

For the last four years Plan has published reports on the State of the World's Girls. These reveal that in too many countries girls are not valued by their families, are not protected by their communities and that governments fail to give them the legislative and financial support they need. Girls remain too often second-class citizens. Their opportunities are limited by the infrastructure and attitudes of the world they live in. In order for a girl to gain the rights she is entitled to she must therefore change the world around her. This is asking a lot. The responsibility to bring about change and to achieve justice should not be left to girls, or women, alone. This year the 'Because I am a Girl' report has looked at the role of boys and men in achieving gender equality and social justice. Men and boys who often hold the levers of power at family, community and government levels must work with girls and women to achieve real and lasting change – and that change will benefit boys too.

Increasingly, men themselves are acknowledging, as we have shown in earlier chapters, that they too are impoverished by rigid gender roles. Sharing power may in fact be empowering for everyone: not a diminishing of masculinity but an enhancement of it. In many societies in many different parts of the world men have voted for legislation that gives women rights. In 1902 Australian women, followed shortly by women in Finland and Norway, got the vote; a change that would have been impossible without the cooperation

of the male politicians in power. More recently, in Rwanda male politicians enacted legislation that would put equal numbers of male and female representatives in their parliament. They had been convinced it was the right thing to do and it was vital, if change was to be achieved, that they were convinced.

However, bringing about change is complex. It is not merely a question of legislation; even in societies with legislation in place, attitudes remain hard to shift. Behavioural change, which lies at the heart of achieving gender equality, at individual, family, community and national level, will be difficult. This year's report has illustrated the price that boys and girls continue to pay if we do not make this shift. This chapter identifies some key strategies and brings together some key initiatives – programmes, campaigns and legislation – that have played their part in consolidating behavioural change, and point the way to how, working together, we can go further and faster in transforming the world we live in.

## Challenges

Current policy challenges in relation to transforming masculinities and engaging boys and young men involve:

- Public policies which reinforce traditional stereotypes of men and boys, and portray male youth as problematic
- Most policies on gender issues make no mention of masculinities, or engaging men and boys as both beneficiaries and power brokers

- At a global level, policies remain ‘men-centric’, assuming that men are a homogeneous group, and are either not willing or unable to change.<sup>1</sup> Policies tend to conceptualise men as the problem and not the solution
  - There can be conflicting policies in different ministries or departments with divergent perspectives on masculinities and youth
  - Not enough is known about boys aged 10 to 13 (ie early adolescence). This makes creating targeted policies difficult.
- These challenges require not only a new approach to integrating boys and men into the gender equality agenda, but new tools for ensuring this work is done effectively.

### Commitments

Over the past decade we have seen high-level policy support to mainstreaming masculinities in gender equality policies. We highlight some critical commitment statements to highlight positive practice which should be encouraged, and also leveraged, by Civil Society Organisations to hold duty bearers to account.

### The 48th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women: Agreed Conclusions on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality

In the final statement of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, member states agreed to call for:

- Gender-equitable education for boys and girls
- Engaging men as fathers in gender equitable socialisation of children in care-giving
- Institutionalising the inclusion of men and boys in gender equality and gender mainstreaming policies
- Public information campaigns and engaging the media, including internet, in questioning inequitable and sexist views
- Engaging men and boys in HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, and in sexual and reproductive health; and
- Engaging men and boys to reduce gender-based violence.

### EU Council of Ministers: Conclusions on Men and Gender Equality

In the past there has been a limited explicit focus on men within EU policy. There has been a longstanding interest in encouraging men

**This report has proved just how important real change is; as the chart below demonstrates, gender-based discrimination is a double-edged sword, hurting both girls and boys in different ways:**

Girls	Boys
Less likely to go to school to begin with, as their education is not valued	More likely in some regions to drop out of school
Harmful Traditional Practices such as FGM and early marriage specifically target girls to control their sexuality	Pressure to conform to stereotypes leads boys to act in violent ways, including increased instances of substance abuse and homicide
Violence against women and girls aged 15 to 44 causes as much ill health and death as cancer, and more ill health than malaria and traffic accidents combined	Rigid norms of masculinity can lead to violent policing of boys who are seen as deviating from the norm
150 million girls under 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact <sup>2</sup>	Traditional masculine behaviour precludes fathers from taking an active part in raising their children
Girls in sub-Saharan Africa are up to five times more likely to be HIV positive than boys. <sup>3</sup> Young women suffer from higher transmission rates too. <sup>4</sup>	Men and boys are less likely to seek healthcare provision and support, which leads to high incidences of STIs – this can affect their partners when combined with risky sexual behaviour.

### CHANGING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

*“The question about inequality among girls, and later about women, is a central question for society. The gender gap starts at an early age and continues, and if we want to advance as a society we have to solve that. We have to solve it for women but we also have to solve it more generally for society.*

*“The question is: how do we decrease this gap? How do we get people to view each other in a more equitable way? One of the answers that comes from social psychology is that as long as there’s a separation between ‘us’ and ‘them’, prejudice can still happen. Under those conditions, when there is ‘us’ versus ‘them’, people view the in-group (their own group) as having lots of variability, individualism and individual nuances; and they view the other group as being very separate, with very different motives, and they also view the other group as being much more homogeneous, and much more the same. Of course, under those conditions it is easy to say that everybody from this ‘other group’ is X, Y, and fall to stereotypical ideology.*

*“So with this in mind, one of the suggestions is to think about how we reduce this segregation, how we get men and women to become friends from [an] early age, with the idea that the more friendship that exists, the more nuances people would see with the other gender, and the less likely they are to discriminate against the other gender.”*

Dan Ariely, Alfred P Sloan Professor of Behavioral Economics; Director, The Center for Advanced Hindsight; Director, eRationality Research Group at MIT; and author of the NYT’s best-selling ‘Predictably Irrational’ and ‘The Upside of Irrationality’

Working towards gender equality and social justice is about changing human behaviour. This report acknowledges that this will inevitably involve trying to change social norms, cultural or religious beliefs, attitudes and even habits. As such, the policy recommendations below are not offering precisely targeted solutions but reflect the inherent complexity of attaining gender equality. An issue, which in the private sphere, in the minutiae of human relationships and behaviour, public policies find hard to reach.

To understand what would be involved from a policy standpoint we draw on work from the field of behavioural economics, which attempts to influence people’s choices by unpacking what motivates them to change.<sup>5</sup>

- People are influenced by other people’s behaviour. We observe others and copy them, and we are encouraged to continue behaving in a certain way if we feel others approve.
- People are creatures of habit. We won’t think about our actions, we’ll just go through the motions, unless someone brings it to our attention.
- People need to feel involved and effective to make a change: just giving people the incentives and information is not necessarily enough.

*Hand in hand in Cambodia.*

as carers (especially for children), but only in the last few years have initiatives to combat violence – and in particular, transnational issues in relation to prostitution, trafficking and sexual exploitation – developed any focus on men and masculinities. In 2006 the Council of EU Ministers agreed on a set of conclusions on men and gender equality, providing an important framework for member states to develop corresponding national policies. ‘...In order to improve the status of women and promote gender equality, more attention should be paid to how men are involved in the achievement of gender equality, as well as to the positive impact of gender equality for men and for the well-being of society as a whole.’<sup>6</sup>



## 8 Point Action Plan: Educate, Campaign, Legislate

- 1 Start young – pre-school education should promote equality between girls and boys and involve parents
- 2 Transform school curricula to challenge stereotypes and acknowledge difference
- 3 Support girls' and boys' participation in the creation of policies to improve sex education
- 4 Make schools safe for girls and boys
- 5 Launch campaigns that challenge discrimination and engage men and boys
- 6 Pass laws that enable both parents to take an active part in raising their children
- 7 Enforce legislation to end violence against women and girls
- 8 Legislate for equal opportunities

## Recommendations for change

This chapter will articulate a number of clear strategies to put policy into practice successfully. Each recommendation is supported by a clear rationale, by evidence, and includes specific examples of best practice approaches as articulated in our conceptual framework. Our recommendations for change touch on cross-cutting issues that have been analysed in this report, including:

- Engaging men as fathers and caregivers
- Education, including early childhood education
- Health policies, HIV and sexual and reproductive campaigns
- Gender-based violence prevention and legislation.

These recommendations on their own do not represent a comprehensive strategy to advance gender equality or mainstream masculinities in policy work. However, based on the analysis in the previous chapters, we showcase the main areas of intervention which have been effective and could lead to real change in terms of gender equitable attitudes and behaviours. In order for this to be achievable we must also concern ourselves with ensuring donors, governments, civil society, families and individuals create a society which enables girls and boys to make equitable choices.

We understand and acknowledge that lasting change in terms of social norms and behaviours happens at an individual level.

Legislative and institutional change will never be enough.

Drawing on the principles of behavioural economics, we also recognise that collective attitudes and behaviours can, and do, influence individual choices to a large degree. Taking all this into account, our recommendations offer interventions that challenge all levels of society to ensure a successful and sustainable transformation of gender norms.

A key challenge underlying all gender equality development interventions is lack of gender disaggregated data. This is an important and consistent problem which must be explicitly addressed if programmes and policies aspire to produce gender equitable outcomes. We, in the development arena, do not know enough about girls and boys growing up in the context of poverty, violence and exclusion. Without resources to pursue in-depth research and robust monitoring and evaluation of existing interventions, programmes and policies will never graduate beyond the level of promising practice.

**We call on all development actors – from donors to governments, from the private sector to civil society organisations, to increase investment in data gathering, research and evaluations to ensure the reality of girls' and boys' lives are adequately captured. Unless we take steps to close this knowledge gap, girls in particular will continue to be sidelined and invisible.**

## Education

**1 National Governments and Donors must adapt Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) programmes to incorporate explicit gender equality goals**

Early development programmes have been proven to be effective in engaging both fathers and mothers in the development of their child. ECCD projects have also proven effective in promoting schooling and increasing the likelihood of children overcoming early disadvantages such as poverty.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, ECCD has been proven to provide the greatest cost benefit of all educational interventions: a study of ECCD programmes in Ireland found that the return on investment in ECCD was 15 to 17 per cent and the cost benefit eight to one.<sup>8</sup>

**Promising Practice: challenging gender stereotypes through holistic Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)**

**Centro Bienestar Infantil project**  
(El Salvador)

The early years well-being centre has been running for two years and is part of Plan El Salvador's 'A Good Start to Life'/'Gender Equality in the Early Education of Boys and Girls' programme, which aims to challenge traditional gender roles from an early age. With the support of the Ministry of Education, these nurseries ensure that the teachers involved have taken part in gender sensitive training, and that the educational and play materials do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Plan currently runs 56 nurseries in El Salvador, which all aim to promote gender equality from an early age. In addition, Plan also works with both parents of children attending the nurseries to understand the aims of the gender sensitive approach adopted by the programme. Parents are asked to attend meetings at the nursery, or to participate in family workshops, which give both fathers and mothers the chance to be a part of their child's educational experience and to comprehend fully and appreciate the benefits of adopting a gender equal



approach. Parents are then encouraged to reinforce messages of gender equality in the home, such as non-sexist language.

As José Vásquez, whose son attends the daycare centre, says: "My son has taught me a lot about gender equality; he is barely five years old and he has already explained that I should respect and see girls and women as equals."

In order to extend the impact of gender equity within early education and increase its influence, Plan El Salvador is training individuals and government institutions in gender and early education and working with them on a national gender policy for early years.

**2 Donors must replicate successful initiatives and proven mainstream curricula that challenge traditional masculinities and promote healthy, supportive behaviours**

Although the field of 'masculinities' is relatively new, promising practice on challenging masculinities exists. These pockets of good practice should be replicated, and successful models of education should be mainstreamed into national education systems.



Young people tackle gender-based violence.

JON SPAULL

**Best Practice: analyse masculinities and re-educate youth**

**Promundo (Brazil)**

Founded in 1997, Promundo is a Brazilian non-governmental organisation (NGO) that seeks to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children and youth. Through research on gender equality and health, programmes (such as Program H and Program M featured in Section 3) and advocacy, the organisation seeks to foster positive behaviours among individuals (men and women), families and communities. Influencing social norms requires a multi-pronged approach as demonstrated by Promundo's combined programming, research and advocacy work. Most importantly, Promundo's Program H works with young people (adolescents) which, as our analysis has shown, is a critical time when identities and attitudes about gender roles and relationships are being formed. Intervening at that stage can yield real returns in terms of future behaviours.

**Best Practice: work with boys and girls in schools to challenge negative behaviours**

**Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)**

(United States of America)

Targeting both girls and boys in 10 secondary schools in the USA, the 2001 MVP programme aimed to prevent gender-based violence by encouraging youth to speak openly against such instances and establish themselves as

mentors to younger youth. An evaluation study found that knowledge and awareness about gender-based violence (what constitutes harassment, rape, etc) was significantly higher after the training as compared with a non-trained group of peers. In addition, it was found that the test group's ability to intervene to prevent gender-based violence increased from 76 to 94 per cent.<sup>9</sup>

School curricula can encourage girls and boys to question and examine stereotypes in a constructive way and foster equitable attitudes. Efforts to promote gender neutral or even transformative curricula in schools have been tried and tested and are an important policy tool that donors and national governments can mainstream into existing national education strategies.

**Best Practice: create transformative educational curricula**

**Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) (India)**

The International Centre for Research on Women, together with the Committee of Resource Organisations for Literacy (CORO) and the Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS) has developed and implemented a curriculum to encourage equal relationships between girls and boys, examine the social norms that define men's and women's roles, and address different forms of violence and how to intervene. Using extracurricular activities, role-playing and games, GEMS begins in the sixth grade and works for two years with boys and girls aged 12 to 14 in public schools in Goa, Kota and Mumbai, India. A recent survey of participants shows that many students' impressions of traditional gender roles had shifted during the course of the programme, particularly among girls. The findings also suggest that schools are perhaps the most appropriate places to intervene for a lasting impact. In the next phase of the project, ICRW hopes to involve teachers at a deeper level, as well as to engage the fathers of girls in the programme.

**3 National Governments must enable and support girls' and boys' participation in the creation of policies on sexual and reproductive rights**

Youth participation should form a key pillar of any effort to create a policy which aims to address adolescent issues, especially with regards to HIV/AIDS. Although this disease affects all age groups in society, evidence shows that the highest infection rates are amongst young women aged 15 to 24.<sup>10</sup> Prevention strategies that involve both girls, who are at greater risk of infection, and boys, who hold more power over sexual decision-making and are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviour, are more likely to be successful in achieving behavioural change. By supporting youth participation in policy processes, donors and national governments can effectively develop positive deviance in young men and develop role models that will encourage gender equitable behaviours amongst their peers. Youth councils and participatory consultation processes have been proven to increase the effectiveness of policies on sexual and reproductive health.

**Best Practice: create a participatory process involving youth leaders, both girls and boys**

**National Youth Consultation on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (Ethiopia)**

Ethiopia's Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture coordinated a participatory process involving 800 young people from across the country to produce an action plan to mobilise Ethiopian youth for improved sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention, behaviour, care and support. This served as a 'roadmap' for the government, donor agencies and religious leaders. The process at every stage engaged both young women and young men in a detailed holistic analysis of how they viewed the relationship of gender to society, sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. The final statement issued by the young men and women is a testament to their increased understanding of the issue of gender inequality: 'We have to explicitly address gender inequality in order to reduce the vulnerability of girls and young

women and to involve boys and young men in gender equality by changing harmful attitudes and behaviours towards women.' The National Youth Consultation led to a National Youth Charter that was adopted by the government and also had direct impact on Ethiopia's National Youth Policy.<sup>11</sup>

**Best Practice: adopt a comprehensive gender sensitive approach to sexual and reproductive rights**

**National Multi-Sector Strategic Framework (NMSF) on HIV/AIDS**

(Tanzania)

The NMSF is a model policy document that presents a holistic understanding of the links between HIV and gender, and promotes a gender transformative approach to programming. NMSF explicitly focuses on changing the social norms that create and reinforce gender inequalities as well as vulnerabilities for men and women. It calls for a democratisation of sexual relations, recognising dominant structural inequalities that reproduce traditional gender norms (eg male aggression and female subservience) and promotes prevention strategies that span multiple levels, from education and life-skills programming with men and boys to awareness-raising campaigns. The NMSF also highlighted the need for further research and the need for galvanising the support of power holders within the community. In addition, the

*Campaigning through drama in Tanzania.*



PLAN

NMSF underlines that boosting men's participation in childcare and health-related services is critical for promoting everyone's health. Finally, the policy emphasises that interventions to strengthen women's sexual negotiation skills should be conducted concurrently with men, thus highlighting the importance of relational programming.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4 National Governments and Donors must ensure that schools are safe spaces for both girls and boys by promoting gender equitable attitudes and through gender equitable curricula

Training teachers in child rights, including a strong focus on non-discrimination based on gender, and positive discipline methods, helps to make schools safer for boys and girls. Through appropriate training, the use of corporal punishment as a discipline method can be challenged, and children's rights promoted. It is critical that teachers are shown the universal benefits of a school which is free from violence and discrimination.

##### Best Practice: training teachers

###### Positive Discipline Training (Vietnam)

As part of Learn Without Fear in Vietnam, Plan worked with teachers, parents and district education authorities to develop a teacher training manual on positive discipline. Children have already noticed positive improvements. One girl said: "My teacher is different. If she sees two children talking she will come and sit with them or send them out of the class but not use violence." The manual explains how to address the causes of violence, such as gender inequality, and how that can manifest into gender-based violence against girls in and around schools. It then goes on to set out practical ways and methods for teachers to deliver quality education using positive discipline methods. Studies have shown that teachers receiving training on alternative discipline methods are more in favour of abolishing corporal punishment than teachers who have not received training. Since the launch of Learn Without



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Fear, more than 4,300 teachers have been trained in school violence issues in Vietnam and over 19,000 globally. Teachers are key partners in succeeding to eliminate violence against children in schools.

Girl taking part in a positive discipline forum.

## Campaigns

Changing human behaviour, as explained earlier, involves positive external affirmations. Thus campaigns which promote and encourage collective attitudinal change are an important measure in challenging negative masculine behaviours and promoting equitable attitudes. A 2007 report<sup>13</sup> by Brazilian NGO Promundo notes that the best campaigns on challenging masculinities followed these criteria:

- Positive, affirmative messages showing what men and boys could do to change, affirming that they could change and showing men changing or acting in positive ways
- Commissioned extensive formative research prior to launching the campaign to test its messaging
- Specifically aimed to target 'men of influence' such as coaches, fathers or religious leaders
- Involving high-quality media content
- Targeting a specific issue, such as family planning or domestic violence.

#### 5 National Governments and Civil Society should develop campaigns that encourage the public to question inequitable and sexist views

For young people who spend much of their time tuning in to radio and television broadcasts, as well as internet and social media websites, these campaigns can be an effective route for reaching large audiences. By bringing together diverse multi-sector partners and working with grassroots youth organisations, campaigns can reach both girls and boys across a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Large-scale campaigns have also shown that working in partnership is a fail-safe way of overcoming the tired dichotomy of gender relations that 'pits the needs of men against the needs of women'.<sup>14</sup> Forming alliances between women's rights organisations and organisations working with boys and men, together with other social justice movements, can ensure that masculinities work is holistically integrated within a feminist agenda.

##### Best Practice: build partnerships with women's organisations

###### White Ribbon Campaign

The White Ribbon Campaign was started in 1991 in Canada and has since grown substantially. Currently, the White Ribbon Campaign is active in over 60 countries across the globe. The campaign aims to mobilise the voices of men and boys by the wearing or displaying of a white ribbon or other white symbols, thus making a public pledge never to



Campaigners in Uganda.

Y.E.A.H.

commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. One of the core success factors of this campaign has been its ability to build enduring and sustainable partnerships with women's organisations.<sup>15</sup> The White Ribbon Campaign continues to be the largest effort in the world of men working to end men's violence against women.<sup>16</sup>

##### Best Practice: reach men when you know they are watching

###### Be a Man (Uganda)

The campaign challenges male gender norms that put men and women at risk of HIV/AIDS through advertisements on television which were broadcast during the soccer World Cup in 2010, a radio drama series ('Rock Point 256') which was aired on national TV, and some silent 'trigger' videos. An impact evaluation found that the top four actions taken by males were: 1) staying faithful to one partner, 2) abstaining from sex, 3) advising someone against transactional sex and 4) disapproving of violence against women.

*HIV knowledge:* Males with low exposure to Be a Man had an average HIV knowledge of 77 per cent while the highly exposed had 82 per cent.

*Condom use:* Young men who had low exposure to Be a Man reported 25 per cent condom use, compared to 42 per cent condom use of the highly exposed.

*Disapproval of risky behaviour:* The survey found that positive behaviours among males and females exposed to Be a Man increased with level of exposure eg low = 19 per cent, medium = 21 per cent, high = 27 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

##### Best Practice: use popular mediums to convey sensitive messages

###### Sexto Sentido (Nicaragua)

'We're Different, We're Equal' is a multi-media campaign designed to empower youth, promote gender equality and reduce violence and STI/HIV risk. At the core of the campaign is a nationally broadcast TV soap opera, 'Sixth Sense', which addresses sensitive and complex

issues such as sexuality, HIV/AIDS, reproductive rights and domestic violence through dramatisation within realistic storylines. An evaluation carried out in 2003-05 confirmed that there was a cumulative effect: the longer the exposure, the more likely youth were to have a 'positive' attitude towards equity issues. The series has since been repeated more than once and has also been broadcast on major TV channels in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

## Legislation

### 6 National Governments must provide support to encourage both parents to take an active part in raising their children

Government policies can effectively promote both female and male participation in child-rearing and caring. Research has shown that men who are positively engaged in the lives of their children or stepchildren are less likely to be depressed, to commit suicide or to be violent.<sup>18</sup> They are more likely to be involved in community work, to be supportive of their partners, and to be involved in school activities.<sup>19</sup> Research also shows that boys with more involved fathers are less likely to take part in risky sexual behaviour<sup>20</sup> and are more likely to start having sex at a later age.<sup>21</sup> Boys who grow up around positive male role models are more likely to question gender inequities and harmful stereotypes, says the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).<sup>22</sup> Such measures may also prove effective in promoting the involvement of young fathers, as discussed in Chapter 5, who in some cases require increased support to ensure they stay involved in their children's upbringing.

#### **Best Practice: comprehensive national parenthood policies**

##### **Chile Grows With You (Chile)**

During her tenure as Chile's first female president, Michele Bachelet not only appointed a Cabinet which, for the first time in the Americas, had women in half of the posts, she also succeeded in achieving concrete gains for both women and men, including the oft-duplicated

Protection System for Early Childhood (Chile Crece Contigo / Chile Grows with You). This provides: psychosocial support for parents and children from pregnancy to age four; a large number of free daycare centres and nursery schools nationwide; an equal wages law with labour benefits for domestic workers; and a basic pension for poor homemakers, as well as promoting increased participation of fathers in childcare, pregnancy, and birth.<sup>23</sup> Chile Grows with You runs alongside other policies including: Chile Barrio, which focuses on combating extreme poverty in slum settlements; Chile Emprende, which focuses on increasing equal access to markets; and Chile Solidario, which uses a social protection approach for poverty reduction. Among other outcomes, this comprehensive legislation has led to an increase in the number of partners (from 20.5 per cent in 2001 to 71 per cent by 2008) – nearly always the father – accompanying women during childbirth.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Best Practice: targeted policies with clear objectives**

##### **Non-transferable paternity leave<sup>25</sup>**

Non-transferable paternity leave quotas have been proven to have a solid impact on gender and family relations and practices. The paternity leave quotas in the Nordic region are examples of how perceptions of fatherhood and equal parenting can be transformed during the course of a single generation with institutional support and incentives. "By 2005, most Nordic countries... began to see the striking impact on gender roles, parental bonds with young children and lower divorce rates as a result of generous paternity leave policies."<sup>26</sup>

In 2007, Germany, for example, adapted a Swedish model and reserved two out of 14 months of paid leave for fathers. Within two years, the proportion of fathers taking parental leave surged from three to more than 20 per cent. Eight out of 10 fathers in Germany now take one third of the total 13 months of leave, and nine per cent of fathers take 40 per cent of the total or more, up from

four per cent a decade ago. Out of 190 countries surveyed as part of a 2010 global study of workplace benefits, 178 guaranteed paid leave for new mothers, and at least 54 countries guarantee some form of leave for new fathers.<sup>27</sup>

### 7 National Governments must put in place comprehensive legislation to end violence against women and girls, and provide victims with effective means of seeking redress

Violence against women and girls is not only widespread and multifaceted; it has also been at the top of both the feminist and human rights agenda for decades. And as we show in Section 3 there have been some major improvements over the past years, both in terms of legislation and in terms of awareness globally. However, even where legislation exists, it is often not enough to keep women and girls safe from the various forms of violence they face daily, or even to provide them with a means of seeking justice. Violence against women and girls is still more often than not a man's recourse, and those with the power to take steps to

end this abuse are men as well. Therefore we must recognise both that boys and men can, and are, perpetrating acts of violence and that at the same time they hold the power to stop these acts. Most men are not violent. They simply allow others to act in violent ways by not standing up to violence against women and girls alongside their female friends and family members.

#### **Best Practice: legislation to end violence against women and girls**

##### **Violence Against Women Act (1994)**

*(United States of America)*<sup>28</sup>

First passed in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) made domestic violence and sexual assault crimes. The VAWA created new punishments for these crimes and gave agencies helping victims more funding to improve their services. In 2000, stalking and dating violence were added to the list of crimes covered by the law. Also, more funding was added for legal aid programmes for victims. On 5 January 2006 even more programmes and services were added, including: violence prevention programmes; protection for those who are evicted from their apartments because they are victims of domestic violence and/or stalking; funding for rape crisis centres; programmes to meet the needs of women of different races or ethnicities; programmes and services for victims with disabilities; and services for children and teens. Alongside this comprehensive legislation the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women (1995). Amongst its duties are the creation of the 'Community Checklist' initiative, to help make sure each community in the country has programmes for domestic violence prevention and intervention; the creation of the Workplace Resource Centre to inform the public about violence through newsletters, information fairs and workplace programmes; and the development of a toolkit to help communities and individuals end violence against women. Each Toolkit chapter is



designed for a different audience and includes suggestions for improving prevention efforts as well as services and advocacy for victims.

As a result of this legislation and other macro-level processes, between 1993 and 2008 there was a 53 per cent drop in the number of non-fatal, violent acts committed by intimate partners.

**Promising Practice: engaging traditional male leaders in ending harmful traditional practices**

**Ending female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and forced marriage (Egypt)**

Ending harmful traditional practices requires a holistic approach which aims to engage all spheres of influence over a girl's life choices – including boys and men. In Egypt, Plan is working with girls, with female figures within the family, with men (fathers, brothers and husbands), with medical professionals and midwives, with school teachers and social workers as well as with community leaders, religious leaders, media professionals and local government officials to end harmful practices. The project uses the following tools to achieve its aims:

- Social marketing, communications and advocacy (eg community theatre, puppet theatre, seminars, conferences at governorate level and local public events)
- Programmatic interventions that promote the empowerment of women and girls (eg awareness-raising campaigns about girls' rights, vocational training and literacy classes, micro-credit projects, support for girls who dropped out of school, support for reproductive health services)
- Awareness-raising training for boys (with 'New Visions' training curricula)
- Pre-marriage counselling on gender-based violence and reproductive health.

One of the project's main successes has been the commitment of religious leaders, such as Sheikh Saad, who have actively joined the campaign to eliminate harmful practices. "I started to encourage my wife to participate in Plan awareness



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sessions and events; this helped her to be convinced that FGM is harmful. We decided that our daughter will not go through this bad, inhumane experience... I am now one of the activists against harmful traditional practices, I am enthusiastic to work with families on these issues and feel that I am a part of the change."

Such projects can be scaled up through targeted funding, and components of the 'New Visions' training curricula could easily be adopted at national level.

Tackling FGM in Sudan.

**8 National Governments must pass equal opportunities legislation and policies to ensure men and women, fathers and mothers, can enter the workforce on equal terms**

In line with the provisions made in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), member states must pass national legislative frameworks that ensure non-discrimination in the workforce.

**Equal Opportunities Legislation (United Kingdom) (1970)**

The provisions under the Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. This legislation has been instrumental in ensuring women's equal access to work opportunities as well as addressing existing institutional and attitudinal gender-based discrimination. It also provides women with a means of seeking redress through legal actions in cases of discrimination.

**Conceptual Framework**

By articulating a clear framework that keeps girls' empowerment and gender equality at its heart, much of the perceived tension between women's rights and men's engagement agenda will be mitigated. Such an approach will also ensure the girls' empowerment arena moves beyond gender-targeted programming alone, which in some cases burdens girls with the onus of challenging existing power bases from a position of exclusion, to gender-relational programming aimed at working with both the powerful and the powerless to reach equality effectively.

**Policy development**

Policies on engaging boys and young men must be framed within an agenda that promotes **human rights**, including the rights of girls and young women.

Policies on engaging boys and young men must be guided by the primary goal of furthering **gender equality**.

Policies on engaging boys and young men must recognise and respond to the **diversities** amongst boys and young men whose lives, like those of girls and young women, are shaped by class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, locality, etc.

Policies will be more effective if they outline the **shared benefits (ie the dividends)** of gender equality for boys and men.

Policies must be **age and stage sensitive (take a life cycle approach)**.

**Policy implementation**

All policies should complement dedicated measures such as National Women's Machineries (ie Ministry of Gender and Child Affairs) and related mechanisms, and be developed **together in collaboration with women's rights groups** and experts.

Policies and programmes should move beyond targeting individuals and begin working with **broader communities** in order to shift social norms, gender roles and power relations.

Policies must address institutional inequalities and discrimination in a concrete, systematic way.

Senior policymakers and decision-makers in government must endorse commitments to gender equality in their public roles and hold one another **accountable**.

Policies must engage boys and young men as **partners and allies** in solving the problems of gender inequality and discrimination against girls and young women.

Policies must take successful initiatives to scale and aim to push forward **systemic, large-scale and coordinated efforts** (including through gender budgeting).

**Conclusion**

In the recommendations above we have targeted attitudinal change for individuals, and social and legislative strategies that work at national and community level. There is also a role to be played by international organisations and policymakers. The recent establishment of UN Women further enhances the ability of international organisations to focus on gender equality to support the rights of girls and young women and to reach out constructively to key partners in governments, international campaigning organisations and legislative assemblies. Girls' rights, an end to discrimination and stereotyping, need to be at the heart of policy and programme analysis until full gender equality is reached.

In this chapter we have suggested interventions that can be scaled up or replicated. The analysis and research undertaken for the report have indicated that an approach that takes into account macro-level changes, including legislation, alongside

small-scale grassroots work will prove the most successful. Legislation that tackles violence against women, for example, may be most effective supplemented by projects that tackle violence at individual level in communities.

For girls' rights to be fulfilled, all of us, girls and boys, women and men, need to challenge the structural causes of inequality inherent in all our institutions, at home, in school, in government, the workplace and the health clinic. By taking concrete measures to work with and designing programmes for boys and girls, and their fathers and mothers, real strides towards achieving lasting change in gender relations can be achieved. Momentum must be harnessed and investments made now to ensure the next generation of girls can break free of the constraints imposed upon them, to realise their rights and achieve their full potential. When girls play an equal role in their families and communities, boys too will be liberated from the rigid roles and expectations their gender places on them.

Leidjane and  
her father.



# Because We are Girls

‘Real Choices, Real Lives’  
cohort study update

# Starting out in life: 'Real Choices, Real Lives' looks at roles and responsibilities within the family

The 'Real Choices, Real Lives' study is a multi-country longitudinal study through which Plan's researchers are examining, in detail, a range of issues affecting girls during the first nine years of their lives. The study is following a core group of 142 randomly selected girls from nine countries and uses in-depth interviews, focus groups and annual surveys to uncover the reality of their lives. Members of 115 of the families taking part were interviewed this year; others had migrated or were unable to take part due to work commitments. Sadly, six of the girls from the original cohort have died since the study began. Emilienne from Benin, Fridos Id. from Togo and Mary Joy T from the Philippines all died as a result of accidents; Resty from Uganda died from malaria and Chimene from Benin from an undiagnosed illness. Even when taking into account the accidental deaths, it can be argued that poverty, including poor housing and lack of sanitation, is the underlying cause of their deaths.



Heidi on her way to primary school.



Airesh with her mother and younger brother.

All the girls in the research group were born in 2006. This year, they reach their fifth birthdays. What is happening in their lives now, particularly as they start their formal education, will have consequences throughout their lives. Their parents are generally committed to, and interested in, their daughters' education. However, in this year's interviews the pressures, both in terms of the families' financial circumstances and their daughters' state of health, are increasingly evident.

The majority of the girls are now either attending a pre-school facility or are already in their first year of primary school. The girls' parents express great pride in their progress through kindergarten, with several



Fridos Id.



Reaksa and her family.

parents showing a clear understanding of the progression from pre-school to primary school and the importance of establishing the building blocks of learning and social skills in a pre-school setting. In Benin, Huguette's mother explains that her daughter "used to be shy. But since she started school she is no longer shy. She can sing, recite poems, dance, play and she is learning to read." Airesh's mother in the Philippines says that her daughter "now knows how to write and can identify colours. When she gets home, she shows me what they did in school. She is very talkative. Her papa and I are amused when she tells us what happened in school, because she does it with actions."

However, the educational prospects of several of the girls have been affected by their poor health. In Togo, Fridos Id. is unable to attend school regularly; Reaksa in Cambodia missed her enrolment day due to illness and therefore missed a year of school. Many parents also expressed their concerns about the quality of the education their children are receiving. They are worried about children repeating classes, the lack of adequate teaching staff and class sizes. They explained that if they were able to afford it, or if their daughters were able to travel further on their own to school (as boys are), they would want to send them to better schools. In Uganda, Juliet's siblings are in classes of more than 200 students. Her parents are ambivalent about sending Juliet

to this school, but as it is the only one nearby which is free, they have little choice.

Lack of money remains an issue for all the families; the economic circumstances of the vast majority of those taking part in the study remain unchanged. A minority have seen their incomes increase but many reported higher food prices and a difficult growing season. They are at the sharp end of a global financial downturn and the impacts of climate change. More families have also reported either a 'hungry season' or difficulty in affording food during part of each month. In the Philippines, Girlie's mother explains her priorities: "I don't want to spend on non-essentials. I want to spend our money on food for our kids. When it comes to food, I don't hold back. That's the reason I work hard – to have something for my children... When they ask for food and I cannot give it to them, they cry. So I really save money for their food so they won't have to cry."

As we showed in last year's 'Because I am a Girl' report, migration remains a reality for many families. In the Dominican Republic, Noelia lives with her grandmother, because her parents have migrated for work. "Is her mother thinking about coming [back] here? Not to live, she lives in the capital," her grandmother explains. "Once people get used to something, it is very hard to go back. She lives with her husband and they are happy."

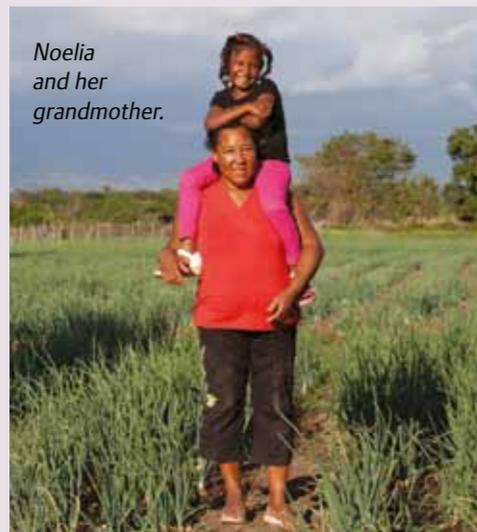


Girlie and her mother.

As the families grow (at least 14 of the girls have had new siblings since the study started), they are beginning to feel the financial pressure of educating all their children. Larger families, in particular, have explained how difficult it can be to keep their children in school and to pay for healthcare when they become ill. Hentou's mother in Togo says: "We spend a lot on our health. I had one still-born child and Hentou's father spent a lot during my pregnancy. All the money he earned for the benefit of the family was spent. Presently, he is suffering from malaria. In case of emergency, we borrow money from the neighbours."

The girls' health is also a major concern. Most of them have had minor illnesses in the past year, requiring a visit to a local health centre for treatment. The girls in Benin, Togo and Uganda suffer regularly from malaria. In Cambodia, several have been seriously ill with dengue fever and tuberculosis, which has meant continuing medical attention and a strain on the family finances. In the African cohort in particular, parents have mentioned the ongoing expense of having to take their daughters to health centres and hospitals for medical treatment.

As the study progresses, we will be exploring the impact of the girls' health on their education. Some families are already reporting disruptions to school attendance. Combined with domestic responsibilities, this is likely to affect the girls' ability to attend school regularly and to learn when they do attend.



RICARDO PIANINI



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### Father figures: protector and provider

*"Of course I want them to remember that I took care of them, that their father struggled for them to complete school even if he doesn't have a job and is poor."*

Jacel's father, Philippines

This year we are looking particularly closely at the way the girls' families view gender equality in relation to what happens in their own homes. What are these five year olds already learning about the differences between them and their brothers? Are they valued equally? What is expected of them as girls? We also conducted a series of in-depth interviews with the girls' fathers (or in a few cases, their uncles or grandfathers). Finding out more about the men's lives and experiences provided a valuable insight into family life.

### The power of family

The reality of family life for the girls taking part in the 'Real Choices, Real Lives' cohort study is in no way uniform. Lyca in the Philippines lives in a household where both her mother and father strongly believe that household tasks should be shared, and that girls and boys should be raised equally. By contrast, in Togo, Adjara's father is raising his children according to a strict set of social boundaries around what it means to be a girl and what it means to be a boy. Sarah and Ruth in Uganda are actually stepsisters, living in a polygamous family. Their mothers are raising the girls and their other children on their own as their father lives elsewhere for most of the time; yet he is the one who makes all of the important decisions for their families. Sarah is currently staying with her stepmother in Namisambya upon the

### Research summary

Research teams interviewed 86 fathers of the cohort girls from nine countries taking part in the 'Real Choices, Real Lives' study. The interviews are life histories, designed to examine how the men's attitudes as adults have been shaped by their experiences as boys and teenagers. Despite researchers' attempts to interview fathers in all the families included in the study, many chose not to take part or could not be contacted in time. In fact, in the Latin American cohort (Brazil, El Salvador and Dominican Republic), the majority of the girls do not live with their fathers and often have no relationship with them. Some of the fathers who were interviewed were emotional about having the opportunity to reflect on their childhood, as they had never done so before.

### Life as a boy

The majority of families taking part in the study are poor, and the fathers reported being just as poor when they were boys. Most lived either in rural or semi-urban villages or towns. Their memories of boyhood largely involved supporting their parents

with agricultural work. Some of the men reported, "Boys help Dad, girls help Mother." These divisions of labour, based on gender, have remained an abiding memory for the men and have heavily influenced how their own households are now managed.

### Life as a teenager

When asked about an abiding memory from this period of their life, most remember an incident that involved them being a victim of violence – at the hands of a childhood friend, teacher or, in most cases, parent. Almost all of the men named male role models, ranging from archetypal males like the local buffalo hunter to teachers who were kind and taught well. Many of the men reported having friends with whom they expressed their feelings openly.

### Life as a man

Almost all the men reported that important family decisions are made by them, although many stated that they also consult with their spouses. They saw themselves as providers and protectors. They work hard for their families, though that might mean missing out on family life.

instructions of her father. He believes that it is important for his children to get to know one another even if they have different mothers. Although Sarah's mother, Hellen, did not want her young daughter to leave home, she followed her husband's wishes.

What families do have in common, though, is how influential they are. This year's research demonstrates quite clearly that attitudes learned in childhood resonate down the generations.

This is particularly reflected in three key areas:

- decision-making within the family
- the division of labour
- the incidence of domestic violence.

### 1. The head of the household: "fathers have the last word"

The role of the father as the head of the family, the chief decision-maker and protector, comes out clearly from our interviews. There are instances when decision-making about daughters is delegated to the mother, but by and large it is the father who "has the last word". This decision-making role is obviously crucial. The attitudes of the household's decision-maker have an immediate impact on the opportunities of girls in the household, as they include decisions about whether girls should go to school, how long they should remain in formal education and when they should get married. In some countries, the



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### He who pays the piper calls the tune: focus group discussions with families from Brazil, Uganda and the Philippines

In Uganda, the majority of teenage boys and their fathers said that it was the father who made important decisions. The father is viewed as the head of the family, the one who pays, the one who decides where children will go to school, and when and where the girls will be married. Fathers from both Uganda and the Philippines related decision-making to income. One father from the Philippines said: "It is us fathers [who make decisions], because we are the ones who work and earn the family's keep." And a Ugandan father explained: "[it is] the man who has the primary responsibility to decide where [a] child will study, because he's the one who knows how much money he has." Another father in Uganda added that "It would be irrelevant for the woman to decide, when she is not contributing anything." Even when the teenage boys in Uganda did think that they had some input in decision-making, it was still felt that their "fathers have the last word". Many of the girls and women who took part in the discussions have internalised this view, as 12 year-old Jennifer from the Philippines explained: "The father is the head of the family and his big responsibility is to protect the family, not only the girls."

In Brazil, on the other hand, the majority of parents said that mothers and fathers have influence in different areas of family life. One of the fathers explained why mothers decide when girls go

to school: "It is difficult for a man to find time... the fathers are not very worried about these things... I have to make a living, provide for the family." Another said, "It is the mother, because she takes more care of children than the father... because the father sometimes is very busy, and the mother is more able to organise things."

The discussion moved on to how decisions are made about matters like marriage. One of the fathers from the Philippines explained how much things are changing: "In the past, even as a child was being conceived, his/her marriage was already being arranged. Now there is no need for that. It used to be that touching the hand of a girl would require a man/boy to marry her; now, even if girls are already pregnant they don't get married." Riza's mother from the Philippines said, "It will depend on the readiness of the child if she decides to settle down. Before, there were instances

when the parents decided when their children should get married. But now, some girls or boys marry at their own will and preference." In fact, all of the Brazilian participants said that it would be bad for someone else, even a parent, to make such decisions. One father said that "it is better when the person has the power of choice". Another explained: "If, when we choose the person we marry it may not work out right, just imagine when someone else does it for us..." However, the Ugandan parents were quite clear that parents, most often fathers, should guide decisions about when girls marry.



Riza and her father.

girls taking part in the study will be the first generation of girls with access to free education, an important opportunity for them to change their families' future.

In Benin, Consolata's father explained how social pressure dictates decision-making in his family: "In Africa, it is the father who makes the main decisions. But sometimes the mother happens to make some decision because we are a couple." He then outlined how his personal actions are somewhat different. When asked who takes care of the children in the family, he explained: "I become the mother to my children when their mother is not there. I can do it all."

And that "what a man does, a woman can also do". In Brazil, Kevyllen's father said that as a couple he and his wife make the decisions together, but he has the final word – a view reflected by the majority of fathers interviewed.

Although attitudes about who makes decisions differ within and across the countries taking part in the study, all the adults interviewed have a polarised view about the roles women and men, and girls and boys play. The girls' fathers perceive their role to be the provider for the family, a decision-maker, an authoritarian and a protector. The girls' mothers are considered

to be the carers of the family. The fathers interviewed routinely described their spouses using words like 'respectful', 'innocent', 'well-behaved' and 'courteous', indicating the submissive role of the women in their families.

Such a clear distinction in male and female roles influences girls' continuing education, particularly beyond the primary years. Some parents are less willing to invest in a girl's post-primary education as they consider that the risk of early pregnancy or marriage will mean a low return on their investment. Better, some think, to spend the money on their sons. One Ugandan father said, "You may invest a lot of money in her and she disappoints you by getting pregnant." Another wondered, "Joel's daughter got pregnant in Senior 5 [fifth year of secondary school]. Do you think if he had invested in a boy he would have reaped big(ger)?" Marcelle's father in Benin explained, "If it were up to me, I would choose to have four boys and two girls. When the girls grow they will join their husbands; the boys will remain here and make the name of the family survive eternally."

In general, the families continue to

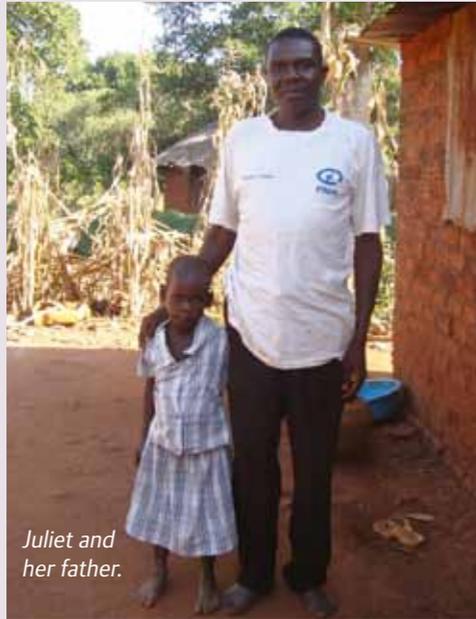


Edwina.

express mixed views about investing in girls' education. Most of the Brazilian respondents defended equal education opportunities for girls and boys, justifying investment in girls' education with comments such as "the girl must study so she won't always be dependent on others". Or: "[without education], she will become a person without knowledge, and will always depend on her husband". In the Philippines, Edwin, father of Edwina, explained that "a girl should be given priority to study because girls have more chance to graduate". Another father from the Philippines did not decide on the basis of his children's gender: "The oldest child, whether girl or boy, is the one we strive to support through completion. Then we expect that child to help support the younger ones. The support that we give depends on [our] financial capability as well as on the interest of the child."

On the other hand, some of the Brazilian fathers believed that "it is important to give more attention to the boys, because the girls are becoming more advanced than the boys", and "the boys have to be more incentivised because they have more opportunity to become someone in life. Men are smarter than women." One of the teenage girls from Brazil explained how these attitudes manifest in real-life decisions: "Education must be equal for boys and girls; our rights must be equal, too, but this doesn't happen. Often, we want to take a professional course, but the community doesn't offer it. Our mothers never let us take a course outside the community because normally the school is far from home and they are afraid of sexual violence and harassment. The boys want to go too, and there isn't enough money for both, so the boys end up taking the course..."

However, on the whole, the parents interviewed across the study have shown great ambition for their daughters' education and future – more than half would like their daughters to pursue careers that would involve post-secondary education or training. One of the major challenges many of these families will face is access to sufficient resources for their daughters to have even a post-primary education.



Juliet and her father.

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## 2. The division of labour: "I have started training her"

The words of Walidatou's mother quoted above show us just how early on girls learn that they have domestic work to do. Girls and boys are both consciously and unconsciously initiated into a world where the primary responsibilities of the girl within the home will include cooking and cleaning, fetching water, gathering fuel and caring for others. In Uganda, Juliet's mother explains how five year-old Juliet helps her: "She supports me in domestic chores, especially fetching water in a five-litre jerry can and washing plates with her sisters. She is always sent to bring firewood to me in the kitchen and other items like plates."

"Walidatou is still a little girl and she doesn't have any [household] responsibilities yet," says her mother in Togo. "However, I have started training her to wash a few dirty dishes." One of the teenage girls who took part in a focus group discussion in the Philippines explained that "boys are assigned heavy tasks. Very few boys would perform household chores because of the thinking that those who do are gay." Many of the fathers interviewed in the Philippines and in the Dominican Republic expressed a similar sentiment.

Almost all of the girls in Uganda, and many in the Dominican Republic and the

Philippines, have daily chores to fulfil, including sweeping and washing dishes. These roles are then replayed outside the family – when girls go to school it may be assumed that they will help to clean the classroom.<sup>2</sup> Most of the girls in the other countries taking part in the study do not have daily chores, but all of them spend much of their playtime mimicking the work of their mothers and the older girls around them. Their older sisters and other female relatives report having regular household chores. For example, in the Dominican Republic, Nataly's nine year-old sister cooked the family meal the day before the interviews. In focus group discussions, these older girls spoke openly about their daily work and how boys have more free time and time for study. Girls from Brazil explained that "at home, the girls have to sweep the floor and do the washing while the boys watch television", and "the girls sweep the floor, wash the dishes and cook the food. This happens because of prejudice: people think that the domestic chores are more suited to women."

The household work that girls do is perceived to have no monetary value and remains unpaid, unlike the tasks handed over to boys. As well as having less to do in the home, boys are generally tasked with supporting their fathers as the family's breadwinners, often acquiring skills they will go on to use as adults, and socialising boys to be producers of wealth.<sup>3</sup> Teenage boys we interviewed in the Philippines confirmed this – when asked who contributes to the



Walidatou.

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Cintia and her family.

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family's income, one of them said "me, and my father". Hilda's father in El Salvador explained that when he was younger, he did not help with household tasks or caring for his younger siblings, but he "supported the family with money", having left school at the age of 15. The mothers and fathers we interviewed explained explicitly how this gendered assigning of roles and responsibilities happens. In Brazil, Cintia's father explained that "domestic chores are the girls' responsibility. Fishing is a typically male activity."

Many recent studies show that the division of labour in the home has a major influence on girls' ability to remain in school and progress to secondary education.<sup>4,5</sup> The impact of this will become clearer as the study progresses.

### THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action clearly outlines the importance of the government's role in encouraging gender equality in the home: "The equal participation of women and men in all areas of family and household responsibilities, including family planning, child-rearing and housework, should be promoted and encouraged by governments. This should be pursued by means of information, education, communication, employment legislation and by fostering an economically enabling environment, such as family leave for men and women so that they may have more choice regarding the balance of their domestic and public responsibilities."

Governments are increasingly following the lead of Latin American and European states with progressive legislation on issues like parental leave. National strategies to provide comprehensive family planning services are also becoming more widespread.<sup>6</sup>

### Like father, like son?

The interviews with the girls' fathers reveal how their own experiences as boys and young men have informed their attitudes regarding the division of labour in their families and what they expect from their children. Boys were largely expected to behave like and work alongside their fathers and other male adults, although there were some exceptions. In Benin, Marcelle's father was brought up by his own father after his parents' divorce. As a result, he expected men to take on household tasks the way his father had done. Several other men had the opposite experience, that of being brought up only by their mothers. They explained that being raised without a father figure meant that they took on caring roles as part of their domestic responsibilities; they continue to do so in their homes today. In fact, where the men are happy to play with their children, help with their homework and support their wives with domestic work, their mothers are usually strong role models for them. In Brazil, Ketily's father explained how when his mother found a job outside the home, he stayed at home to look after his younger siblings and was responsible for doing all the domestic chores – cooking, cleaning the house and taking care of the children. He had very little time left to play and relax.



Ketily and her family.

MARCELO FERREIRA

### “These changes are going too far”: focus group discussions from Brazil, Uganda and the Philippines<sup>7</sup>

The vast majority of the families acknowledged that changes between the sexes had taken place. A Brazilian father had this to say: “Before, women couldn’t even get out of the house, and now we see women driving lorries, working as mechanics, being important executives...” Another added, “The more time passes, the more attitudes change. Here in Brazil, women have achieved many important things...” One father felt that the changes had gone too far: “Women have won too many rights. Nowadays, if you have a wife and she doesn’t want to have sexual relations with you, she can denounce you to the police. This is good because it recognises the woman’s right. The problem is that women might want to overcome men and men are always stronger. That’s why I think that these changes are going too far.”

Girls and women across the three countries had a somewhat different perspective, not convinced that much has changed. One of the teenage girls from Brazil explained that “not everyone respects us, and when we ask for respect, they call us rude”. A Brazilian mother said, “People say a woman is like an infectious disease; society has a lot of prejudice against us.”

Many of the mothers and fathers were keen to talk about changes in the way children and parents communicate. A Brazilian father noted, “I talk to my daughters about their studies and about whom

they are involved with. Nowadays, parents are more affectionate than before... they care more about the children. We didn’t use to talk a lot, we only used to work.” One of the Filipina mothers went on to explain, “Before, girls and boys were easy to talk with. They could understand easily. They were passive. Now, they understand but they keep on asking and reasoning. They are able to express themselves. They know their rights.” A Ugandan teenage girl felt strongly that these changes present an opportunity: “Changes will start with those who have got the opportunity to speak and express their views in their communities.”

Fathers from all three countries said that they felt that “children no longer respect their parents”. “In my time,” one of the Brazilian fathers explained, “I respected my parents. Now children don’t respect their parents anymore, they even want to beat them up...”

Freedom could be interpreted positively or negatively, as described by one Brazilian father: “These days, anyone can pass by and ‘take’ our daughter away... in my time, no girl would leave the house without the parents’ authorisation... they could only go out with their parents and the siblings, especially the girls.” One of the mothers from the Philippines embraces the new freedom girls have, however: “Nowadays, girls are courageous. It used to be that they couldn’t go on their own to another place: now they are confident as long as they have mobile phones with them.”

### 3. Violence in the home: “the strictest person was my father”

*“I spank them with one stick of raffia broom. I just hit them once, but when I’m really angry, I give them three hits.”*

Bhea’s father, Philippines

The lives of many of the girls taking part in the cohort study have already been touched, either directly or indirectly, by violence. In their own homes and communities, gender-based violence is by no means rare: some of the men we interviewed were very much in favour of violence as a means of disciplining their children.

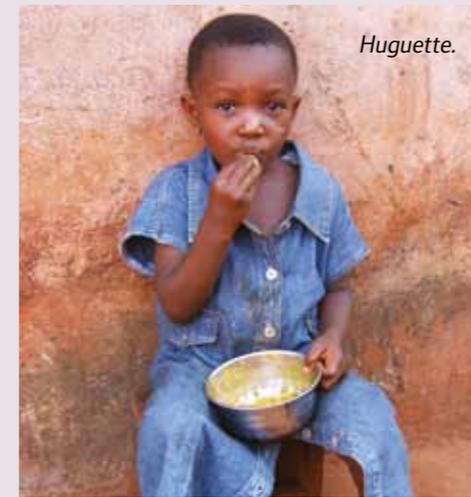
Interviews with cohort fathers show how violence that was integral in their own upbringing is now shaping their notions of masculinity – almost all of them were beaten as children, either by their own parents, by

other relatives or by teachers. Discussions with the girls’ fathers illustrate how boys can become conditioned to the idea that married men are expected to control their wives and punish their children. Many of them reported that violence was part of their parents’ relationship and that violence was often the



Albine’s father.

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Huguette.

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most important memory of their childhood. Huguette’s father in Benin explained that “the strictest person was my father. He was the one who often beat us. I did not like to bathe and one day I ran away and hid myself under the bed where he discovered me. Then he beat me severely.” In El Salvador, Melissa’s father told of how he watched as his grandfather attacked his mother.

For many, this routine masculine violence was troubling, and several sought out role models who offered an alternative view of the world. Albine’s father in Benin looked up to a teacher who did not beat his students: “Mr Gnonhoue was the teacher who taught me in sixth form of primary school. He was patient and did not use a stick to explain things to us.”

### SUPPORTING FRAMEWORKS

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action outlines clearly what is needed to challenge traditional gender roles and the issue of violence against women and girls: “Parents and schools should ensure that attitudes that are respectful of women and girls as equals are instilled in boys from the earliest possible age, along with an understanding of their shared responsibilities in all aspects of a safe, secure and harmonious family life. Relevant programmes to reach boys before they become sexually active are urgently needed.”

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines the responsibilities of governments: “States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.” The African Charter on the Welfare of The Child goes further, outlining the need for protection from “all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment”.

Yet families also play the primary role in protecting girls and ensuring that their rights are respected. Focus group discussions with the girls’ parents show a clear role for fathers within the family as protectors of their daughters. This protection, however well meaning, also plays its part in emphasising the ‘weakness’ of girls, discouraging independence and putting men firmly in control.

A growing number of governments are legislating against violence against women and girls. Brazil’s Maria da Penha Law on Violence against Women (2006), for example, was the culmination of a lengthy campaign by women’s groups, regional and international bodies. It has been cited as one of the most advanced in the world. The law provides a variety of legal protections, including special courts; preventive detentions for severe threats; increased penalties for perpetrators; and affirmative measures to assist women, including vulnerable domestic workers, and to educate the public about the issue and the law. Several laws have recently been passed specifically directed at preventing violence against women and girls, including a number promoting positive attitudes towards women and girls, and the need for shared responsibilities for safety in the home. Some of the legal progress includes guidance for promoting gender equality in schools and pre-schools.<sup>8</sup> The Brazilian five year olds in our study will grow up with strong legal protection in a society with a growing awareness of gender equality.

**“Girls should really be protected” – values and attitudes about protecting girls from violence**

In focus group discussions about the role of the family in protecting girls from violence, a father from the Philippines explained: “They should really be protected. They are our flesh and blood. They are weaker than our boys. For example, in terms of abuse, more girls are being abused than boys.” Edwin, father of Edwina (Philippines), added: “I am the one who will protect my girl, especially from those who may put her in danger.”



Edwina with her mother and sister.

The girls’ fathers in Uganda felt that mothers were “too soft” to protect their children. The Brazilian fathers echoed this view: “The father... the man... [is the one responsible for protecting girls]. I think he has a more authoritarian presence, and people respect him more...”



Jacel and her mother.

The majority of the men in Brazil who joined the discussions justified the necessity of protecting the girls. One father noted: “It’s not that I’m sexist, but women are more helpless, they have a fragile side.” Ugandan fathers felt that ‘weakness’ even extended to will-power – one respondent adding that “[girls’] hearts and heads are too weak to resist some temptations”. A Brazilian father added: “Girls are very easily influenced.” Another Ugandan father commented: “These days girls are seduced by the older men who have the resources. They no longer go out with friends of the same age.” A Brazilian father explained that “girls must be more protected because they are women... and there is the issue of virginity”.

Some women taking part in the discussions have internalised this attitude by explaining that “girls have something to treasure [purity of a person] but for the boys this is not a big deal” (Elna, mother of Edwina, Philippines).

These values are passed on to children – boys from the Philippines echoed this language, saying that girls are “weaker than boys” or “easily

abused”. In the focus group discussions in the Philippines, teenage boys said that girls are subjected to violence in their community because they are “looked upon as the weaker sex”. Others stated that they believe that girls are subjected to sexual violence because of the way that they look: “Nice body, legs are displayed, smooth skin.” Although some took a different view of protecting girls, their attitudes remain informed by this view of girls being weak and vulnerable. According to Gremenio, a teenage boy from the Philippines, “It’s good that it’s the mother [who protects the girl child] because the mother knows well what the girl needs. They know their weaknesses.”

Jacel’s mother, Analie, presents a different view: “Most of our husbands cannot control their emotions if our children ever commit mistakes. This sometimes leads to physical abuse. Thus we can say that it is more the responsibility of us mothers to protect our girl child.” The girls’ parents discussed further the importance of a mother’s protection. Antonio, father of Mary Joy O (Philippines) explained: “In the family, of course it is the mother [who protects the girl]. The mother takes care of the child, and she knows what the child wants.”

Another father from the Philippines said: “It is the mother’s responsibility [to protect the child] because fathers are usually not around because they are working outside. Girl children are most often with their mothers, more than with their fathers.” One of the Brazilian fathers commented: “When



Mary Joy O and her mother.

it comes to the girls, it is the mother who must provide the care. Men taking care of daughters is a little strange...” Another explained, “The mother must take care of the daughters, because she’s a woman... for us, it’s more complicated to talk to them.” One Ugandan father said of his relationship

with his daughter: “We men are sometimes like lions in the home; how do you expect her to tell you her secrets?”

**Family matters**

*“The world is changing and soon everybody will understand that we should not treat them [girls] in a different way [from boys].”*  
Sulgence, father of Charnel, Benin

Now aged five, the girls in our study are beginning to “learn their place”. Although there is a lot of variety between individual families and between the different countries, it is clear from the interviews that gender discrimination is handed down from one generation to the next. Without some positive intervention, the girls will have little choice but to become the carers and cleaners, rather than the decision-makers, of tomorrow; seen as in need of protection. By starting with the family, and addressing the obstacles and barriers girls face at home and in their communities, it is possible to disrupt this cycle.<sup>9</sup> It will be very hard, though, to do so without male support. The family decision-maker, the father, is a crucial ally. Change, as Charnel’s father says, is

happening. There is, of course, some ambivalence about this and some disagreement between the generations and between the sexes. However, many families are beginning to value girls’ education. Progress in this area is being held back by poverty as much as prejudice. Treating girls and boys differently is now being questioned, not just accepted. There is a greater recognition that discrimination is having a negative effect on boys’ as well as girls’ lives, and on the wider success of their families and communities.

In Section 1 of the report we discussed the price men and boys pay in terms of living up to the idea that they must be tough. Many recognise the richness that gender equality can bring to their relationships with partners, friends and children. The father of Doreen from the Philippines, for example, is obviously aware that he has missed out on family life and his daughter’s childhood: “I would like my children to remember most the good things that I did for them... that their Papa came home late because he was working for us.”



Doreen and her father.



Consolata with her family.



Charnel and her father.

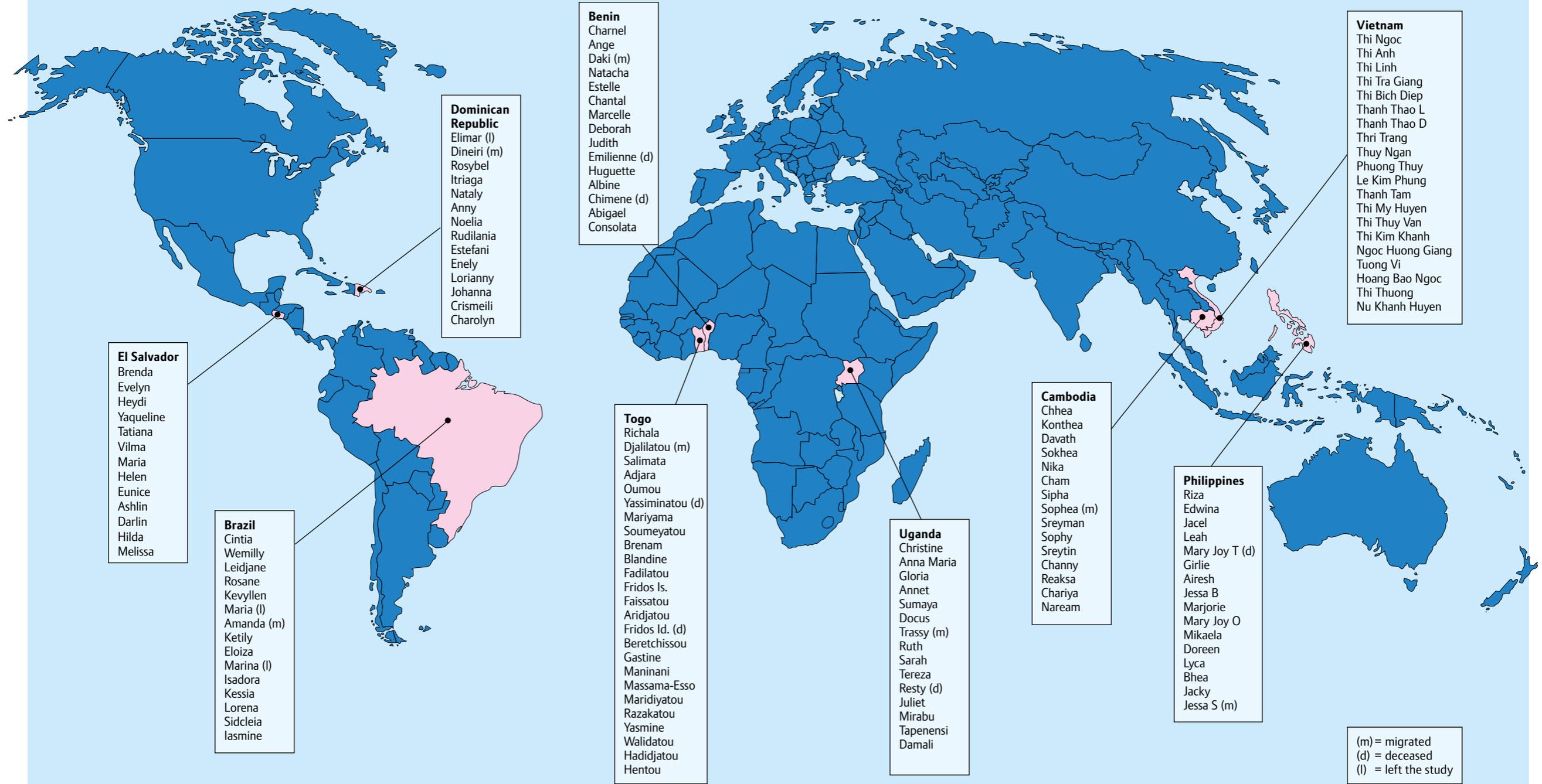


Konthea and family.

ALL PHOTOS PLAN

# Because We are Girls

'Real Choices, Real Lives' Cohort Study Update



# Section 3



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# Plan's Because I am a Girl campaign

'Because I am a Girl' is Plan's global campaign to promote girls' rights and lift millions of girls out of poverty. Across the world, girls face double discrimination due to their gender and age, leaving them at the bottom of the social ladder.

For example, research has shown that girls are more likely to suffer from malnutrition; be forced into an early marriage; be subject to violence or intimidation; be trafficked, sold or coerced into the sex trade; or become infected with HIV.

Yet we know that investing in girls and young women has a disproportionately beneficial effect in alleviating poverty for everyone: not only the girls themselves but their families, communities and entire

For more information visit:  
[plan-international.org/girls/campaign](http://plan-international.org/girls/campaign)

countries. Everyone benefits, including boys and men.

The Because I am a Girl campaign will be geared towards equipping, enabling and engaging girls of all ages to acquire the assets, skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life.

The 'State of the World's Girls' annual reports provide, and will provide year after year, tangible proof of the inequalities which still exist between girls and boys and will support the campaign with specific girl-oriented evidence. The report will give concrete recommendations for the campaign to take forward on ways to tackle gender inequality and ensure that every girl is able to realise her full potential.

*Girls learn about their rights.*



## Introduction

Our final reference section provides a variety of resources which support the analysis of Section 1, and makes suggestions for further resources on girls' rights and engaging boys in gender equality. We have also included two maps which highlight and compare maternity and paternity leave policies throughout the world. These are an important means to ensure both parents are supported by the State to take an active part in their child's well-being and development.

To give an idea as to how our recommendations can be put into practice at the grassroots level, we take a detailed look at a number of best practice and promising practice development projects which are working with boys and men to achieve gender equality. These examples demonstrate innovative methods by which to engage men and boys, whilst also charting their success and impact.

This year we have also introduced a glossary of gender-related terms, which will act as an important resource in understanding the nuances, definitions and meanings of gender specific terminology.

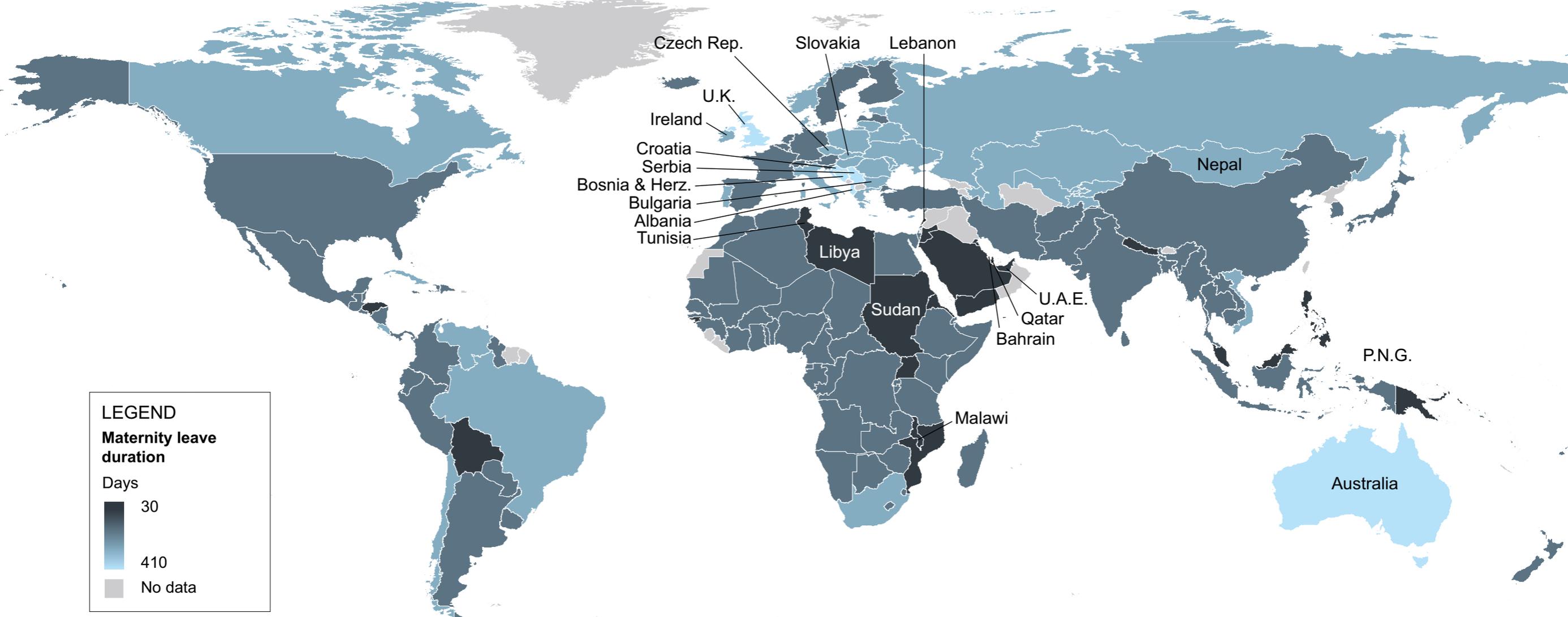
Our final resource section provides a useful reference guide for information on organisations, campaigns, research and databases, which all focus on girls' rights and well-being.



*Family life in Cambodia.*

# Maternity leave duration

Source: The data was compiled by Maplecroft and is based on the definitions and data in the International Labour Organisation's TRAVAIL database. The database contains the principal legislative measures adopted in member States to protect the health and welfare of working women during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding and to ensure that their employment is protected and that they are not subject to discrimination.



**LEGEND**  
**Maternity leave duration**  
 Days

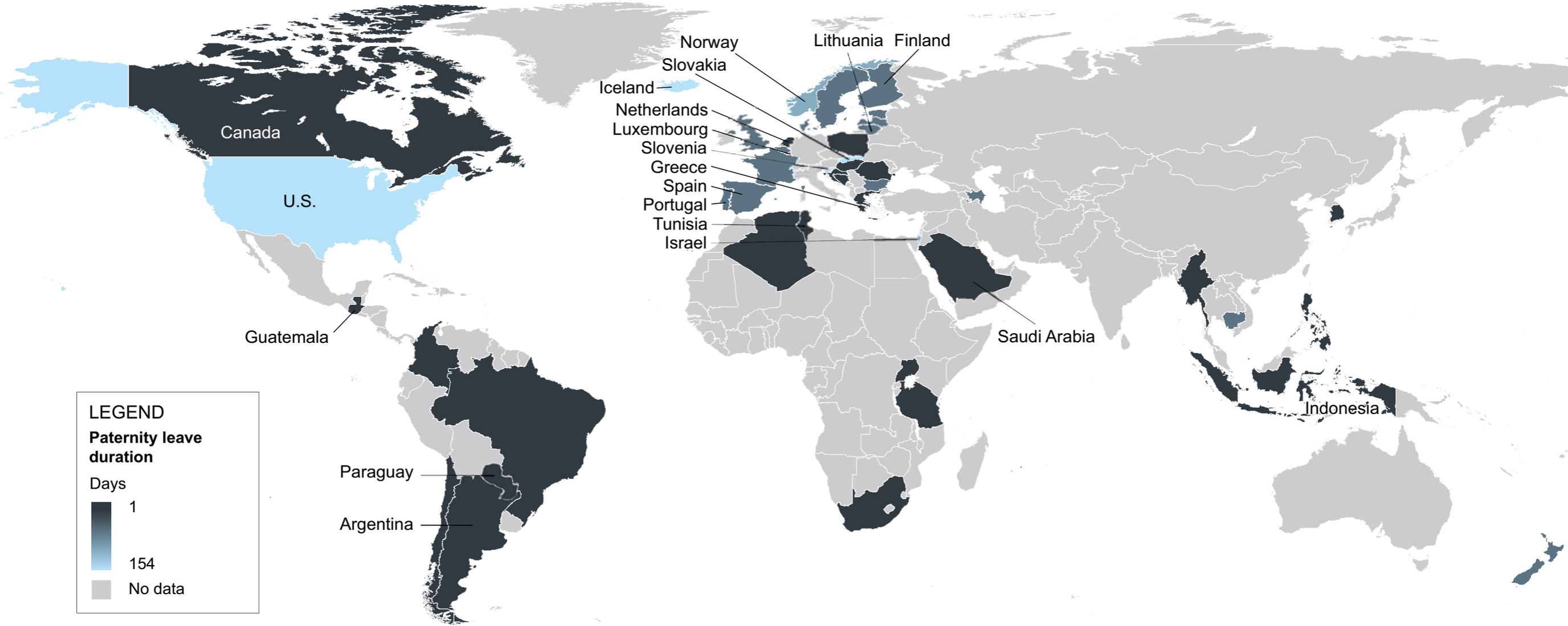
- 30
- 410
- No data

Highest duration of maternity leave			
Country	No. of days	Country	No. of days
Croatia	410	United Kingdom	365
Albania	365	Bulgaria	227
Australia	365	Czech Republic	196
Bosnia & Herz.	365	Slovakia	196
Serbia	365	Ireland	182

Lowest duration of maternity leave			
Country	No. of days	Country	No. of days
Tunisia	30	Libya	50
P.N.G.	42	Qatar	50
Bahrain	45	Nepal	52
U.A.E.	45	Malawi	56
Lebanon	49	Sudan	56

# Paternity leave duration

Source: The data was compiled by Maplecroft and is based on the definitions and data in the International Labour Organisation's TRAVAIL database. A strict definition of Paternity leave was used which includes leave provisions reserved for fathers or leave that can be used by fathers as paternity leave. It does not include parental leave provisions that can be used by the father or mother unless a portion of the leave is reserved for fathers or such leave is indistinguishable from paternity leave.



**LEGEND**  
**Paternity leave duration**  
 Days

- 1
- 154
- No data

Highest duration of paternity leave			
Country	No. of days	Country	No. of days
Slovakia	154	Israel	56
Iceland	90	Lithuania	30
Slovenia	90	Spain	28
United States	84	Portugal	20
Norway	70	Finland	18

Lowest duration of paternity leave			
Country	No. of days	Country	No. of days
Saudi Arabia	1	Greece	2
Tunisia	1	Indonesia	2
Argentina	2	Luxembourg	2
Canada	2	Netherlands	2
Guatemala	2	Paraguay	2

# Case Studies



## 1 Program H, various locations<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Program H was initiated by Instituto Promundo, a Brazilian-based NGO, along with partner organisations, in response to research findings highlighting gender-inequitable attitudes amongst young men; the need to encourage young men to stand in solidarity with women in questioning and challenging gender-based violence; and the pressure on boys and men created by hegemonic masculinities and the damaging effects this can have. Promundo sought to understand the 'voices of resistance' amongst the groups of young men who challenge attitudes of hegemonic, inequitable and violent versions of masculinity. Following on from in-depth analysis into these issues, Promundo created Program H – 'H' for 'homens' (men in Portuguese) and 'hombres' (men in Spanish).

### Key beneficiaries

Boys and young men (aged 15 to 24) who take part in the workshops.

### Objectives

- To support and encourage young men to challenge hegemonic masculinities and the violence and gender-inequitable outcomes associated with it, and to engage and reflect on traditional norms of 'manhood' in a safe space.
- To offer young men opportunities to interact with gender-equitable role models in their own community setting.

### Methods

- To intervene at the level of individual attitudes and behaviour change, by

engaging in a critical reflection to identify the direct and personal costs of traditional versions of masculinity.

- To target interventions at the social or community level, including among parents, peer groups, service providers and others that influence these individual attitudes and behaviours.
- Program H generates media campaigns and youth-friendly education materials.
- Activities within the programme consist of, for example, role plays, brainstorming exercises, discussion sessions, and a no-words cartoon video series.
- Same-sex group discussion sessions which are usually facilitated by males, who also serve as gender-equitable role models.
- Program H uses popular culture (such as harnessing the support of rap stars in Brazil) to appeal to its youth audience.

### Results

- Program H was first carried out in Latin America, but the programme has now been built on and adapted by project partners in more than 20 countries, such as India and Vietnam.
- The programme was tested amongst 271 young men between the ages of 15 and 24 in six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Results found that participants displayed increased feelings of empathy and critical reflections about how they treated their partners, and also reported reduced conflict among participants.
- Impact evaluation studies in Brazil and India have found that young men have reported a number of positive changes, from higher rates of condom use and improved relationships with friends and sexual partners, to greater acceptance of domestic work as men's responsibility, and lower rates of sexual harassment and violence against women. In addition, girlfriends of Program H participants have also said they feel the quality of their relationships has improved.
- The numbers of those advocating violence

against a partner in India reduced from 25 to 18 per cent, and in Brazil, significant changes among young men regarding attitudes of high gender equity increased from 48 to 69 per cent.

- The Program H video is being used as an official educational tool in public secondary schools in the state of São Paulo. The Program H manual has been officially adopted by the ministries of health in Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua and Costa Rica and is used in health education with young people via the public health system, in schools, and with community-based partner organisations. In India, the National AIDS Commission (NACO) has adopted it as a training curriculum for a national-level youth peer promoter project.

### Good practice and lessons learned

- The workshop process and its core principles of promoting a critical reflection successfully operate across diverse settings in many different countries. However, adaptation is necessary in the form of adding context-specific examples for discussion and analysis by the young men, helping to localise the issues.
- Gaining support for the project from celebrities can help to influence young men; the project in Brazil has generated backing from several well-known rap stars.
- Campaign slogans should use language from the community and images should be of young men from the same communities – acting in ways that support gender equality. For example, the campaign was called *Hora H*, which translates as "In the heat of the moment". The phrase was developed by a group of young men themselves who frequently heard their peers say: "Everybody knows you shouldn't hit your girlfriend, but in the heat of the moment you lose control." Or, "Everybody knows that you should use a condom, but in the heat of the moment..."

### Recommendations for the future

- To start engagement in the training programme at a younger age.

## 2 New Visions: life skills education for boys, Egypt<sup>2</sup>

### Background

The New Visions programme is a non-formal education programme for boys and young men, carried out in Egypt by The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) in partnership with 216 local NGOs, funded by USAID. The need for a programme for boys and young men grew out of CEDPA Egypt's experience implementing the New Horizons non-formal education programme for girls. Programme managers asserted that the goal of supporting young women could only be achieved if their family members and the broader community were supportive of gender equity. Accordingly, a new curriculum was developed during 2000-01 to meet the needs of boys and young men in the communities where New Horizons operated. In Egypt as a whole, 88 per cent of males aged 15 to 24 are literate compared with 82 per cent of 15 to 24 year-old females. This general figure of disparity in male/female illiteracy was further asserted with an assessment of the communities in which New Horizons worked, which found that most young males were literate and had attended school, unlike the young females, who were mostly illiterate.

### Key beneficiaries

Boys and young men aged 12 to 20.

### Objectives

The project's overall objective was to increase the reproductive health knowledge and gender sensitivity of young men and to encourage the development of key life skills.

### Methods

- Over 15,000 participants attended a six-month course.
- The course comprised 64 educational sessions (with each session covering one subject and lasting from one and a half to two hours) and were taught by trained facilitators in youth centres and delivered over a six-month period.
- The facilitators provided participants with

information and discussion issues on a range of topics: gender, gender roles, interpersonal relationships and legal rights, among others.

- The skills included: anger management, planning, negotiation, communication and decision-making.
- Facilitators used both interactive and non-interactive methods to communicate messages, including tapes of drama and poetry, role-plays, puzzles, posters and games.
- Group discussions, learner-centred dialogue, written work, individual tasks and fieldwork constituted the sessions' main components.
- The two-volume New Visions manuals served as a training and facilitator resource, not as a textbook for participants.
- Youth centres were chosen as the primary venue for the programme because they are natural congregating sites for young men.
- College graduates in their twenties and thirties, particularly those trained in education or social work, were recruited to be volunteer course facilitators; and many of them were already working with boys at the centres.
- The facilitators received 13 days of training and were supervised during their first course.
- Initially all the facilitators were men; some female facilitators have since been introduced and are well-accepted.

## Results

An evaluation of programme processes, outcomes, and impacts was conducted in 2004 by CEDPA in four governorates where the programme was implemented, covering 2,314 programme participants before the course (baseline) and 2,224 participants at the end of the course (endline). According to this study, boys who completed the New Visions programme reported that they had gained knowledge and changed their behaviour in several areas covered by the course:

- The evaluation found that there were positive shifts in attitudes toward male-female interaction, female genital mutilation (FGM) and gender-based violence, although some

respondents still retained traditional attitudes on these topics.

- Participants reported that they were better able to cope with anger and stress, found it easier to express themselves in front of peers and had gained a greater awareness of their personal strengths and skills.
- Respondents had more favourable views on shared responsibility in family decision-making, community service, political participation and household duties than at baseline.
- Respondents were more likely to support equitable treatment for boys and girls in relation to attire, work and marriage age than at baseline.
- Knowledge of a source of family planning increased from 68 per cent at baseline to 94 per cent at endline.
- At baseline, 36 per cent of boys surveyed could not name any mode of HIV transmission; at endline, this percentage had declined to 11 per cent.
- The boys' age did not affect the outcomes of the programme. Interestingly, at baseline, boys with lower levels of education scored lowest on outcome scores, but by the end of the programme were more likely to have taken on board the messages than boys of the same age with higher levels of education.



## Good practice and lessons learned

- Initially the programme was geared towards boys as young as 10, but the minimum age was raised to 12 to ensure that the boys were sufficiently mature to benefit from the programme.
- The reproductive health component was originally intended to be for participants of all ages, but after initial piloting it was found that some communities preferred this topic to be optional for the 12 to 14 age group.
- It was difficult to find facilitators who were willing to take a non-traditional stand on certain issues covered in the course, particularly FGM. Those facilitators who agreed to participate were similarly greeted with scepticism from parents who

were not comfortable with the topics covered in the manuals.

- Facilitators were not provided with formal materials to share with the parents or other community leaders. This initially made it difficult for them to gain acceptance by the community.
- The wide age range of participants also made it difficult for the facilitators to make all activities relevant to the entire group.
- Large unanticipated problem of facilitator drop-out due to the difficulty of finding a significant number of men who were able to leave their jobs for the time required to be trained as a New Visions facilitator.
- Difficult to ensure that all of the curriculum material was always being presented during training.
- In some cases, facilitators omitted sessions that were controversial or uncomfortable for them to teach – namely the sessions on marriage and FGM.
- Many facilitators suggested that offering two rounds of training, instead of one extended training, would be more appropriate; and that controversial subjects such as marriage be delayed until the second manual.
- Facilitators recommended improving the training on work, especially small enterprise development.
- Facilitators recommended that beneficiaries be provided with a take-home booklet, which would allow them to refer to the content of the programme into the future.

## Recommendations for the future

- Good initial results make it easier to engage with government in consolidating and extending the programme. For example, recognising the remarkable results achieved by the New Visions facilitators, the Ministry of Youth worked with CEDPA Egypt to establish leadership camps. These camps were intended to reward facilitators from different governorates of Egypt for their work as well as to enhance further their skills and provide them with incentives to carry on their community service and volunteer work.
- Extending the curricula to the formal school system requires a different form of

training to be developed.

- Engaging with religious and community leaders can help to overcome reluctance of facilitators and participants in dealing with sensitive and controversial subjects such as FGM.
- Piloting and consulting with local communities can help to ensure that materials are age-appropriate.
- CEDPA's regional partners were all fully trained and left with New Visions kits, enabling the replication and continuation of the programme by community organisations and facilitators.



## 3 Promising practice: Plan Honduras – including Honduran boys and men in gender equality<sup>3</sup>

### Background

In order to tackle violence against women and girls, Plan Honduras introduced the Including Honduran Boys and Men in Gender Equality project in 2008.

*“In cultures with high levels of violence and aggression, many men have grown up witnessing or being victims themselves of violence. While some repeat this violent behaviour within their own families and relationships, others reject it and look for ways to challenge patriarchy and transform cultural patterns that lead to violence. Boys and men can become a social force for change and gender violence prevention; working with them can help change our understanding of the causes of violent behaviour and violence.”*

Daniel Molina, Violence Prevention Advisor, Plan Honduras

### Key Beneficiaries

Plan staff trainers, and subsequently male community leaders and youths who receive the training. Plan Honduras has also recently started working with groups of girls and boys, focusing on basic gender knowledge aimed at gender violence prevention.

## Objectives

- The project aims to increase the capacity of children and youth (both girls and boys) as well as men, to recognise and challenge the causes and effects of domestic and gender-based violence.
- To use gender sensitive and rights-based approaches.
- To build and strengthen local communities' capacity to respond effectively to gender-based violence and encourage their ownership of the issue, particularly engaging and actively involving men and boys.

## Methods

- Initially, Plan Honduras conducted national consultations which indicated that girls reported gender discrimination and unfair treatment in their communities, schools and families.
- Plan raised institutional awareness through a continuous training process amongst Plan staff, in order for them to recognise and understand gender discrimination and its implications in their own personal, as well as professional, lives. Plan mainstreamed gender equality methodologies into their work as an analysis tool, and throughout all their strategies and programmes.
- Plan Honduras is developing a Facilitators' Guide that aims to provide knowledge, values and understanding of issues such as gender; sex; roles and stereotypes; control and power from androcentric cultures; the hegemonic male model and its devices and configurations; sexual education; gender-based violence; and parenthood, as well as other facts and methods by which to engage boys and men in discussion and reflection.
- Trained staff members facilitate training and discussions amongst young men and community leaders using methods such as community murals, songs and drama, all utilising the themes of gender equality and masculinity.

## Results

To date, 300 young men and community leaders have participated in training and discussions.

## Good practice and lessons learned

- Use men to engage men: men can act as role models for other men, and having men work with men embodies recognition that they (men) must take responsibility for helping to end gender inequality.
- Spaces for discussion amongst female facilitators and participants should also be created. Plan Honduras are in the process of starting a new initiative with a partner organisation (Centro Bartolome de las Casas, from El Salvador) that will include women in challenging gender-based violence through re-conceptualising masculinities, named: women as allies (mujeres aliadas) of the masculinities process.
- Be prepared for, and respond to, resistance: acknowledge and work with men's fears about gender equality, and recognise men's own perceived 'victimisation' within the context of gender inequality.
- Before starting workshops/engagement with men, it is important to align with persons or partnering institutions that are capable of coordinating and leading long-term processes.
- It is vital when engaging with men and boys on issues such as masculinities and gender equality that it is guided by feminist content and framed within a feminist political agenda, including accountability to women and women's groups.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## 4 USAID – Safe Schools Program, various countries<sup>4</sup>

### Background

The Safe Schools Program was a five-year initiative (2003-08) funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Women in Development, and implemented by DevTech Systems

in Ghana and Malawi. The project was established to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of schoolchildren, and to make schools a safe learning space for girls. In many countries gender-based and sexual violence against girls in schools is all too often overlooked by both teachers and students, and often plays a role in girls' drop-out, due to fear of the school environment, or even early pregnancy.

### Key Beneficiaries

Male and female students aged 10 to 14, as well as male and female teachers.

### Objectives

The goal of Safe Schools was to reduce school related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in selected upper primary and lower secondary schools in Ghana and Malawi, to support the longer-term goal of improving educational outcomes, and reducing negative health outcomes for schoolchildren.

### Methods

- Using a gender lens to identify the relationship between the traditional gender roles and the types of abuse and violence that both girls and boys suffer from and perpetrate in schools.
- Assessments of levels of SRGBV were conducted in four countries, and based on the information gathered, Safe Schools offices were established in Ghana and Malawi.
- Activities at the local and individual levels were implemented in 60 schools, focusing on male and female students in upper primary and lower secondary school.
- In each country, a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) assessment was conducted to identify critical information in target communities.
- Interventions were implemented in partnership with teachers, headteachers, parents, community leaders and the police in each country. A critical part of these interventions was the development of the Doorways training programme, a set of three innovative manuals that served as a resource for students, teachers and community counsellors in efforts to break the cycle of violence in and around schools.
- Advocacy networks were formed in each

country to raise awareness and promote advocacy to SRGBV.

- Teachers and supervisors were sensitised to recognise, prevent and respond to SRGBV through the Doorways teacher programme.
- Safe Schools staff worked with the respective ministries of education and teachers' unions to consolidate existing versions of the Teachers' Code of Conduct into one Code of Conduct (also available on the project website) that addressed SRGBV.
- Safe Schools worked with traditional leaders, village elders, Parent Teacher Associations, Community Action Planning Committees and School Management Committees to raise awareness, identify issues and to develop mobilisation capacity to prevent SRGBV. Through these processes, groups and individuals emerged as role models that had success in overcoming SRGBV or changing attitudes and behaviours.
- Through a Doorways community counsellor programme, 240 community counsellors and teachers were trained in basic listening skills, children's rights and responsibilities and methods to prevent, respond to and report SRGBV incidents. The network of community counsellors reached 30,000 students in the two countries.

### Results

A baseline/endline survey of 800 students and 400 teachers who participated in the programme found that:

- Teachers became more aware of how to report incidences of school related gender-based violence: prior to the Safe Schools Program, only 45 per cent knew how to report such incidences; after the intervention this rose to more than 75 per cent.
- Teachers' attitudes towards acceptability of physical violence changed: in Malawi, prior to the intervention, 76 per cent of teachers thought whipping boys was unacceptable; afterwards approximately 96 per cent of teachers thought it was unacceptable.
- Teachers' awareness of sexual harassment of girls and boys at school increased: in Ghana, prior to project involvement,



roughly 30 per cent of teachers agreed that girls could experience sexual harassment at school; after the programme that number increased to nearly 80 per cent. Teachers' belief that boys could experience sexual harassment increased by 38 per cent – from 26 to 64 per cent.

- Students became more confident that they had the right not to be hurt or mistreated: in Ghana, the percentage of students agreeing with the statement “You have the right not to be hurt or mistreated” increased from 57 to 70 per cent.
- Students' attitudes towards teen pregnancy changed: in Malawi, the baseline study showed that just 70 per cent of girls disagreed with the statement that it was acceptable for a teacher to get a girl pregnant as long as he married her. After the Safe Schools Program's involvement, nearly 90 per cent of girls disagreed.

### Good practice and lessons learned

- A gendered approach expands understanding of violence in schools.
- Interventions were most effective when a 'whole-school' approach – one that includes all members of the school community and anyone who comes in contact with students – was utilised.
- Redefining classroom discipline requires sensitising both teachers and parents. Eliminating corporal punishment – a harmful traditional practice – required changing the teacher-student power dynamic, as well as parents' beliefs that such practices build character.
- Training materials that stress both children's rights and responsibilities build stronger support among teachers and parents.
- Use of role models is an effective tool to overcome fear of reporting SRGBV. Discussion of gender issues was often controversial and grounded in a power dynamic that was predicated on male dominance and female subservience. The use of student, teacher and community member role models was a powerful strategy for sensitising and mobilising people to reduce GBV and SRGBV.
- Active involvement of district and ministry

officials supports grassroots efforts. Open Days and other advocacy network events at the grassroots level (including participation of national or regional officials) were supportive of efforts at the village level.

- Communication materials should balance negative images with positive and constructive ones. The emphasis placed on the beneficial aspects of behavioural change, and avoiding depicting only teachers and boys as perpetrators of violence, was essential to the success of the programme.
- Student-led groups are effective at changing behaviour and attitudes. School-based clubs were popular and helped expose students to topics of the Doorways curriculum.



### Recommendations for the future

- There is no single solution to reducing SRGBV. It must be understood as a complex issue that is influenced by a wide variety of factors across multiple levels of a society.
- The synergy of the multiple Safe Schools interventions was key to its success and good reception in Ghana and Malawi. Changing cultural attitudes is a slow process, and the Doorways training programme is an effective starting point. Numerous examples exist to demonstrate that the linkages between the various Safe Schools interventions increased awareness of SRGBV and showed the first steps of change.
- As the development community strives to address this issue and provide support for victims, it is clear that a multi-faceted approach across a number of institutional levels can increase knowledge, change attitudes and alter practices in a way that improves learning environments for students.

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### Chapter 1

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## Girls online

A list of links to websites, reports, research institutions, databases, practitioner blogs and agencies working on gender-based discrimination with a particular focus on girls and young women.

### Business Sector

**The Girl Effect** is a shared initiative by the Nike Foundation and the NoVo Foundation to create opportunities for girls. The 'girl effect' shows how a girl's empowerment can impact the girl, her community and humanity at large; it also provides tools and information for private sector actors, NGOs, governments and policymakers on how to empower girls. The **'Your Move' report can be found at:** [girleffect.org/downloads/Girl\\_Effect\\_Your\\_Move.pdf](http://girleffect.org/downloads/Girl_Effect_Your_Move.pdf)

**Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women** is an initiative that works to provide under-served women with business and management educations and expanding entrepreneurial talent in developing countries. Its goal is to provide 10,000 women with a business and management education over the next five years. '10,000 Women' works with development, NGO and educational actors. **More information on the initiative can be found at:** [10000women.org/index.html](http://10000women.org/index.html)

**Standard Chartered Bank – 'Goal':** works to empower girls in their communities in India through netball in order to work towards the MDGs. Working with grassroots NGOs, it reaches 3,500 young women in Delhi. To find out more about Standard Chartered's MDG projects **see here:** [goal-girls.com](http://goal-girls.com)

**United Nations Global Compact** is a policy initiative for businesses that are committed to aligning their organisation with the humane principles in the area of human rights, anti-corruption, labour and environment. By implementing this, businesses can ensure that market and commerce benefit economies and societies everywhere. An important part of the programme is concerned with empowering women in the workplace. More information can be found

here: [unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human\\_rights/equality\\_means\\_business.html](http://unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html)

**World Economic Forum** runs a Women Leaders and Gender Parity Programme which strives to promote female leadership and close the gender gap. It produces a Global Gender Gap Report which includes a full ranking of 128 countries from both the developing and developed world. It also monitors the change in rank from previous years to map improvements in the gender gap. [weforum.org](http://weforum.org)

### Civil Society Organisations

**10x10** is a global movement for girls' education channelling film and social action to increase investment in girls by driving resources to girl-focused programmes already operating, by penetrating the public consciousness and creating a vast grassroots network. Building on their support, 10x10 advocates for governmental, global and institutional policy changes to empower adolescent girls. Find out more about their film and work here: [10x10act.org/about-10x10/](http://10x10act.org/about-10x10/)

**Amnesty International (Stop Violence Against Women)** is a campaign which strives to end violence against women and girls in times of peace as well as war. Its main themes are the empowerment of women, violence against women perpetrated by the state and the implementation of existing laws on rape and sexual violence. **For more information visit:** [amnesty.org/en/campaigns/stop-violence-against-women](http://amnesty.org/en/campaigns/stop-violence-against-women)

**Camfed** is an organisation dedicated to improving access to education for girls in Africa. Using a community-based, holistic approach, Camfed provides long-term support, such as fees throughout a girl's schooling, offers business training and small grants to women; and aims to empower women through a partnership with Cama, an association of Camfed alumni and other African women, which encourages young African women to become leaders in their

own communities. Find more information at: [uk.camfed.org](http://uk.camfed.org)

**Forum of African Women's Educationalists (FAWE)** is a pan-African NGO founded by five female ministers of education. It works to improve access and quality of education to girls in the region. It has national chapters in 35 African countries. **More information can be found at:** [fawe.org](http://fawe.org)

**Girls, Inc.** is a non-profit organisation dedicated to empowering girls. It provides educational opportunities to girls in the most vulnerable sections of society in the United States. **For more information visit:** [girlsinc.org](http://girlsinc.org)

**Girls Learn International** is a US-based organisation which pairs American middle- and high-school chapters with schools in countries where girls have traditionally been denied education. It promotes cross-cultural awareness and understanding and trains girls to be leaders in the movement for positive social change. [girlslearn.org/index.php?catid=1&over=1&color=White](http://girlslearn.org/index.php?catid=1&over=1&color=White)

**Ipas** is an organisation focused on increasing women's ability to assert their sexual and reproductive rights. It works in several areas, focusing on sexual violence and youth. It works in advocacy, research, training health workers in safe abortion technique, and technologies and advocacy. **For more information visit:** [ipas.org/Index.aspx](http://ipas.org/Index.aspx)

**NGO Working Group on Girls' Rights** is an international network which aims to ensure domestic implementation of international standards relating to girls in all stages of their youth, as well as promote advocacy of girls' issues in international policy. **More information can be found at:** [girlsrights.org](http://girlsrights.org)

**MenEngage** is a global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies that seeks to engage boys and men to achieve gender equality through activities such as information sharing; joint training activities; and carrying out regional and international advocacy and campaigns. Seeks to act as a collective voice to promote a global movement of men and boys

engaged in and working towards gender equality and questioning violence and non-equitable versions of manhood. For further information and toolkits, see: [menengage.org](http://menengage.org)

**Promundo** is a Brazilian NGO that seeks to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children and youth. Promundo works by conducting research related to gender equality and health, and implementing and evaluating programmes that seek to promote positive changes in gender norms and behaviours among individuals, families and communities. In addition, Promundo advocates for the integration of these initiatives and a perspective of gender equality in public policies. For more information, and to look at the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) see the website: [promundo.org.br](http://promundo.org.br)

**A Safe World for Women: The 2011 Campaign** focuses on ending all forms of abuse of women and girls. It is an online organisation that brings together NGOs, groups and individuals committed to a safer world. Their website contains useful information on the types of violence inflicted against women and girls. [asafeworldforwomen.org](http://asafeworldforwomen.org)

**She's The First** is a media action campaign established by young women to promote girls' education in areas where that right is not often an opportunity, by attracting donors to their online directory of schools with sponsorship programmes. [shesthefirst.org/about/](http://shesthefirst.org/about/)

**Sonke Gender Justice Network** works across Africa to strengthen government, civil society and citizen capacity to support men and boys to take action to promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. To learn more about the network and their current and past projects see: [genderjustice.org.za](http://genderjustice.org.za)

**Soroptimist International** is an organisation for women in management and professions who work to advance women's status and human rights through advocacy, awareness

and action. **For more information visit:** [soroptimistinternational.org/index.html](http://soroptimistinternational.org/index.html)

**Vital Voices** is a global partnership that aims to empower women worldwide. Working in partnership with organisations in the business sector, it works to train women leaders and entrepreneurs around the world who can then go back and train women in their own communities. [vitalvoices.org](http://vitalvoices.org)

**White Ribbon Campaign** is a global campaign and network of men working to end violence against women. In over 55 countries, campaigns are led by both men and women, with a focus on educating men and boys. To learn more about the campaign, see the website: [whiteribbon.ca](http://whiteribbon.ca)

**Women in Development Europe (WIDE)** is an umbrella organisation of European women's organisations which monitors and influences economic and development policy from a feminist perspective. It produces a monthly e-newsletter on its activities and news relating to gender and development. **To sign up for the newsletter follow this link:** [wide-network.org/blocks/join.jsp](http://wide-network.org/blocks/join.jsp)

**Womankind Worldwide** aims to promote women as a force for change in development. It works in 15 developing countries funding projects tied to women's legal rights and self-empowerment. Their publications, which are available for download, may be found at: [womankind.org.uk/publications.html](http://womankind.org.uk/publications.html) Their 'Respect 4 Us' campaign website provides interactive tools for young people to explore issues of violence. [respect4us.org.uk/container.htm](http://respect4us.org.uk/container.htm)

**Women for Women International** is a global NGO that works with socially excluded women survivors of conflict, by providing them with financial aid, job training, rights awareness and leadership education. To learn more about the programmes and projects they run, visit: [womenforwomen.org](http://womenforwomen.org)

**Women's World Summit Foundation** has consultative status with the UN and strives to alert governments and international bodies

to take an active role in the empowerment of women and children. **More information can be found at:** [woman.ch](http://woman.ch)

**World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts** works worldwide to provide a non-formal education through which girls can gain life skills and self-development. It reaches approximately 10 million girls through 145 member organisations. **For more information visit:** [wagggsworld.org/en/home](http://wagggsworld.org/en/home)

**YWCA** is a global network empowering women around the world to enact social and economic change. It works with 25 million women and girls in 22,000 communities. It works in four priority areas: peace with justice, human rights, women's health and HIV/AIDS, and sustainable development. **For more information visit:** [worldywca.info](http://worldywca.info)

## Foundations

**The Cherie Blair Foundation** works to provide entrepreneurship opportunities and access to technology for women worldwide. They provide finance, networking and business development support on the premise that economically empowered women not only have greater control over their own lives and the lives of their children, but also signal a brighter future for their communities and economies: [cherieblairfoundation.org](http://cherieblairfoundation.org)

**Girls Action Foundation** runs innovative girls' empowerment programmes across Canada, investing in girls and young women at both a local and national level. The programmes foster community leadership skills and inspire action to change the world. Many of the girls enrolled in the programmes are from remote, marginalised and urban communities. Find out more at: [girlsactionfoundation.ca/en](http://girlsactionfoundation.ca/en)

**UN Foundation** The Foundation's Women and Population section has been working to empower women and girls worldwide, on the premise that they are essential to eradicating poverty and achieving social justice. They place a particular focus on reproductive and sexual health and rights, as well as investing

in and advocating for, adolescent girls. **More information can be found at:** [unfoundation.org/global-issues/women-and-population/](http://unfoundation.org/global-issues/women-and-population/)

The UN Foundation provides a vehicle through which donors can support the UN's work on girls – The Girl Fund [thegirlfund.org](http://thegirlfund.org)

**Girl Up** is the United Nations Foundation awareness-raising campaign to harness girls' energy and enthusiasm as a powerful force for change. [girlup.org](http://girlup.org)

## Multi-Laterals

**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** is an organisation which brings together governments committed to democracy and the market economy. Its **OECD Development Centre** has created **Wikigender**, a pilot project for the OECD Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies which provides a free forum through which to exchange and collect information on gender issues. **For more information visit:** [wikigender.org](http://wikigender.org)

**World Bank** works closely with other development organisations towards improving girls' education. It finances projects in developing countries as well as providing technology and financial assistance to countries with high gender disparities in education. **Other excellent resources from the World Bank on girls' empowerment can be found at:** [go.worldbank.org/B9VQI8YJTO](http://go.worldbank.org/B9VQI8YJTO)

## Partnerships

**Girl Hub** is a collaboration between the UK government Department for International Development (DFID) and Nike Foundation. Girl Hub aims to form a global network of girls' experts and advocates and link them with development programmes and policymakers to promote girls' rights, and work to include girls in policy design and implementation. [girlhub.org/about/](http://girlhub.org/about/)

**iKNOW Politics** is an international knowledge network of women in politics from around the world who share experiences, access resources and advisory services, and network and collaborate

on issues of interest. The organisation is made up of five partners: UNDP, UNIFEM, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. More information can be found here: [iknowpolitics.org/node/221](http://iknowpolitics.org/node/221)

**The Coalition for Adolescent Girls** is a partnership between the United Nations Foundation and the Nike Foundation, and is committed to driving public and private investment in adolescent girls. **Check out:** [coalitionforadolescentgirls.org](http://coalitionforadolescentgirls.org)

**World Bank Adolescent Girls Initiative** is an initiative hoping to improve girls' employment prospects tomorrow with training and education today. It works in partnership with the governments of Australia, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden and Norway; and private sector firms including Cisco, Standard Chartered Bank and Goldman Sachs. The initiative also offers incentives to employers to hire and train girls. **For more information visit:** [go.worldbank.org/15PX4JETM0](http://go.worldbank.org/15PX4JETM0)

**Gender and HIV/AIDS web portal** has been set up by UN Women in collaboration with UNAIDS in order to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. For further information see: [genderandaids.org](http://genderandaids.org)

**The Population Council** is an international non-governmental organisation conducting research into population issues worldwide. It is merging its research areas into three headings: HIV and AIDS; Poverty, Gender and Youth; and Reproductive Health. Its publications and resources can be found here: [popcouncil.org/publications/index.asp](http://popcouncil.org/publications/index.asp)

## Research

**Asia Pacific Women's Watch** is a regional network of women's organisations. It works to improve women's rights by working with other NGOs, national governments and the UN. **More information can be found at:** [apwww.isiswomen.org](http://apwww.isiswomen.org)

**Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)** is an international organisation working for women's rights, gender equality and development. It works to build alliances and influence international institutions to advance women's issues. AWID provides current and up-to-date information on women's rights in the news; as well as profiling recent research and information on a multitude of topics, themes and countries. **See:** [awid.org](http://awid.org)  
Also, a profile of the 'Young Feminist Activism Program' can be found here: [awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-Initiatives/Young-Feminist-Activism-Program](http://awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-Initiatives/Young-Feminist-Activism-Program)

**Centre for Global Development (CGDev)** is a non-profit policy research organisation focusing on reducing poverty. **Of particular interest to girls** is its report 'Girls Count: a Global Investment and Action Agenda' which can be found at: [cgdev.org/files/15154\\_file\\_GirlsCount.pdf](http://cgdev.org/files/15154_file_GirlsCount.pdf)

**Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)** is a global network of children's organisations which coordinates and promotes information on child rights. It has a membership of 2,000 organisations, and its search facilities can be narrowed down by region or theme with extensive information concerning children's legal rights. For more information concerning child rights mechanisms see [crin.org/docs/CRINmechs.pdf](http://crin.org/docs/CRINmechs.pdf)

**International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)** is an organisation which works on research, technical support for capacity building and advocacy. Its research focus includes: adolescence, HIV/AIDS, food security and nutrition, economic development, reproductive health and violence against women. Regarding girls, it works towards improving sexual and reproductive rights and combating child marriage. **Its many publications on the subject can be found at:** [catalog.icrw.org/pubsearch.htm](http://catalog.icrw.org/pubsearch.htm)

**International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP) Asia Pacific** works to promote domestic implementation of international human rights standards. It focuses on the CEDAW, facilitating a flow of information

from the international to the domestic, ensuring that women worldwide are aware of their rights. **More information can be found at:** [iwrap-ap.org](http://iwrap-ap.org)

## Resources and Databases

**Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children** produces action-oriented research in order to support local, national and international communities in their work against violence against women and children. The Centre's research and publications can be found on their website: [crvawc.ca/index.html](http://crvawc.ca/index.html)

**DevInfo** is a powerful database combining three databases to review the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Of particular interest is its 'Facts. You decide' page which shows statistics on each of the MDGs. **It can be found here:** [devinfo.org/facts.htm?IDX=13](http://devinfo.org/facts.htm?IDX=13)

**Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB)** represents a new tool for researchers and policymakers to determine and analyse obstacles to women's economic development. It covers a total of 160 countries and comprises an array of 60 indicators on gender discrimination. The database has been compiled from various sources and combines in a systematic and coherent fashion the current empirical evidence that exists on the socio-economic status of women. Another of their projects is the **SIGI** (Social Institutions and Gender Index), a composite measure of gender discrimination based on social institutions in 102 non-OECD countries. Users may build their own gender index by changing the priority of the social institutions in the SIGI. [genderindex.org](http://genderindex.org)

**Girls Discovered** is a comprehensive, interactive resource of data relating to the welfare, health and education and opportunities of girls worldwide. It enables users to choose from over 200 datasets and view, compare and analyse their data on maps or download it as a spreadsheet. [girlsdiscovered.org/create\\_your\\_own\\_map/](http://girlsdiscovered.org/create_your_own_map/)

**Sexual Violence Prevention Network** uses a social justice and health framework, in order to raise awareness and share information with the ultimate goal of ending sexual violence. Its objective is to foster a network of researchers, policymakers, activists and donors to address the problem of sexual violence. To see a list of resources available, visit: [svri.org](http://svri.org)

**WomenWatch** provides information and resources on gender equality and female empowerment. The girl child is one of its critical areas of concern. It is a useful source of information as it provides clear and easy access to the various UN conventions, bodies and activities relating to gender in a user-friendly way. **Information specifically related to the girl child can be found at:** [un.org/womenwatch/directory/the\\_girl\\_child\\_3012.htm](http://un.org/womenwatch/directory/the_girl_child_3012.htm)

**Women Stats Project** provides extensive and comprehensive information on the status of women in the world. The Project facilitates understanding the linkage between the situation of women and the security of nation-states and highlights qualitative and quantitative information on over 310 indicators of women's status in 174 countries. For more information visit: [womanstats.org/index.htm](http://womanstats.org/index.htm)

**Young Feminist Wire** is an exciting new online community for young feminist activism, to showcase the work of young feminists, bring them together to enhance their effectiveness, and offer resources. [yfa.awid.org](http://yfa.awid.org)

## UN Resources

**Say NO to Violence** is presented by UN Women, and records what individuals, governments and organisations are doing to end violence against women worldwide and count the actions taken towards that goal. They provide free resources and publications to download at: [saynotoviolence.org/issue/publication](http://saynotoviolence.org/issue/publication)

**Stop Rape Now** is a UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict uniting the work of 13 UN entities with the goal of

ending sexual violence in conflict. It aims to improve coordination and accountability, amplify programming and advocacy, and support national efforts to prevent sexual violence and respond effectively to the needs of survivors. For more information visit: [stoprapenow.org](http://stoprapenow.org)

**The E4 conference**, held in April-May 2010, aimed to promote partnerships for girls' education against the obstacles that violence, poverty, climate change, health and educational quality can pose. The 'Dakar Declaration on accelerating Girls' Education and Gender Equality' was unanimously adopted by the participants at the conference: [ungei.org/index\\_2527.html](http://ungei.org/index_2527.html)

**UN Programme on Youth** is the UN's focus centre on youth. It produces a biannual World Youth Report. One of its areas of concern is girls and young women. **Information regarding its work on girls and young women can be found at:** [un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wpaygirls.htm](http://un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wpaygirls.htm)

**UNDP Millennium Campaign** aims to support and promote awareness of the MDGs. The campaign produces 'The Millennium Goals Report' which summarises the data and achievements of all the MDGs. **It can be found at:** [un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf](http://un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf).

**Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls** is presented by UN Women and acts as a one-stop online centre which encourages and supports evidence-based programming to design more efficiently and effectively, implement, monitor and evaluate initiatives to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. The website provides step-by-step programming guidance and expert advice, including working with men and boys. For more information see: [endvawnow.org](http://endvawnow.org)

**Women Watch** was first established as a joint UN project in 1997 to provide an internet space for global gender equality issues and to support implementation of the

1995 Beijing Platform for Action. It is now managed by a taskforce of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, led by UN Women, and acts as a central gateway to information and resources on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the United Nations system. For more information visit: [un.org/womenwatch](http://un.org/womenwatch)

## UN Agencies

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** focuses on child development, education and gender equality, HIV/AIDS, child protection and policy advocacy. **Of particular interest to girls** is the 2007 'State of the World's Children Report – Women and Children: the Double Dividend of Gender Equality': [unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07.pdf](http://unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07.pdf) and the 2009 State of the World's Children Report: 'Maternal and Newborn Health': [unicef.org/sowc09/docs/SOWC09-FullReport-EN.pdf](http://unicef.org/sowc09/docs/SOWC09-FullReport-EN.pdf)

**UN Commission on the Status of Women** is a commission of the Economic and Social Council dedicated to gender equality and the advancement of women. The 54th session of the commission, which reviewed the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and its contribution towards the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals, can be found here: [un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html](http://un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html)

**UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)** was created in July 2010 to accelerate the UN goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women has merged together the roles of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM and works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women, and equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action, and peace and security. UN Women seeks to support inter-governmental bodies to formulate policies, global standards and norms, to help member states to implement these standards (through technical and financial support) and to forge effective

partnerships with civil society. In addition, UN Women holds the entire UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress. For more information see their website: [unwomen.org](http://unwomen.org)

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is the UN's development organisation and works on the ground in 166 countries. Its yearly Human Development Report monitors development at national, regional and international levels, and can be found at: [hdr.undp.org/en/reports/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/). Of particular interest: its Human Development Index (HDI) measures a country's development by considering education, life expectancy and income, but it also produces indices specific to gender: the Gender Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Index which can be found at: [hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi\\_gem/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi_gem/)

**United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI)** aims to ensure that by 2015 the gender gap in primary and secondary education will have narrowed and all children complete primary education. Its 'Gender Achievement and Prospects' in Education (GAP) projects work to assess progress towards MDG 2 (universal primary education by 2015) and identify obstacles and innovations. The GAP Report can be found at: [ungei.org/gap/pdfs/unicef\\_gap\\_low\\_res.pdf](http://ungei.org/gap/pdfs/unicef_gap_low_res.pdf)

**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** uses population data to ensure that every man, woman and child has the right to a healthy life. It produces a yearly 'State of the World's Population' report, several of which have focused on gender. 2006 focused on 'Women and International Migration'. [unfpa.org/upload/lib\\_pub\\_file/650\\_filename\\_sowp06-en.pdf](http://unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/650_filename_sowp06-en.pdf)

# Glossary

**Assets:** Anything of material value or usefulness that is owned by a person. Can include human assets (eg skills and knowledge), financial assets (eg cash), physical assets (eg land ownership), and social assets (eg relations of trust).<sup>1</sup>

**Empowerment:** Can be interpreted as freedom of choice and action to shape one's life, including the control over resources, decisions and institutions necessary to do so.<sup>2</sup> Empowerment implies an expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.<sup>3</sup>

**Gender:** Gender refers to the social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities. Gender is about the expectations and behaviours that people have of someone because they are female or male. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed.<sup>4</sup> They change over time. They are learned from families and friends, in schools and communities, and from the media, government and religious organisations.

**Gender Norms:** Are socially constructed beliefs regarding men and women's behaviour which are 'assigned' in accordance with their biological sex. These norms govern our actions and choices and may lead to gender stereotyping.

**Gender Transformative Approach:** Is a policy or programme approach which assumes that gender equality is central to achieving positive development outcomes and transforming unequal power relations.<sup>5</sup>

**Gender Neutral Approach:** Where gender is not considered relevant to the outcome and gender norms, roles and relations are not affected (worsened or improved).

**Gender Equity:** Fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equal in terms of rights,

benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.<sup>6</sup>

**Gender Equality:** Meaning the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality means that women and men, girls and boys enjoy the same status in society. It does not mean that men and women are the same, but rather that their similarities and differences are recognised and equally valued. Gender equality can be measured in terms of equality of results, meaning gender equality is concerned with arriving at equal outcomes rather than giving identical treatment. Ultimately, promoting gender equality means transforming the power relations between women and men, girls and boys, in order to create a more just society for all. Gender equality is not a 'women's issue' but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

**Gender Justice:** Refers to the ending of, and the provision of redress for, inequalities between women and men that result in women's subordination to men, in both the informal and formal sectors.<sup>7</sup>

**Gender and Development Approach (GAD):** Developed as a response to the failure of WID (Women In Development) projects to effect successful and long-lasting changes in women's social status. GAD focuses on social, economic, political and cultural forces that determine how men and women participate in, benefit from, and control, resources and activities differently. This approach shifts the focus from women as a group to the socially determined relations between women and men.

**Gender Specific:** Programming that involves only one of the sexes in order to address specific constraints or to

promote empowerment. May be neutral or transformational.

**Gender Stereotypes:** Gender stereotyping occurs when females or males are consistently attributed certain characteristics or roles, thereby creating the belief that these are linked to their sex. Gender stereotypes determine the gender roles that males and females play in society by influencing what is considered masculine and feminine. Gender stereotypes reinforce gender inequality by portraying these views and beliefs as biologically or culturally true.

**Heteronormativity:** Refers to any set of lifestyle norms which hold that people fall into distinct and complementary genders (man and woman) with natural roles in life. It also holds that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation, and states that sexual and marital relations are most (or only) fitting between a man and a woman.<sup>8</sup>

**Intersectional Discrimination:** The idea of intersectionality refers to the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. It highlights the ways in which racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantages and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it addresses the way that specific acts and policies create intersecting burdens that contribute actively to create a dynamic of disempowerment.<sup>10</sup>

**Masculinities:** Refers to the socially constructed perceptions of being a man and implies that there are many different and changing definitions of manhood and how men are expected to behave.<sup>11</sup>

**Patriarchy:** Refers to historical power imbalances and cultural practices and systems that confer power and offer men and boys more social and material benefits than women and girls.<sup>12</sup>

**Sex:** Refers to the biological characteristics, which define humans as male or female. This should not be confused with gender which is a social attribution.<sup>13</sup>

**Sexuality:** In the 2011 'Because I am a Girl' report we refer to sexuality in the context of sexual orientation. Someone's declared sexuality can influence the social attitudes they encounter.

**Types of Empowerment:** Empowerment can be understood in terms of four distinct types of power relations:

**Power over:** the ability to coerce and influence the actions and thoughts of the powerless.

**Power to:** the capacity to act, to organise and change existing hierarchies.

**Power with:** increased strength from collective action, social mobilisation and alliance-building.

**Power from within:** increased individual consciousness, self-dignity and awareness.

**Women in Development Approach (WID):** An outcome of the realisation that women's contributions were being ignored and that this was leading to the failure of many development efforts. WID projects were developed to involve women as participants and beneficiaries of development aid and initiatives.<sup>14</sup>

## About Plan International

Founded over 70 years ago, Plan is one of the oldest and largest international development agencies in the world. We work in 48 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas. Plan directly supports more than 1.5 million children and their families, and indirectly supports an estimated further 9 million people who live in communities that are working with Plan. We make long-term commitments to children in poverty and assist as many children as possible, by working in partnerships and alliance with them, their families, communities, civil society and government, building productive relationships and enabling their voices to be heard and recognised in issues that affect them. Plan is independent, with no religious, political or governmental affiliations.

### Our vision

Plan's vision is of a world in which all children realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity.

### Our mission

Plan aims to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives, by:

- enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in and benefit from their societies;
- building relationships to increase understanding and unity among peoples of different cultures and countries;
- promoting the rights and interests of the world's children.

[plan-international.org](http://plan-international.org)



*Girls' education in Nepal.*

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