



MenEngage Alliance

working with men and boys for gender equality

 institute of  
development  
studies

 FUNDACIÓN  
PARA ESTUDIO  
E INVESTIGACIÓN  
DE LA MUJER

 SVRI  
SCAU  
VIOLENCE  
RESPONSE  
INITIATIVE

A call to action.

# Progressive Policy Approaches to Effectively Engage Men and Boys in Countering Backlash on Rights, Gender Equality and Democracy

# Acknowledgments

This document was developed by the Men, Masculinities and Countering Backlash Collective, a group of civil society organizations committed to addressing the backlash against gender justice and rights. As a collective, we believe that engaging men and boys is a key part of the solution. The collective includes - MenEngage Alliance, IDS, SVRI, FFPC, FEIM, among other who choose to remain unnamed due to risk associated with public visibility of their work on these topics.

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## **About MenEngage Alliance**

We are the world's largest collective working to bring men and boys into the work of women's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, and gender justice for all, while supporting men and boys to break free of stereotypes of what it means to be a man. Together, we are more than 1,000 groups in some 90 countries coming together around shared values and standards for how to work with men and boys for gender equality.

**Learn more at [menengage.org](https://menengage.org)**



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## Summary

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Masculinities—social norms shaping ideas of manhood—are deeply implicated in the global backlash against gender equality and human rights. Anti-gender actors mobilize patriarchal ideals to restore traditional power hierarchies, promote narratives of aggrieved or “crisis” masculinities, and frame feminism, LGBTQ+, and immigrant rights as threats to social order. These dynamics are amplified by online spaces and political leaders who deploy hypermasculine rhetoric to justify nationalist, exclusionary, and authoritarian agendas, contributing to the erosion of democratic norms and increased discrimination.

Engaging men and boys is therefore essential to counter these trends, as they are both primary targets of anti-gender narratives and influential gatekeepers within institutions. Transnational anti-gender campaigns, often framed through the concept of “gender ideology,” undermine human rights and gender equality commitments and democratic progress while producing real social harms.

This resource provides policy- and decision-makers with feminist-informed, practical strategies to counter anti-rights forces through policy action. It emphasizes the critical need to confront patriarchal masculinities and engage men and boys as allies and agents of change in advancing rights-based policies and resisting rollbacks driven by ultra-conservative actors.

Applicable to both domestic and regional policymaking and international norm-setting and diplomacy, the resource compiles analysis and adaptable strategies to counter how backlash actors mobilize narratives and structures rooted in patriarchal power to undermine universal human rights principles. Coordinated policy action and partnerships between policymakers and gender, climate and social justice movements are critical to challenge these narratives, protect rights, and advance inclusive and resilient societies.

# The problem:

**Masculinities are  
deeply implicated  
in the rising backlash**

# The problem:

## Masculinities are deeply implicated in the rising backlash

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**Masculinities - the socially constructed ideas, expectations, and behaviours about what it means to be a man - are deeply tied to the growing backlash against gender equality and women's human rights.**

- Ideas, norms, and structural factors relating to masculinities are not just passively caught up in anti-gender movements. Rather, they are actively constructed, mobilized, and weaponized to uphold systems of patriarchy, nationalism, capitalism, racism and social control.
- These ideas about masculinity often serve as both the emotional fuel and the cultural or political justification for many anti-rights mobilisation and groups.

Understanding masculinities, stereotypical manhood and gendering of men and boys, as both root cause and political tool allows us to respond not only to the symptoms - but to the architecture beneath this systemic and patriarchal social construct.

**We highlight five significant features or aspects of this problem below.**

## Restoring Traditional Power Hierarchies

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Many anti-gender and anti-rights actors (especially those targeting feminism, LGBTQ+ rights, and racial justice) are driven by a desire to reinstate stereotypical and patriarchal gender roles and power orders, where hegemonic masculinities (Connell, R.W., 1995) are linked to control, dominance, heterosexuality, provider and patriarchy (Hooks, b., 2005) in order to justify holding privileges, power and authority.

- Anti-gender actors often idealize the stereotypical and socially constructed roles, in both historical as well as contemporary terms, where men were portrayed as "providers and protectors" and women as "nurturers and homemakers."
- Changes brought about by feminist and queer movements, and broader democratic and social reforms, are seen as threats to this "natural" order, and to men's and patriarchal social status.

Hegemonic masculinity is the sociocultural set of practices and ideals that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of the common male population and women, and other marginalized ways of being a man.

Masculinities (plural) refers to the recognition that "manhood" isn't a single, universal experience but a diverse spectrum of socially and culturally defined behaviors, practices, and identities that vary across time, place, and different groups of men. Instead of a single model, many different ways exist to express what it means to be a man, with some forms of masculinity being more dominant or powerful than others within specific social contexts.

## Mobilization of "Aggrieved Masculinities"

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Anti-gender actors often portray men and boys as “victims” of feminism or gender equality, suggesting that men and boys have been "emasculated" (deprived of their male role or identity, made weaker) by liberal, egalitarian values. Furthermore, we have better understanding on how rigid gender norms correlate with violence, resistance to gender reforms, and susceptibility to extremist narratives.

- The "crisis of masculinity" narrative claims that men and boys are losing their identity, economic power, and societal roles, thereby making them powerless.
- This has fueled the coalescing of regressive actors like the men’s rights movement<sup>1</sup>, incel and manosphere communities, and broader populist rhetoric that frame “manhood” as under threat, an attack which must be defended against.

## Masculinity as a Tool for Authoritarianism and Nationalism

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Authoritarian and nationalist leaders frequently perform hypermasculinity - toughness, emotional detachment, militarism, violence and control - as a part of their political identity.

- Leaders like Putin, Bolsonaro, Trump, and others often project “strongman” images that align with traditional, patriarchal masculinity.
- Their rhetoric frequently includes anti-feminist, anti-LGBTQ+, and anti-migrant stances as well as climate crisis denial, positioning these groups as threats to “the nation” and its so-called “manly” protectors/defenders.
- Authoritarian ethno-nationalists also weaponise racialized masculinities, with anti-immigrant racist rhetoric portraying migrant men as sexually violent, and the need to "protect our women" to justify their racism.

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<sup>1</sup> We understand that these anti-rights groups are not uniformly organised across various parts of the world, and in some situations are very loose networks mobilised informally around the anti-gender sentiments. These groups may appear to be more organised in the Global North regions and playing catalytic roles in fueling, including channeling funds and using religious based institutions in majority terms, similar mobilisations around the world making it seem like a cross-regional consortium or collective. However it's important to acknowledge that these are also quite fragmented groups that have found “common enemy” to the rights agenda.

## Online Masculinities and Radicalization

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Online spaces have become fertile ground for the organizing, construction and spread of patriarchal masculinities, thereby fueling everyday and systemic misogyny and sexism with the tools that can spread it much faster and with huge outreach in a short time.

- Platforms like YouTube, Reddit, X and 4chan, as well as quite a large number of video games, amplify and profit (platform capitalism) from voices that equate masculinity with dominance, control, misogyny, and anti-feminist sentiment.
- These actors and voices on such platforms, which often mirror offline social dynamics, collectively function as coordinated systems that build support for sexism, misogyny and male supremacy. Many content creators focus on young men and boys with messages that encourage, condone and often glorify violence against women, girls, gender diverse populations and other marginalized groups, as well as sexual objectification of women's bodies.
- Echo chambers such as the online digital “manosphere” and incel (involuntarily celibate) groups have managed to radicalize young men and mobilise them into broader far right and misogynistic ideologies.

## Gender Justice and Feminism Framed as Anti-Male

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Anti-gender actors often directly target feminist, gender and sexual rights policies and discourses, framing them as harmful to society, particularly to men and boys, using terms like “gender ideology” to fuel the backlash.

- These confusing and conflicting narratives reach boys and men, in particular those in positions of political power and young men, leading to the situation where they don't see feminism and the struggle for equality as something that is about and for their own well-being and therefore are less supportive of the agenda.
- Masculinities are tied to resisting perceived liberal gender ideological overreach (for example with statements like “gender equality has gone too far”), often under the guise of protecting children, family, cultural or religious values. Some women are also active participants in anti-rights groups, including in leadership positions, upholding these ideological frameworks and claiming feminism does not benefit women.
- This promotes a binary view of gender as a sex-based dichotomy, dismissing gender non-conformity and fluidity or equality as dangerous, perverse and not-natural.

# Part of the solution:

## Why working with men and boys is essential

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Working with men and boys is a critical strategy for countering the rising anti-rights and anti-gender backlash, because these reactionary groups/actors often rely on and reinforce patriarchal power inequalities, both at interpersonal and structural levels, and rigid gender norms around manhood, i.e. patriarchal masculinities. Men and boys, in allyship with women, girls and LGBTIQ people, must work towards dismantling these.

**There are three important reasons for why engaging men and boys better in this is crucial:**

- 01. Men and boys are often the primary targets and enforcers of anti-gender ideologies:** These regressive actors and groups frequently appeal to men and boys —especially those feeling anxious about their future in the current changed socio-economic landscape, their mixed sense of their power and privileges — and capitalize on feelings of isolation and dislocation in a changing world, by promising a return to a glorified, hierarchical version of patriarchal social order. Without engagement, these narratives go unchallenged and can gain dangerous momentum. A number of researchers have highlighted that these narratives and stereotypes are harmful for men and boys themselves in many ways throughout their life cycle, with disproportionate impact on those that are at the margins of the margin.
- 02. Men hold disproportionate power as gatekeepers** in politics, religion, media, and business, where men often occupy key leadership positions and/or have control over the decision making processes. Without their active involvement and support in advancing gender justice, efforts remain limited or face resistance from within these institutions, collectively as well as within individuals.
- 03. Men and boys can have the capacity and a shared stake in actively supporting a vision of gender, social, and climate justice.** As gendered beings, men and boys can denounce and challenge patriarchal norms, and can fully express their capacities for empathy, care and peace. Once they can connect with their full human self, they can mobilize to support in countering conservative, regressive, anti-rights narratives, actors and politics, alongside other movements for gender and social justice.

# What can you do:

## Why policy action is necessary

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**Efforts to roll back national, regional and international agreements that recognize and protect human rights and gender equality have grown into a well-funded and coordinated backlash, which gender justice scholars refer to as ‘transnational anti-gender campaigns’.<sup>2</sup> This backlash has gained traction in different places as part of local political agendas and as an online phenomenon.**

Since the 1990s, the international development community has adopted ‘gender’ as a marker of identity to understand and measure how development policies and programmes are progressing toward global goals. However, backlash attacks on gender equality focus on what it’s being called ‘gender ideology’ as a unifying enemy or banner of the conservative agenda. Gender justice scholars and activists have documented and studied its manifestations at least since 2011. Backlash strategies include weakening democratic institutions, eclipsing development progress, attacking and discrediting gender equality and human rights concepts and principles. In some cases, it has also included utilising the banner of democratic values and the strengthening of the family discourses to reinforce gender stereotypes and undermine democracy all the same. Funded by powerful private and corporate interests, backlash actors and tactics protect a stereotypical patriarchal power order, aimed at sustaining neo-liberal economic agendas and the concentration of wealth in the hands of elites. Simultaneously, the aim is to enforce a hierarchical order that justifies poverty, exclusion, invisibility, and the denial of rights and economic conditions to the vast majority of people.

**“Anti-gender movements include a complex constellation of actors that goes far beyond specific religious affiliations. Research has shown that ‘gender ideology’ is an empty signifier, which can tap into different fears and anxieties in specific contexts and therefore be shaped to fit distinct political projects. [...] the vague notion of gender ideology operates as a ‘symbolic glue’ that facilitates cooperation between actors despite their divergences.”<sup>3</sup>**

- Democracy and society 31.05.2018  
Sonia Corrêa & David Paternotte & Roman Kuhar

Progressive policymaking is increasingly challenging - from national level to global norm setting. Yet, policy makers hold substantial power to influence discourse and to aim to develop policies that impact the lives of millions of citizens for the better, fund movements that push forward on justice and equality, and protect enshrined rights before further rollbacks take place. Policy action between gender equality activists and policymakers is urgently needed to counter the effects of right-wing anti-gender populism.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/democracy-and-society/the-globalisation-of-anti-gender-campaigns-2761/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/democracy-and-society/the-globalisation-of-anti-gender-campaigns-2761/>

## Why Gender Ideology is Utilized as a Central Strategy

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- By conflating gender as a socio-political category with sex as a biological characteristic, the anti-gender campaigns create a ‘one size fits all’ concept and political strategy. Gender becomes everything that might include reference to sex, sexual behavior, and sexuality. And by labeling the enemy as an ideology, it seeks to diminish it as a set of ideas, as opposed to what they claim as the ‘concrete reality’.
- It also plays with accepted stereotypes and symbols that evoke fear. Therefore, ‘gender ideology’ becomes a useful tool and a threat to watch out for, and strong authoritarian political regimes are portrayed as solutions to the threats posed by ‘gender ideology’.

## It’s Not Just Cultural— It’s Political and Undermines Democracy

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- Anti-rights backlash is part of coordinated political strategies to roll back civil liberties, suppress dissent, and consolidate authoritarian power. Gender, SRHR, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ rights, racism, xenophobia and discrimination are often the first targets because they symbolize freedom and equality, making them easy scapegoats for populist and fundamentalist leaders.
- Gender, inclusive of gender identity, sexual orientation, reproductive rights, and sexuality education, is a convenient front for the discourse that uses ‘gender ideology’ as a threat to the nuclear heteronormative family unit. It also unifies and brings together several single-topic political groups, such as anti-abortion rights groups, anti same sex marriage conservatives, anti-comprehensive sexuality education groups, among others.
- At the same time the backlash narrative portrays democracy as a weak system that does not work to protect families and a male leader is typically proposed as the protector and saviour of these conservative family values and culture ‘under threat’. They claim that a strong leader, strong political regime is justified and needed to restore order. Once authoritarianism is justified, it will work to undermine other democratic institutions and practices, in strategic ways that could offer them full power and impunity for dismantling justice systems.
- Backlash tactics—including banning equal rights education, censoring dissidents, scapegoating of immigrants and refugees, or funding regressive religious groups—are used to weaken democratic pluralism and resistance.

## It's Not only Rhetoric — It Impacts the Lives of Real People

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- The anti-rights actors foster fear and panic among their followers. A populist leader needs followers, and they need a controlled narrative to convince their followers that there is a real enemy whose narrative and life experiences are not real – it's just ideology that risks destroying the family.
- **“Gender ideology”** also plays a central role in this narrative of the family unit as a religious and political organizing factor, reinforcing the figure of the patriarch and the authoritarian leader as strong men. Once again, this ignores the diversity of families and the caring ties that sustain communities and contributes to eroding rights and dignified living conditions for large sectors of the population.

## Organised Resistance to, and Co-Optation of Human Rights Language

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- Anti-rights narratives are spreading transnationally, aided by unregulated digital platforms that share lessons from countries where anti-rights and anti-democratic groups have advanced.
- Single-issue conservative groups also help the broader ‘backlash’ narrative by repeating the claim that ‘gender’ is the evil enemy. Certain Christian religious groups, anti-abortion groups, and opposition to same-sex relationships, marriage, and homosexual families attack add their individual claims adding fuel to broader backlash discourse.
- These actors have also sought to undermine international human rights and development agreements, with tactics such as norms-spoiling within the United Nations, in which actors seek to roll back gains in agreed-upon international commitments for equality and rights. The rollback of decades of human rights norms is particularly dangerous because these frameworks underpin democratic governance, constrain abuses of power, especially towards marginalised communities, and provide the shared legal foundations through which states are held accountable to their citizens and to one another.

## It's a Matter of National and Global Stability

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- It is a fact that societies that protect and enjoy their human rights to the fullest are more peaceful, resilient, innovative, and socially cohesive. Backlash campaigns often lead to increased hate crimes, suppression of civil society, and violence<sup>4</sup> as they promote a narrative that sells the idea of imminent danger and chaos.
- Focusing on social actors and individual citizens that are labeled as 'enemies', backlash campaigns advance by denying civil rights to dissidents, or even by engaging in their persecution. Backlash campaigns and narratives foster conflict and unrest because unrest can, then, become a path to control and power, an opportunity to weaken democracies and democratic institutions, and an attempt to install strong authoritarian regimes.

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<sup>4</sup> [FBI Press Release](#): Violent Online Networks Target Vulnerable and Underage Populations Across the U.S. and Around the Globe

- 75% of online profiles that participate in extremist conversations belong to men and boys; Source: Public Safety Canada. (2022). The rise of ideologically motivated violent extremism in Canada.
- Research shows that men and boys who begin in milder online spaces focused on men's issues end up in forums that promote radical ideologies, blame women and girls, and promote gender-based violence Source: Horta Ribeiro, M., Blackburn, J., Bradlyn, B., De Cristofaro, E., Stringhini, G., Long, S., Greenberg, S., & Zannettou, S. (2020). Pick-Up Artists to Incels: A Data-Driven Sketch of the Manosphere. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/reader/4743a52a95d31c49b34152f4e23ac4c1076>

# Quick Reference Guide

## Identifying the pushback within the political sphere

### What are the key target topics of backlash agendas?

**Backlash opposes and attacks** well known and established human rights principles such as:

- Gender equality, racial justice, immigrant and refugee rights, democracy, climate justice
- Individual freedom
- Collective expression and action
- Independent research/thinking
- Democratic rule and free elections
- Civil and human rights
- Minorities' rights and humanity
- Women's rights and empowerment
- Same-sex marriages, LGBTQ rights, and expressions of homo-affectiveness<sup>5</sup>

### What are typical elements of backlash narratives?

**Backlash is anchored on slogans** and popular concepts such as:

- Gender ideology as an attack
- Biological sex over gender as socially constructed
- Protection of the 'traditional' family unit
- Call for strongman solutions lead and enforced by a strong leader
- They/them - outsiders/others narratives

### How does backlash organize its narratives and arguments?

**Backlash affirms** that:

- There is an overlap of family and nation
- The patriarch of the family and the authoritarian ruler are both strong.
- The family unit is modeled on an often urban, racially or ethnically majoritarian group couple with children.
- Family is made of heterosexual men and women who complement each other by nature.
- Sex is determined by biological characteristics at birth.
- Gender nonconforming people are 'unnatural' and against the 'Creator's intentions'.
- 'Identity-based hierarchies are needed to maintain social order, the family and social hierarchy (based on gender, class, ethnicity and other markers).
- Feminism is a dangerous doctrine that can destroy the family.
- Majority religion is deemed the only legitimate framework of 'morality' and not divorced from political rule and governance.

<sup>5</sup> GATE Recognizing and Addressing Anti-Gender Movements: A Tool Kit  
[https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-GATE-Recognizing\\_Documenting\\_and\\_Addresssing\\_Anti-Gender\\_Opposition.pdf](https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-GATE-Recognizing_Documenting_and_Addresssing_Anti-Gender_Opposition.pdf)

# Tips to spot backlash rhetoric and expose its bias

## 1. Identifying its core topics of interest and typical narratives

- What are their assumptions about **family, women, and LGBTQ individuals?**
- What is the role of **men in the family?**
- What are the characteristics of men in the ultra-conservative social order?
- How and why do they differentiate between ethnic majority men and othered minorities?
- How do they view men in politics and in policy making?
- How do backlash narratives communicate with the public?
- How and why backlash narratives and policies target migrants?<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Finding ways to insert new information into the narratives

- Governments and decision-makers can understand that there are many types of families, which must be recognized legally and appreciated as structures of care.
- Families are diverse, inclusive of- and shaped by- caring ties within their communities.
- Scientific studies recognize that gender and sex are different categories.
- Gender has been recognized within the Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action and other international agreements dating back to 1994.
- Human rights adopted in 1946 are universal to all human beings equally.
- Women have been workers for millennia, and there is no past patriarchal society where women didn't work. Portraying women as exclusively caretakers and nurturers is not based on real life experiences or facts.
- People may be attracted to the "strongman" leader, but they still expect democracy. They need to understand that anti-rights movements scapegoat certain groups but ultimately lead to the infringement of all people's rights, including your right to vote, freedom of expression, of protest, of assembly.

## 3. Detangling false premises and offering useful comparisons<sup>7</sup>

- There is an overlap of family and nation
- The patriarch of the family and the authoritarian ruler are both strong.
- The family unit is modeled on an often urban, racially or ethnically majoritarian group couple with children.
- Family is made of heterosexual men and women who complement each other by nature.
- Sex is determined by biological characteristics at birth.
- Gender nonconforming people are 'unnatural' and against the 'Creator's intentions'.
- 'Identity-based hierarchies are needed to maintain social order, the family and social hierarchy (based on gender , class, ethnicity and other markers).
- Feminism is a dangerous doctrine that can destroy the family.
- Majority religion is deemed the only legitimate framework of 'morality', and not divorced from political rule and governance.
- Efforts to convert individuals to Christianity are legitimate, and the end justifies the means.

## 4. Exposing the utilitarian use of gender and their end goal

- A useful strategy to navigate misinformation can be to use First Draft – **SHEEP standing for Source, History, Evidence, Emotions and Pictures.**

<sup>6</sup> J. Butler, 2024. "fascist passions can take many forms, but certainly one form is the desire to strip people of their rights – their rights of citizenship, rights of belonging to a particular country, rights of self-determination. If we have the expulsion of migrants with the claim that they do not belong to a particular nation state, if we have the stripping of rights of trans people to determine their own sex, if we have the rights of women to self-determination, including bodily autonomy, taken away, then we are seeing a series of rights-stripping activities".

<sup>7</sup> The Commons Social Change Library, Countering Disinformation <https://commonslibrary.org/collection/countering-disinformation/>

# Inspired to act?

## Actionable Policy Recommendations you can advance

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# Inspired to act?

## Actionable Policy Recommendations you can advance

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The following policy recommendations land within a current context of decreased funding streams for human rights, gender equality, social and climate action. In recognition of this context, it is critical to note that many of these actions can be implemented within the context of already existing policy frameworks, initiatives, and campaigns. These are:

- Reframing how to approach men, boys and masculinities in policies for development and equality
- Media, Digital Information & Communications Technologies
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing
- Foreign Affairs and International Diplomacy
- Gender Equality in the Workplace
- Climate Change

# Reframing how to approach men, boys and masculinities in policies for development and equality

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- Address the fact that many men and boys today are struggling, just like women and girls and gender diverse individuals. Patriarchal expectations and the perception that some privileges are going away, combined with other economic, political, and cultural hardships, have caused men and boys to feel uneasy and unequipped to manage problems and stressors, and to adjust to a fast-changing world.
- Encourage CSOs and governmental agencies to actively engage with men and boys as a constituency and to understand the problems they struggle with and develop solutions to help them move forward (as opposed to blaming women, immigrants, or LGBTIQ+ people for such problems). Do so in accountable ways that ensure they don't displace the needs, concerns, and problems of women, girls, and gender non-conforming people.
- Integrate a feminist, anti-patriarchal, masculinities lens into existing gender equality action plans and strategies, including gender transformative strategies to engage men and boys in preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against all women, girls, and LGBTIQ people - online and offline. Include clear strategies for engaging men and boys in social norms transformation, as well as in mobilizing men and boys to be part of the solution to push forward for rights and justice for all.
- Ensure all policy-making efforts, inclusive of work with men and boys, are co-created with feminist movements, LGBTQ+ organizations, and youth-led groups, and that a feminist power analysis informs all interventions.
- Offer gender equality education in schools that include men's and boys' issues (so that men's and boys' issues are also strategically used to make the case for the importance of education on gender and other equality matters)
- Integrate critical gender, sex, sexuality, life skills and power education in school curricula from early years to higher education, including on caring, equitable, and non-violent alternative expressions of masculinities, consent, emotional literacy, and anti-violence.
- Mobilize and allocate funding for initiatives to combat violence against women, girls and LGBTIQ people - online and offline, and include them in school and university curriculums.
- Fund non-formal education, community-based programs, and peer-based programs that engage boys in questioning gender norms. Prioritize intersectional approaches that address race, class, disability, sexuality, migration, and colonial legacies.
- Expand outreach to marginalized men and boys who may be vulnerable to radicalization.

# Media, Digital Information & Communications Technologies

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- Develop approaches to engage men and boys in progressive efforts to counter the backlash. This sense of building solidarity among men for progressive change within communities can work against the sense of loss of community that is a driver for men and boys to join online misogynistic communities. When men and boys understand how patriarchal power politics (which benefit a tiny minority of established interests); i.e. how this patriarchal politics is unjust/unfair and bad for all, themselves included, they can more easily be mobilized as agents of change.
- Strengthen understanding, research, and evidence-gathering to inform digital policy to combat online radicalization of young men through misogynist, transphobic, or far-right ideologies. Work with specialized stakeholders in civil society and academia to support these aims.
- Support public awareness campaigns and media literacy programs that address and counter digital misogynistic culture (e.g., incel forums, manosphere, etc.).
- Develop clear legislation and regulatory frameworks that address the issue of online violence. This may vary from measures developed to combat violence offline and require new strategies to address the scope, impacts and manifestations of technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- Support programmes and initiatives that engage with and encourage men and boys to act in the prevention of online violence against women and girls and gender-based violence.
- Explore the important roles that men and boys can play in preventing and eliminating VAWG and violence against other marginalized groups within the virtual sphere, including challenging gender stereotypes and patriarchal power dynamics, harmful social norms, attitudes, and behaviors that underlie, perpetuate, and reinforce violence and discrimination online
- Lay down the laws around legal accountability of digital media platforms, including the provision of compensation by the platforms, making them more effective in promoting responsible usage (e.g., information on fake news).
- Enact regulatory controls that make tech companies financially and legally accountable for algorithmic amplification of hate.
- Raise public awareness on the responsible use of media platforms and information technologies.
- Develop communications campaigns, initiatives in the media and programming that promote non-violent actions, attitudes, and values by men and boys, and encourage them to take an active part in efforts to prevent and eliminate GBV online and offline
- Address misogynistic biases among the police and judiciary by strengthening capacity, clarifying ambiguities in existing laws, and improving the handling of online harassment and abuse cases, which are often trivialised or mishandled due to limited understanding of digital violence and legal frameworks.

## Health, Safety and Wellbeing

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- Develop national strategies to involve men and boys in gender equality and SRHR, including through an understanding of their own roles and responsibilities.
- Codify SRHR in national law, including access to contraception, safe abortion, maternal health care, and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE).
- Uphold UN-agreed provisions, principles, and standards for Health, Safety, and Wellbeing<sup>8</sup> which address gender equality in a rights-based framework.
- Resist regressive legal reforms by establishing constitutional or statutory protections for bodily autonomy and non-discrimination.
- Promote fatherhood programs, non-violent masculinities, and positive relationship skills in schools, health clinics, and community spaces.
- Fund campaigns that challenge gender stereotypes and support respectful relationships.

## Foreign Affairs and International Diplomacy

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- Increase funding to progressive actors, such as feminist and youth-led movements internationally
- Align with the CEDAW Convention, the Beijing Platform, and other regional human rights frameworks and support continued progress for gender equality and human rights.
- Speak out against the “Geneva Consensus” and other illegitimate transnational agreements centered on backlash agendas to gain international solidarity against SRHR and women’s rights.
- Address the need to transform patriarchal masculinities and systems in international policy-making, feminist informed foreign policy efforts, and other regional and international norms-setting.
- Join informal multilateral networks with allied member states such as the Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP+ Group) and other examples.

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<sup>8</sup> 1994 ICPD Program of Action, 1995 Beijing Plan for Action

## Gender Equality in the Workplace

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- Develop anti-harassment policies that address gender-based and homophobic abuse in workplaces, particularly in male-dominated workplaces.
- Promote effective enforcement of gender equality policies and practices.
- Establish initiatives that challenge the patriarchal norms among male employees that women's leadership, advancement and opportunities are a threat to men's careers
- Engage unions and employers in transforming masculinities at work and promoting gender equality and promote initiatives within unions themselves to combat these issues internally.
- Ratify ILO C190 at the national level and take measures towards full implementation.

## Climate Change

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- Link gender policy making to climate change policy, as almost every international climate change program and funding mechanism has a mandatory gender policy and considerations
- Combat climate change and climate crisis denialism by consistently ensuring that rigorous evidence is cited and available in relevant meetings and forums, and connecting its deep links to masculinist ideologies and anti-gender backlash
- Promote Indigenous rights protections + leadership in climate mitigation and adaptation measures
- Raise awareness and understanding on how patriarchal masculinities are a root cause in the climate crisis, promoting actions, attitudes, and behaviours that promote domination, control, extraction, and abuse of people and planet
- Address the intersection of climate, livelihoods, and gender inequalities.

[www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org)