



**MenEngage Alliance**  
working with men and boys for gender equality



# What we see, what we believe, and our strategic approaches

A handbook to summarize the **Strategic Plan** and **Accountability Framework** for members, networks and partners of MenEngage Alliance.

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# About this handbook

This handbook shares our strategy towards our vision. It is summarized from our Strategic Plan, which has been created through an extensive and collaborative process among representatives from across MenEngage Alliance, plus key external partners. Our Strategic Plan builds upon previous global and regional Strategic Plans and the Evaluation of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, which included the views and insights of members and partners.

The full Strategic Plan 2021-24 is available at [menengage.org](https://menengage.org)

This document also includes our 'Accountability Framework', which consists of:

- [Our Core Principles](#) (our shared beliefs and values), Page 5
- [Our Code of Conduct](#) (the standards of behavior members commit to), Page 17
- [Accountability Standards](#) (which promote good practices and a culture of accountability), Page 30



# Who we are

## Our purpose

We are an international network for social change. We exist to bring together people and organizations with a shared vision of a world in which gender justice and human rights are recognized, promoted and protected—and where all people are equal and free from discrimination and oppression.

As a global community, we work with men and boys in all their diversities, along with girls, women and people of diverse identities, towards women's rights, gender justice, LGBTQI rights, climate and social justice for all.

Our work with men and boys stems from the pioneering work and ongoing leadership of women's rights and LGBTQI movements.

This means we root our understanding of the world in feminist theory and an understanding that patriarchy is a system at the center of women's and LGBTQI person's human rights violations and gender inequalities.

More recently, we have committed to learning about and questioning colonialism and its effects. This includes listening to and learning from indigenous groups, women of color, and those on the margins of the margins.

We aspire to work as allies and in partnership with all movements that aim to transform oppressive systems and unequal power relations.

## What we believe

Our Core Principles are an agreed set of commitments, values, and aspirations for the work we do. As individuals, organizations, and as networks, they affirm our beliefs, guide our efforts, and inspire our work. Moreover, they provide a basis for reflection, discussion, and growth.

You can read more about our understanding of each of these Core Principles at [menengage.org/about/core-principles](https://menengage.org/about/core-principles).



## Our core principles

1. **We stand** for women's rights and gender justice
2. **We embrace** intersectional feminism
3. **We support** human rights for all
4. **We work** to disrupt and end patriarchy
5. **We celebrate** and embrace diverse identities, expressions, and characteristics of sex, gender and sexuality
6. **We strive** to address racism and its root causes
7. **We believe** in the capability of men and boys to actively support gender, social, and climate justice
8. **We strive** to decolonize our systems, practices, values, and mindsets
9. **We believe** that transformation must begin with ourselves
10. **We are accountable** for our words, actions, and decisions

## Our mission

Our shared mission is to work toward dismantling unequal power relations and patriarchy and achieving gender justice, climate justice, and social justice for all. We aim to make the specific contributions of:

### Transforming patriarchal masculinities

This includes dismantling rigid, harmful norms around 'being a man'.

### Working with men and boys on gender justice.

We strive to do this through intersectional feminist approaches.

### Building inclusive collaborations.

We work together at local to regional to global levels.

### Developing joint actions.

We aim to build partnerships and act in solidarity with movements for women's rights, gender justice, as well as racial, climate and social justice. We strive to remain accountable to them.



# Our Theory of Change

We aim to challenge



As a  
community  
of practice



Through  
our shared  
mission

Developing  
joint actions

Building inclusive  
collaborations

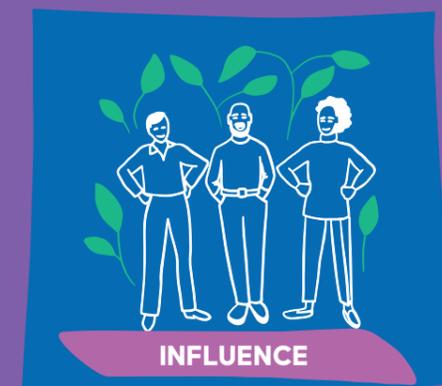
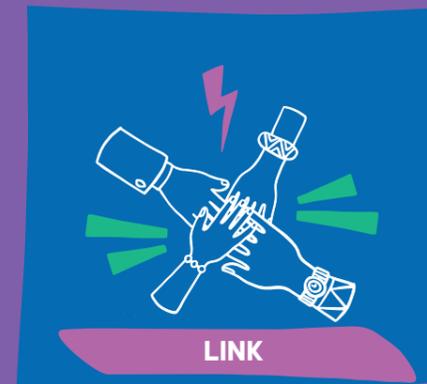
Working with  
men and boys  
on gender justice

Transforming  
patriarchal  
masculinities

**Towards  
a shared  
vision**

A world where all people  
are equal and free from  
discrimination - a world in which  
gender justice and human rights  
are recognized, promoted  
and protected.

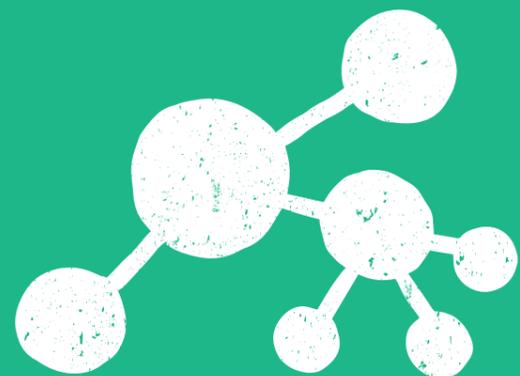
Using these  
strategies



The conditions of gender and social injustices are dynamic. This means they change over time, and from one context to another. In addition, different forms of injustice—and entire systems of oppression—are deeply interconnected and should be examined in relation to one another.

To reflect this, our theory of change is a continually evolving conversation taking place at multiple levels. It aims to support us as an alliance, and as individuals, to understand the changes we see happening and those we envision working towards.

Read our theory of change as part of the full Strategic Plan at [menengage.org](https://menengage.org).



We must always listen to those who are most targeted by gender injustice and patriarchal systems.

This includes intersectional feminist, LGBTQI, anti-racist, youth and Indigenous movements.

It is their collective analyses about how best to dismantle oppressive systems that guide our work. This requires continuing listening and dialogue across movements.

# What is to be changed?

Every society has a gender order.

A society's gender order reflects the ways in which some characteristics of gender are considered more important or valuable than others. It shows up in all aspects of life, from the workplace to the home, from media to politics. It is expressed in personal attitudes and behaviors, institutional policies and practices, and societal traditions and belief-systems.

Across all societies today, the gender order privileges men over women, and masculinity over femininity. It is a 'binary' gender order, because it divides society into two broad categories. It is hierarchical, because masculinity—or 'maleness'—is privileged or more valued over femininity—or 'femaleness'.

This leads to what is often known as 'male privilege'. Peggy Macintosh, one of the first feminist scholars to write about white privilege and male privilege, describes male privilege as an "invisible backpack" of rights and privileges that all males carry, often unaware and usually unacknowledged.

At the same time, distinguished author and social activist bell hooks, as well as leading scholar of masculinities, Raewyn Connell, have emphasized that privilege is not shared evenly among men. Aspects of identity like class, race, caste, sexuality—and many more—cut across the category "men". This, Connell reminds us, spreads the gains and costs of gender relations very unevenly among men.

These understandings of masculinities and gender inequalities underpin our work. It is why we believe that gender equality work with men and boys needs to focus on changing ideas about masculinity, and in particular, challenging 'patriarchal masculinities'.

# What are 'patriarchal masculinities'?

Patriarchal masculinities are ideas and practices of masculinity that create or reinforce a hierarchy of masculinity over femininity, or certain kinds of masculinity over other kinds. They cause or maintain the power of men over women, and power hierarchies in general.

Patriarchal masculinities can be expressed individually, such as one person's attitudes

and behaviors. They can also be institutional, such as in an organization's policies or a particular law or regulation.

Patriarchal masculinities also show up as part of social and cultural norms. These are known as 'ideological' forms of patriarchal masculinities, because they are based around shared ideas or systems of beliefs in a society about how men should act or think.

# Transforming patriarchal masculinities

Members of MenEngage Alliance work on many issues related to gender injustice. What unites us is a common interest in understanding patriarchal masculinities—and transforming them.

What are patriarchal masculinities? What do they look like? How do they work? Where do they show up? In what ways do they affect our communities, relationships, societies, and the world? How can they be dismantled or transformed?

By asking these kinds of questions, our work aims to place patriarchy at the center of our thinking and actions on difficult and interconnected challenges in the world.

Because patriarchal masculinities create and maintain unfair, unjust, and unequal gender orders, our work aims to dismantle and disrupt these kinds of masculinity. We call this 'transforming patriarchal masculinities'.

For members of MenEngage Alliance, this means changing social norms, ideas, institutions, and systems. Often, it involves challenging stereotypes about 'being a man'. Instead, we promote equitable, non-violent and inclusive ideas of manhood.

As bell hooks argues, even if individual men rid themselves of male privilege, this does not automatically lead to patriarchy being dismantled. Patriarchy is currently inherent in individuals of all genders, and the cultural, social, economic and political institutions humanity has built across societies.

For this reason, we work to transform patriarchal systems, institutions, policies, and practices, and not only the behaviors and attitudes of individual men and boys.

Ultimately, our work involves dismantling the labels of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' altogether—for a world where people can express themselves without certain traits carrying gendered labels, associations, stigma, or facing violence or oppression.

# We recognize that different issues are interrelated

It is vital we recognize that patriarchy is linked to other systems of oppression. Matters of race, class, economic status, age, geographical identities, sexual orientation, and many others are interconnected.

The ways in which these factors overlap and compound each other can increase inequalities and vulnerabilities. This leads to deeper injustices for people at the intersections of different marginalized identities.

The need to work from this 'intersectional' perspective has long been advocated by feminist women of colour. This includes the pioneering work of Kimberlé Crenshaw on intersectionality.

Intersectional feminist thinkers and activists have also shown how the climate and environmental crisis is a symptom of these same systems.

As a community, we aim to approach our individual and collective work from this intersectional understanding. This includes how we see men and boys' roles and responsibilities.

Members of MenEngage Alliance work with those who most benefit from patriarchal systems—in order to dismantle those very systems.”

– Strategic Plan 2021-24, MenEngage Alliance, 2021

# Our community

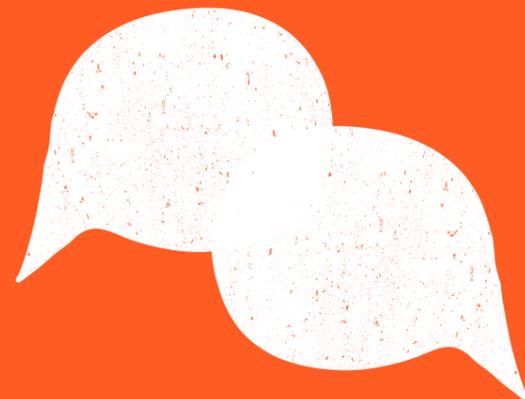
Unlike a typical organization that might run programs or projects, MenEngage Alliance is a solidarity-based network. It is a collective space for our 1000+ members from 80 countries to come together around a common understanding and vision.

Our work as MenEngage Alliance is built upon a foundation of accountable, democratic and inclusive communities of practice at local, national, regional and international levels.

Members come together based on issues of interest, such as preventing and ending violence, advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, youth leadership, and climate justice.

We also come together because of shared contexts, countries, or world regions. In this regard, we have 43 country networks and six regional networks. Globally, MenEngage Alliance members are present in Africa, Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America, Oceania, and South Asia regions.

Our communities of practice are diverse and decentralized. As a decentralized network, we avoid top-down, prescriptive global operating models and value country and regional priorities and activities. As a global network, we work to create contextualized bottom-up plans and processes that support the movement-building and mobilization of members and partners. We strive to bring this work together at an international level.



## We foster communities of practice that offer members collective:

### **Accountability:**

We strive to hold each other and ourselves accountable in this work through our communities at national, regional and global levels. Especially to women's rights organizations, LGBTQI organizations, and movements for intersectional feminism and gender justice.

### **Standards:**

We set and enact common standards for the work of transforming masculinities, and gender justice work with men and boys.

### **Support:**

We come together to support, inspire and energize each other.

### **Voice:**

We express our shared, collective voice in solidarity with those most marginalized by gender injustice and patriarchal systems. We do this through country and regional networks, and in diverse contexts around the world.

### **Action:**

We take collective actions toward transforming patriarchal masculinities. And in solidarity and partnership with those most marginalized by gender injustice and patriarchal systems.

### **Learning:**

We share promising practices and lessons learned. We discuss and apply research and evidence, and collectively contribute to improving gender justice work with men and boys.

It is essential that each of us live the values of gender justice”

– Delhi Declaration and Call to Action (2014), MenEngage Alliance

## Code of Conduct

As part of joining our communities of practice, members of MenEngage Alliance commit to living by the values we wish to see in the world. Our Code of Conduct was developed in close collaboration with members to create an agreement of what that should look like. It focuses on individual behaviors. It applies to all the members of MenEngage Alliance, at country, regional and global network levels.

You can read more about our understanding of each point in the Code of Conduct at [menengage.org/about/code-of-conduct](https://menengage.org/about/code-of-conduct)

## Values and behaviors members are expected to practice

1. Respect and kindness
2. Affirmative Consent
3. Fairness and equality
4. Ethical decision making
5. Transparency and honesty
6. Self-reflection and growth
7. Solidarity as an upstander

## Behaviors MenEngage members commit not to engage in

1. Abusive behavior
2. Sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation
3. Discrimination
4. Conflicts of interest
5. Fraud and corruption
6. Substance use disorder

If you have a concern or feedback that you would like to raise, visit [menengage.org/about/reporting-a-concern](https://menengage.org/about/reporting-a-concern)

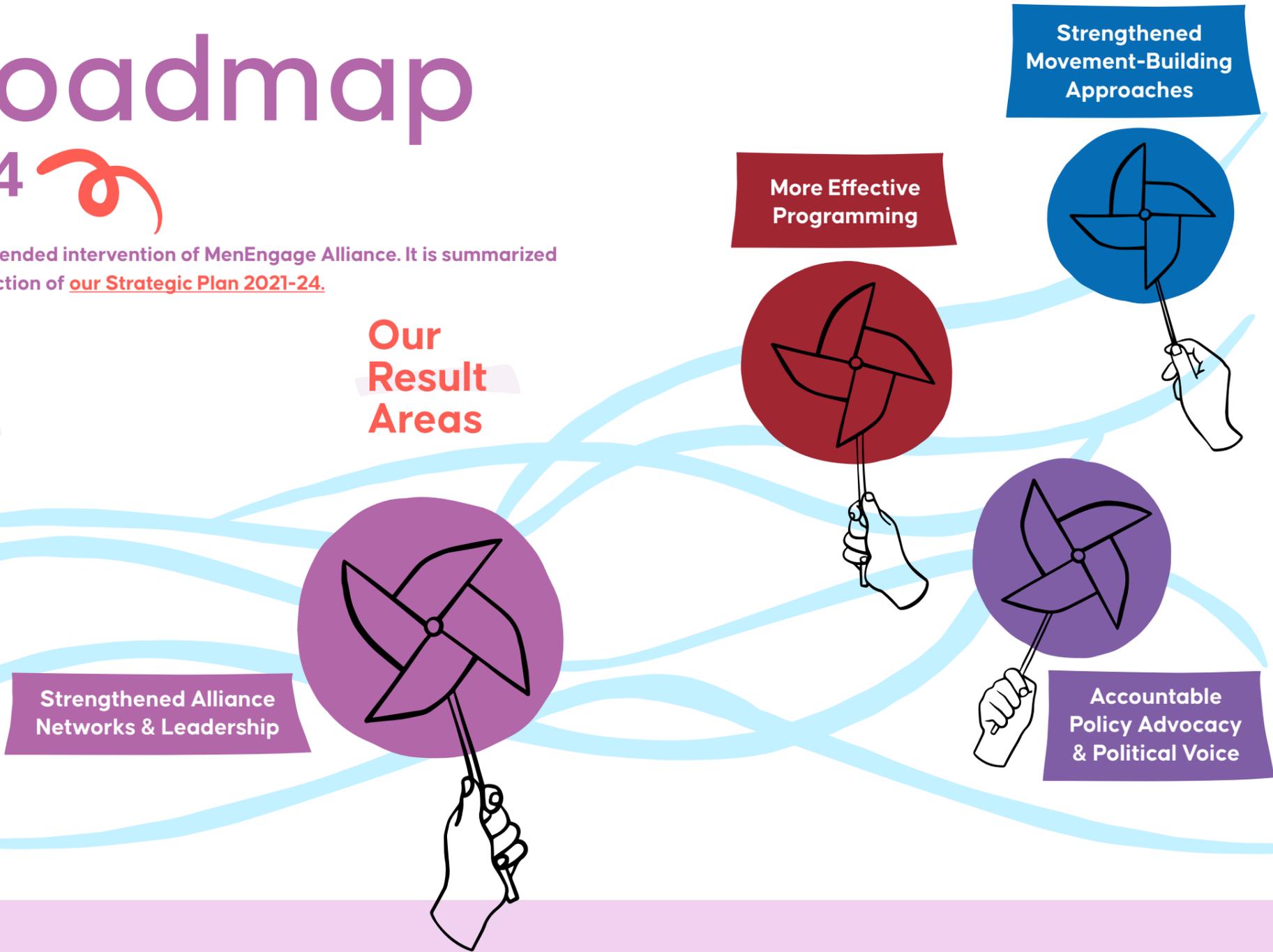
# Our roadmap 2021-2024

This section summarizes the intended intervention of MenEngage Alliance. It is summarized from the 'Intervention Logic' section of [our Strategic Plan 2021-24](#).

## Our Strategies for Change

- LINK
- LEARN
- IMPROVE
- INFLUENCE

## Our Result Areas



**Our goal** is to be a capable, inclusive and accountable social change network. We aim to harness the collective energy of our members to contribute to improved discourse, policy and programs. We aim to do so in partnership with feminist, LGBTQI, youth, climate and social justice movements.

**The impact we want to make** is to contribute to transforming patriarchal masculinities. This includes mobilizing men, boys, and male identified individuals as agents of change for gender justice. By 2024 we aspire to have made a meaningful contribution to ending patriarchal power, protecting human rights and achieving gender equality and social justice.

## Core Principles

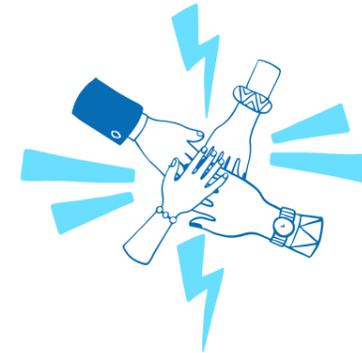
- We stand for women's rights & gender justice
- We embrace intersectional feminism
- We support human rights for all
- We work to disrupt & end patriarchy
- We embrace diverse identities and expressions of gender and sexuality
- We strive to address racism & its root causes
- We believe in the capability of men and boys to support gender justice
- We strive to decolonize our systems, practices, values & mindsets
- We believe transformation must begin with ourselves
- We are accountable for our words, actions & decisions

We are all interconnected in a world of profound injustices that can no longer be hidden. We believe things must urgently change.”

– [Ubuntu Declaration and Call to Action](#), 2021

# Strategies for change

Our strategies aim to improve the quality and quantity of work to transform patriarchal masculinities for gender justice.



## 1. Link

A key part of our work as a network is helping members, partners, and networks to connect with each other. We provide spaces to strengthen links with each other, towards relationships of trust, respect and inspiration.



## 2. Learn

As a network, our role is to help members to access, share, and learn from a rich body of knowledge. We aim to facilitate learning between our members and partners, as well as from feminist and social justice movements. Our members around the world are continually learning from and contributing to this rich body of knowledge.

We have set four main strategies to achieve our goals and the impact we wish to have as an alliance.



## 3. Improve

We support our members and partners at national and regional network levels in strengthening their programs and technical capacities. This includes areas such as democratic governance of networks, accountability in leadership, and intersectional feminist approaches that allow them to do their work on engaging men and boys towards transforming masculinities more effectively.



## 4. Influence

We express a collective voice in support of gender justice for all. We do this in international policy-making spaces such as the United Nations, as well by advocating to governments directly. We raise our collective voice in solidarity with the broader intersectional feminist movement through our public communications channels.

# What we do in practice: our four Result Areas

Our Result Areas guide our specific collective processes and activities. Each result area has a number of Outcomes. The Outcomes represent the more specific contributions we hope to make to gender justice efforts by 2024.

Each country and regional network also has its own priority areas that are more specific to each context:

## 1. Strengthening our networks and leadership



### RESULT AREA 1: Strengthened MenEngage Alliance Networks & Leadership

This Result Area is about having strong foundations that allow us to do collective actions. It sets out our aspirations for how we work.

It focuses on nurturing the 'roots' of our networks, and bottom-up ways of organizing that unpack and address unequal power dynamics. This includes fostering a culture of decision-making that is non-hierarchical, accountable, democratic and inclusive.

The Result Area includes activities that support understanding and dialogue around our shared values and vision. It fosters spaces for diverse communities based on relationships of trust, respect and inspiration.

Outcomes for Result Area 1 focus on...

**1: Democracy, governance and leadership of our networks.**



**2: Membership engagement. Nurturing our communities.**



**3: Collaborations between members - within and across different countries and regions.**



## 2. Raising our political voice



### RESULT AREA 2: Accountable Policy Advocacy and Political Voice

This Result Area focuses on how we can collectively add value to feminist movements from a 'men and masculinities' perspective in influencing laws, policies, and the conversations taking place in political spaces.

It aims to ensure these advocacy efforts are done in accountable ways, and as allies with feminist women's rights and LGBTQI rights organizations and movements. This means speaking up in responsible, appropriate, and helpful ways for the political changes that marginalized groups are calling for.

Through this Result Area, we aim to add value by monitoring and advocating around 'transforming masculinities' approaches, including the roles and responsibilities of men and boys.

We call for policies to be accountable, gender transformative, informed by intersectional feminism, and based on human rights.



Outcomes for Result Area 2 focus on...

**1: Our ability to do advocacy. And being interconnected around advocacy (including at country and regional levels).**



**2: Joint advocacy actions, together with our members and partners.**



**3: Taking a vocal and visible stance for gender justice.**



# 3. Strengthening practices for greater impact



## RESULT AREA 3: Effective and Strengthened Programming

Many of our members and partners are at the forefront of work around transforming masculinities. This Result Area outlines our role as a community of practice for the collective strengthening of this work.

This includes coming together to better understand what works (and what does not) when it comes to gender-transformative work with men and boys. It includes promoting accountable practices,

consolidating evidence, and sharing knowledge around 'men and masculinities' work.

This Result Area focusses on what we can do to help each other to be as impactful as possible for gender, climate, and social justice. This includes understanding and countering backlash against women's and LGBTQI rights.

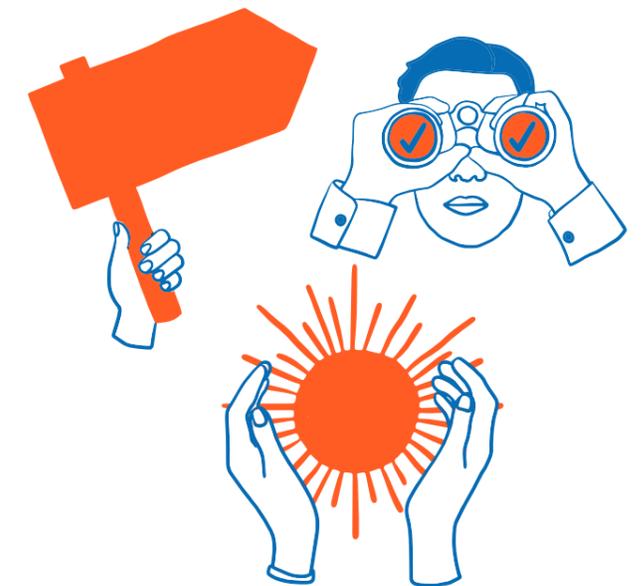


Outcomes for Result Area 3 focus on...

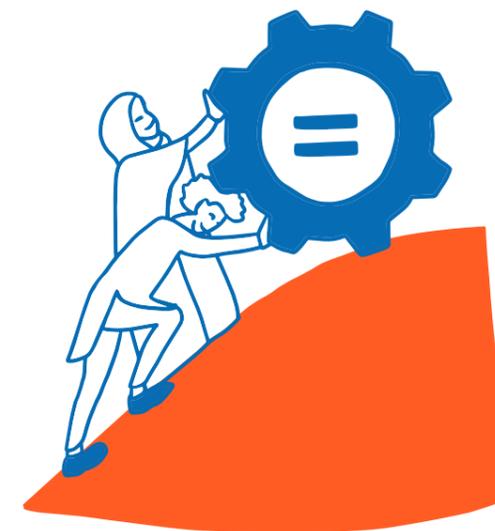
**1: Access to knowledge. Being informed by evidence.**



**2: Having a shared understanding of values and standards—and putting them into practice.**



**3: Collective actions. Challenging backlash against gender justice.**



# 4. Amplifying our solidarity through movement-building



Outcomes for Result Area 4 focus on...



**1: A culture of collaboration, partnership and allyship.**



**2: Actions for solidarity and to foster partnerships.**

## RESULT AREA 4: Strengthened Movement-Building Approaches

This Result Area focuses on our connections and commitments to movements for gender, LGBTQI, racial, climate, and social justice. It speaks to how our work cannot be seen in isolation from a cross-section of issues. And how we can support and be part of a shared agenda across a broad range of movements.

This means we must always work to strengthen trust and partnerships with feminist, women's rights, indigenous, youth, and LGBTQI organizations. Only by working together can we achieve desired and sustainable social change.

**3: Leadership and inclusivity of people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).**



# Being accountable

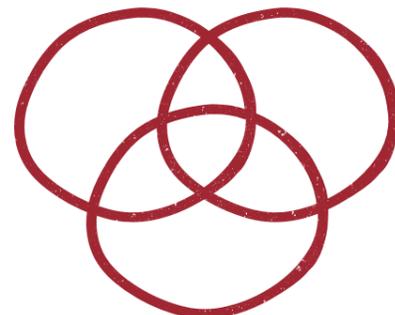
The strategies and programs outlined above help guide us towards our shared goals. But the process of getting there is as important as the goals themselves. Our Accountability Standards offer a framework for how to do the work responsibly, respectfully, and fairly.

Our Accountability Standards were developed together with members and critical feminist partners of MenEngage Alliance. They address the feedback that women's rights and gender justice activists have shared with MenEngage Alliance over the years. They include guidance on:

- General standards
- Accountability at the individual, organizational, national, and regional network level
- Accountability when responding to concerns and complaints
- Accountable programming
- Accountable advocacy
- Accountable fundraising
- Accountability to children and young people

Importantly, we strive to be accountable to the communities, organizations, and groups that influence our work and are impacted by it. We commit to be answerable to all our stakeholders, and accept being held responsible for our decisions and actions, or inactions. This includes accountability among ourselves across MenEngage Alliance networks.

You can read the Accountability Standards in full at [menengage.org/about/accountability-standards](https://menengage.org/about/accountability-standards)



Promote critical reflections on the work with men and boys, identifying areas for improvement and strategies to remain accountable.”

– [Accountability Standards](#), MenEngage Alliance, 2021



# MenEngage Alliance

working with men and boys for gender equality

Read the full Strategic Plan 2021-24  
and much more at [www.menengage.org](http://www.menengage.org)



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