



MenEngage Alliance
working with men and boys for gender equality

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BUILDING CRITICAL MASS

for transformative work on men and masculinities



BUILDING CRITICAL MASS for transformative work on men and masculinities

2021-2024 SUMMARY REPORT

REFLECTING ON FOUR YEARS OF CONNECTION, COLLABORATION, AND ACTION



A WORD OF THANKS

We extend our sincere gratitude to our strategic partners, donors and members for their support over the 2021-2024 period, and their trust on us to enabling bottom-up standard-setting and field-building, and fostering collaborations and collective actions in the work with men and boys for women's rights, LGBTQI rights, gender justice, climate justice, and social justice for all:

Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Ford Foundation

World Health Organisation (WHO)

UN Foundation

Global Affairs Canada - via Women's International
League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

UN Women

Asian Development Bank - via International Center
for Research on Women, Asia Regional Office

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From the global leadership team



By our Global Co-Chairs, Samitha Sugathimala & Festus Kisa; and Co-Directors, Ixman Belbase & Joni van de Sand

For the past two decades, a community has been growing around the world. It is made up of people and organisations who share a common purpose; to tap into the potential of men and boys to step up as agents of change for the achievement of equality for all.

MenEngage Alliance was born out of this community, officially launching as a network in 2006. Today, it is a unique, globally-recognised platform of leading actors, all around the world, pushing forward the work on transforming patriarchal masculinities towards gender justice, climate justice, and social justice for all - and engaging men and boys in these efforts. Over the years, **MenEngage Alliance** has evolved to be an agenda-setter, global convener and trustworthy voice, aligned around a shared vision and mission of transforming unequal power relations and dismantling patriarchal systems.

This report aims to provide an overview of what this community —coming together as national, regional, and global **MenEngage** networks— has achieved in the past four years; a period representing the 2021-2024 Strategic Period for the **Alliance**.

It is a period that has seen our members come together in new and innovative ways. It has forged new connections, collaborations, and partnerships, from local communities to global policy discussions. It is a period of growth that has pushed us into joint reflections and reaffirmations around who we are, what we stand for, and what we want to achieve together. This has meant not only looking at our impact in the world, but also engaging in honest self-reflection, knowing we must hold ourselves to the same values we promote.

Throughout this time, we have centered the power of collective action. With collectivity

as a guide, members of **MenEngage Alliance** have worked together to drive global policy change, enhance impact and standards across the field, shape the agenda for working with men and boys, and deepen the understanding of how male-engagement strategies align with intersectional feminist work for gender equality.

The need to connect with men and boys in positive ways on gender equality, climate and social justice has come into ever-sharper focus over the four year period covered by this report. The lure of men, particularly of younger generations, into narratives rooted in male victimhood, anti-feminism, and misogyny, has been well-reported in the media and is a major concern among practitioners and policy makers. In a relatively short period of time, narratives driving these trends have shifted from the confines of the ‘manosphere’ into the mainstream.

In stark contrast to the positive and empowering messages championed by decades of feminist progress, aggressive displays of masculinity now cast a shadow over the public consciousness. This can be seen from viral videos of self-styled “alpha male” social media influencers, to the messaging of far-right politicians aiming to reassert the male as the head of the family and nation state.

Beyond rhetoric, these trends arise from and sustain a world in which women, girls and gender non-conforming people—as well as men and boys—continue to face an epidemic of violence at the hands of men. Anyone who doubted whether patriarchy is alive and well in the 21st Century can find their answer in these and countless other examples.

As anti-gender actors grow increasingly influential, these challenges are likely to persist in the years to come. Yet we know that boys and men are looking for affirmation, connection, community, and support—in *online* and *offline* spaces. There is an enormous opportunity

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation said:

It was clear to all how much effort the Alliance has put into centring the feminist movement in its work. Feminist thinking runs through the Alliance, and is routinely at the heart of all its actions. The Alliance deserves significant credit for the careful, thoughtful work that has gone into building credibility and trust with the feminist community. The Alliance’s values are very clear, and provide solidarity in times of shrinking civic space. There is real room to extend this solidarity and understanding to members at national and sometimes regional levels.

to engage with them and provide positive alternatives to rigid and narrow definitions of manhood based on being dominant, aggressive, or violent. Indeed, many members and partners of **MenEngage** are already doing this work in bold and creative ways all over the world.

With the conviction that such efforts drive progress, we move into our next Strategic Period with the continued commitment that engaging men and boys and transforming patriarchal masculinities has the power to accelerate gender, social, and climate justice for all. We firmly believe that, much like the generations of social justice movements before us, our strength lies in building solidarity and coalitions. Only through unity and collaboration can we overcome the obstacles and create a world rooted in equality, social justice, and care for both people and the planet.

About this report

The conclusion of 2024 marked the end of a four-year strategic cycle for **MenEngage Alliance**. This report discusses the key areas of progress made during this period. It is divided into a number of sections, each focusing on an area in which members of **MenEngage Alliance** have worked together to have a collective impact. Alongside the achievements and promising trends, each section notes challenges and opportunities for the years ahead.

As we reflect on progress achieved, we recognize that we are part of a much broader ecosystem of social justice movements, extending far beyond our immediate network. Many of the 1000+ members of **MenEngage Alliance** are actively engaged in other collectives and alliances, working together to advance feminist visions for the future. As **MenEngage Alliance**, we humbly acknowledge that the impacts highlighted in this report are not ours alone; they are contributions to a larger wave of change, made possible through the combined efforts of countless individuals, organizations, and movements working tirelessly toward a more just and equitable world.

As a summary of key trends and achievements, this report draws on the independent 2021-2024 Evaluation of **MenEngage Alliance** which took place in 2024, as well as the four Annual Reports that cover the same period, each of which is available at menengage.org for a more detailed look at the annual activities and results of **MenEngage Alliance**.

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation found that:

Nearly all external respondents and the research noted that MenEngage is reluctant to claim or sometimes even acknowledge its results.

In part because of the need to centre the feminist movements, and in part because of concerns about risk, MenEngage has not always been clear about its role in successes.

We see a balance between false binaries of unfairly and loudly claiming entire responsibility for collective success, and eschewing any role in successes.

This report was prepared by the Global Secretariat team of **MenEngage Alliance**, with photos by Tom Hornbrook from the Global Secretariat (except where stated otherwise).

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

The following sections are our overarching approaches. Cutting across many topics, they guide our work and enable us to achieve our goals.

How MenEngage members have harnessed the power of connection

Between 2021 and 2024, MenEngage Alliance networks served as a space for countless connections among actors working on different issues and strategies for gender equality and social change. This helped strengthen collective actions towards feminist systems transformation through a critical masculinities lens, and by mobilizing men and boys as agents of change. The power of these connections is—in large part—what motivates people and organisations to be part of the Alliance. Over the past four years, at every level—local, regional, and global—MenEngage Alliance has shown itself as a space that brings together diverse actors and groups, while forging stronger partnerships across movements. As our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation notes, MenEngage Alliance provides a ‘unique and very valued voice in the gender equality community’.

MOVEMENT-BUILDING



MenEngage has brought together voices from more movements than any other alliance that I know. If MenEngage did not exist, we would miss its movement building efforts. It is critical for building collective power. It drives structural change.

— **Irene Ogeta**, ATHENA Network, and Global Board Member of MenEngage Alliance

In numbers

20%
growth in membership
over the 4-year period

92
countries with active member
presence (up from 84 in 2020)

5,000+
participants in the 3rd
MenEngage Global Symposium

170+
in-person regional and global
leadership meetings

83
online global dialogues held

MOVEMENT-BUILDING

Women’s rights organizations, LGBTQIA+ groups, racial justice activists, environmental justice advocates, and organisations engaging men and boys and transforming masculinities have found inspiration and energy in coming together within **MenEngage** networks to collectively address the intersections of masculinities and systemic oppression. It is these groups, organisations, and individuals—as well as the relationships built between them—that form the heart of **MenEngage Alliance**. This has helped us advance the aspiration of the **Alliance** as a vibrant and pluralistic civil society network that contributes effectively to reducing inequalities and violence through a rights-based approach.

Exploring and building new ways to engage this community—as a movement-building practice—has been a major focus of the 2021 to 2024 Strategic Period. This commitment to innovation has paid off, with the 2021 to 2024 Evaluation noting that significant progress has been made to support membership needs, adding value to their work by building shared values, centering accountability, organizing convenings and facilitating governance changes (see *Strengthening Governance* below for more about the impact in this area.)

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation said:

MenEngage Alliance has made significant progress in many aspects of [movement building], namely a number of impressive partnerships, excellent centering of feminist movement values, good inclusion of LGBTQ priorities in light of challenges, and strong SRHR focus.

How members connected, exchanged knowledge and set joint agendas as a movement-building practice

The four-year period covered by this report began amidst a profound societal shift in how people connect, as the COVID-19 pandemic propelled millions into the world of virtual meetings and events. For the **Alliance**, the pandemic necessitated moving much

of our 3rd **MenEngage Global Symposium**, known as the *Ubuntu Symposium*, online (2020–2021). While this shift presented significant challenges, it also created an opportunity, resulting in the participation of more than 5,000 people over a 7-month period.



Members of MenEngage Rwanda at the Ubuntu Symposium Opening Event in Kigali

The symposium brought together civil society practitioners, researchers, funders, government and UN policy makers, and local activists. It was instrumental in generating an unprecedented depth and breadth of mobilising, networking, dialogue, sharing, collaboration, knowledge building and agenda-setting for **MenEngage Alliance** and the wider field. Highlighting the importance of the space, Redi Thabi, host of the online Closing Event aptly noted: “The Ubuntu Symposium has been the most ambitious collective activity embarked on as a global alliance for transforming patriarchal masculinities and really doing the important work on engaging men and boys for gender justice and human rights.”

The **Ubuntu Declaration and Call to Action**, drafted collaboratively by 72 members from 54 countries, set the tone for **MenEngage Alliance** and the wider field’s 2021-2024 Strategic Period and beyond. Presented by diverse members at the symposium’s June 2021 closing event, the

document marked a significant milestone in our collective political agenda for social change. It specifically calls for centering feminist systems change, accountability, decolonisation, youth leadership, and intersectionality in work transforming masculinities and engaging men and boys in gender equality and social justice.

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation said:

Strengthened membership engagement has in many ways acted as a backbone to allow progress in other result areas.

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

MOVEMENT-BUILDING

Since the Ubuntu Symposium, **MenEngage Alliance** has continued to **leverage online tools to facilitate connection, learning, and collaboration** among members and partners. The annual Global Members' Assembly, the **MenEngage Learning Collaborative (CoLab)** with its peer-to-peer learning sessions, and numerous leadership and working group meetings all stand as examples of connection in action, fostering collaboration and unity across diverse **MenEngage** networks. These and other events have filled a vibrant online events calendar, bringing thousands of participants to critical conversations around gender transformative approaches to working with men and boys across a broad range of issues.

Our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation found that members and external stakeholders considered **MenEngage Alliance** convenings a unique contribution to the field. They noted that no similar opportunities exist for solidarity,

practice-exchange, strategy-development, facilitating inclusive and open conversations, and building collective action on the role of men and boys in promoting gender and social justice.

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation said:

Convenings are critical for developing shared advocacy campaigns that then achieve policy wins, or for improving GBV best practice, or for bringing in new actors or donors.

MenEngage Pakistan convenes in Islamabad as a national hub for the opening of the MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium



How regional networks brought together activists, scholars, policy-makers and practitioners

Throughout the four year period, further convenings and mobilisations took place across regions, bringing together activists, scholars, policy makers, experts and organisations for collective analysis and strengthening the field of gender transformative approaches to work with men and boys in advancing gender, climate and social justice.

These included in **Africa** the *3rd MenEngage Africa Symposium* (2023), bringing together around 150 participants; and the pre-symposium *MenEngage Africa Youth Annual General meeting* (2023), attended by young people from over 17 countries. **MenEngage Latin America** organised its VIII International Colloquium of Studies on Men and Masculinities (2022), bringing together 205 papers from 18 countries. **MenEngage South Asia** joined hands for the *Pan-Asia Summit 'Reframe'* (2022), with Breakthrough India, ARROW, and SWAYAM that gathered an audience of more than 1000 from 16 countries with 250 speakers; and organised a Regional Members' Assembly for members in South Asia.

While we have become increasingly skilled at collaborating online in recent years, members have also encountered the limitations of virtual meetings —from challenges with digital infrastructure to growing 'Zoom fatigue'. When we have had the privilege of meeting in person, these moments continue to ignite the energy and passion that motivate our shared work, strengthening relationships and the bonds of solidarity and collaboration that drive collective action forward.

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation found that:

Members and external stakeholders felt MenEngage's convenings were excellent. They play a unique role in the sector: there are no other spaces for conversations and collective action on the role of men and boys in gender and social justice issues. Members derived significant value from spaces curated by MenEngage. They cited a sense of solidarity, sharing best practice, identifying common challenges, and developing shared strategies.

Building connection, community, and action through shared values

From 2021 to 2022, we engaged in a collective global reflection to renew and update our shared values, expectations, and standards as an international network. While one clear output of this was the *MenEngage Accountability Framework* (see section *Elevating Accountability* for more on this), the process itself was an ambitious effort in movement-building that brought voices together from across and beyond the network in an energising joint process.

As an alliance-wide agreement, the Accountability Framework has proven to be a key resource for our continued network-building efforts. Since its launch, all members are invited to reaffirm their commitment to the collective agreements that bring us together as a global network. Anchored by the regional **MenEngage** networks, this process has provided further opportunities for members to come together at the regional level to discuss the Accountability Framework, and how it can be contextualised, applied in practice, and used to inform their work.

Beyond community engagement, member reaffirmation is crucial for embodying our shared vision of equality and justice. The process fosters reflection on how our principles guide individual and collective actions, renews the collective commitment to the shared mission and values of the alliance, and strengthens bonds within our global network as we reaffirm our shared purpose.

Alongside the *Accountability Framework*, the development and strengthening of several other policies, toolkits, and frameworks between 2021 and 2024 was accompanied by a rise in member awareness of the values

and principles of the network, as noted in the evaluation. The evaluation also finds that our efforts to build up values “has also strongly influenced members’ own beliefs in a positive

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation noted that:

MenEngage members at country-level said, in many places, they are now accepted as part of gender advocacy communities in their countries, where they were not in the past. This critically allows them to plug into existing networks, listen and learn, and leverage their unique voice to add value to gender equality campaigns. It also speaks to alignment on values and trust-building work through membership of MenEngage Alliance.

MOVEMENT-BUILDING

way, which in turn is influencing the delivery of their own activities in local contexts.”

Interviews with members about their experiences and value-add of being a **MenEngage** member are beginning to point to

a recognition of the **Alliance** as a leadership development platform. In the coming years these stories will be further developed and shared. The next step is in making the paper documents real, and helping members apply the policies to real life situations.

How MenEngage Alliance has reached out across movements

Building partnerships with critical feminist, LGBTIQ+, youth, and climate advocacy coalitions has been a priority for **MenEngage Alliance** over the period covered by this report. indeed, we see this as critical to ‘walking the talk’ on our accountability to feminist and social justice movements, as well as underpinning feminist-informed work with men and boys.

Crucially, **MenEngage Alliance** proudly encompasses a diverse range of people and organizations, including those focused on women’s rights, climate justice, youth-led movements, and LGBTIQ+ rights. This inherent diversity fosters a rich and dynamic environment for intersectional and bottom-up movement building for members and partners.

Advocacy work has been a particular focus for collaboration across movements. We have successfully integrated and contributed to leading feminist coalitions advocating at critical UN mechanisms for the advancement of women’s rights, from New York to Geneva, such as the *Women’s Rights Caucus*, the *Women’s Major Group*, the cross-movement collective coordinated by *Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI)*, the *Alliance for Feminist Movements*, the *Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition Core Group*, and the *Women and Gender Constituency* at COP. Our contributions have been increasingly welcome and recognized,

in particular our expertise on normative frameworks on men and masculinities, and most importantly, a sense of trust and partnership has emerged which has facilitated the common aim of movement building towards a shared vision for feminist systems change.

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation noted that:

Partnerships have been quietly excellent. There does not seem to be a full recognition of how high-value the Alliance’s partnerships are, and how valued the Alliance’s perspective is to partners. There is high potential for growth in this area.

SVRI and MenEngage Alliance: A powerful partnership model for building the field



Over the past few years our relationship with MenEngage Alliance has increasingly deepened. The partnership began with MenEngage actively reaching out to discuss accountability and the value of the SVRI Forum as a platform to deepen work with feminist researchers and activists in the field. In our interactions, MenEngage colleagues have [...] modelled feminist partnerships in true and practical ways. [...] For us, the significance of partnering with MenEngage - a powerful voice in our field - is clear. Working together in these many meaningful ways has amplified our complementary expertise, networks and resources for advancing knowledge on how to prevent gender-based violence, promote gender equality and create safer communities for all. Overall, the partnership between MenEngage and SVRI serves as a powerful model for collaboration in the field of gender equality and gender-based violence prevention.”

— **Elizabeth Dartnall**, Executive Director, Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)

Connecting on key issues as a movement-building practice

Over four years, more than 150 members of **MenEngage Alliance** actively participated in 9 globally facilitated working groups to learn and strategize together on advocacy; communications; accountability; youth leadership; sexual orientation and gender identity; ending gender-based violence; advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all; militarised masculinities; and climate justice.

More than 170 members are part of working groups and committees at the national and regional levels, actively involved in shaping bottom-up political agendas around the work with men and boys for gender justice. These

groups bring together activists, advocates, researchers, and practitioners with unique expertise and shared interests to explore how masculinity and engaging men and boys connect to key challenges. As well as being key agenda-setting spaces, these groups are the launchpad for collective actions. Examples of this can be found throughout this report.

With more opportunities than ever to collaborate and participate in joint activities across the network, it is no surprise that members who took part in our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation reported a stronger sense of ownership and commitment at every level compared to previous strategic periods.

The power of collective action

MenEngage Alliance serves as a platform for collective action, a space where individuals and organizations converge — and collaborations take root. Gathering and telling these stories of joint action is a long term project for the years ahead, while the examples below provide an insight into the power of members working together.

→ In **South Asia**, a partnership between **MenEngage Sri Lanka** (through national coordinator Foundation for Innovative Social Development) and the Asian Development Bank brought together over 115 activists and key figures for the sub-regional conference, *Deconstructing Masculinities: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality*

and Social Inclusion in the Education Sector. The event spurred the Asian Development Bank to conduct a regional analysis of its priorities through a ‘men and masculinities’ lens. This led to a further collaboration that brought in the International Center for Research on Women’s Asia office as well as Equimundo and the **MenEngage Global Secretariat** for a stocktaking of initiatives in the region focused on *Engaging men and transforming masculinities for gender equality and women’s empowerment.*

→ In the **Caribbean**, CariMAN members collaborated with UNFPA, Institute for Gender and Development Studies-UWI St. Augustine (IGDS), and the Caribbean **Alliance** of National Psychological

MOVEMENT-BUILDING

Associations (CANPA) in a multi-year project which led to the design of the *Caribbean Model of Behavioural and Cultural Change*. The initiative seeks to look beyond traditional intervention methods that focus primarily on law enforcement responses, examining deep-rooted cultural and social factors that normalize different forms of violence.

- In **Africa**, **MenEngage Africa** organised a two part *SRHR Learning and Exchange Symposium* in **2023** and **2024**. These served as an important platform to bring together diverse practitioners, policy makers, community gatekeepers and young people in all their diversities to unpack youth involvement and participation in knowledge sharing and development of SRHR priorities in Africa. The 2024 symposium *Promoting*

the realisation of SRHR and Gender Equality across Africa resulted in the declaration of **Commitment to Uphold Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Exploitation**.

- In **Europe**, like-minded **MenEngage** member organisations from **Spain** and **Portugal** have come together to establish the **MenEngage Iberia** network. It has since partnered with the Spanish Ministry of Equality in the *Masculinidades Corresponsables* project. They have delivered education programs, a high-impact awareness campaign, new knowledge products, and a conference that brought together 80+ participants and dozens of best practices in engaging men and boys - resulting in a publication of a resource-base that can inform further upscaling of programming.

Lessons and the road ahead

Our collective movement-building efforts between 2021 and 2024 have taken place against a backdrop of intensifying threats to civil society and democratic actors. The growth of authoritarianism, nationalism, and a conservative backlash against gender justice has limited the space and resources available for advancing gender equality and social justice. As well as impeding progress for **MenEngage Alliance** collectively, this trend has impacted many members, partners, and other collectives. While challenging, the current backlash has deepened the commitment of organizations to come together to find and express our collective voice.

Part of this effort is telling the compelling story of how membership engagement supports movement-building and —ultimately— impact on the ground. To this end, it is clear we must

step up our efforts to share this powerful social change narrative, and better make the case for why engaging in a network like **MenEngage Alliance** amplifies our collective impact. Key to this is simplifying how we talk and write about our theory of change and our work, as well as its real-world impact. This is particularly true in today's challenging political landscape.

Like progressive groups before and now, **MenEngage Alliance** must innovate and adapt to counter regressive trends, finding creative ways to mobilize despite shrinking democratic and civic spaces. As one Global Board member aptly put it, “this work is long-term. The power structures we are challenging will not change overnight. But we have seen what’s possible when we organize, strategize, and take action together.”

How members of MenEngage contributed to gains on global agreements on men, masculinities, and gender justice

Over the past four years, MenEngage Alliance has advocated at a wide range of human rights and development policy mechanisms, delivered impactful political statements at global forums, provided evidence-based policy recommendations informed by our members' work, and built relationships with policymakers in UN agencies and governments. Together with a committed community of advocates across our networks, we have ensured that the agenda of transforming patriarchal masculinities is not only included in policies, but also aligned with feminist, anti-racist, economic and climate justice, feminist peace and decolonial frameworks. We have contributed to broader feminist movement efforts to hold the line and prevent regression on existing agreements, and in some instances we have been able to advance inclusion of men and masculinities in agreements for women's rights and gender equality.



The MenEngage Advocacy Working Group provides a gender transformative agenda that needs to be pushed, even in policies and contexts where no men and masculinities language is currently included.

— **Pritha Chatterjee**, Breakthrough Trust India; Global Board member of MenEngage Alliance

In numbers

350

MenEngage Alliance activists gathered at policy forums for joint advocacy

80

sign-on statements supported for solidarity with feminist advocacy recommendations

55

Global Advocacy Working Group meetings and 4 Regional Advocacy Working Groups with numerous meetings organize

49

policy briefs published to give policy-makers and advocates critical tools to understand and influence how men and boys are incorporated into gender policies

31

policies integrating gender-transformative approaches to engaging boys and men (9 national, 4 regional and 18 global)

25

global policies influenced through formal submissions

24

policy and decision makers have demonstrably expressed awareness, support and uptake of gender transformative approaches to engage men and boys at country, regional and global levels

20

MenEngage delegations coordinated globally at international policy forums, from the United Nations to regional mechanisms such as the African Union, the Council of Europe and European Union

A strong track record of influencing policy

Our 2021 - 2024 Evaluation said:

It was universally acknowledged that MenEngage Alliance delivers beyond its capacity on paper, in terms of policy and advocacy impact, especially in global spaces and increasingly at country level.

Every social issue is inherently gendered in some way, and where gender exists, masculinity is also at play. This means, as a diverse global network pursuing multiple thematic priorities, we are able to add value to feminist policy efforts with a critical ‘men and masculinities lens’ across a wide range of issues. Over the 2021 to 2024 period, these efforts have been welcomed by feminist partners as a value-addition to wider gender advocacy. Indeed, as our 2021-2024 Evaluation notes, this collective work has resulted in ‘impressive advocacy and policy successes in global spaces’, with some feminist actors urging us to be more visible and vocal around our advocacy work in the years ahead.

Our central aim across our collective advocacy work is to ensure that discussions

about men and masculinities among policymakers, UN agencies, and other stakeholders, and within all levels of normative and policy frameworks, are rooted in a robust and political feminist perspective.

As feminist movements have increasingly made calls for systems transformation at the core of their political agendas, **MenEngage Alliance** has been well-positioned to support these aims through building our own understanding, capacity and relationships. Over the past four years, this has meant aligning with feminist movements’ calls for systems transformation, investing in building collective capacity to understand feminist systems change and strategically supporting it as a goal through our joint advocacy.

These efforts have strengthened our understanding that feminist systems change requires transforming norms associated with patriarchal masculinities, which uphold power structures that sustain systemic inequality, oppression and marginalization. With a stronger integration of a ‘men and masculinities’ lens—from the individual to systemic levels across all of our priority issues—we have been able to collectively mobilise to support nuanced policy recommendations alongside the broader field of gender justice.

While there have been notable advocacy successes in recent years, a substantial amount of our advocacy work has been to **advocate against harmful framings on men and masculinities** within policies, political debates, programs and initiatives with government policy-makers and UN agencies. In essence, this means that members work together through **MenEngage Alliance** to ‘hold the line’ to ensure the language about men and boys is not diluted or framed in ways that may harm the

IMPACTING POLICY

achievement of gender justice. From what we observe, no other actor is serving this function.

This is particularly important at a moment of rising anti-rights backlash, including within the United Nations and among governments. In particular, language around men and

masculinities can easily be co-opted in negotiations for the purpose of maintaining traditional ideologies and a binary, hierarchical gender system more broadly. This work often goes unreported, but offers a key value addition of our advocacy work which cannot be measured as a concrete policy gain.

Building the tools for accountable advocacy

Over the course of the 2021 and 2024 Strategic Period, members of **MenEngage Alliance** have made strides in working together to broaden and deepen our collective political analysis across a wide range of issues.

With the support of the Global Advocacy Manager and wider Global Secretariat team, this has resulted in a series of comprehensive policy briefs and recommendations on topics including; online and offline gender-based violence; sexual and reproductive health and rights; climate justice; feminist peace and militarized masculinities; youth leadership and engagement; economic empowerment; caregiving, fatherhood and unpaid care; equality in the workplace; LGBTQIA+ rights and many others.

Alongside these *thematic* policy recommendations, members of **MenEngage Alliance** have shaped collective agendas around specific political processes and mechanisms including the *Sustainable Development Goals* (including at *United Nations General Assembly* and *Summit of the Future*) and the annual *Commission on the Status of Women* (CSW65/66/67/68) - which continues to be *the* annual moment for gender equality advocates to come together. We have been actively monitoring and making technical

Our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation said:

MenEngage produces very advanced, thoughtful and nuanced policy documents that help align members around a common policy, enunciate positions, and equalise knowledge.

submissions for the *United Nations Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies*, including for the *CEDAW Committee*; the *Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls*; the *Special Rapporteurs on Violence Against Women and Girls, on Development, and on Climate Change*; and for the *COP* climate change negotiations (see below). Furthermore **MenEngage Alliance** has developed 7 dedicated policy agendas —one for each of the *Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition* themes. Similar tools and documents have

Members discuss advocacy strategy at CSW68 in New York, March 2024.



been developed for regional advocacy spaces together with regional **MenEngage** networks, particularly at the *African Union, Council of Europe, European Union, Caribbean Community, Southern African Development Community, and Economic Community of West African States*.

In each case, these collective processes have provided a platform for joint inputs from activists and advocates working at the grassroots of gender justice. The resulting materials equip advocates and policymakers with precise language and actionable demands related to the inclusion of anti-patriarchal work on men and masculinities, helping address these issues within the broader framework of feminist-informed gender and social justice agendas.

Feminist Foreign Policy has gained traction in recent years, particularly within the four-year scope of this report, with several States adopting this approach. Recognizing this trend, and together with the global Advocacy Working Group of **MenEngage Alliance**, we conducted an in-depth analysis on integrating a ‘men and masculinities lens’ into Feminist Foreign Policy frameworks —conducted in 2024 and published as a report in 2025. As Feminist Foreign Policy continues to evolve, we will actively work to promote the adoption of more feminist approaches among governments that have developed or are developing such policies.

As well as making policy recommendations, we have developed innovative tools to analyse existing policies, and to support policy

IMPACTING POLICY

development at local, national, regional, and global levels. Created with *FemJust* and launched in 2022, the *MenEngage Policy Analysis Toolkit* aims to improve feminist policy-making that is inclusive of work with men and boys. It includes a comprehensive methodology for how to assess policies against benchmarks for taking a feminist, gender-transformative, and human rights-based approach in their design, content, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Putting the toolkit into practice, we developed *9 country policy case studies* (Turkey, Czech Republic, Mexico, Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, Rwanda, Canada and Indonesia). Available to the broader field in French, Spanish, and English, the toolkit has been put into

practice by a number of organisations analysing government policies, and has been accessed more than 2,000 times online.

In 2024, we synthesized insights from many years of participatory advocacy processes—each of which features discussion, inputs, iterations, and feedback involving grassroots experts across **MenEngage Alliance**—into a unified set of general policy recommendations. The resulting document, *10 Recommendations for Governments from lessons learned on effective, transformative work with men and boys for sustainable gender equality*, provides policymakers and advocates with key recommendations distilled from over two decades of collective organizing, dialogue, and learning.

Policy advocacy gains

Through a clear political framework and collective action, **MenEngage Alliance** has made significant contributions to global policy agreements, including:

- UN Human Rights Council *Resolution 53/L.3* on Ending Child Early and Forced Marriage (2023) includes the **first-ever reference to ‘patriarchal masculinity’** in a UN resolution. Its recognition as a structural factor in gender inequality marks a significant shift in understanding of gender justice beyond a ‘men as individuals’ framework.
- UN General Assembly Third Committee *Resolution 77/193* on Ending VAWG Resolution (2022) saw important gains in the inclusion of **first-time language on the need for accountability in work with men and boys**, and nuances language gains on the roles and responsibilities of men

and boys in eliminating violence against women and girls. This follows a trend in policy maker’s understandings of how work on men and masculinities must fit within broader aims to achieve gender justice, i.e. through ensuring accountability is woven into program and policy development.

- At the annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65/66/67/68) we continued to work alongside feminist coalitions to hold the line and push forward feminist demands in global gender equality frameworks. While language gains at CSW have remained difficult for all feminist advocates, we have seen **consistent improvement in the CSW agreed conclusions of language on working with men and boys**, with negotiated outcome documents yielding one substantive paragraph addressing the roles and responsibilities of men and boys to addressing the thematic priority of



Nyasha Phanisa Sithole, MenEngage Program Officer and youth focal point, addressing the Interactive Youth Dialogue at CSW67, March 2023

CSW, and moving away from watered down language on merely addressing the ‘need to engage men and boys in gender equality’.

- At Generation Equality Forum (including in the Mexico and Paris Forums) we joined the Action Coalition for Feminist Movements and worked to embed feminist accountability frameworks in global commitments on engaging men and boys for gender equality. Engaging men and boys was a cross-cutting pillar among the discussions of all the Action Coalitions,, with the Action Coalition on Ending gender-based violence leading a session to explore work with men and boys towards this aim. The **2024 Generation Equality Forum Accountability Report** highlights the work of MenEngage Alliance on working with men and boys to counter the backlash faced by feminist movements as a promising practice.

Our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation said:

There is a clear cadence to the advocacy work, and MenEngage has a strong knowledge of the spaces it works in, particularly in the United Nations’ spaces. There has been progress in coordinating and amplifying regional and national advocacy efforts.

IMPACTING POLICY

- At the annual Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27/28/29) we have been adding our voice to those of climate justice activists and drawing attention to the links between masculine norms, patriarchy, and the climate crisis. In 2024 **engaging men and boys was included in the COP29 decision document**, encouraging all Governments to include work with men and boys in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change (*FCCC/CP/2024/L.12*). This win in policy advocacy offers many opportunities to support Governments in implementing strategies to work with men and boys within their Gender Action Plans for climate change, as part of the Convention. (See below section on climate justice).
 - The Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls, with the support of **MenEngage Alliance**, published the **position paper: Men's Accountability to Gender Equality**, further anchoring macro-political recognition of this critical transversal strategic approach for transformative work on masculinities.
- MenEngage Alliance** members collaborated closely with national and regional feminist movements to influence policy agreements and implementation, and to counter legislative rollbacks on gender equality. Some examples of concrete national and regional policy gains include:
- In **Kenya** (2023) the **Alliance** supported feminist-led advocacy that secured new government funding for gender-transformative gender-based violence prevention programs.
 - In **Nepal** (2023) a **MenEngage** Steering Committee member led the development of the *National Strategy on Male Engagement to end gender-based violence* in partnership with UNFPA and the Ministry of Women, Children, and Elderly Affairs.
 - In **Brazil** (2022-2024) the national **MenEngage** network joined feminist organizations to block legislation aimed at removing gender equality education from school curriculums amid rising anti-gender movements.
 - In **Pakistan** (2024) founding member Rozan spearheaded efforts to develop a National Strategy on Male Involvement to address gender-based violence, set to be finalized in 2025.
 - In **Sri Lanka** (2022-23) the national coordinator and members contributed technical expertise to integrate male engagement into the *National Action Plan* on addressing sexual and gender-based violence.
 - Across **South Asia** (2022-2024) the regional **MenEngage** network provided policy guidance to ensure masculinities work in national gender-based violence action plans, grounded in feminist principles, moving away from male-centered leadership models.
 - **Resolution 2480** (2023) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, was influenced through the advocacy by **MenEngage** Europe on the resolution on 'The role and responsibility of boys and men in stopping gender-based violence against women and girls', which lays out a progressive framework including calling on men, including men in positions of political, economic or social power, to be part of the response and participate in changing mindsets, behaviours and social norms in order to prevent and combat gender-based violence.

Lessons and the road ahead

The increasing inclusion of ‘engaging men and boys’ in policy agreements in the last four years has presented both opportunities and risks, and is not a win in and of itself. For **MenEngage Alliance**, success has been measured by the depth and political nuance of adopted language, ensuring that it continues to facilitate and add value to the aim of achieving women’s rights and gender equality.

Navigating this terrain has demanded careful, accountable approaches rooted in collaborative dialogue and solidarity with established feminist advocacy collectives. It has required us to engage with and push policy makers to go beyond the language of engaging men and boys as a demographic group, and towards deeper systemic change that addresses the cultural, social, economic, political and institutional roots of gender inequality. As one policy advocate at CSW67 noted, “**MenEngage Alliance’s** advocacy has made it clear that we cannot transform gender justice without addressing the ways patriarchal power operates across institutions”, as well as systems.

Over the coming period, **MenEngage Alliance** will continue to work hard to support feminist movements in holding the line against the rollback of women’s and LGBTQIA+ rights. The growth of authoritarian regimes and anti-feminist movements, including within the United Nations and among national governments, calls for creative strategies and stronger alliances. Where there are progressive allies in governments, they often prioritize behavior-change programs over efforts that tackle systemic issues. As well, working with political, UN, and other leaders, especially men in positions of power, will become a key priority moving forward.

Moving forward, with our interconnected advocacy strategy as a guide, members and networks of **MenEngage Alliance** aim to: amplify the impact of our collective advocacy at national and regional levels; deepen connections between masculinities and broader root-cause struggles like economic, racial, and climate justice; and empowering member organizations to engage in policy processes at national and regional levels, including those focused on men and boys.

How members of MenEngage developed a new benchmark for accountable practices in the work to engage men and boys in gender equality

A cornerstone of MenEngage Alliance is a shared commitment to how work with men and boys on gender equality should be carried out. If designed and implemented poorly, even well-meaning initiatives can reinforce inequalities that disproportionately impact the most marginalized communities, including women, girls and gender-non conforming individuals. Over the past four years, members of MenEngage Alliance —as well as our global leadership— have dedicated substantial time, energy, and expertise to develop guidance for stronger practices of accountability for the field. These include actively seeking feedback from women’s rights groups, fostering spaces for critical reflection on our work, and implementing measures to prevent and address harm. These efforts have been invaluable for MenEngage Alliance as well as the wider field, and —as our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation notes— appreciated by feminist movements.

ELEVATING ACCOUNTABILITY



Being part of MenEngage has reinforced our organizational accountability by connecting us to a larger network that holds us to high standards. We're accountable to a global community that shares our commitment to gender equality.

— **Tricia Basdeo**, International Consultant in Gender, Social Inclusion and Development; and member of the Caribbean Male Action Network (CariMAN), Trinidad & Tobago

In numbers

1

comprehensive MenEngage Accountability Framework launched

5

internal accountability cases handled

67

Accountability dialogues held

300+

people involved in developing the updated Accountability Framework through focus group discussions and surveys

500+

practitioners reached for capacity strengthening on accountable practices



ELEVATING ACCOUNTABILITY

The past four years have continued to reinforce the widely recognized consensus across **MenEngage Alliance** and the broader field that initiatives engaging men and boys must be firmly accountable to feminist women’s rights movements, LGBTQIA+ movements, and other social justice causes. Ensuring accountability is not only a moral imperative but also a practical necessity to create meaningful, inclusive, and transformative change for equality and justice.

As one **MenEngage** board member reflected, “accountability is not a one-time process —it’s an ongoing commitment. We must ensure that masculinities work does not just engage men, but actively dismantles patriarchal power”. With this shared understanding, accountability remained a key strategic focus for members of **MenEngage Alliance** during the 2021 to 2024 period.

Accountability: ‘Walking the talk’

As a decentralised global network, power and privilege are at play within our structures, leadership, and membership, just as they are in the wider world. Over the 2021 to 2024 period, this has meant engaging in honest self-reflection, knowing we must hold ourselves to the same values that we promote.

To create cultural and structural changes, we have developed increasingly transparent, bold and transformative spaces where members can engage meaningfully with questions of positionality, authority, and responsibility —ensuring our network culture is truly aligned with feminist values of equity, care, and mutual accountability.

Where there have been individual challenges, we have sought to address them through appropriate restorative justice approaches, while setting up new ways for reporting and handling concerns. In 2021, this included launching a publicly-available online mechanism for reporting complaints or providing feedback of any kind.

Building on this, a group of nominated members from across **MenEngage Alliance** stepped forward as the global **MenEngage** Accountability Team in 2022. Meeting in

Istanbul, Turkey that year, the Accountability Team worked together to further develop a case-handling protocol focused on restorative justice and survivor-centered approaches, representing a concrete step in our collective commitment to ‘walk the talk’ on accountability.

Members of the Accountability Team now serve as Accountability Focal Points in their respective **MenEngage Alliance** regional network networks. This approach is part of a formal mechanism designed to address concerns raised across the global alliance, including in any regional network.

With these systems either in place or in development during our 2021 to 2024 Strategic period, **MenEngage Alliance** networks at the country, regional and global levels have worked together to handle breaches of our principles and accountability standards —when possible through practices of restorative justice outlined in our case-handling protocol. These experiences have helped us strengthen understanding, knowledge and mechanisms in handling issues. Yet, as is noted in our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation, there is still a lot that needs to be done to strengthen implementation in practice.

ELEVATING ACCOUNTABILITY

How members shaped a new framework for accountability in gender equality work with men and boys

While noting the critical importance of a robust and safe complaint-handling mechanism, members of **MenEngage Alliance** recognised that being accountable means proactively working to shift cultures and systems, and improve standards —rather than only responding to harm. A key step towards this was a rigorous, multi-year, network-wide process of discussion, dialogue, and iterative refinement to create an updated set of agreements for participants of all **MenEngage Alliance** networks. Facilitated in partnership with The Equality Institute and ATHENA Network, the process resulted in the *MenEngage Accountability Framework*, which was formally adopted by the Global Board in April 2022.

The Accountability Framework is made up of three interrelated documents: the Core Principles, the Code of Conduct, and the Accountability Standards. As well as representing a collective agreement of principles, values, and aspirations, the Accountability Framework is designed to support members and others in the field to strive for stronger practices and impact in their work. They also provide a clear framework for assessing concerns that have been raised,

and whether there has been a breach of the standards collectively outlined and agreed upon.

Developing the Accountability Framework together with more than 300 member and critical feminist partners remains a significant milestone for us as a global network. But agreements on paper can only go so far. To ensure that accountability is not just a theoretical concept but an active practice, we have prioritized initiatives to collectively reflect on, learn about, discuss, and take actions around accountability over the 2021 to 2024 period. This included organizing accountability dialogues and workshops at regional and global levels, as well as implementing campaigns to raise awareness and capacities on accountability, including on the updated *Sexual Harassment Policy* and the accountability case-reporting mechanism.

Over the four-year period, these efforts have contributed to open communication, critical reflection, and collective learning, empowering members to integrate accountability into their work and the communities they serve. This has had a ripple effect, positively influencing how this work is approached and implemented at every level.

How members strengthened accountability at regional and national levels

Regional networks of MenEngage Alliance put accountability into practice in

different ways depending on the priorities, challenges, and opportunities in their contexts:

ELEVATING ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Latin America (2023):** The Latin American network, supported by experts from the women’s rights movement, developed a regional analysis of the network’s efforts on transforming patriarchal masculinities and working with men and boys in gender and social justice. The assessment provided insights and strategies to strengthen how men and masculinities-related initiatives in the region can better adhere to intersectional feminist principles. The findings and recommendations inform the work-plans of the regions going forward.
- **Africa (2022-2024): MenEngage Africa Alliance** worked with grassroots movements to integrate accountability measures into masculinities programs addressing gender-based violence and reproductive justice.
- **South Asia (2023-2024):** In response to concerns about masculinities work being co-opted by male-dominated NGOs, **MenEngage Alliance** facilitated cross-movement dialogues to reaffirm feminist leadership in this space.

Lessons and the road ahead

The question of ‘what it means to be a man’ is in the public consciousness more than ever. The growing attention on masculinity is creating potential for the scaling up of programs and policies aimed at men and boys. Strong commitments to accountability are therefore essential as organisations navigate this emerging trend. Our work of developing Accountability Standards and related technical support materials provide a strong foundation for this work, addressing directly the concerns and risks presented when work with men and boys is not informed by feminist approaches.

Yet translating accountability agreements and standards into consistent action across all levels remains a significant challenge. ‘Walking the talk’ remains —and will continue to be— a central priority in the years to come. While **MenEngage** members have worked together over the past years to establish mechanisms to strengthen accountability, more effort is needed to ensure these are widely and fully embraced and integrated into everyday practices. At the same time, there is untapped potential

to explore new, creative, and innovative approaches to promoting accountability —opportunities we are committed to uncovering and leveraging in the future.

Strengthening accountable practices —within and beyond **MenEngage Alliance**— will remain central for us in the years ahead. By prioritising accountability, we aim to ensure efforts are more effective and impactful for gender equality, women’s rights, and LGBTIQ rights for all. These in turn have strengthened collaborations and trust across movements for social justice.

How grassroots expertise informed practices, programs and field-building

The past four years is a period in which MenEngage Alliance stepped up its role as a facilitator of peer-led learning, reaching both within and beyond our immediate network. Members and partners from all corners of the globe took advantage of new MenEngage structures for knowledge exchange that were established during the period. Anchored in shared principles, these vibrant spaces have fostered a growing repository of insights, fueling feminist-informed, gender-transformative approaches to working with men and boys to advance gender justice worldwide. As our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation finds, these efforts have led to improved programming with men and boys, as reported by members.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE



I visited Emancipator in the Netherlands because I was curious about their pedagogy for working on gender justice with boys and men. They introduced MenEngage as a platform for collaboration as well as a pedagogy. I have trained over 500 trainers/facilitators to work together on transformative masculinities education. Now I am building the MenEngage Korean network.

— **Goldie Kim**, Representative of GOMA, Co-Coordinator of MenEngage Korea (K-Men)

In numbers

107
papers, toolkits, and guides published

300+
learning events held

300+
video recordings on the MenEngage YouTube channel (up from 30 at the start of 2021), 94,400 video views and, 4000+ hours of view-time

780+
enrollments in our “Power, Patriarchy & Feminism” online course, and 600+ comments as participants engage with the course material and each other

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE

Learning from practical experiences

is critical to addressing persistent, systemic social justice problems. Indeed, there continues to be an urgent need and opportunity to harvest and exchange practice-based knowledge and evidence from **Alliance** members and partners on transforming patriarchal masculinities for gender justice. With this in mind, our collective efforts towards peer-led knowledge-building stepped up considerably throughout the 2021 to 2024 period. Throughout the four years, members came together to share, learn and document the work. Our collective, bottom-up approaches also contributed to decolonization of how knowledge is produced, challenging the existing knowledge hierarchy within the field.

A milestone towards these efforts was the third **MenEngage** Global Symposium, the ‘Ubuntu Symposium’ (see *Movement-Building* for more about the impact of the Ubuntu Symposium). The 7-month program of knowledge-sharing and learning showcased the state of the field at the time, and resulted in a rich body of knowledge captured in a library of webinar recordings across a wide range of topics, as well as six dedicated reports consolidating priority themes.

As well as providing the platform for knowledge-building, the Ubuntu Symposium set the tone for the subsequent four-year period, acting as a springboard for collective growth

Evaluation finding:

The MenEngage Colab peer learning sessions were cited as an example of success. Members felt they drove innovation, expanded knowledge, and improved member programmes, advocacy and communications.

and action. Bringing in diverse contributions from the field, it inspired alternative, more inclusive approaches to organizing symposiums and colloquiums at national and regional levels.

Launching a new platform for ongoing shared learning

The Ubuntu Symposium demonstrated the need and appetite for *ongoing* spaces for learning and peer exchange. This came to fruition in 2023 with the launch

of the *MenEngage Learning Collaborative (CoLab)*, a set of long-term spaces and opportunities for practitioners, researchers, and activists working on masculinities and

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE

gender justice to come together in a spirit of co-creation, shared learning and collective knowledge development.

In addition to exchanging and documenting practical knowledge, these learning spaces have consistently provided opportunities for members to discuss and explore the shared

political vision and values of **MenEngage Alliance** —both in their own work and collective efforts at all levels. This includes integrating practices of ‘*inner work for social change*’ to walk the talk in professional and personal conduct, in support of being the change we want to see in the world.

How member-led expertise fed into a growing knowledge-bank

Between 2021 and 2024, members of **MenEngage Alliance** took the field’s collective knowledge-base forward. Synthesising diverse insights, we published new reports covering some of the latest practical insights on priority issues (see also the priority issues sections of this report below), and the building of a library of recorded webinars that dig deeper into many critical topics. These recordings have been made available to anyone via the global **MenEngage** YouTube channel, with many also available in Spanish and French, generating a total watch time of 771 hours in 2024 alone.

These resources support practitioners globally, strengthening their ability to drive meaningful change in their communities. They also serve to develop shared understanding, contributing to building a community of practice that is working on men and masculinities from feminist-informed and accountable perspectives.

The four year period saw significant upskilling of capacities to do collective knowledge-building —both within the Global Secretariat team as well as throughout leadership structures of **MenEngage Alliance**. This experience has allowed us to hone in on

Evaluation finding:

In interviews all members spoke about the Alliance helping them improve their programming. 92% of survey respondents said MenEngage has helped them improve the quality of their programming for men and boys. This is a very strong finding, and could be emphasised and probed more by the Alliance.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE & EVIDENCE

methods that support collaboration, cross-pollination of ideas, bottom-up learning, and participation. The result has been the establishment of consultative processes to identify promising practices, convene expert webinars, facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas, and to document lessons learned.

During this period, we deepened our collective around specific priority themes, hosting a series of webinars on each as part of the **MenEngage** CoLab. One such series, in collaboration with UN Women, brought together

practitioners working with men and boys to prevent gender based violence and on ending violence against women and girls (see also *Gender-Based Violence*). Another focused on applying decolonising the work with men and boys for gender justice, working with an external anti-racism and decolonisation expert (see also *Decolonisation*). The learnings and knowledge from each of these two series have been consolidated in new reports. Other topics that have been addressed through the **MenEngage** CoLab can be explored in the relevant thematic sections of this report.

Capacity strengthening courses & trainings

It is a firm belief of **MenEngage Alliance** that it is critical to understand the concepts of power, patriarchy, and feminism in order to do accountable work with men and boys for gender justice. In 2024, the **Alliance** launched *an online course* exploring them—and why they are essential for anyone working with men and boys to advance gender justice. Co-developed with **CREA**, the course is structured across three modules, combining video lectures, presentation graphics, written exercises, and quizzes to reinforce key ideas. Designed to take around 12 hours to complete, it garnered strong interest, with over 750 enrollments so far. To enrich the learning experience, the course has been complemented by online dialogues, offering participants the chance to engage more deeply with the material, with facilitation with some of the course's authors.

In **Africa**, the **MenEngage** Africa network has established a capacity strengthening initiative *MenEngage Africa Training Institute (MATI)*, which runs a full course on 'men and masculinities' every two years. MATI aims to

build a dynamic, vocal and visible network of leaders and gender justice advocates that will drive the gender equality and human rights agenda on the African continent. In the seven courses that have run since launching in 2012, MATI has trained more than 210 activists, researchers and practitioners working on the agenda of women's rights, gender and social justice from the Africa continent.

Lessons and the road ahead

The **2021 to 2024** period saw huge strides across **MenEngage Alliance** to build knowledge and evidence around gender transformative work with men and boys. We have also significantly built the capacity and systems to *do* collective learning. From the 7-month Ubuntu Symposium, to the launch of several high-uptake learning initiatives, shared knowledge-building has been a key achievement of the four year period.

While there has been notable progress around this, there remain significant gaps in evidence as well as a near-endless pool of grassroots expertise to learn from. It is nothing new to recognise that many programs and projects working to challenge systems of injustice and shift social norms are not well documented or disseminated. Compounding this, many members continue to face barriers to digital access, limiting their ability to engage with the many online spaces and resources available, or with opportunities to share their expertise. Language is also a hurdle for any international network. While the four year period saw progress through the systematisation of publishing key materials in French, Spanish, and English, their reach remains restricted to those languages, except in cases where members localise them.

With these challenges in mind, learning will continue to be a significant priority over the coming years. In line with our strategic thinking around building knowledge, we will continue to harvest practice-based knowledge and evidence on transforming patriarchal masculinities and working with men and boys in gender, climate and social justice, support the decolonization of knowledge and leadership, and challenge knowledge hierarchies within the field. To support these efforts, we will continue to

strengthen our knowledge-sharing and learning systems, initiatives and capacities.

Looking ahead, the **MenEngage CoLab** will launch two complementary pieces; a dedicated CoLab website and a digital community discussion platform, creating further spaces for collaboration, asking questions, learning, and resource-sharing.

Cementing **MenEngage Alliance** as a space for mutual learning is a strategic, long-term goal—one that will empower our members, enrich the broader field, and advance the interconnected causes of gender, social, and climate justice for all.

How members came together to counter the anti-gender movement

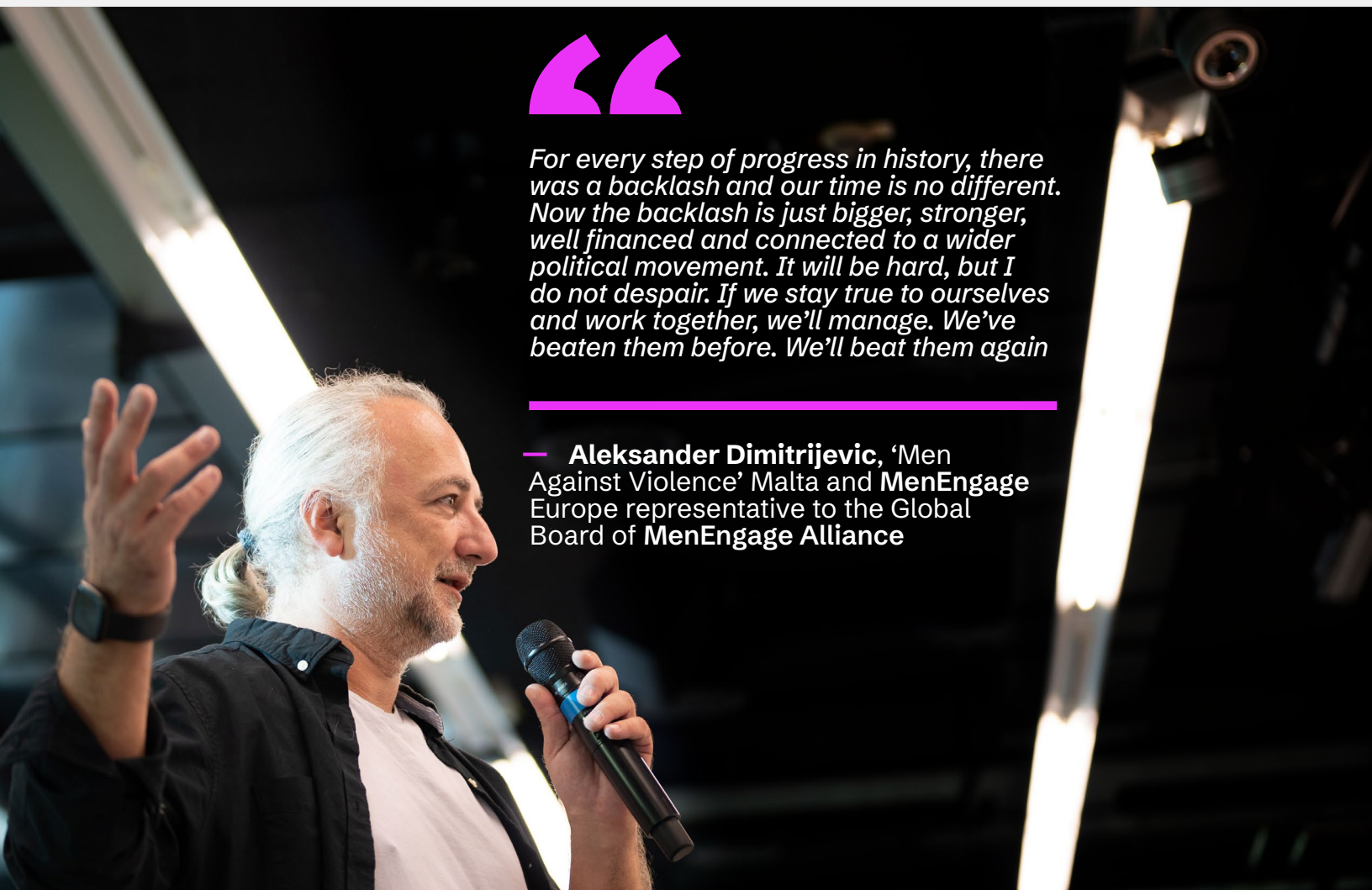
While women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ individuals have seen increased rights over the past few decades, the surge in far-right, nationalist, white supremacist, and religious fundamentalist movements has led to significant rollbacks across the globe. Over the past four years, this alarming trend has accelerated and become a critical concern, including for MenEngage Alliance members. In response, the network has created spaces, partnerships, and opportunities for members and partners to collaborate, resist these setbacks, and develop proactive strategies to defend and advance gender equality and human rights.

RESISTING BACKLASH



For every step of progress in history, there was a backlash and our time is no different. Now the backlash is just bigger, stronger, well financed and connected to a wider political movement. It will be hard, but I do not despair. If we stay true to ourselves and work together, we'll manage. We've beaten them before. We'll beat them again

— **Aleksander Dimitrijevic**, 'Men Against Violence' Malta and MenEngage Europe representative to the Global Board of MenEngage Alliance



In numbers

16

dialogues, roundtables, and webinars held about tackling backlash, including one regional consultation with each Regional Network

2

joint #HowToTalkWithMen campaigns; amplifying the stories of 91 MenEngage members; reaching an organic audience of approximately 100,000 people in 2024 alone.

650+

people accessing the 2022 paper Backlash and Fundamentalism: A discussion paper of the Ubuntu Symposium in 3 languages

RESISTING BACKLASH

Members of MenEngage Alliance have long been deeply aware of and concerned about the backlash against gender equality. The rise of so-called ‘Men’s Rights Activist’ groups in the past few decades, for example, was part of the motivation to establish clear principles that firmly root our collective

work in intersectional feminism and the advancement of women’s rights. In this way, **MenEngage Alliance** stands as a proactive counterforce to the backlash from those who seek to engage men and boys with approaches that resist equality for women, girls, and people of diverse gender identities.

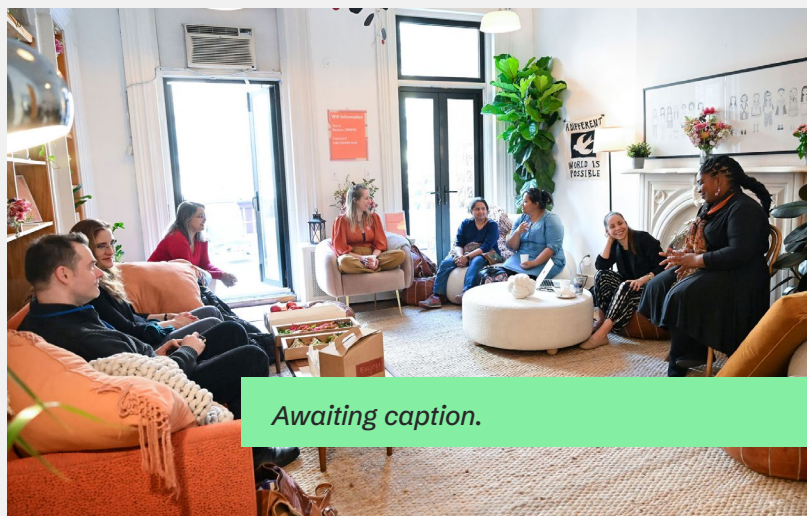
Strategizing and building knowledge on backlash & masculinities

The concern among members about anti-gender backlash only grew stronger in the 2021 to 2024 strategic period, emerging as a key priority in strategic discussions. The **MenEngage** Ubuntu Symposium series on ‘Countering Patriarchal Backlash’ sourced insights from around the world, and was consolidated into a *discussion paper on backlash and fundamentalism* (2022). Numerous virtual discussions on countering backlash have been captured, with their *recordings publicly available* as a widely accessible archive.

women’s rights, LGBTIQ+ rights, democracy, climate action, and racial and social justice. The group agreed on the importance of a unique focus: leveraging the role of men and masculinities to actively counter the pushback. In an example of action through partnerships, the group has explored approaches to address backlash that involve engaging men and boys as part of the solution. The group has laid the groundwork for concrete collective actions through evidence-gathering, narrative shifts, and targeted policy advocacy.

In 2023-2024 members from around the network contributed to a cross-regional consultation exploring how backlash manifests in their local contexts and brainstorming strategic next steps to address these challenges collectively. These insights have been captured in a 2025 report, and inform our collective strategies as **MenEngage Alliance**.

In 2024, **MenEngage Alliance** brought together more than 20 partners from feminist civil society and donor organizations to form the *Men, Masculinities, and Countering Backlash Collective*. Launched at CSW68, the group forms a key platform for strategizing on solutions to the growing backlash against



RESISTING BACKLASH

How to talk with men and boys about gender issues in an era of backlash

With backlash in the front of our minds, regional representatives called for **MenEngage Alliance** to take more proactive steps, for instance around *International Men's Day* which has a long history of promoting anti-feminist messaging and a false narrative that it is men who are the real victims of systemic oppression. The global **MenEngage** Communications Working Group took this forward and anchored the development of the **Alliance**-wide #HowToTalkWithMen campaign (2023 & 2024).

The campaign tapped into the unique strength of the **MenEngage Alliance**; the voices and expertise of members working every day at the grassroots of work to call men and boys in on the work for gender justice for all. Members across the network came together in two participatory planning sessions, while campaign materials were translated into eight languages including Korean, Albanian, and Turkish. Through the campaign's *videos* and

social media posts, members have been able to empower individuals around the world to have bold, transformative conversations with men and boys about gender justice.

Throughout 2024, public debate increasingly focused on the attitudes and roles of men, particularly adolescents, in the backlash. **MenEngage Alliance** is contributing to these discussions from a position of clear values and specific expertise. In partnership with SVRI, Breakthrough and NUMUN fund, **MenEngage Alliance** co-organised a session at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum 2024 to analyze men's involvement in the *manosphere* and the issue of sexual and gender-based violence taking place on digital platforms. There is a deep sense of commitment and responsibility that **MenEngage Alliance** has a critical role to play in these debates, and finding solutions in how to reach and engage men and boys.

Lessons and the road ahead

Over the past decade, backlash has grown from an emerging issue to a central concern—not only for **MenEngage Alliance**, but for all movements for gender, social and climate justice. These concerns were brought into sharper focus through our consultations with members in 2023 and 2024, helping us see the intensity of threats from anti-rights and anti-gender movements on the ground. The insights from the **MenEngage** CoLab learning process, combined with our efforts to build strategic partnerships on countering

backlash, have given important direction to our priorities and strategies for 2025 to 2028.

In essence, we have learned that the backlash is the prevailing context in which we now operate. This means that countering backlash has become a key lens for all our work for the advancement of gender equality, human rights, and democracy. Strategically, this has meant prioritizing 'shifting narratives' as a primary goal for our collective external impact in the coming years.

RESISTING BACKLASH

The escalating threat of anti-rights and anti-gender movements has led to a growing realization among feminist and rights actors: collective and cross-movement solidarity and collaboration among progressive movements are crucial to prevent further erosion of human rights and gender justice. Strengthening our collective response necessitates exchanging efforts and lessons, alongside identifying new opportunities and strategies for joint feminist actions that employ movement-building approaches to counter the backlash.

This context means that disinformation and misogynistic backlash will —unfortunately— continue to have impacts on the views that men and boys hold on gender equality, with severe consequences for women, girls and—in particular— people of marginalised gender and sexual identities. Yet inspiring, positive efforts to counter this trend are already taking place, including through collective action within **MenEngage Alliance** and elsewhere.

MenEngage Alliance is committed to vocal support and allyship in these endeavors, mobilizing men and boys for feminist systems change by “calling them in” to be part of the movement – a commitment underpinned by our position as the largest worldwide network focused on this agenda. As a network with strong partnerships, **MenEngage Alliance** is also uniquely positioned to act as a mobilizing catalyst for multi-sectoral coalitions, enabling bold strategies to push back against the pushback.

How careful governance changes have contributed to more meaningful inclusion of diverse voices and democratic processes across MenEngage Alliance

Our focus on strong governance and democratic processes can, by nature, be invisible and underappreciated. Yet, as our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation notes, our efforts to build shared values, robust governance systems, and strengthened capacities for leadership have ‘contributed significantly to the professionalism of the Alliance, the delivery of its advocacy and policy wins, the credibility of its voice and ability to forge strong partnerships’. As such, progress on governance over the past four years has strengthened our foundations for collective impact.

Strengthening governance across country, regional and global networks

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation noted:

The Alliance is overall trustful and open, and addresses complex issues with kindness and thought. This is reflected in survey results where 87% of respondents felt the regional governance and operating structure was good or strong, and 92% felt the global structure was good or strong. Responses to this question varied by region.

One of the results identified by the evaluation is that the regional networks have matured and developed stronger governance and operating systems in the past strategic period. Changes to governance models have resulted in a stronger role for regional committees. According to the evaluation report “this is an example of **decolonisation** in action. (see also the section on anti-racism and decolonisation)

Members have reported an increased level of democratization in terms of decision making, inclusion, transparency and opportunities for new leadership, including engagements at the global levels. As a result this further strengthened the interconnectivity, capacity and visibility of **MenEngage Alliance** members’ and partners, inspiring and informing qualitative uptake of gender transformative work on men and masculinities. The implementation of the strategic plan in a bottom up approach and close collaboration with the regional networks resulted in a clear shared understanding of the strategic plan and of the theory of change across the network.

During this reporting period 100% of the regional networks and around 75% of the country networks have received direct support from the **MenEngage** Global and Regional Secretariats, through financial support, capacity strengthening activities, technical support particularly on accountability and advocacy efforts, networks strengthening, and membership engagement.

Supporting the sustainability of regional networks has also been a key concern, so **MenEngage Global Alliance** played a modest but valued role in mobilizing resources for

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the Regional Networks. In addition, regional **MenEngage** networks continued to receive sub-grants through MnEngage Global for the development and implementation of their localized plans throughout the four year period. As these are core-grants, they serve to support key network functions that enable collective work, such as resources for a designated regional secretariat in the Caribbean, South Asia, Europe, Latin America,

MENA and North America networks, and for strategic initiatives and convenings in Africa. **MenEngage** Africa regional network has its own direct funding support from Sida. In addition, designated regional advocacy grants helped advance contextualized advocacy strategizing (see *Policy Impacts* section above) which will continue to be a key area of work for **MenEngage Alliance** in the coming years.

MenEngage Global as a hub in the Alliance's interconnected systems

In our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation, the global leadership of **MenEngage Alliance**—consisting of the Global Board and Global Secretariat—is recognized as strong, thoughtful, skilled and kind. Members and partners who contributed their thoughts to the evaluation noted that the leadership is not afraid to tackle hard issues in a collaborative way, and hold each other accountable. The Global Board has been appreciated as collaborative and engaged with 'a high knowledge of both content matter and the **Alliance** dynamics, while the Global Secretariat staff are described as 'excellent leaders'.

Spanning many regions and contexts, we can safely assume that **MenEngage Alliance** is not only the largest network for transforming patriarchal masculinities, but also the most diverse—taking in a range of factors from gender and ethnicity to region and specialism. Over the four year period covered by this

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation said:

The Alliance has done incredible work building trust with the feminist community, and centring feminist perspectives. This has been challenging at times and required considerable policy expertise, diplomacy, care and hard work by the Secretariat and Global Board. It has paid dividends in terms of the Alliance's ability to deliver on its mission, and was recognised universally by external partners.

GOVERNANCE & DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

report, we have made efforts to ensure this diversity is represented in leadership systems at global and regional levels. The Board continues to have designated seats for each Regional Network, as well as representation of women's rights, LGBTQIA, youth and men & masculinities; while the Global Secretariat includes geographic, language, gender-identity and expertise diversity.

Communications is a notable component in supporting open and transparent systems, contributing to overall governance. To this end, our 2021 to 2024 Evaluation highlighted a significant professionalization of our

communications, enhancing transparency, awareness, and the impact of our collective messages and agenda across the field and beyond. This included revitalised social media efforts, and our global newsletter reaching an extensive network of over 7,000 practitioners, researchers, activists, and representatives from governmental, intergovernmental, and international donor agencies. Furthermore, we launched a new global website that better reflects the breadth and diversity of our network's resources, stories, and news, providing a strong platform for our political and advocacy statements, and a space for hosting learning resources for the field.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

As a result of the efforts and support from the leadership at the regional level and Global Secretariat, there has been remarkable consolidation of the network as a strong and inclusive Community of Practice which facilitates exchange, mutual learning and joint actions among members, through regional and country networks and thematic priorities. Yet there remains room to grow, in particular through supporting country and regional networks in their governance capacities and systems, which remains an ongoing priority.

With these efforts we believe that **MenEngage Alliance** is on a solid path to level-up our collective energy and impact as a vibrant, accountable social change network and movement-builder, as anchored in our *Theory of Change*.



Representatives of the Global Board - from left to right: Phillip Carlisle, Irene Ogeta, and Bafana Khumalo - at the Global Board meeting in Stockholm, Sweden in May 2024.

How young leaders got their seat at the table across MenEngage Alliance

For young people across MenEngage Alliance, 2021 to 2024 was a period of increased opportunities, energy, and inclusion. Through the Youth Reference Group and other avenues, young people advanced their capacities as leaders, advocates and activists; and contributed their unique perspectives to the agenda and current state of work on men and masculinities across a variety of gender and social justice issues.



There is sincere inclusion of young people in MenEngage Alliance. I always feel like I am equal to everyone else in the space, and now I am contributing to a global perspective because of the warm, generous support that I received.

— Festus Kisa, Founder and Executive Director, Q-Initiative, Kenya, and Global Co-Chair

A milestone for youth leadership was the launch of the **youth leadership strategy 2021-2024**. Collectively developed by the Youth Reference Group, the strategy sets a clear roadmap for youth engagement and leadership across **MenEngage Alliance**. Noting the importance of youth leadership, the Global Secretariat also introduced a dedicated role within its team focused on fostering and coordinating youth engagement and leadership at all levels of the **Alliance**, ensuring that young voices and organising remain central to our shared work moving forward.

By the end of 2024, a vibrant Youth Reference Group composed of 15 representatives from across all the regional networks meets regularly to strategise, discuss and engage in joint actions. Members of the Youth

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation said:

Respondents had high praise for meaningful youth inclusion in MenEngage's internal processes: the way MenEngage involved youth throughout all its decisions, committees, board and governance.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Reference Group hold seats in every global working group of **MenEngage Alliance**, as well as having a seat on the Global Board. This effort goes beyond simply having youth

representation —it harnesses the invaluable strategic insights of young people, who are essential to shaping a future rooted in gender equality and social justice.

From regional to global: Young voices rising across MenEngage Alliance

MenEngage Africa has been at the forefront of youth led organising and empowering young people, setting an example for other regions to follow. Integral to its governance structure, the regional network established a Youth Steering Committee since 2017, composed of youth-led and youth-serving organizations operating at both national and regional levels.

In **South Asia**, the regional Youth Committee co-led a peer-to-peer learning series of online dialogues on youth-led advocacy in the region (2022). The series *Championing change through advocacy* covers everything from the basics of advocacy goals, to more sophisticated and creative advocacy strategies. This initiative has supported around 30 young activists and advocates to step up in the work for gender justice in the region.

The progress around youth leadership during this four year period was underscored by the first in-person meeting of the Youth Reference Group in December, 2024. Young leaders from across the network convened in Kigali, Rwanda, for three days of strategizing and capacity-strengthening. Reflecting on the meeting, Irene Akoth Ogeta from ATHENA Network, Kenya, said: “this is a moment for us to continue mobilizing, educating and liberating our fellow young people. For them to realize that it is important for us to work in collaboration, in partnership and not in isolation. We need to speak one language, we need to have one common goal and this common goal should be social justice through gender equality and dismantling patriarchy, and together we can.”

Youth influencing policy

MenEngage Alliance has provided a platform for powerful young voices to be heard in major policy-setting spaces. In 2023, a cohort of young activists and leaders from around the global network joined hundreds of youth voices at CSW67 at the UN in New York —including at the Inaugural Interactive

Youth Dialogue that took place. Members of **MenEngage Alliance** collectively shaped a powerful oral statement to CSW67, highlighting the “power of young people to lead the way on a radical transformative agenda to advance women’s rights and gender justice for all, and in being accountable to the feminist movement”.

Challenges and the road ahead

Youth are energised and ready to lead, and **MenEngage Alliance** is fortunate to count many powerful youth voices among our membership, as well as our leadership structures. Yet challenges remain, such as resources to support youth in building capacity and doing advocacy work, which is often based on the time and energy young people are able to give voluntarily while studying or being employed.

However, **MenEngage Alliance** will continue prioritising youth in the years ahead, further embedding young voices across governance and decision-making structures, providing more opportunities for young people to engage in spaces in which **MenEngage Alliance** is privileged to have access, and working with young people to build more opportunities for them to learn, grow, and lead.

Our commitment to youth goes beyond mere inclusion. We actively cultivate spaces where young voices are not only heard but also valued and acted upon. Through organising structures like the Youth Reference Group and regional youth networks, we provide platforms for meaningful participation and decision-making at all levels.

PRIORITY ISSUES

The following sections are the issues that we prioritised during the 2021 to 2024 period, contributing a ‘men and masculinities’ lens and through the Strategic Approaches above.

How members pushed the agenda forward on men's roles in ending violence against women and girls

In the last four years, to address root causes of gender-based violence, members have come together through MenEngage Alliance to drive change on policy advocacy, identify and advance promising practices in the field, and push for transformative strategies.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Coming together as MenEngage Alliance means harnessing the expertise of diverse actors, all working together to achieve greater impact in preventing and responding to gender-based violence. It allows us to access and share invaluable resources, expertise, and experience from other members and partners, to achieve greater impact in preventing, responding to, and eliminating gender based violence.

— **Douglas Mendoza**, REDMAS
Nicaragua, member of
MenEngage America Latina

For far too long gender issues have primarily been considered women’s issues, placing the responsibility for solving them on women and girls. Changing the attitudes and behaviours of men and boys is essential to transforming social norms and institutional practices that perpetuate gender inequalities. Men and boys constitute the majority of perpetrators of violence, both

relational and structural. Existing notions of manhood socialise men and boys to dominate others, engage in high-risk behaviours, and discriminate against women, girls, & LGBTQI individuals. Research indicates that patriarchal masculinities significantly contribute to and are at the roots of interpersonal and structural violence, including war and militarisation.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

How members exchanged grassroots knowledge to strengthen the work to end gender-based violence

The understanding that gender-based violence is not just a ‘women’s issue’ but a societal issue where men and boys have critical roles and responsibilities, unites the global membership of **MenEngage Alliance**. Across the network, examples of programs addressing gender-based violence are widespread—from engaging male faith leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to encouraging boys in Sri Lanka to reflect on the impacts of masculine stereotypes through journaling. As a network, we ensure these initiatives do not operate in isolation but strengthen one another through facilitating processes of mutual learning, exchange, and support.

Through 2023-2024 we organized a series of *eight peer-led webinars* where grassroots

organizations presented their approaches, shared challenges, and showcased their impacts to engage men and boys in ending gender-based violence. Developed in collaboration with UN Women and members of **MenEngage Alliance**, the series addressed gaps in documented practices, methods, and evidence on effective strategies to work with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence, including violence against women and girls. The recordings have garnered significant interest with *one amassing almost 100,000 views*. Captured in a forthcoming report, the findings also highlight areas where more grassroots evidence and examples of practical initiatives are needed to further advance the field.

How MenEngage Alliance worked as partners in ending gender-based violence

MenEngage Alliance partnered with movements, networks, and organizations leading the effort against gender-based violence. These partnerships reflect our commitment to accountability to feminist women’s rights movements. For our partners, **MenEngage Alliance** brings together our diverse grassroots expertise and a focus on addressing gender-based

violence by engaging men and boys and challenging harmful masculine norms through feminist-informed approaches. During the four year period, we:

- **Worked as a collaborative partner in the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum. MenEngage**

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Alliance representatives contributed to the *SVRI 2024 Forum* in Cape Town, South Africa; co-organised a participant-driven session on *Feminist approaches to engage men and boys in gender-based violence prevention*; and served as an official symposium organizing partner to strengthen the SVRI collective.

- **Advocated to the UK Government for deeper commitment to addressing the roots of gender-based violence**, together with 48 leaders from feminist movements, at a meeting hosted by the

UK government asking ‘What will it take to end gender-based violence? Rethinking pathways to preventing violence at scale.’

- **Advocated at a high-level European Union/United Nations Side Event** together with the *Spotlight Initiative* as part of the Group of Friends for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls. The event, titled ‘Engaging Men and Boys: Showcasing the Spotlight Initiative a high-impact model for accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals’.

How MenEngage Alliance worked at regional and national levels to address gender-based violence in policy and practice

MenEngage Alliance networks have been active over the past four years, advancing a gender transformative agenda at national and regional levels. Here are some examples:

- **MenEngage Alliance South Asia** partnered with Breakthrough India, ARROW, and Swayam to co-organize *The Reframe: A Pan Asian Summit* (2022), which consolidated a regional advocacy agenda for gender-based violence prevention and norm change using an intersectional feminist lens. In **Sri Lanka**, the **MenEngage** network was invited to add a critical men and masculinities lens to the National Action Plan on sexual and gender-based violence, while in **Bangladesh**, the ‘engaging men

and boys’ network conducted capacity-building workshops for youth leaders on gender-based violence prevention.

- **MenEngage Europe** joined the Gender Equality Commission of the Council of Europe as one of two civil society representatives (2022) developing *guidelines on the place of men and boys in policies to combat gender-based violence*.
- At national level in **Africa**, **MenEngage Botswana** was invited to advise the Ministry of Immigration, Nationality, and Gender Affairs on male engagement in national gender policies, while **MenEngage Eswatini** hosted a symposium bringing together government, UN agency partners and civil society to address

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

intimate partner violence. **MenEngage Madagascar** partnered with UNFPA for gender-transformative programming across five national districts. As part of the gender-based violence platform at the Ministry of Gender, **MenEngage Liberia** led efforts to facilitate the enactment

of a ‘temporary suspension’ of female genital mutilation under the Spotlight initiative, while **MenEngage Namibia** delivered trainings on the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence to the Namibian police and correctional services and Namibian Defence Forces.

Lessons and the road ahead

Violence against women and girls is, and remains, the most pervasive human rights issue in the world. As an alliance, our contribution to end the impunity and prevalence of violence against women and girls, and all forms of gender-based violence, will continue to focus on changing the attitudes and behaviours relating to masculinity. Together with directly engaging men and boys, this focus is an essential value-addition to transforming social norms and institutional practices that perpetuate gender based violence.

Research continues to show that progress on eliminating gender-based violence requires gender-transformative approaches. With over two-thirds of **MenEngage Alliance** members leading grassroots initiatives and a wide range of interventions to shift gendered attitudes and behaviors, our network occupies a vital niche in strengthening gender-transformative approaches with men and boys on the ground.

In the years ahead, **MenEngage Alliance** will continue to employ a consultative approach to identifying promising practices among our membership in addressing and eliminating intimate partner violence, violence against women and girls, and gender-based violence. We will continue to prioritise and grow efforts that bring together experts, such as through webinars and facilitated conversations for

cross-fertilization of ideas, while documenting lessons learned, and promising practices and methodologies. We will continue to build on and value processes of continual learning and critical understanding of how change happens within the field of ‘men and masculinities’ and how programs can strengthen transformative approaches when it comes to prevention and ending of gender-based violence.

How members stood in solidarity with sexual and reproductive health and rights for all

Between 2021 and 2024, members of MenEngage Alliance strengthened our collective commitment to tackling fundamental barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This has meant deepening our solidarity with the intersectional feminist SRHR agenda and to feminist systems-change more broadly. In leveraging —as well as promoting— a growing global interest in the need to engage men and boys in SRHR for all, we have strengthened partnerships and forged new ones. Having nurtured communities of practice on men, masculinities, and SRHR in the period prior to the years covered by this report, we have been able to mobilise networks to push for a progressive agenda for men as allies, advocates, and beneficiaries of a progressive SRHR agenda over the past four years.



The MenEngage Lebanon Network has been an essential ally in our efforts to advance SRHR for all. Through its support, we've gained access to capacity-building opportunities, shared advocacy tools, and valuable spaces for reflection and learning, particularly on how to engage men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending gender-based violence. This has greatly enriched our programming and helped us approach SRHR from a more inclusive and transformative perspective.

— **Lina Sabra**, Executive Director of Salama, the Lebanese Association for Family Health



Global agenda-setting on masculinities, SRHR and gender equality

As an international network for gender justice, we mobilised 200 stakeholders from 60 countries to inform the **research agenda on men, masculinities and SRHR** for years to come. Together with the World Health Organisation (WHO), Queens University Belfast, and other UN agencies and academic institutions, the *Global Research Priority Setting Exercise* (launched in 2023) reviews more than a decade of evidence. In line with our role as a convener and field-builder, and

being informed by feminist and decolonial perspectives, **MenEngage Alliance** led the multi-stakeholder engagement process.

By tapping into the grassroots expertise of our network of members and partners, the process identified gaps in research on men's and boys' engagement in SRHR and gender equality, providing a roadmap for what future studies could explore. A key outcome was that practitioners on the ground are seeking more

SRHR

research on gender-transformative approaches in work with men and boys to transform gender equality and SRHR as strongly interconnected issues. In May 2024 a co-authored article was published in *The Lancet Global Health*.

From 2021 to 2022, **MenEngage Alliance** provided strategic input to the NORAD

global strategy on SRHR and gender-based violence. National **MenEngage** networks in Malawi and Uganda were actively engaged in developing the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Shadow Report, launched at WomenDeliver in 2023.

Partnerships for feminist-informed work with men and boys on SRHR

SRHR for all has historically been an entry point and priority area for grassroots work engaging men and boys. The participation and contributions of institutions like IPPF, UNFPA and WHO at the **MenEngage** Ubuntu Symposium is a testimony of a shift in the degree of involvement and collaboration with **MenEngage Alliance** to advance SRHR that is gender transformative, diverse and inclusive.

To elevate this further, we have **built strategic partnerships** with SRHR actors that center feminist-informed and gender transformative approaches. Such as with the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights *WGNRR Africa*, with whom we co-hosted a joint webinar in 2021 with SRHR advocates from across **MenEngage Alliance** to amplify the messages of the May 28 campaign for women's health. This partnership culminated in the production of a *communications strategy* to involve men in SRHR.

Since 2022, members of the **MenEngage** Youth Reference Group have participated in the *YIELD Hub*, whose mission is to put young people at the heart of decisions and programmes relating to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. As well as an opportunity for **MenEngage Alliance**

voices to add a critical men and masculinities lens to the youth SRHR agenda, this partnership has provided opportunities for youth leadership-building thanks to YIELD Hub's focus on youth empowerment.

In 2023, the **Alliance** joined feminist partners and in particular the Campaign for the right to legal abortion - the 'unstoppable movement' - and amplified the message of abortion as care with a call for male allyship. Also in 2023, **MenEngage Alliance** was represented in the UNFPA Global Youth Reference Group and this space has been utilised to contribute to the analysis, development of UNFPA initiatives incorporating masculinities and youth leadership lens.

Across the **MenEngage** alliance networks in the past 4 years, there has been a commitment to strengthen the capacities of members to actively engage in SRHR for all. These included training of executive staff members and member organisations in **Pakistan**; training on positive masculinity and SRHR in **Botswana**; implementing community sensitization campaigns that addressed toxic masculinity and promoted women's SRHR in **Cameroon**; and implementing the SRHR Changemakers Project in the **Caribbean** region.

SRHR

A highlight of the work of **MenEngage** Global on SRHR through the 2021-2024 period are its cross-collaborations among strategic groups within the **Alliance**. The SRHR working group and SOGIESC Learning Circle informed the *SRHR and SOGIESC Ubuntu Symposium discussion paper* to align members, articulate positions, and inform advocacy efforts. The Global Advocacy and Global Communications working groups mobilize(d) men and boys annually on International Safe Abortion Day. In 2022 the SRHR working group partnered with NAMEN to *call out the overturning of Roe vs Wade*.

We continued to influence by also adding our voices and signing on statements. For example in 2023 we joined AIDS United, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Reproductive Rights, Council for Global Equality, Ipas, PPFA, SIECUS, URGE to sign on the Unite for Reproductive and Gender Equity SRHR Blueprint Vision Statement. We joined 425 organisations to sign on the HRC54 joint civil society statement on abortion rights, which focused on the impact of de-prioritising and defunding public health systems and universal healthcare on SRHR and the need to uphold the right to safe and legal abortion.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

According to the 2021-2024 evaluation report, **MenEngage Alliance** has made significant progress in many aspects to advance the ‘SRHR for all’ agenda. These include ‘a number of impressive partnerships, excellent centering of feminist movement values, good inclusion of LGBTIQ priorities in light of challenges’. There is ‘strong SRHR inclusion’, and external partners and donors see **MenEngage’s** voice as critical and unique in this space. Going forward, we see our potential to expand our collective voice and visibility on SRHR through critical men and masculinities work in policy advocacy and activism, programmatic best practice, and in tackling anti-rights and anti-gender movements.

movements working tirelessly to push forward in the face of rollbacks in the years ahead.

Achieving access to SRHR for all remains one of today’s critical human rights priorities. Yet recent years have seen significant policy setbacks, including against reproductive rights and comprehensive sexuality education. As a network for engaging men and boys, including men in positions of power, our collective voice will add valuable support to feminist

How climate activists, advocates and researchers across the network formed a grassroots action group

The climate crisis has long-been a critical concern in certain circles of MenEngage Alliance. Over the past four years, this concern has shifted into collective action. Grassroots initiatives have ranged from hosting a comprehensive series on climate justice during the *MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium*, publishing a report sharing members' insights on the links between the *climate crisis and masculinities*, and members coming together to establish a global Climate & Environmental Justice Working Group. Through this working group, we have amplified the need to address patriarchal masculinities at COP and other high-level policy forums, stood in solidarity with feminist-led environmental campaigns, and elevated the urgency of the climate crisis —and its links to patriarchal masculinities— within our networks and beyond.



Being part of MenEngage Alliance has been an eye-opener to how patriarchal masculinities are a structural issue behind climate injustice. I cherish the links I have made through this network, which have led to insights that I now take with me in my work—from grassroots organising to advocacy with governments and in UN spaces.

— **Sohanur Rahman**, Founder and ED at YouthNet for Climate Justice; and member of the global **MenEngage Climate Justice Working Group**

The Climate and Environmental

Justice Working Group has been celebrated by **MenEngage Alliance** leadership as a promising example of an energized, member-led initiative that embodies the network’s principles of horizontal organizing and shared leadership. The group brings together environmental and human rights defenders, researchers, practitioners and advocates from across **MenEngage Alliance** who felt compelled to self-organise to add value to environmental movements with a critical ‘men and masculinities’ lens.

Since 2021, the working group has served to bring together and unite activists and experts on the intersections of climate crisis and masculinities. By examining how patriarchal masculinities lead to ecological damage, we seek to encourage alternative models of manhood - those based on care, sustainability, and fairness. Under the guidance of this working group, we have conducted

awareness campaigns, training programs, and advocacy initiatives to assist our members in becoming more involved with climate justice. These initiatives have enabled us to confront extractive economies and promote community-driven solutions to the crisis.

The last four years of **MenEngage Alliance** activity around the issues of climate justice culminated in a four-day, in-person *Climate Justice and Masculinities Forum*, hosted in Belgium in October 2024. The event brought together activists, practitioners, researchers and advocates—from the Working Group and partners— united by a common goal: To explore the intersections of climate justice and masculinities and to further develop plans and strategies for action on this agenda.

Having met almost every month since its formation in 2021, the group has developed four strategic tracks:



Sohanur Rahman and Vidar Vetterfalk joined other members of the global Climate Justice Working Group to plant trees as part of the MenEngage Masculinities and Climate Justice Forum in Belgium, Brussels, in October 2024.

#1 Mobilising, energizing and activating our global networks on the issue of climate justice

Members of the Working Group have used **MenEngage Alliance's** communication channels to help more members understand that ideas about 'being a man' —like needing to dominate, control, or compete— are not only linked to gender inequality and violence but also play a big role in sustaining the climate crisis.

In 2023, Ugandan member of the Climate and Environmental Justice Working Group, Kayinga Muddu Yisito, spoke about the group's work at the **MenEngage Africa** symposium in Kigali, Rwanda.

#2 Advocating for policy change in solidarity with youth-led climate movements and feminist systems change agenda

CSW66 – Through *MenEngage-led events, formal inputs to negotiations, and collective policy recommendations*, **MenEngage Alliance** worked with feminist partners in this key global political space to amplify the message that patriarchal masculinities need to be addressed as part of transforming the systems at the roots of gender injustice and climate injustice.

COP – **MenEngage Alliance** was among the first networks to advocate for the explicit recognition of masculinities in climate policy discussions at the United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC. Through *policy briefs and advocacy sessions*, we highlighted how extractivist economies and militarized masculinities exacerbate climate injustice. Our contribution has been to center the problem of *patriarchal* masculinities as a root cause to the nexus between gender inequality and climate change.

A member of the Climate and Environmental Justice Working Group represented **MenEngage Alliance** in their advocacy efforts at COP26/27/28/29. For COP27, we published a collective *Political Agenda* for advocates to use at this crucial climate gathering. We joined feminist environmental groups in *amplifying concerns* of the human rights record of the host nation, Egypt and —at that time— proposed host nation of the United Arab Emirates. In the run-up to COP28, we collated a *series of resources for collective mobilising and advocacy*. Ahead of COP29, the **MenEngage**

Global Communications Working Group co-led a joint sign-on statement, *Achieving Climate Justice by Challenging Patriarchy*, attracting signatures from a number of feminist partner organisations and networks, which will be used as a basis for systems-change mobilising and advocacy around COP30. This statement was presented at COP29 during a Side Event hosted by **MenEngage Alliance** member, Vital Voices.

Campaigns – We *joined a Global South-led advocacy and digital activism campaign* in 2024 calling for global north countries to PayUp for Climate Finance, and the #EndFossilFuels campaign in 2023.

Building allyship in policy spaces – Members of the Climate and Environmental Justice Working Group met with Green Member of European Parliament, Pär Holmgren, in October 2024. Mr Holmgren took the opportunity to hear from front-line climate defenders from the **MenEngage** Working Group, Sohanur Rahman and Kayinga Muddu Yisito, and later recorded *a video for MenEngage Alliance*, sharing his insights on the links between masculinity and the climate crisis.

Strengthening collaboration with feminist networks – Since 2023 **MenEngage** members have been engaged in knowledge exchange with Women Engaged for a Common Future (WECF), sharing and building knowledge on the intersection of masculinities and the climate crisis. This joint collaboration is expected to continue and strengthen in the years to come.



Dr. Sue Ann Barratt, Head at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus and member of CariMAN, the MenEngage-affiliated network in the Caribbean region, speaking at the MenEngage Masculinities and Climate Justice Forum in Belgium, October 2024

#3 Strengthening knowledge on the links between the climate crisis and patriarchal masculinities

In September 2023, the Climate and Environmental Justice Working group published a *joint opinion editorial* on the links between economic injustice and extreme wealth, masculinities, and the climate crisis.

In February 2024, a workshop “*Patriarchal structures & prevailing masculinity norms as important root causes to the climate crisis*” was held where the Working Group’s members

Sohanur Rahman, Jan Reynders, and Kayinga Muddu discussed the connection between gender and environmental issues as part of the **MenEngage** Europe Monthly Webinar series.

In 2024, we also shared messaging across social media to explain why patriarchy is a root cause of the climate crisis through *simple and engaging visuals*.

CLIMATE JUSTICE

#4 Engaging men & boys around climate justice

At the Climate Justice and Masculinities Forum in Belgium, 2024, members of the Working Group recorded videos to break down, in simple, easy to understand language, why men and boys must question and reject

restrictive, harmful, and narrow definitions of manhood in order to support more sustainable practices and politics. These recordings are to be used in videos forthcoming in 2025.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

The connections between masculinities and the climate and ecological crisis are increasingly recognized within and beyond **MenEngage Alliance**. Yet, many initiatives still approach climate justice as an afterthought —adding actions like recycling or using public transport to existing gender equality programs and messaging. By focusing on symptoms rather than systems, such efforts leave the underlying drivers of both the climate emergency and gender injustices unaddressed.

feminist and climate justice movements, **MenEngage Alliance** has a pivotal role to play in advancing systemic transformation for a liveable and just future for all.

The nexus of climate and masculinities underscores the need to continue advancing a feminist systems-change agenda in the work of engaging men and boys. Without addressing the structural drivers — extractive economies, patriarchal norms, and unsustainable models of power and production— efforts for climate and gender justice will remain fragmented and ineffective.

Building on the momentum of the 2021–2024 Strategic Period, the Climate Justice Working Group and a growing community of practice at the intersection of climate and masculinities remain committed to deepening this work. By collaborating with

How members amplified the care agenda at the heart of gender, economic and climate justice

Fatherhood has traditionally served as a gateway for engaging men in gender justice work through their roles as caregivers—an approach long-employed by many members of MenEngage Alliance around the world. However, in the run up to and during the 2021-2024 Strategic Period, MenEngage Alliance advanced a critical agenda: that advancing gender justice requires more than just working with men as individuals. It demands a fundamental societal shift that transforms the notion that care is ‘unmasculine’. Such a shift is essential for achieving gender equality. Through high-level advocacy wins, publications, learning sessions, and speaking engagements, MenEngage Alliance added a critical men and masculinities lens to the feminist-led agenda around *economies of care*.

CAREGIVING



Being part of MenEngage Alliance has been very enriching to be part of projects with other organisations that are working in the same field and to meet people who are working with great conviction for gender justice in different regions. This has been extremely important in strengthening my work on issues of masculinities, care, and fatherhood in Latin America. It has allowed me to learn about other experiences, access useful and up-to-date information, but above all, to feel part of a community that is constantly working to transform gender inequalities with critical and contextualised perspectives.

— **Pamela Saavedra Castro**, Sociologist, University of Chile, co-coordinator of MenEngage Latin America



How members embraced and advanced an agenda of feminist care

Over the four-year period covered by this report, our political agenda has been deeply informed by two global trends. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed society’s dependence on care. Secondly, an increasing

dominance of militarisation in public policy and discourse —especially in response to conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine— has come at the expense of *care* and the systems of support on which all people rely.

CAREGIVING

Yet feminist movements and economic justice advocates have been pioneering solutions for many years, around a transformative vision that recognizes care as a universal human need and a collective responsibility that touches everyone. Advocates and activists within and beyond **MenEngage Alliance** pushed this vision up our collective agenda in the past four years, beginning with a learning series on “Politics of Care” and subsequent discussion paper on *Unpaid Care and Economies of Care* as part of the **MenEngage** Ubuntu Symposium in 2021. In parallel to this, the collectively-drafted *Ubuntu Declaration and Call to Action* called for ‘a sustainable social economic order based on care, responsibility and accountability’.

The developments foregrounded our collective advocacy and activism at national, regional, and global levels in the years that followed. The symposium and the ongoing **MenEngage** CoLab initiative strengthened understandings on men, masculinities and care through a host of discussions ranging from how to use *parenting programmes to reduce violence against women and children* to exploring the *gendered politics of giving and receiving care*.

From contributing to the adoption of **Argentina’s** 2022 *Cuidar en Igualdad Bill* to

training 1,600 **Brazilian** public health managers on equitable parental leave policies; from *MenEngage Lebanon’s 5 P’s communications product*, to **MenEngage Alliance South Asia’s** videos *deconstructing masculinities* in South Asian Media and care inequalities, to advocating for the recognition of care work in economic policy before the Organization for Security and Co-operation in **Europe** (OSCE) and the *Nordic Co-operation Programme for Gender Equality and LGBTI 2025-2030* - **MenEngage Alliance** members and networks have been driving the agenda forward.

Globally, the **MenCare Campaign**, launched together with **MenEngage Alliance** in 2011, continued to be advanced by **MenEngage** members, including Equimundo at the global level; and Sonke Gender Justice (Africa), CulturaSalud (Latin America) and CES (Europe). A series of national, regional, and global *State of the World’s Fathers* reports provides important statistics and strategic guidance for centering care in masculinities connected to fatherhood and other caregiving roles of men. These and many other efforts around the network collectively shifted policy discourses, embedding a transformative vision of masculinity within an agenda that puts care at the centre of social and economic systems.

How we joined feminists in advocating for care in global policy

A key milestone was influencing the *2024 UN Resolution on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls: Economic Discrimination*, which explicitly called for engaging men and boys in care redistribution and gender based violence prevention.

In collaboration with the **MenEngage Alliance** Advocacy Working Group and Youth Reference Group —alongside members Breakthrough Trust and Sonke Gender Justice— we utilized our ECOSOC status to underscore a critical issue in our *joint submission to CSW68*, noting that ‘women and girls continue to spend two

PRIORITY ISSUES

CAREGIVING

to 10 times more time than men and boys on unpaid care work.’ Amplifying feminist and Global South perspectives, we reinforced that ‘care is the engine needed to keep social, economic and political life functioning’. At the same time, we mobilized members and amplified messaging online for equitable care in the public discourse surrounding CW68, through our #WeWontWait campaign.

Elsewhere, we contributed to the World Bank Gender Strategy (2024–2030), with efforts of ours and others resulting in the framing of care economies as a key to poverty reduction and sustainable development. At CSW66, we advanced the agenda through the Parallel Session *Men and unpaid Care Work: Global Perspectives COVID and Beyond*

Lessons learned and the road ahead

Care stands out within progressive movements as a concept that is simultaneously easy for anyone to understand, while offering the depth needed to weave together systemic justice issues to do with economics, climate, and gender. While much progress has been made embedding care as a cross-cutting agenda across **MenEngage Alliance**, its full potential for members and the broader ‘men and masculinities’ field remains unrealized due to resource constraints and competing priorities. Many members with expertise and track-records advocating around care hope to address this by fostering community-of-practice approaches as a basis for amplifying our collective impact. Prioritising and supporting such initiatives is crucial in the coming years to collectively politicise care —within and beyond **MenEngage Alliance**— as an imperative for achieving gender, climate, and social justice for all.

How LGBTQI+ members led the calls for justice within MenEngage Alliance, in a world that continues to deny and threaten these rights

Recognising and celebrating diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) is a key element in dismantling harmful gender stereotypes and achieving gender justice. Advancing these issues in MenEngage Alliance has long been done through the leadership of queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTQI+) individuals across the network. The 2021-2024 strategic period saw us push back against anti-LGBTQI+ legislation and politics, elevate LGBTQI+ leaders through new institutional structures and positions, and unapologetically celebrate gender and sexual diversity alongside intersectional feminist movements in a time of increasing hostility to LGBTQI+ issues and communities.

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY



Everyone is impacted by harmful gender norms: gender-based violence, the rise in misogynistic, anti-LGBTQI+, and hateful ideologies, the lack of emotional intelligence, loneliness among youth, and more. The world is becoming divisive, especially regarding gender justice, framing women’s and LGBTQI+ rights’ movements as against men. MenEngage flips this ‘us vs. them’ script by calling on men to work together for the liberation of all.

— **Humberto Carolo**, CEO White Ribbon, Canada & Global Board member of **MenEngage Alliance**



Gender and sexual diversity was a central priority from the outset of the four-year period covered by this report, and a direct result of existing initiatives like the SOGIESC Learning Circle, established in 2017. This ensured that discussion on gender and sexual diversity was strongly integrated in the **MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium**, and further

solidified in the subsequent *Discussion Paper on SHRH & SOGIESC* within the context of masculinities. In 2022, the adoption of our **MenEngage Alliance** updated, collectively developed, *Core Principles* reaffirmed that, as an alliance, ‘we celebrate and embrace diverse identities, expressions, and characteristics of sex, gender and sexuality’.

How MenEngage Alliance embedded a culture of LGBTQI leadership

Over the past four years, **MenEngage Alliance** has strategically prioritized LGBTQI+ inclusion within our structures, recognizing that authentic global impact necessitates embodying values through a coalition that genuinely celebrates gender and sexual diversity.

This commitment includes the **MenEngage** Global Board's dedicated LGBTQI+ representation seat, which resulted in the 2022 election of Festus Kisa, co-founder of Kenya's Q-Initiative as Global Co-Chair - along with Samitha Sughatimala of FISS Sri Lanka representing the women's rights constituency. At the regional and country level, **MenEngage Alliance South Asia** broadened LGBTQI+ inclusion through its 2021 strategy which

spurred **MenEngage** networks in Nepal and Sri Lanka to successfully seek LGBTQI+ rights organisations to join their memberships. Seeking to advance LGBTQI+ leadership, **MenEngage Africa** members elected an LGBTQI+ rights activist as Chairperson of its Youth Steering Committee; and country networks in Botswana, Eswatini, and Rwanda integrated LGBTQI+ representatives into their Steering Committees. These institutional advancements are crucial for dismantling heteronormativity within **MenEngage Alliance**, for determining who has a 'seat at the table', to shape our collective agendas from the bottom up, and to strengthen our collective actions for gender justice for all.

How members took action for LGBTQI+ rights

The increasingly challenging global landscape for LGBTQI+ rights, characterized by rising transphobia in politics and policy, galvanized **MenEngage Alliance** members into collective action. Through actions including regular, timely *statements* on key LGBTQI+ awareness dates shared across all our communications channels, and a Pride month digital campaign featuring LGBTQI+ members around the world, we were able to provide *consistent public solidarity for LGBTQI+ rights* and foster a more inclusive global discourse.

draconian legislation through collective condemnation and advocacy at regional and global levels. Critically, we were able to provide direct support to members persecuted by the law because of their activism, by providing connections to legal and financial aid.

The response to Uganda's 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Act aimed to challenge the

SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

Influencing policy spaces as a voice of solidarity for LGBTQI+ rights

MenEngage Alliance amplified our advocacy for LGBTQI+ rights throughout 2021-2024, including a 2024 meeting with the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. This dialogue addressed the intersections of patriarchal masculinities,

anti-gender movements, and violence against LGBTQI+ communities. 2024 saw **MenEngage Alliance** partnering with ILGA and AWID at the Human Rights Council to champion policies around self determination of gender identity.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

The current political climate presents a stark challenge to fundamental human rights, with governments actively suppressing individuals’ rights to love freely and express their identities authentically. As a network committed to diversity, inclusion, intersectional feminism, and universal human rights, **MenEngage Alliance** views this trend with profound dismay and is resolute to continue taking collective action in the coming years, in partnership with LGBTQI+ and feminist movements.

demand that allies actively step forward, taking accountable action in alignment with LGBTQI+ rights and feminist movements. We firmly believe that ending transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia is not a supplementary concern but a core imperative of gender justice, as these oppressions are inextricably linked, stemming from shared patriarchal roots and requiring a unified, intersectional response.

Our 2021-2024 Evaluation revealed a critical area for growth within our own circles: a significant minority —one-third of members who informed the Evaluation— felt that LGBTQI+ issues were not sufficiently integrated across the **Alliance**. This finding underscores the urgent need to enhance visibility, inclusion, leadership, and concrete action concerning LGBTQI+ rights throughout our network and beyond.

As a network that recognizes the complexities of privilege, moments of heightened persecution against marginalized groups

How members advanced visions of peace amid global conflicts and resurgent militarism

Amid global conflicts and a pervasive political landscape of militarism, state violence, isolationism, nationalism, and war, MenEngage Alliance has become a powerful space for organizations to radically reimagine masculinities as part of feminist peacebuilding efforts. Through MenEngage Alliance, and working in tandem with feminist partners, members have brought to the forefront of high-level policy discussions the patriarchal foundations of war. Together, we have worked to expose the links between dominant masculine gender norms and a culture of militarism —norms that often go unchallenged thanks to powerful political and economic interests that normalise the idea that war is inevitable. We know this is not the case, and have made strides in amplifying alternative visions based on care, cooperation, and peace.

FEMINIST PEACEBUILDING

As with many areas of our work, the **MenEngage** Ubuntu Symposium acted as a springboard for renewed energy to collectively address the links between patriarchal masculinities and the root causes of war and militarism. Having been prioritised as a key thematic area during the symposium, the numerous dialogues and exchanges

were captured in our 2022 discussion paper, *Peacebuilding and Countering Militarism*. This paper, along with our public archive of *online sessions on the nexus of masculinities, militarism, and peacebuilding*, has served as both a key learning resource and an agenda-setter for our subsequent work, for the wider field, and in our joint advocacy efforts.

How networks and members addressed militarised masculinities from the grassroots to global

The 2021-2024 Strategic Period

commenced with a grassroots initiative addressing the links between militarisation and masculinity. The *Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace* project, in partnership with our Global Board member, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), engaged **MenEngage** networks in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Colombia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, fostering bottom-up organizing to influence local, regional, and global agendas and advocacy. This collaborative effort informed policy through joint advocacy and strengthened alliances between feminist peace organizations and those working with men for gender equality. In addition, it generated a substantial new body of research and analysis on the drivers, forms, and solutions to militarised masculinities, along with compelling communication tools, notably the feature-length documentary *Power On Patrol*.

The project illustrated the synergy of integrating complementary frameworks — male engagement and the Women, Peace and Security agenda— for transnational movement-building and a comprehensive

approach to creating change. Building on this, **MenEngage Alliance** furthered our alliance-building around the issue in 2023 by joining an international coalition —co-led by WILPF and peace organisation PAX— of organizations, activists, researchers, and practitioners, which culminated in a strategic gathering in Tbilisi, Georgia, to develop shared strategies for demilitarisation and feminist peace.

Throughout multiple convenings and online dialogues over the four-year period, **MenEngage Alliance** members with specific expertise collaborated to unpack and highlight the intersections of militarisation with issues such as gender-based violence, the climate crisis, and sexual and reproductive health rights. This work advanced the recognition that effectively addressing conflict and building sustainable peace requires the fundamental and simultaneous transformation of patriarchal systems, militarised economies, and colonial legacies.

FEMINIST PEACEBUILDING

How members collectively pushed transforming patriarchal masculinities up the peacebuilding advocacy agenda

MenEngage Alliance counts some of the world's most effective voices for exposing how harmful ideas about being a man relate not only to individual violence, but to conflicts on national, regional, and global scales. Individually, and through **MenEngage Alliance**, they are advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in a time of rising geopolitical tensions.

Our collective advocacy has achieved progress in two key areas: first, pushing policymakers to integrate masculinities analysis into feminist foreign policy, informed by the collective insights of the global Advocacy Working Group; and second, calling out the small minority of people in power —predominantly men— who actively invest in preserving a paradigm of

militarism and suppressing resistance to the systems that perpetuate their interests.

With the support of the Advocacy Working Group, we have brought greater attention to the imperative of transforming patriarchal masculinities for peace, ensuring that policy demands for ending militarisation and building feminist peace are heard in international policy spaces. We have provided technical inputs and engaged in formal advocacy processes in a range of bodies including the Human Rights Council, Commission on the Status of Women, Generation Equality Forum's Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, a UN Open Debate on Women Peace and Security, and raised the issue at the Feminist Foreign Policy conference in the Netherlands in 2023 and Mexico in 2024.

Calling out atrocities, and showing collective solidarity for those affected

The four-year period of this report has been defined by persistent and escalating global conflict. Amidst horrific human rights atrocities, we remained resolute in our visibility and vocal support for those impacted. Crucially, we also continued to call out those in power, particularly male leaders, for their role in perpetuating the patriarchal cycles of state-led violence and war. Like many progressive movements and voices, we have operated under the unwavering

conviction that speaking out is essential, even when our direct capacity to prevent these unfolding tragedies feels limited.

Leveraging our on-the-ground presence through members and networks in affected regions, we swiftly published statements in response to the 2023 atrocities in Palestine and Israel, and the subsequent Israeli-led and Western-sanctioned attacks, humanitarian crisis, and practices consistent

FEMINIST PEACEBUILDING

with genocide in Gaza. Collaborating with members and regional **MenEngage** networks, we also condemned the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and Western failures in the

region, Russia's war on Ukraine, and the violence between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

The past four years unfolded against a backdrop of escalating global geopolitical tensions, instability, and deepening ecological crises. In this fragile reality, peace and cooperation are not idealistic goals but essential prerequisites for the survival and well-being of present and future generations who must share finite resources within increasingly vulnerable life-supporting ecosystems. Recognizing this urgency, addressing patriarchal masculinities at the roots of war remains a critical and immense challenge. However, the dedicated work of **MenEngage Alliance** and our members shows that grassroots solutions exist.

Driven by this understanding, **MenEngage Alliance** and our members will continue to challenge the fatalistic paradigm that war is inevitable. As an alliance, we remain deeply committed to nurturing transformative spaces at the grassroots, empowering men and boys to critically examine and actively reject harmful masculine norms that fuel conflict, dominance, aggression, violence, and war. This collective grassroots experience will continue to inform our advocacy at all levels —national, regional, and global, while setting a bold tone to reshape public and cultural narratives surrounding militarised masculinities. Through these and other actions, **MenEngage Alliance** will continue to strengthen our voice and impact in the global movement for feminist peace.

How members embarked on a shared journey of racial justice and decolonisation

Between 2021 and 2024, members of MenEngage Alliance amplified the understanding across the network that gender justice is inextricable from racial justice and decolonization. Members and networks of the Alliance were able to take collective steps forward in the long journey of dismantling racism and colonialism in the struggle for gender, climate, and social justice. While the integration of this lens is a critical milestone, we know there is a long way to go for deeper transformation across the network, wider field, and society.

RACIAL JUSTICE & DECOLONISATION



It is no longer sufficient to merely oppose right-wing ideologies or to identify as a liberal or leftist. Instead, we must come together as humanity —anti-racist, feminist, union members, climate activists— gathering in a circle beneath the tree of wisdom and life to cultivate Ubuntu — fostering love, active solidarity and compassion for all living beings.

— **Nontoko Sedibe-Sabic**, advocate for social and climate justice, facilitator of the **MenEngage CoLab** series on Decolonization in 2023, and the **MenEngage Europe** facilitated dialogues on Anti-Racism.

While anti-racism and decolonization have long been key concerns for **MenEngage Alliance**, it was the ongoing activism of indigenous and racial justice movements that propelled these issues to the forefront of our agenda. The global outcry after George Floyd's murder in the USA, to Indigenous leaders

at the forefront of climate action, the Black Lives Matter movement and the toppling of colonial symbols worldwide, these moments have created the imperative for members to come together to deepen our commitment for interconnected work to address privileges and transform unequal power relations.

Members push racial justice and decolonisation up the agenda

In 2021 racial justice and decolonisation were cemented as priorities for **MenEngage Alliance** in the Ubuntu Declaration and Call to Action. The document put decolonisation front-and-centre—not only for **MenEngage Alliance**, but as a priority for the field of engaging men and boys— by committing to ‘question and unpack how colonial, eurocentric, Global-North hegemonic structures of power and dominance continue to produce inequalities around the world.’ Through the Ubuntu Declaration and Call to Action, members collectively highlighted that ‘personal transformation is deeply interwoven to social

change’ calling for those working for gender justice to ‘reflect on power and privilege’.

The following year, members and partners engaged in a comprehensive review of our shared *Core Principles*, resulting in the new principles: ‘We strive to address racism and its root causes’ and ‘We strive to decolonize our systems, practices, values, and mindsets’.

These participatory processes set a clear mandate for amplifying racial justice and decolonisation as part of the work to challenge harmful ideas relating to masculinity.

Addressing uncomfortable truths through bold spaces

Collectively dismantling systems of oppression requires a shared understanding and honest reckoning. With this in mind, much of the work during the period covered by this report revolved around fostering processes for reflection, dialogue, learning, unlearning, and growth.

Because of the historical and ongoing injustice and trauma caused by racism and colonialism, creating such spaces is itself a process requiring careful planning, trust-building, and self-awareness. At a structural level, this meant creating space for confronting the racialised and colonial power dynamics within **MenEngage**, which reflect inherent global power imbalances. At the individual level, it meant supporting members—particularly

those with privileges based on their racial and ethnic identities— through their journeys of inner work, understanding, and growth.

Addressing both individual and structural levels, 380 members participated in a seven-part online series on decolonization as part of the **MenEngage CoLab**. Given the sensitivity and importance of this work, anti-racism and decolonisation expert Nontoko Sabic was engaged to facilitate the series, supporting our members in navigating the process of addressing the ways we internalise and practice racism, especially unconsciously. This program drew on expertise within and beyond **MenEngage Alliance** to establish a shared foundation for understanding colonialism, while equipping participants with practical

RACIAL JUSTICE & DECOLONISATION



Members of MenEngage Europe engaging in a workshop on racial justice and decolonisation at the regional members meeting in Berlin, Germany, in November 2022.

frameworks for putting racial justice and decolonisation into practice in their lives and work. The series was made available online and has attracted more than 1,000 views.

Recognising their location in colonial nations, several members of **MenEngage** Europe established an anti-racism working group that convened a series of online sessions on racial justice and decolonisation, plus an in-person workshop at the European Members Assembly in Berlin, Germany in 2023 —also facilitated by Nontokoza Sobic. As well as raising awareness,

these sessions provided members with tools on how to approach decolonization in their work across the region. In North America, members raised their consciousness on the issue through a peer-to-peer dialogue online session focused on decolonisation and anti-racism.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

Although we would like to see systems of colonialism and racism unravelled today, they are deep-rooted and held in place by a neoliberal economic consensus, geopolitics that maintain the power of wealthy nations over others, and the persistence of white supremacy—in hidden and overt forms. Yet, as a network, we can focus on the scope we have to effect collective change.

Decolonisation and racial justice are complex issues, and will continue to require us to engage in challenging and uncomfortable discussions. In our communications, it is a critical task to use plain, accessible language, seeing this as part of matters of equality and rights. As a network, we must continue to take action to address power inequalities, combat biases, and foster recognition and action to mobilise the various aspects of individual privilege we have for collective liberation.

Glossary of key terms

This glossary provides brief descriptions of how **MenEngage Alliance** understands and applies the key concepts that are at the core of our work. This glossary can be consulted as a reference throughout reading this proposal document, as not to repeatedly provide detailed explanations in the document itself/texts that follow.

→ **Accountability:** For **MenEngage Alliance** being accountable is a proactive responsibility. The onus falls on us as individuals, organisations, and as a global community to be accountable in words and deeds. We strive to hold each other and ourselves accountable in the work through our communities at national, regional and global levels, especially to women's rights organisations, LGBTQI organisations, and movements for intersectional feminism and gender justice. By being accountable, we aim to ensure our efforts are effective and impactful for gender equality, women's rights, and LGBTIQ rights for all.

→ **Enabling spaces for dialogue and joint action:** **MenEngage Alliance**, being informed by a feminist approach, engages in strengthening partnerships, networks and alliances as a political act to change and a tool for empowerment within movement building. We work 'glocal': where ideas from the local to the global are jointly identified, shared, negotiated, changed, and disseminated.

→ **Engaging men and boys:** We work with men and boys to encourage their active involvement in ending gender inequalities, advancing women's & LGBTQI rights and transforming masculinities as allies with women, girls and people of diverse gender identities. Recognizing that some men and boys question the harmful notions of manhood and the privileges that society grants them, we provide them with ways to take transformative action. We work with men in all spheres of society to promote progressive policies and institutional practices in favour of women's rights and gender justice.

→ **Feminist approach:** We acknowledge that we build on the heritage of feminist women's rights organisations and movements and ground our work firmly in feminist principles. We seek to strengthen our work by embracing a women's rights perspective and feminist analysis, including placing inequalities in privilege and power that result from patriarchy at the heart of our work with men and boys. We commit to listening to and being accountable to women's rights voices; and to institutionalising democratic and inclusive decision making processes within the **Alliance**.

→ **Gender transformative approaches:** Policies, processes and strategies that seek to critically reflect on and transform social norms and institutional practices that create and reinforce gender inequalities. Gender transformative approaches do not view the

engagement of men and boys as an end in itself, rather as a means to transform social norms and gender power relations at their roots. Gender transformative approaches are part of a ‘gender integration continuum’ that classifies interventions as gender exploitative, gender neutral, gender sensitive or gender transformative. **MenEngage** seeks to support the increased uptake of gender transformative approaches with men and boys through the work of the **Alliance**.

- **Intersectionality:** We acknowledge that oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. This interplay of multiple identities can increase vulnerability and inequalities in privilege and power, and further entrench inequalities and injustice. We seek to contribute to an intersectional understanding of men and boys’ roles and responsibilities, and enhance an intersectional perspective in the work of the **Alliance** and its members.
- **Partnerships:** We seek to foster concrete and equal associations and collaborations with various actors and agencies in the field of women’s rights, gender and social justice, climate justice, child rights, youth empowerment and rights, sexual

and reproductive health rights, civil and political rights, indigenous population rights, human rights, among others.

- **Transform and end patriarchy:** We seek to work with men and boys, along with women, girls and people of diverse gender identities, to redress structural power imbalances and inequalities, male domination and their manifestations upheld by systemic male supremacy ideologies and structures, and to reform such dualistic and sexist gender orders.
- **Transform masculinities:** We seek to destabilise stereotypical male gender roles and hegemonic expressions of manhood, and support manifestations of non-violent, equitable and inclusive notions of manhood, by changing social norms that shape boys’ and men’s behaviour.
- **Working as allies with women’s rights organisations:** We are committed to working as allies, and to fostering healthy relationships, with women and women’s rights organisations, movements and networks to achieve equity and equality for women and girls, and justice for all, as a political act to strengthen the collective struggle for human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.

The following terminology is used to refer to specific entities within MenEngage Alliance:

- **MenEngage Alliance**, or *the Alliance*, refers to the collective of entities that constitute the international network: the MenEngage Global Alliance, Global Secretariat, Regional

and country Networks, and all Alliance organisational and individual members. The term is distinct from *MenEngage Global Alliance* which supports this network to achieve its full potential.

- **MenEngage Global Alliance** refers to the non-profit organisation which serves as the implementing entity of the program, responsible for anchoring the work of the **Alliance** and supporting its members' activities. MenEngage Global Alliance is registered in the USA as a 501(c)3 organisation.
- **MenEngage Global Board**, or the *Board*, refers to the Board of Directors that is responsible for the governance of the **Alliance** at the global level. This includes oversight of programs and finances, and carrying out fundraising for the organisation *MenEngage Global Alliance*. The Board consists of representatives from the **Alliance's** regional networks, international at-large members, and core-constituency groups that the **Alliance** considers itself accountable to.
- **MenEngage Global Secretariat**, or *Global Secretariat (GS)*, refers to the executive body of the MenEngage Global Alliance. It is composed of a staff-team responsible for the implementation of the **Alliance's** strategic priorities, carrying out fundraising for the organisation (supported by the Board), and managing the budget. The staff-team is based in various locations around the world. e.



MenEngage Alliance

working with men and boys for gender equality