

Faith-based Approaches to Transforming Masculinities for Gender Justice & Equality: A Two-day Consultation

1-2 August 2016, Washington, D.C

Summary Report



MenEngage Alliance
working with men and boys for gender equality

tearfund

Acknowledgements

MenEngage Alliance extends its deepest thanks to Prabu Deepan and Veena O’Sullivan of Tearfund for their invaluable technical and financial support in organizing the consultation; without your enthusiastic collaboration, this event would not have occurred.

The Global Secretariat would like to express its gratitude to the representatives of MenEngage regional networks from Africa, Middle East, North America and South Asia, and of UN Women, and the experts from various faith-based/inspired organizations for their support and active participation in the consultation: Amy Gopp (Rev.) of We Will Speak Out/US coalition; Anthony Keedi of ABAAD – Resource Centre for Gender Equality; Bafana Khumalo of Sonke Gender Justice; Bilquis Tahira of Shirakat Partnership for Development; Chrystal Corman of World Faiths Development Dialogue; Danielle Robertson of the U.S. Institute of Peace; Kirsten Laursen Muth of Episcopal Relief & Development; Negar Abay of Baha’I International Community/Baha’is of the United States; Shafferan Sonneveld of Muslims for Progressive Values; Shereen El Feki of Promundo US; Susan Heyward of the U.S. Institute of Peace; and Tim Shand of IRH/Georgetown University. MenEngage Alliance also would like to thank Sinead Nolan, Laxman Belbase and Oswaldo Montoya for pulling together this report.

MenEngage Alliance looks forward to taking its dialogue with faith-based leaders and organizations – especially in collaboration with feminist faith leaders – ahead with the continued support of expert members within the Alliance. MenEngage will further build on its members’ ongoing innovative and locally-relevant work to engage individuals and institutions working with faith-based strategies and approaches. With this, we will continue strengthening our collective efforts and voices to counter religious and other forms of faith-informed fundamentalisms.

Contents

Background	4
What do we mean by 'Faith-based approaches'?	5
Experiences from the Field: Programs & Projects on faith-based approaches	6
Lessons Learned, Challenges & Observations	10
Introduction to MenEngage Alliance	12
Reasoning and Prioritizing Common Messaging for a Joint Agenda	13
WHAT: Defining a Joint Agenda	15
WHO: Potential Allies & Partners	16
HOW: Ways Forward and Promising Strategies	17
Conclusion	20
Annexure	I
A. Agenda	I
B. Resources	II
C. List of Participants	III
D. Presentations	IV

Background

Spirituality, religion or faith-based beliefs significantly influence the lives of more than 85 percent of the global population. Such belief systems and associated practices can, in turn, strongly influence believers' norms and value systems, both positively and negatively. While a critical evaluation of the roles played by faith-based belief systems in shaping gender norms is essential, it is also important to work with people of faith to promote positive interpretations of spiritual, faith and religious values, supportive of parity and justice.

Given the profound influence of faith and religion on human development, socialization and on the traditions and cultures of the world, an increasing engagement between gender equality organizations and activists and faith-based communities or leaders has become common. This engagement, while still on a relatively small scale, has opened a window of opportunity to explore ways that faith and religion may promote, rather than hinder, gender equality. However, despite the promise of faith-based approaches to gender equality, there is extremely limited availability of systematic review or systematized evidence to support this work.

MenEngage Alliance and Tearfund, organised a two-day consultation in Washington D.C. in August 2016, to collectively explore and gain better understanding of faith-based approaches to transforming masculinities for gender justice. Twenty-two gender experts, including some faith leaders, from within and outside the Alliance and faith-based organizations, came together to share experiences, explore lessons learned from working with faith-based approaches for gender equality and begin to develop a joint agenda.

The specific objectives of the consultation were:

- To discuss promising practices and lessons learned in programming based on faith-based approaches
- To identify common strategies for working with faith-based approaches vis-à-vis the focus areas of the MenEngage Alliance's global strategy
- To identify joint advocacy opportunities, with a specific focus on addressing the negative influences of faith-based institutions.

What do we mean by 'Faith-based approaches'?

Day 1: Sharing of Experiences & Lessons Learned

The consultation began with a focus on sharing experiences from around the world of working with faith-based approaches and with faith leaders for gender justice and transforming masculinities. Participants from different regions and contexts shared strategies, challenges faced and lessons learned from a wide range of programmes, campaigns and advocacy initiatives.

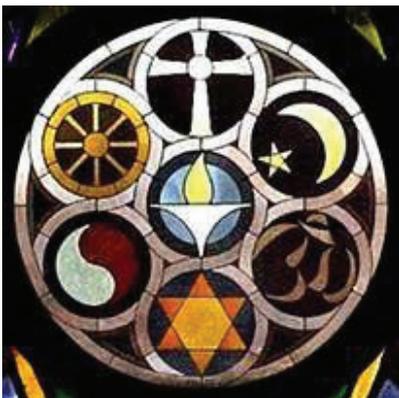
Following introductions and brief descriptions of involvement to date with faith-based approaches, participants shared their understanding of the term 'faith-based approaches'.

Prabu Deepan, from Tearfund and the facilitator of this session, started off by sharing his organization's experience of working with faith-based approaches to transform masculinities for gender justice. Tearfund works with religious leaders to help them examine their own values and attitudes about gender equality. They use the term 'faith' instead of 'religion', as its interpreted to be more inclusive and to sound less threatening, and takes into account the fact that most people have some kind of faith but may not necessarily associate with any organized religion. He explained that in its programs Tearfund does not directly challenge gender roles but rather the values that one assigns to these roles, and how one negotiates and plays out the roles. Following this presentation, other participants shared their views on how they understand faith-based approaches based on their own experiences of working with religious or faith communities and leaders.

There was a general agreement that faith, religion and notions of masculinities (values around what it means to be a man) are deeply interrelated, and shape each other closely, partly stemming from the fact that, typically, religious leaders across different world faiths are male. The group acknowledged the influence of faith on people's lives and shaping social norms and the need to explore opportunities to advocate for gender justice from within these spaces. There was a shared recognition that this can be challenging, given the many negative experiences among those in the gender justice field, especially women's rights organisations and activists.

There was an acknowledgement of the disconnect between the teaching of religious texts within various cultures and traditions, and the multiple interpretations of such teachings at the general public level. Historically, these texts have been interpreted by men, and much of these interpretations have promoted male dominance and even violence against women and girls. On the other hand, there is considerable scope for the reinterpretation of religious texts and there have been interpretations compatible with human rights, feminist principles and gender equality. In this regard, the potential of religion as a catalyst for positive social change was widely acknowledged. Participants also stressed the many links and compatibilities between the principles of faith and the principles of human rights and social justice, which can offer an extremely strategic entry point to work with faith-based approaches to transform masculinities for gender justice.

Some highlighted that there could be different and varying understanding or associations among people of faith between the terms "faith-based" and "faith inspired" organizations or initiatives, and that even the term faith may not be inclusive enough to all spiritual traditions.



Experiences from the Field: Faith-based programs and projects

During the next session, participants, primarily MenEngage Alliance members representing different regions, presented the faith-based programs and initiatives with which they were involved.

1. Bafana Khumalo (Rev.), Director-Social & Structural Drivers Unit, Sonke Gender Justice/MenEngage Africa, South Africa
2. Bilquis Tahira, Chairperson, Shirakat-Partnership for Development/MenEngage Alliance, Pakistan
3. Anthony Keedi, Program Coordinator-Masculinities, ABAAD-Resource Centre for Gender Equality/MenEngage Alliance, Lebanon
4. Shafferan Sonneveld, Global Advocacy Director, Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV), USA
5. Marina Mancinelli, Program Specialist, UN Women, USA

During the presentation and discussions, participants were asked to use post-it to write down common threads identified across presentations, promising practices, key issues, major challenges and other key points they wanted to highlight. Participants were later requested to stick the post-it on charts under four separate headings as follows:

- WHY (why is it important to work with faith-based approaches)
- WHAT (what kind of activities were found to be meaningful and important, what can we do collectively to advance faith-based approaches)
- HOW (the strategies that stood out for them)
- WHO (who are potential allies or partners in this work).

Participants agreed that well executed and strategic faith-based programs and initiatives can be an effective means of transforming social and gender norms, due to the credibility of religious leaders and institutions in society. Some highlighted the influential role that religious institutions have historically played in struggles against systemic social injustices such as slavery and apartheid in Africa, as well as in the global development agenda, especially in health and education. Working to transform masculinities involves engaging with strongly

held beliefs on what it means to 'be a man', based on existing cultural and religious interpretations of social expectations of boys and men. Most of the presenters highlighted this as a strong association between 'engaging boys and men in gender equality' and 'faith-based approaches'.

The presentations demonstrated that, although much is being done in relation to engaging faith-based communities and leaders in gender equality, there is a need for more strategic partnership building and coordination of efforts between the gender justice and faith-based arenas. The participants acknowledged that the influence of faith and religious groups and organisations is growing globally, including in global policy spaces such as UN, yet often it is not the most progressive voices that are heard. There is a need to create networks and partnerships to amplify the voices of feminist faith leaders and feminist religious interpretations and create an alternative, progressive global discourse on faith and gender, as part of a cohesive, intersectional, social justice movement.

The presenters emphasized the need to apprehend the difference between working with faith leaders and working with faith communities, a difference not often recognized. While working with faith leaders can be more challenging, a meaningful engagement with can have a greater and sustainable impact due to the level of influence they have in society. Both strategies were recognized as important and, depending on the particular context, either one, or a combination of both may be the most appropriate.

A similar methodology and modality was seen across the programs presented by the participants, summarized in the matrix below:

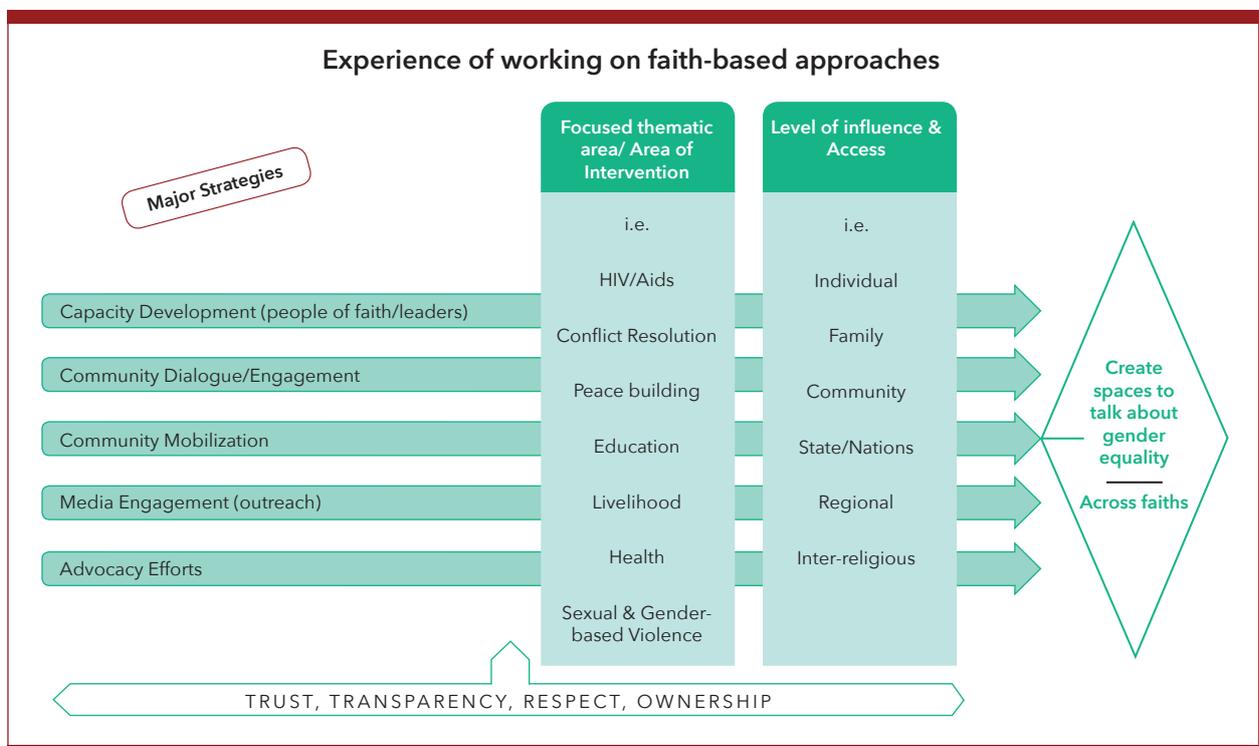


Figure 1: Common Strategies Identified to Work with Faith-based Approaches to Gender Justice

A common feature of the strategies presented, was the recognition that religious leaders and institutions are often suspicious of NGOs who are perceived as representing a western agenda, while NGOs are often sceptical about religious leaders' patriarchal ideologies and significant power. Building relationships between both parties, based on mutual respect, transparency, accountability and trust is therefore an essential, though slow, process. It is important that faith leaders and communities feel listened to as well as made aware of disagreements and tensions. Emphasis was placed on bringing gender equality within the scope of faith and religion, and helping faith leaders and communities see that the two are not mutually exclusive or incompatible.

Faith is an intersection of religion, practice and culture, with considerable overlap between the three, making it a challenging field in which to engage. An examination of practices and culture is required, as there is space to redefine them. Framing and language is crucial and it is often necessary to adapt tone and language, and not utilize terms considered 'development jargon', such as patriarchy, equality or justice, when beginning to engage with people of faith. One common strategy that emerged from the presentations was that of starting with less contested entry points such as violence against women, HIV/AIDS, or girls' access to education and from there introduce other issues once trust had been established.

A general consensus was reached that activists and organizations who want to, or are working with, faith-based approaches need to educate themselves on scriptures and their interpretation, as these texts are at the core of peoples' faith. Participants discussed the considerable amount already written about faith and gender justice by feminist academics and activists, including feminist interpretations of religious texts, that could be useful tools in attempting to 'speak the same language' as religious communities and leaders. The participants agreed on the potential role for the MenEngage Alliance and Tearfund in collecting the many existing resources in this sector, rather than trying to 'reinvent the wheel'.



Participants in the MenEngage Alliance-Tearfund consultation on faith-based approaches to transforming masculinities for gender justice and equality, held August 1-3, 2016 in Washington DC.

Building personal and collective (religious/faith) accountability was identified as an important component of this work. This requires a recognition of specific areas of disagreement between both parties and a mobilising of faith-champions to hold their peers accountable for misuse, abuse and misinterpretation of scriptural texts.

Ownership of programs and initiatives was also considered to be important. Sonke, Shirakat, Tearfund and Muslims for Progressive Values have worked directly with faith-leaders to jointly come up with program ideas, activities and strategies. By doing so, they have been able to build ownership and respect among faith communities and leaders. They have found that the faith-leaders generally engage well with programs and activities and in many instances even independently take the initiative to promote gender equality in their work.

A common emphasis in the presentations was on creating spaces for dialogue with faith communities, as distinct from monologues delivered by religious leaders. It was considered important to create space for questions, critical thinking and clarification of confusion about faith or religion. Although a resistance to discussing issues of substantive equality or sexuality was common at the start of programs, faith communities and leaders generally opened up during the later phases and were keen to talk about such issues, as they had not usually had previous opportunities to discuss or learn about them. Identifying areas of common ground was considered important. Although most likely there will not be agreement on all issues, there will usually be certain areas of agreement to work on together. Sometimes just the intentional efforts by NGOs to get religious leaders join the table for discussion was in itself a promising breakthrough.



Consultation participants listening to a presentation by Shafferan Sonneveld of Muslims for Progressive Values, right.

Lessons Learned, Challenges & Observations

A shared realisation emerged among participants that those working in the sector of women's rights or gender justice have very limited knowledge and understanding of religious texts and teachings, and that this can create a barrier to meaningful engagement with people of faith and the leaders.

Another challenge identified was the acceptance of progressive reinterpretations by people without the authority to do so. In Islam & Hinduism, for example, there are many conflicting authorities when it comes to interpretation of religious texts. In addition, religious texts and interpretations are very context specific. Language and translation is another barrier to the interpretation of scriptures and is often contested among religious scholars themselves.

Religious or faith groups are not homogenous groups, therefore there can be no "one strategy fits all" approach. Rather, the work with faith-based approaches must be contextualized to each setting. Participants agreed that faith-based interventions should have a programmatic vision, rather than a project character, as they require longer term, continuous and consistent engagement. In addition, participants acknowledged that, given the diversity that exists within the gender equality field and amongst faith leaders and institutions, there can initially only be alliances in relation to certain issues, rather than on a full gender equality agenda. A more comprehensive equality agenda will require continuous engagement and creative strategies over a much longer period of time.

Many organizations using faith-based approaches have faced a backlash from women's rights organizations and from the media who feel this work betrays what they stand for. This is partially due to the lack of evidence supporting faith-based approaches to gender equality, as well as trust and unwillingness of some groups to engage with faith communities, especially leaders. A further risk involved in this work is that faith leaders who engage in this work can be isolated from their peers and communities.

One of the biggest challenges in this work is not getting faith-based actors to the table, but getting secular development professionals involved. There is a widespread assumption that working on gender equality and having a faith are incompatible. The question was raised of how to move beyond such an assumption. This was identified by participants as an area of collective exploration for both MenEngage Alliance members and faith-based organizations.

While acknowledging that there are faith-based groups and leaders who are already closely working with LGBTIQ communities, including faith leaders who are open about their own diverse sexual orientation, the attitudes of many religious leaders' to LGBTIQ rights were identified as a common challenge.

Other questions raised, which were thought to require further reflection, included the following:

- What can be done if religious/faith leaders don't fully support all human rights principles, such as LGBTIQ rights?
- What can be done if they don't support all aspects of women's rights or gender equality, such as inheritance rights?
- How to work with what was described as religious/faith leaders' 'egos'?
- How to prevent backlash from religious camps?
- How to ensure that religious leaders are not perceived as the ones who are 'saving women's and girl's rights' and avoid reinforcing the role of the male 'protector' in this work?
- How to convince donors to support faith-based initiatives?
- How can actors from both fields work together without instrumentalizing each other, and enter into genuine partnerships or collaboration?

See Annex D for links to the full presentations.

Day 2: Strategic ways forward

The second day focused on exploring strategic ways forward and the creation of a joint agenda. Participants reflected on the intersection between faith-based approaches and work on men and masculinities. They also explored the added value that MenEngage Alliance can bring to the field and identified some concrete areas for collective action in the coming months and years.



Discussion during Day One of the MenEngage Alliance-Tearfund consultation on faith-based approaches to transforming masculinities for gender justice and equality.

Introduction to the MenEngage Alliance

Day two began with an introduction to the MenEngage Alliance, including its structure, organisation and strategies. The MenEngage Alliance is an international network of civil society organizations working together with men and boys, along with women and girls, to promote gender justice. The Alliance has a presence in over 66 countries globally, with 36 country networks, 6 regional networks, 700 non-governmental organizations, as well as UN partners. The Alliance works with men and boys to transform harmful notions of masculinity: as partners and allies; as clients who are gendered and can be at-risk themselves; as leaders and as agents of change. It honours the pioneering work of the women's rights movement, stands in solidarity with the on-going struggles for women's empowerment and rights and works in partnership with and holds itself accountable to feminist and women's rights organizations. The MenEngage Alliance does not support anti-feminist men's groups and is fundamentally opposed to groups that perpetuate privilege and patriarchy. Please refer to Annex D, for the detailed presentation.

I am a man fighting for women's rights in the Middle East: any questions?

I work for a Lebanese gender equality NGO, running programmes to reform macho culture. Ask me anything



📷 Anthony Keedi of Aaad at the gender violence summit in London. Photograph: Anna Leach for the Guardian

Reasoning and Prioritizing Common Messaging for a Joint Agenda

Following the introduction of the Alliance, participants were asked to reflect on the four charts from Day 1, consisting of key ideas, points and thoughts. An examination of the WHY question was considered to be a useful first step in framing a response to the remaining three questions.

Accordingly, the group was divided into 4 smaller groups to further elaborate their responses to the following question:

WHY should the MenEngage Alliance incorporate faith-based approaches into their work/ WHY should faith-based organizations incorporate a men and masculinities approach into their work?

The following reasons were identified:

- A large worldwide majority identify with a faith or religion of some sort, and most Alliance members work in predominantly faith-based contexts. If faith or religion attracts and retains so many people, then perhaps insights from those communities will help advance the work of transforming masculinities for gender equality.
- Many organizations, both within and outside the Alliance are already working on faith and masculinities. MenEngage Alliance can play a key role to coordinate these groups, share learning and strengthen their capacity.
- The core focus of the Alliance is on transforming masculinities/social norms in relation to “being a man”, and faith leaders and institutions are often those with the power to influence and (re)shape these norms.
- MenEngage Alliance can help add a ‘men and masculinities’ lens to work on faith and gender, and add a faith perspective to the discourses on men and masculinities.
- Conversations about power dynamics within religion and about the way the power of religion is played out in society are urgently required. The Alliance and its members can bring their expertise to this critical discussion and analysis of power, privilege and patriarchy in a faith context.
- Troubling worldwide trends make engaging with religion more urgent. We need to counter voices (individual and institutional) of faith/religion that are against gender equality, and, to be effective to people of faith, this must come from within faith communities.

- Collaboration is essential in order to counter highly organized conservative religious groups in global policy spaces.
- Many religions have central values and principles about hope, healing, redemption, restoration and reconciliation that align well with the core principles and values of the Alliance.
- The lack of space within faith communities for dialogue on gender equality was recognized and many religious spaces lack the resources, awareness and skills to begin these conversations. The Alliance can provide tools to help instigate constructive dialogue.
- Most religious leaders are men, while most active religious adherents are women. The Alliance is uniquely placed to contribute to constructive conversations and bring valuable lessons learned in working with men for gender inequality.
- There is a need to counter violent religious extremism among young men and the Alliance can provide conceptual clarity on the connections between violent extremism and masculinities.
- Members of the Alliance and other faith-based organizations share the same goals and can both benefit from getting together, listening and learning from each other.
- There are many organizations in the Alliance using faith-based approaches, some of which consider it a key strategy for their organisations, and many individuals of faith within the alliance that would like to see a stronger emphasis on faith.
- The Alliance is committed to intersectionality in its work and faith is an important component of intersecting identities for many people, including Alliance members.
- The MenEngage Alliance can assist in bridging the gap/binary between secular and religious actors, within the social justice movement.

Ingredients of a Joint Agenda

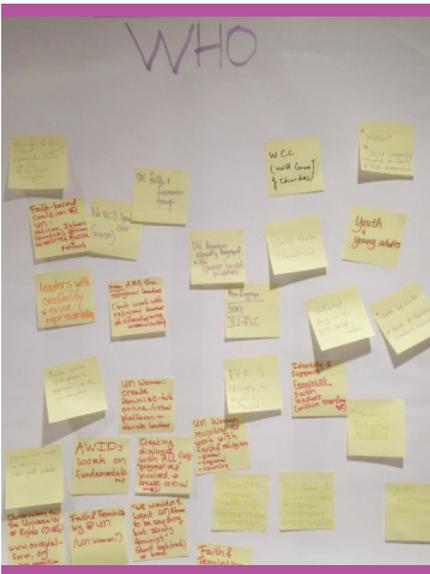
“Faith, gender and masculinities” is a learning agenda for MenEngage Alliance. Participants were requested to dig deep during the ‘why’ exercise to collectively come up with the basic ingredients of a joint agenda for the Alliance and its partners, including the participants of the consultation.

Group outputs are summarised on the following pages:

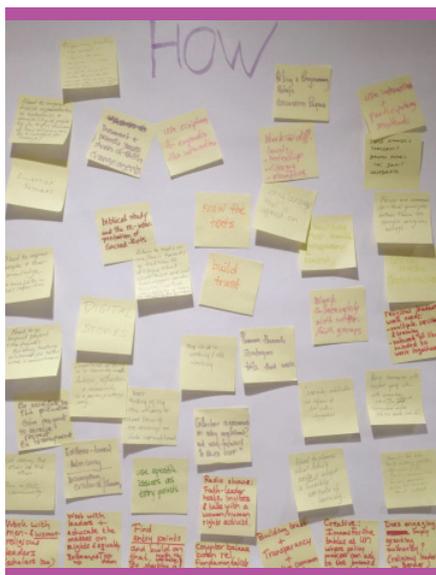
WHO: Potential Allies & Partners

Participants identified a number of activities with potential allies and stakeholders for faith-based work:

- To work with both faith institutions/leaders and faith communities, using both a top-down and bottom up approach.
- To ensure strong youth participation and work informed by a youth perspective.
- To connect with other networks working on a similar agenda, eg. We Will Speak Out, Side by Side, the Faith and Feminism working group to the UN.
- In accordance with the MenEngage Alliance's accountability agenda, to make a concrete effort to bring secular women's rights groups into the conversation in order to maintain a strong feminist analysis.
- To partner with academics and feminist theologians in order to build capacity and knowledge about counter arguments to narrow interpretations of religious scriptures.
- To enable UN Women, who also prioritise this agenda in their new strategy, to play a facilitator role and be a point of reference in this dialogue for the women's rights groups as well as for the faith-based institutions with whom they work globally.
- To make linkages with the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, and the UN NGO committee on freedom of religion or belief in order to strengthen the MenEngage Alliance's activism and its connections with Human Rights institutions and the United Nations.



HOW: Ways Forward and Promising Strategies



The participants identified the following strategies to strengthen understanding and partnerships for faith-based approaches:

- To conduct a mapping exercise to understand what faith-based initiatives exist within its membership, and what faith-based organizations are doing in relation to men and masculinities as a first step. While doing so, the Alliance should also map tools, resources and evidence on this work and create a 'knowledge pool' for those working in the field.
- To organize follow up consultations at national and regional levels as well as high level global consultations.
- To mainstream 'faith-based approaches' within the capacity development strategy of the Alliance, and prioritise strengthening the capacity of relevant stakeholders (including the MenEngage Alliance), for example through online courses.
- To create more spaces for mutual learning and sharing of best practices, both virtual and in person, as part of the Alliance's "Community of Practice" approach.
- To work together to develop a discussion paper on men, masculinities and faith in order to have a structured discourse within and outside its membership base.
- To engage with journalists and media institutions, for example through op-eds and radio shows.
- To jointly come up with a plan for the inclusion of faith-based approaches in the next MenEngage Alliance Global Symposium. Working backwards was recommended, starting with how the MenEngage Alliance wants to showcase and discuss faith-based approaches at the symposia and then establishing the steps needed to achieve that within a 3-year timeframe.
- To promote joint advocacy/events at next year's CSW, and other global policymaking stages.
- To establish a faith, men and masculinities task team/working group made up of consultation participants in order to work towards the achievement of the identified activities.
- To jointly document and disseminate stories of faith-based change agents in order to raise awareness of these activities.

- To connect each other with relevant organizations and actors to enhance and promote collaborative work. The MenEngage Alliance is in a position to connect faith-based organizations with regional and country level members engaged in faith-based work, and faith-based organizations can connect the Alliance with other organizations and actors working on gender equality and men and masculinities.
- To use an ecological model to explore faith-based approaches to creating change at an individual, relationship, community and policy level.

Scenes from the consultation, August 1-2, 2016, Washington DC



Conclusion

At a concluding session, consultation participants reflected on the clear links, and many common goals, apparent throughout the consultation, between the work of faith-based organizations, and the Alliance's work on transforming masculinities. They committed to working together to further this agenda by strengthening cooperation with the Alliance, connecting one another with relevant actors and organizations, sharing tools and resources, contributing to further dialogue on faith, men and masculinities and identifying opportunities for joint advocacy.

MenEngage Alliance and Tearfund shared their commitments to the following actions to advance our collective goals in the coming months and years:

- Take into account the lessons learned and recommendations from this consultation in the development of our next Global strategic plan for 2017-2020.
- Conduct a survey among our members, in collaboration with Tearfund, in order to map faith-based programs, tools and strategies being used within the Alliance. This mapping exercise will also inform our next Global strategy.
- Facilitate further discussion on men, masculinities and faith by organizing follow up consultations, events at global advocacy spaces, the third global symposium and online spaces such as webinars and e-dialogues.
- Connect our members at all levels with faith-based organizations and UN agencies interested in collaboration on faith-based approaches.
- Develop an online storytelling platform showcasing MenEngage Alliance change agents and their work, including faith-based leaders and approaches.
- Collecting resources and tools, including promising case stories and evidence, on faith-based approaches and making them available on our website.

MenEngage Alliance and Tearfund would like to thank all the participants for their valuable contributions and insights throughout an extremely constructive two days. It was energising and inspiring to interact with so many committed individuals working from different perspectives towards the common goal of gender justice. We hope the consultation will lead to greater partnerships and collaborative initiatives with faith-based organizations and an enhanced faith perspective in the work of the MenEngage Alliance in the coming years.



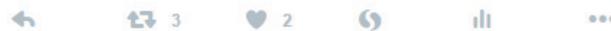
MenEngage @MenEngage · Aug 2

'There are trends in the world that make engaging with religion urgent'
[@menengage](#) [faith](#) consultation



MenEngage Alliance @MenEngage · Aug 1

[@prabudeepan](#) : value in creating space for dialogue w/critical stakeholders, [@menengage](#) [@tearfund](#) consultation



MenEngage @MenEngage · Aug 2

'Why are we working together? What is the common ground?' Questions at
[@menengage](#) [@Tearfund](#) [faith](#) consultation



Annexure

A. Agenda

Time	Session/Agenda	Facilitator/s
Day I: Sharing and Exchanges of Programs, Campaign, Advocacy, Research and Lessons Learned: What do these pieces tell us?		
09:00	Introductory Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Welcome ■ Introduction of participants ■ Expectations / Sharing of Agenda & the objective ■ MenEngage Alliance and the Consultation: The Relevance 	Joni Prabu Laxman
09:30	Setting the Stage: Understanding the concept around “faith-based approaches” & MenEngage Alliance’s importance to it	Prabu/Veena Laxman/Joni
10:15	Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from Africa (followed by Q&A)	Bafana/Mpho (Sonke)
11:15	Tea Break	
11:30	Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from Pakistan / South Asia (followed by Q&A)	Bilquis (Shirakat)
12:30	Lunch Break	
13:30	Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from Lebanon and MENA region (followed by Q&A)	Anthony (ABAAD)
14:30	Experiences, strategies and Lesson Learned from North America, including global works	Shafferan (MPV)
15:30	Tea Break	
15:45	Sharing from other initiatives: Interactions among experts (Is there any thing missing during the sessions and discussions?)	Laxman (MenEngage Alliance)
16:15	Sharing of UN Women’s Strategy on “Working with Faith and religious leaders and approaches for Gender Equality”	Marina (UN Women)
17:00	End of the Day I	

Day II: Strategic Ways forward & Common approaches to collective Advocacy

09:00	Reflection of Day I	Oswald
	Introduction to MenEngage Alliance (what the added value is)	Joni
10:00	Digging out Faith, Men and Masculinities Lens (Ingredients for MenEngage Alliance) <i>Key Question: How does faith or religion shape the masculinities or ideologies around manhood? Or how patriarchy shapes Religion? Look at What" part?</i>	Veena
11:00	Tea Break	
11:15	Expanding & Prioritizing the Common Messaging (WHY), Strategies (HOW) and Partnerships (WHO): What does these mean from Men & Masculinities lens <i>Key Questions: What is the added value of adding on men and masculinities (core element of MenEngage Alliance) for members and non-members? Is there anything missing that one would like to add?</i>	Prabu Joni, Veena, Laxman, Oswaldo
12:45	Lunch Break	
13:45	Expanding & Prioritizing the Common Messaging (WHY), Strategies (HOW) and Partnerships (WHO): What does these mean from Men & Masculinities perspectives (contd.)	Prabu Joni, Veena, Laxman, Oswaldo
15:30	Tea Break	
15:45	Ways Forward for the Alliance and its members on collective efforts to strengthen the works around 'faith-based approaches to transform harmful social norms'	Oswaldo/Joni (MenEngage Alliance)
16:30	AoB: Feeling the temperature in the Room. Thank you, Ways Forward & Greetings	Laxman/Joni (MenEngage Alliance) Veena/Prabu (Tearfund)
17:00	End of the Consultation	

B. Resources

Below is a list of some useful resources that were mentioned during the consultation:

- Channels of Hope (2013), World Vision International
- Faith, Gender and Sexuality Toolkit (2016) Wits Centre for Diversity Studies, the Institute of Development Studies and Sonke Gender Justice
- Men in Charge (2009), Musawah
- Ending Domestic Abuse: A Pack for Churches (2016), Restored UK
- Survivors' Story Leaflet (2015), Restored UK
- Christians Ending Violence Against Women (2012) Restored, the White Ribbon Campaign
- Living as First Man Standing, Africa Edition (2016) Restored, Family Impact (see <http://www.restoredrelationships.org/>)
- Advancing Toward the Equality of Women and Men (2009) Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity

C. List of Participants

Name	Organisation	Country
Abby Fried	Promundo US	USA
Amy Gopp	We Will Speak Out - US coalition	USA
Anthony Keedi	ABAAD-Resource Centre for Gender Equality	Lebanon
Bafana Khumalo	Sonke Gender Justice	South Africa
Bilquis Tahira	Shirakat Partnership for Development/ MenEngage Alliance Pakistan	Pakistan
Crystal Corman	World Faiths Development Dialogue	USA
Danielle Robertson	U.S. Institute of Peace	USA
Johannes Lang	UN Women	USA
Joni van de Sand	MenEngage Global Alliance	USA
Kirsten Laursen Muth	Episcopal Relief & Development	USA
Laxman Belbase	MenEngage Global Alliance	USA
Maddie Dimarco	UNFPA	USA
Marina Mancinelli	UN Women	USA
Negar Abay	Baha'i International Community/Baha'is of the United States	USA
Oswaldo Montoya	MenEngage Global Alliance	USA
Prabu Deepan	TearFund	Sri Lanka
Shafferan Sonneveld	Muslims for Progressive Values	USA
Shereen El Feki	Promundo US	Canada
Sinead Nolan	MenEngage Global Alliance	USA
Susan Hayward	U.S. Institute of Peace	USA
Tim Harwood	MenEngage Global Alliance	USA
Tim Shand	IRH/GeorgeTown University	UK
Veena O'Sullivan	TearFund	Ireland

D. Presentations

1. Presentation "Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from MenEngage Africa



Experiences, strategies and Lesson Learned from MenEngage Africa Region



Bafana Khumalo

SOCIAL AND STRUCTURAL DRIVERS

- MenEngage acknowledges the role religious communities play in the formation and entrenching of social norms, including those affecting the quest for gender transformation.
- This role can either be a force for positive social change or a barrier to the quest for gender equality and transformation through long standing religious teaching, practice and thought
- But it can also be a force and ally for change. This is borne out of the historical role the sector has played in struggles against systemic social injustices such as slavery and apartheid and also its role in the development agenda, especially in health and education globally.
- Religious leaders remain very influential and can be mobilised to become advocates for our work
- Faith communities offer a 'captive' audience to work with
- Faith matters for many people in the region (and the world)

OBJECTIVES

- To mobilise faith communities to increase their effective participation in initiatives aimed at ending HIV, GBV and advancing gender equality.
- To study and promote promising programmes and practices within religious communities.
- To support the building of the capacity of and offer technical support to faith communities so that they can develop own interventions in response to prevailing social norms that perpetuate gender injustices.
- To mobilise leaders in faith communities to participate in policy advocacy networks that respond to GBV, HIV and AIDS, SRHR and LGBTI rights at local, national, regional and global levels from a human rights perspective.

Why focus on religious and social-cultural factors to influence man ?

- These institutions have influence and seen as credible, to the communities.
- This intervention gives us an opportunity to make a real difference in combating HIV/AIDS.
- To respond to this challenge, these two factors must be engaged in the face of the HIV/AIDS crisis, in order that the society can become a force for transformation — bringing healing, hope, and accompaniment to all affected by HIV/AIDS.



What are we addressing

- Our work focuses is on empowering both religious and cultural leaders, with an intention to eliminating stigma and discrimination within the entire society or communities.
- We promote acceptance and tolerance as both these values are integrated within the two disciplines: **Religion and Culture**




Our current work

- We developed a policy framework on work with Religious Leaders with the support from UNFPA,
- The Faith, Gender & Sexuality toolkit has been developed by the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies (WICDS), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Sonke Gender Justice, with individuals, communities and faith leaders.
- It is a user-friendly, free and interactive resource that seeks to **support faith communities and leaders** working to promote social justice in relation to gender and sexuality.

Link <http://www.genderjustice.org.za/faith-gender-sexuality-toolkit/>

Strategies of engagements

- Dialogues
- OMC Trainings / workshops
- Community mobilisations
- Advocacy for inclusiveness and acceptance
- Open debates on current issues through media spaces
- Digital stories...




CAPACITY BUILDING

- Facilitated training on TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIPS with TearFund in Rwanda and the DRC
- Providing Technical support to the SACBC on a programme targeted at men in the church, including clergy under a theme **Men as Peacemakers**.
- Working with ELCSA on GBV programme,
- Worked with the SRHR team to develop a framework for religious youth and SRHR
- MEN AND MASCULINITIES resource with PACSA <http://www.genderjustice.org.za/publication/men-and-masculinities-in-south-africa-volume-3/>
- Ran a 5 day RELIGION, GENDER and SEXUALITY workshop in Johannesburg. <https://soundcloud.com/sonke/religion-gender-sexuality-workshop>

NETWORKING

- Assisted in the launch of WWSO launch in Kinshasa in partnership with Tearfund under the theme, "Silent no More DRC".
- Participated in a UNFPA convened consultation on RELIGION and the post 2015 process. 50 participants from Europe, the Caribbean, South East Asia, Latin America, Africa, North America and the Middle East, representing Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities attended.
 - The meeting adopted the following priorities for this work. 1) Gender Based Violence, 2) Comprehensive Sexuality Education, 3) Quality Health Service (Maternal, HIV and AIDS), 4) Peace and Religious tolerance (including LGBTI issues).
 - Sonke asked to convene the Africa follow up processes and plans are afoot to convene a consultation in Malawi in October with the support of the African region of the UNFPA.
- Participating in a global initiative to strengthen the faith for gender movement called **Side by Side**

LESSONS AND OBSERVATIONS

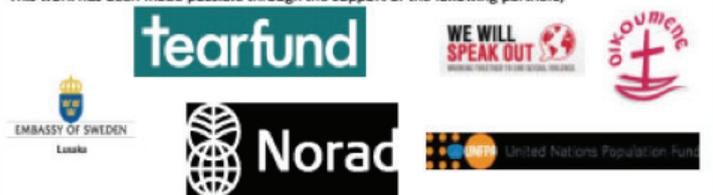
- A lot is being done at different levels and there is a need for strategic partnership building and coordination of efforts,
- Much of the negative beliefs and practises emanate from misuse, abuse and misinterpretation of the scriptural texts. Awareness raising, education and mobilisation cannot exclude this
- It is possible to adopt an interfaith approach, as done in Nigeria, Malawi and Johannesburg, the work has largely been done with Christian communities. There is a need to reach out to other faiths
- There is a question of whether we 'mainstream' the work or grow a new work area

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS'...

My colleagues;

Rev Desmond Lesejane, Mpho Mabena, Abubaker Sebeela, Nkonzo Khanyile,
Patrick Godana

This work has been made possible through the support of the following partners;



2. Presentation "Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from MenEngage Pakistan

Faith-based Approaches to Transforming Masculinities for Gender Justice & Equality: A 2-day Consultation

1-2 August 2016
MenEngage Alliance Global Secretariat, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW,
Washington D.C., USA
Bilqis Tahira, Shirakat – Partnership for Development, Pakistan

Overview of Programs



- Integrating gender equality and engaging men and boys for gender justice in education, sustainable livelihoods and peace building - research and advocacy as basis of each program
- By consulting with faith leaders and men in communities in each activity and enlisting their support
- A kind of mid-life crisis of members' activism on human rights and women's rights; also the encouraging results of engaging with both
- Extremely effective; example Hazir Imam and girls' education; challenges us to have original knowledge (of the text); re-interpretation critical

Collaboration for Change (C4C)

- Objective: To bring a positive behavioral and attitudinal change in society towards women's inclusion in public life and their assumption of leadership roles
- Engaging with religious leaders and recording 250 messages for dissemination; training of adolescent boys and girls on GE; development of manual for faith leaders on women's participation in public life and leadership; training of MEA-P members for integrating faith based approaches in their programs
- 14-17 (boys) from madrassah, church school, low cost private schools; and 20 to 39 (men – relatives of potential women leaders trained)
- Major Tools used in the program (videos, art, sports, jingles, messages, poetry, paintings, sculpture, manuals)
- Advocacy (politicians, parliamentarians, journalists); capacity building (boys, girls, men and women); 2 researches on expressions of masculinities in electronic media and textbooks; building alliances with other groups
- 160 girls and boys trained; 40 action plans developed – 4 months into the project

A few photographs



Challenges faced

1. Trust building a slow process; NGOs considered promoting western agenda
2. Educating ourselves on scripture text and translation
3. Reinterpretation of text a challenge – Dr Riffat Hassan
4. Acceptance of re-interpretation by faith leaders
5. Alliance on issues – not on agenda; example Women's Protection Bill
6. Different strategy/language for different sect
7. Adaptation of language

Approaches to deal with the challenges

1. Frequent meetings; Transparency
2. Quoting the scripture back to allay doubts
3. Finding simple ayahs and referring to them
4. Staying away from development jargon; terming it as rights under the religion
5. Alliance with individuals at local level and not with Federations
6. Using different strategy/language for different sect

Recommendations

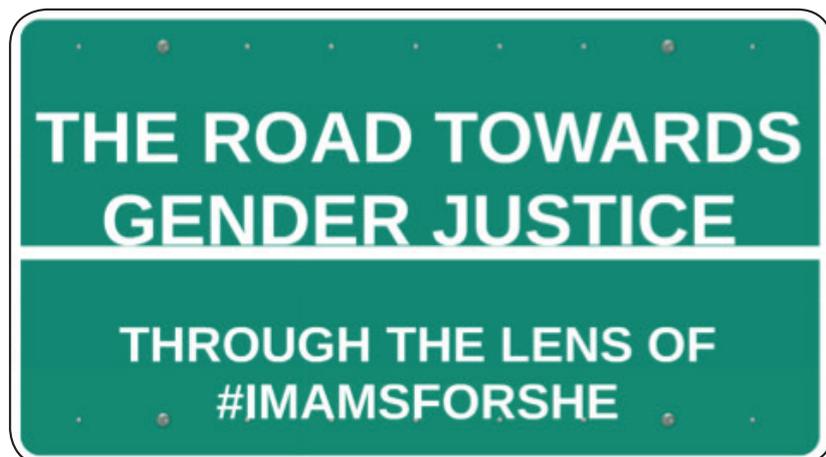
- Knowledge Network be established at national and international level of the pool of existing knowledge base through re-interpretation of scriptures
- Further research on the role of faith based institutions in society
- Alliance building at national, regional and international level of change entrepreneurs
- Advocacy with clergy leadership at the highest level – edicts can then trickle down and bring about change
- Success stories and effective strategies be documented and shared widely
- Linkages be actively explored and developed with collective stances of faith leaders e.g. Islamic Declaration on Climate Change; sessions in Humanitarian Summit
- Strategies explored to bridge the gap between welfare initiative of religious groups and social development groups

Conclusion

- Very effective when it works (faith assets huge; large following; trust by communities, volunteerism, community ownership); Dharna – re civic education; questions remain
- How to motivate secular and faith based institutions to work together
- Critically looking at our own stances and methodologies – are we creating another stereotype? How rigid or flexible are we in our strategies? Are we transparent and accountable to our constituencies?
- Are we tolerant? Are we trust worthy? Are we respectful towards them – the 'Other'
- Working with faith sector (all religions and sects) to find common ground

3. Presentation "Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from Muslims for Progressive Values

<https://prezi.com/z8f-kai6orfu/the-road-towards-gender-justice/>



4. Presentation “Experiences, Strategies and Lesson Learned from ABAAD MENA / MenEngage Lebanon

Faith-based Approaches to Transforming Masculinities for Gender Justice & Equality: A 2-day Consultation

1-2 August 2016
MenEngage Alliance Global Secretariat, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington D.C., USA

“We Believe” Campaign -ABAAD

- Experience of ABAAD-Resource Center for Gender Equality
- Presented by Anthony Keedi- Masculinities Program Manager

Overview of the program/projects/works

- ABAAD launched a national campaign with Religious Leaders in Lebanon during the 16 days of Activism to End Violence Against Women in 2012.
- In that time a series of discussion sessions has taken place with a national consultation of Religious Leaders and Civil Society addressing topics relevant to Women’s Human Rights in Lebanon: Divorce, inheritance, child custody, marital rape, etc.
- Religious leaders are extremely influential in the MENA region
 - Laws and religious courts
 - Religious identity very important to the general population
 - Women’s Rights Organizations have highlighted the need for this for decades
- At the time there was a new domestic violence bill that was getting negative attention by religious leaders and creating more divisions between Religious communities and civil society

Project/Program

- Discuss issues deeply affecting Women’s Human Rights with Religious leaders and promote more Gender Equal principles among them.
- Hold a series of workshops and discussion sessions with Religious leaders/ Promote messages of equality from Religious Leaders in their community and nationwide
- Target of Program was Religious leaders or men learning to become Religious Leaders
- Strategy was very much focused on Dialogue and documentation.
 - Regional Conference
 - Series of Discussion session for RL in Lebanon
- “We Believe” Campaign
- The campaign generated much national interest, media exposure, and exposure and support on social media.

Challenges faced

- There were some Women’s Organizations and Media figures who did not agree that Religious Leaders should be allies in Gender work
- The program was greatly affected by the war in Syria (Mostly by because of lack of funding)

Approaches to deal with the challenges

- Women’s organizations or media individuals who had vocalized disagreement with the approach of working with religious leaders were individually contacted and invited to the ABAAD office in order to discuss their concerns and speak about our strategy for working with Religious Leaders.
 - Media figures did not respond
 - Some of the civil society organizations and the sessions went well
- We continue to work with what Religious Leaders we formed strong relationships with, however many of them (especially highly influential ones directly involved with Religious courts) will only make time certain protocols and projects are involved.

Recommendations

- We believe that this strategy and experience was successful. The qualitative and quantitative feedback we received from our ABAAD Facebook page was some indication of that.
- The strategy is one that needs time and consistency.
- The strategy is one that organizations from the region are interested in. ABAAD would be hesitant to train or promote a strategy that has not had sufficient testing or experiences from which to learn.

مؤمن' فمحم... | 'We Believe...' Campaign

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trsSvCBLgr0&list=PLyPaiAM6tjFhXwju6yohy57Ohs2MZNZ6Y>

5. Introduction to MenEngage Alliance



Joni van de Sand
Global Coordinator and Advocacy Manager
MenEngage Global Alliance, Secretariat

Faith-based Approaches to Transforming Masculinities
for Gender Justice & Equality: A Consultation



An alliance of civil society organizations working together with men and boys, along with women & girls, to promote gender justice

WHAT WE BELIEVE
OUR CORE PRINCIPLES
CODE OF CONDUCT
MENENGAGE & ACCOUNTABILITY

We work collectively and individually toward advancing gender equality, human rights and social justice




A world in which all people are treated equally, are free from discrimination, and in which human rights are protected and promoted.



The MenEngage Global Alliance works to promote positive masculinities by:

- Transforming unequal power relations and patriarchal systems;
- Building inclusive alliances from local to regional to global;
- Working with men and boys through an intersectional feminist approach; and
- Fostering joint actions in partnership with women's rights, gender- and other social justice movements.

MenEngage Alliance Presence



A network with presence in around 66 countries globally, with 36 country networks, 6 regional networks, 700 non-governmental organizations, as well as UN partners

Together for Gender Justice

- ✓ We honor the pioneering work and on-going leadership of women's rights organizations
- ✓ We stand in solidarity with the on-going struggles for women's empowerment and rights, and seek to positively engage men and boys to further these objectives
- ✓ We believe that by making men and boys understand the implications of gender inequality, harmful notions of masculinity, its effects on women's and girls' human rights, and on men and boys' own health and well-being → we can mobilize them as agents of change for all
- ✓ We work to contribute to a global movement for gender justice through transforming masculinities, working with men and women, boys and girls, people of all genders.

We believe that manhood is NOT defined:

- by how many sexual partners you have
- by using violence against women or men
- by how much pain you can endure
- by how much power you can exert over others
- or by your sexual orientation.

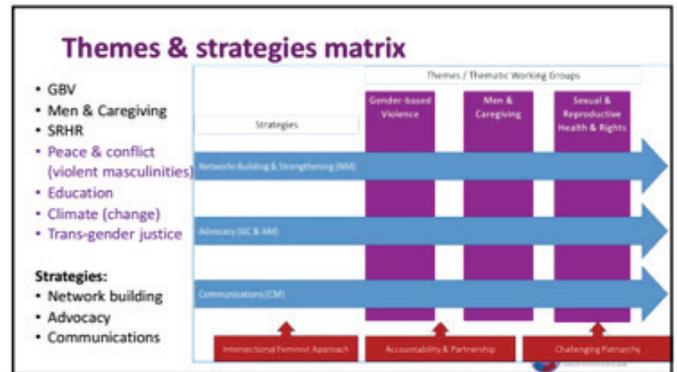
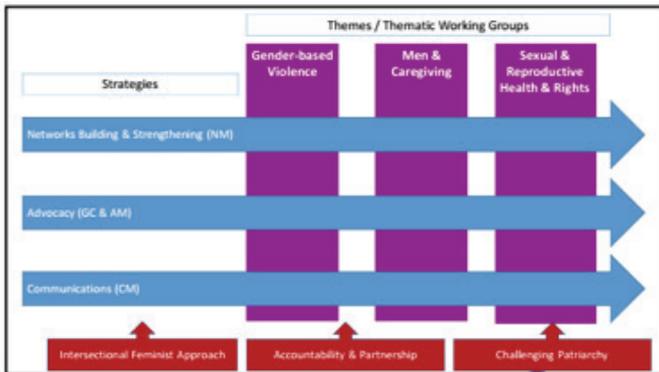


We believe that manhood IS defined:

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

Men & Masculinities in realizing gender justice

- "Masculinities" refers to the different ways masculinity (or "manhood") is socially and culturally defined in a specific context, as well as the power differences between different versions of masculinity.
- This implies that men, like women, continuously renegotiate their position within the social hierarchy.
- And that norms, attitudes and behaviors of men towards others (women, other men, people of all genders) can change in a positive manner, characterized by non-violence, caring and equality.
- It is these "positive masculinities" that the MenEngage Alliance aims to advance, in order to contribute to the realization of women's rights and gender justice in particular, and human rights and social justice more broadly.
- Positive masculinities are promoted as alternatives to "hegemonic" or negative forms of masculinity, which are based on some men's privilege and power over others, and which form the basis of the patriarchal system(s) that the MenEngage Alliance aims to transform and contribute to its elimination.



- MenEngage Members, How we work...**
- Group education and training
 - Service provision (counseling, health services, batterers interventions programs)
 - Community mobilization
 - Communication/mass media campaigning
 - Networking and promotion of men activism in partnership with women and other social justice organizations
 - Evidence-based research, policy research
 - Advocacy and public policy (scaling up & institutionalization)
- 

MenEngage Alliance Video

- <https://vimeo.com/111230906>



Thank You, very much

MenEngage Alliance Global Secretariat
 1875 Connecticut Avenue
 Floor 10, Suite 12069
 Washington, D.C. 20009, USA





MenEngage Alliance

working with men and boys for gender equality

www.menengage.org



@menengage



@MenEngage