

TOPS–SPRING–USAID Gender Webinar Series

Women's Empowerment and Men's Engagement: How a Focus on Gender Can Support Agriculture and Nutrition

Webinar 3: Engaging Men and Boys in Food and Nutrition Security: The Hidden Half of Gender Equality Programming

May 29, 2014, 9:00 a.m. EDT

All event materials are available at: <http://www.spring-nutrition.org/events/engaging-men-and-boys-food-and-nutrition-security-hidden-half-gender-equality-programming>

SPRING, TOPS, and USAID hosted the third of a three-part webinar series, *Women's Empowerment and Men's Engagement: How a Focus on Gender Can Support Agriculture and Nutrition*. Theresa Hwang, Gender Director, and Maureen Miruka, Pathways Team Leader, shared experience from CARE's rights-based approach to gender equality in agriculture, nutrition, and economic empowerment programs.

CARE views its work as a “journey” in engaging men and boys in food security and nutrition programming. It is a work in progress, building on lessons learned, experimenting, and learning from others. As background, CARE is a humanitarian organization working in 87 countries on a range of issues including health, education, nutrition, agriculture, livelihoods, GBV, and emergency response. Promoting gender equality is a cross-cutting theme in these programmatic areas.

Why engage men and boys?

Engaging men does not take away from a focus on women or women's empowerment. It is not a zero sum game; men and boys are part of the solution, especially when we work with them as equal partners with women and girls to change social structures and power imbalances. By understanding the complexities of men's' and boys' experiences—how they are shaped and the pressures they face—we can build sustainable approaches that are a win-win for everyone. Program staff should avoid assumptions that men are disinterested in participating in activities targeting women; instead they should be given opportunities to be included. Often men want to support women and girls and further, engaging men and boys can help mitigate negative reactions from programming that sometimes focuses only on women and girls.

Most projects start off with a situational analysis that identifies gender norms, roles and dynamics in the context of food security and nutrition goals. The prevailing gender norms tend to characterize women as caregivers who are involved primarily in subsistence agriculture or petty income-generating activities; they are also seen as responsible for household nutrition and food security. Men, on the other hand, are seen as providers for the family and are the household decision-makers. But frequently projects are designed for women on a range of topics (improving agricultural production, increasing breastfeeding,

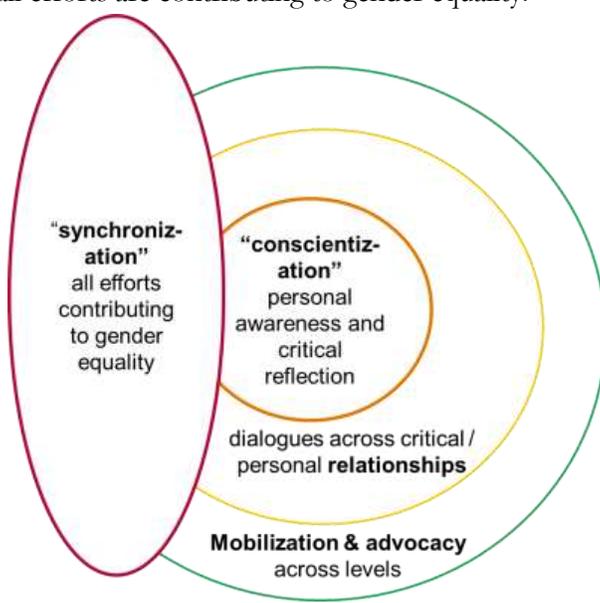
learning business and financial skills), and the changes they require *involve men*. This can result in shortcomings in results, for example:

- **Limitations in women’s nutrient-rich food production** because men control the land and prefer cash crops to food crops, or women don’t control assets or lack authority to purchase inputs; or extension services don’t consider women ‘farmers.’
- **Nutritious foods are not reaching women** - even if you improve food quality in the household (through nutrient-rich crops, improved cooking), it may not actually change how food is allocated within the household. Oftentimes women are the last to eat and have the smallest and least “choice” foods to eat.
- **Limited adoption of Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices** because women lack time due to disproportionate caregiving and household tasks; or men aren’t supportive of early EBF because they don’t receive information about its benefits or understand why it is important.

Not involving men and boys could also lead to backlash or gender-based violence (GBV) because you are dealing with potential changes in power dynamics. One cannot work with women alone; it is only half of the equation. One example is cooking demonstrations: if you only work with women, you are reinforcing the stereotype that cooking is the responsibility of the woman and it places the burden of change on her.

Framework and Programming Examples

CARE has developed a draft conceptual framework that is similar to a socio- ecological model in that it looks at interventions across different levels: starting with the individual, cutting across key relationships that individual has, and into a broader public sphere – be it in the community, with government actors or service providers, or key policymakers. And cross cutting all of the work in these levels is a principle of “synchronization,” where all efforts are contributing to gender equality.



Synchronization

Synchronization means that programs intentionally reach out to both sexes to promote mutual understanding. They also promote flexible gender roles, a balance of power, and a pursuit of gender justice. This concept comes from a publication from the [Interagency Gender Working Group](#). In Rwanda, CARE had done a lot of women's economic empowerment work through village savings and loans (VSLA) groups. A few women talked about how their husbands began doing household work while they were attending their VSLA meetings. We wanted to understand why this happened and how we could speed up this positive change among men. We began with pilot research into men's experiences and developed a manual in partnership with Promundo. [Journeys of Transformation](#) is a manual to work with men as allies in women's economic empowerment. It contains a series of activities for groups of men to examine personal attitudes, beliefs, and practices on household decision-making, division of household labor, and women's economic empowerment.

Conscientization

Conscientization is about starting with the individual to build personal awareness and encourage critical reflection on gender. When engaging with men and boys, it's about reflecting on masculinities and the consequences different forms of masculinity have on the men and those around them. This requires a safe space for critical reflection. One unique feature is that at CARE, this personal reflection is done first with its own staff. This goes back to the recognition that gender socialization affects all individuals. And if we are asking staff to facilitate social norm change, then staff need to at least be aware of their own attitudes, values, and beliefs. Since the early 2000s, CARE has rolled out Gender Equity and Diversity trainings for its own staff. Recently, CARE developed and rolled out a specific module for staff working on engaging men and boys for gender equality. In Mali, the Pathways project utilizes a participatory performance tracker to monitor changes among field staff, as well as in community groups. On a quarterly basis, staff ask questions and calculate the changes in the following categories:

- **Division of labor**
- **Communication**
- **Decision-making (joint)**
- **Role modeling**

Dialogue across key relationships

The focus here is on dialogue across key relationships, particularly between couples and among male peers. For example, in Ethiopia the [GRAD project](#) focusing on livelihoods and nutrition utilizes a series of facilitated dialogues among men only, women only, and also in mixed groups. They discuss issues such as traditional gender roles in the household and public sphere, decision-making related to expenditures, and nutrition (including exclusive breastfeeding). The dialogues occur in 2 hour sessions every other week.

In Burundi, CARE found an example of one man who was an activist against gender-based violence in his own community. This passionate man spoke out to other men about his own experience, and inspired his male peers to challenge harmful traditional practices. CARE is now supporting a growing

number of Abatangamuco ('he who brings light'). Abatangamuco works with men in the community to help them to realize the potential of women and create equality in their marital relationships, ultimately benefiting individuals, families, and whole communities.

Mobilization and advocacy

The outermost level is about mobilization and advocacy. This is about working with male champions to go beyond awareness and dialogue, to collective action. By publicly celebrating positive deviant role models for gender equality we can raise community-level awareness. This mobilization and advocacy includes linking groups of male champions from local to national levels to advocate for gender equality – often in alliance with diverse gender equality groups and activists. In Bangladesh, CARE found that many women were engaged in agriculture day labor and were receiving just over half of men's wages for the same work. The female day laborers enacted a "fair wage" initiative. Male day laborers became active supporters of the initiative by supporting women in rallies and meetings to negotiate fairer wages with landowners. As a result, a total of 7,077 women (649 direct project participants and 6,428 women agri-laborers from the community) received increased wage rates, up from USD \$1.17 to USD \$1.67 per day, which represents a cumulative annual income of USD \$994,886 for 7,077 women.

The story doesn't end here. Through this work, there have been positive changes in men's perceptions about women's work. Another significant change as a result of this joint advocacy is that landowners allow lactating women to bring their babies and nurse them during work.

Pathways – A Programming Example

Pathways is being implemented in six countries in Asia and Africa: Bangladesh, India, Malawi, Tanzania, Mali, and Ghana with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It has three objectives:

- 1) To increase the productive engagement of 50,000 poor women in sustainable agriculture and contribute to their empowerment
- 2) To enhance the scale of high-quality, women-responsive agriculture programming
- 3) To contribute to the global discourse that surrounds women and agriculture

CARE's Pathways approach is based on a global theory of change that addresses the underlying causes of poverty and women's exclusion in agriculture through increased productivity and empowerment of women farmers and more equitable agriculture systems at scale. Intra-household power dynamics are a crucial component to women's greater control over resources, time allocation, household decisions and ultimately production and income. Across each of the implementing countries, CARE has identified five common and closely inter-related change levers that must be impacted to achieve the Pathways goal of more secure and resilient livelihoods: capacity, access, productivity, household influence, and the enabling environment.

The enabling environment refers to engagement with the market, financial, and extension service structures, and the land laws (the institutional environment) as well as the normative environment,

including beliefs and attitudes. Engaging with men is crucial to all of these. How does Pathways do this? Across the various countries, there are some common approaches:

Conscientization

Pathways starts by participatory training for staff and community-based trainers (gender, equity and diversity) to internalize their own gender beliefs.

Gender Dialogues & Relationship Building

There are five themes integrated into farmer field and business school including: gender discrimination; workload-sharing; decision-making control; communication and listening skills; and power. At a minimum, spouses are invited at a community level. In addition, female leadership and participation is promoted through local market committees, which serve as governing structures for linking farmers to markets. This enables women to have direct relationships with market actors to help build autonomy. Gender dialogues focus on helping women negotiate budget priorities, workload sharing, and other negotiations that are a part of doing business.

Mobilization and Advocacy

Land access dialogues target community leaders and traditional chiefs (especially in areas where there are communal land tenure systems) and wage equality with landlords. Male champions (both individual spouses and community-wide) serve as role models (for examples ensuring women and children have access to high protein diets in Malawi).

Achievements

Decision-making

Pathways has developed several tools to support joint household and agricultural production. These include 1) a cash flow tree that demonstrates women's contributions to household income and lack of decision-making power and 2) a joint budgeting tool to assist households in dual budgeting exercises.

Workload-sharing

Continued dialogue with men is focused on normalizing involvement of male care giving and workload sharing. Daily clock activities and affirmations represent a transformative approach to break the false dichotomy of sole breadwinning versus caregiving.

Relationship Building

Pathways established direct relationships between women producers and male actors in the market and helped women take leadership roles in 209 marketing committees. Building numeracy and market skills is a prerequisite to participating in marketing committees and markets.

Advocacy

Over 3,760 hectares of land have been made accessible for 4,954 producers from dialogues with chiefs and authorities in Ghana, Mali and Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, male co-lobbying has resulted in a 42 percent increase in daily wages. Land rights and wage labor activities are not just based on access but also control of productive land.

Male Champions and Role Modeling

Male champions have emerged as change agents at household and community levels.

Reflections and Considerations

Measuring changes in gender and women's empowerment is an ongoing challenge. People have different perspectives on change related to gender based violence and there are local meanings of terms. All this requires being very purposeful – which CARE is doing through things like the Pathways Mid Term Review. Other lessons learned:

- Do not assume there will be backlash or resistance among men and boys.
- Multi-generational approaches are important.
- Role modeling through male change agents and champions are particularly effective in catalyzing broader social change. CARE has found the role of community events and theatre to be really helpful.
- Involving community leaders as thought leaders and gatekeepers provides a key entry point for engaging men and boys.
- Many of the interventions rely on skilled facilitation of sensitive issues. Planners should be aware that staff are not always equipped to deal with GBV issues or when there is backlash.

Question & Answer Session

- 1) **You mentioned the positive case in Rwanda with the man doing household chores while the woman participated in the project. Is this an anomaly or has it been seen in other contexts?**
I appreciate the question on context because it is very important when understanding the experiences of women and men. Not all men act in homogenous ways. It is important to find men who are curious about your work and thus are going to be willing to engage. Also, you need to try and identify and understand those who resist. I should note that we work with local partners on the ground who are extremely helpful because they understand the local context.
- 2) **What is the level of training needed for staff as some may have some attitudes/beliefs that actually hinder the efforts toward gender equity?**
We are consistently asking what it takes to train community volunteers. The process takes a couple of months and involves a lot of learning by practicing. We are looking at transformation of attitudes and looking at how attitudes might affect achieving project goals. It is the same process for staff. We need to be careful about who is selected and how. They must be good listeners, open-minded and since much of the work focuses on a reflective process, they need to be able to create a safe space. It is a journey of transformation and we believe that everyone has the potential to take that journey. We meet them where they are and work them through it. It is the most challenging aspect but also the most rewarding. When we do the training, we use role plays. We also train the community and partners together so the message is the same.

- 3) **Do you have a curriculum for engaging men and women?**
CARE did a mapping of the curricula available and it's up on our [wiki site](#). This includes things both inside and outside of CARE and includes the GED for staff mentioned previously.
- 4) **How do the CARE projects measure changes – in things like joint decision making and dialogue (for example too in household food allocation). Can M&E tools be shared?**
We've adapted parts of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) in our framework. We also have a qualitative mid-term evaluation, as well as annual review studies that look at the adoption of practices. The Participatory Performance Tracker is used as noted in the presentation and there are nutrition, agriculture and gender indicators that are measured bi-annually.
- 5) **What are the ages of the men engaged?**
We start with the partners of the women we are working with. But we recognize though the importance of inter-generational links. The influence of parenting is obviously very important. There are other organizations that focus on working with boys, Save the Children for example. CARE starts with a focus on fatherhood and the roles of men in caregiving – this clearly has a influence on the children.
- 6) **What do you say to engage men in the first place?**
Yes, it can be slow. And it varies by context and relationships (that organizations have in the community). Our approach uses the fact that humans are naturally curious. I've often found when I'm in the field and we have our first meeting with a group of women regarding an intervention – well, it will be surrounded by the whole village! So it is very important that you use that curiosity and explain from the start what they activities are, why you are meeting etc.
- 7) **Do you think that most nutrition, agriculture, and livelihoods activities can be retrofitted or do they have to be designed to engage men from the start?**
It depends on how far you want to go. Ideally of course, engaging men is a component included in the design. It is best to think about this early on. That said, it is possible to do some retrofitting. For example, in a nutrition program that is already conducting cooking demonstrations it should include men to help break the gender stereotype that it is the women's purview. This invites the men to try new flavors and get further engaged. There are simple ways to retrofit even though ideally, the project design should have been informed by a gender analysis about the norms and practices (around gender) that influence the work you are seeking to do.
- 8) **What are ways in which men resist? And what are the given and ungiven reasons?**
Resistance is mainly around issues of power dynamics. Many place where we work, men are the traditional breadwinners and yet these activities have women providing income. It is therefore important to engage men and work together toward the greater goal to increase income and well-being of the household overall. Some men get this quickly and see the benefits. Others hold thoughts of the 'ideal man' (that can be in conflict with changes in power dynamics) and you need to work this to broaden their perspective. We work with men to examine these notions of an 'ideal man'. Is it fair or unfair? And to whom?
- 9) **What are the visible changes in roles in the next generation due to this work? Are there changes you've seen as a result of CARE's past programs?**
It's obviously very exciting when we see changes in women and men's behaviors and more workload sharing. We have seen boys joining men in public at events around issues of violence (e.g. International Women's Day in Bangladesh). But note, you can also see sometimes in projects that target women, the household duties they no longer have time for are put on the girls, sometimes

even pulling them from school to cover these. Organizations must be aware of this and CARE monitors this.

10) Can you give a sense of the numbers of men and how many weeks the training takes? What is the level/rate of dropout?

The training is structured so that both men and women can participate and is usually held during the dry season or when there is less demand on their time (for harvest etc.). The numbers are project specific and I can't speak to drop out as such – the experience is that more and more men want to be engaged and see the benefits to their households. One example in Rwanda, there were 30 people trained for 17 weeks. Note too that community clubs are used and they continue to spread the training so there are important multiplier effects.

11) You mentioned the possible unintended consequence of increased GBV. I was wondering whether the evaluation baseline and endline measures of experience intimate partner violence (IPV) and/or other forms of GBV in addition to other gender indicators such as autonomy?

This is something that comes up in all different programming areas. There is a forthcoming publication where we have brought together experts from different organizations around the issue of monitoring unintended consequences of GBV or monitoring for GBV when you aren't actually doing GBV programming. That will be out in July and will provide guidelines on how to do that. There are a lot of ethical considerations behind this question. We do stress monitoring for increasing GBV or household conflict and work with our staff to make sure that at a minimum they are able to provide referrals or are aware of other projects that may be able to provide resources. It is important to know whether there is an increase or decrease in GBV and we do have some measures but they of course look different across different projects.

12) Should men and women be trained or in discussions together or separate?

We think that a mix of that methodology is really effective again because some of these topics are so sensitive you get a little more openness when you work with a single sex group but what is really important is to make sure the topics and dialogues within both groups are aligned with one another and that you also create time when both groups come together in a mixed group to discuss the topic together. [Stepping Stones](#) is a good example from the HIV field that follows this methodology.

13) This approach talks a lot about partners and husbands. How do you engage on these issues in largely female-headed households? Who are the men you would engage with?

You find in communities where there are many female headed households you still have to deal with customary structures, such as brother-in-laws, brothers or fathers. Our baseline data shows that women in female headed households are more empowered in all of the domains that we looked at as compared to women in male headed households. For those that are not empowered we still have to work through their extended family structures.

Additional questions from the chat box that the webinar did not have time to address

- 1) Has CARE had success with training male family members in nutrition? And if so, how was the training delivered and have there been any assessments as to how the training may have changed nutrition status for different household members?**

Yes, CARE has intentionally trained male family members in nutrition and is currently in the final year of a program that hopes to share lessons around how this worked and how to do this better in the future. The training is delivered through men's groups (some of whom are husbands of the women who participate in mother-to-mother support groups and some who are men whose wives do not participate – the groups are open to men in households with children under two). In these groups men receive training on best practices around infant and young child feeding and maternal nutrition and a leader facilitates dialogue around how they can support these practices, perceptions and myths surrounding certain IYCF practices, social norms that influence nutrition practices and outcomes, etc.

- 2) What is the level of training needed for staff to bring them up to the level of facilitating sessions with men in the programme, as they may have attitudes that need influencing? What level of support, timeframes, etc. are needed?**

This is such a good question. We know technical competency of the topic at hand is important, but it does not stop there. While someone must be able to identify mis messaging and misinformation, they must also be capable of facilitating dialogue around that mis message and misinformation rather than quickly calling it out as 'wrong' or unintentionally labeling someone as 'uninformed'. We strongly believe that anyone facilitating these sessions should first explore their own attitudes and perceptions of practices and norms before they can effectively facilitate this process for others. We also know that ongoing support to both the facilitators and the groups they facilitate is essential. There are some models that lend themselves to this better than others. So beyond technical competency or mere knowledge of a subject matter, we look for things that are pretty standard in any effective facilitator such as: someone who can develop rapport and gain trust; someone who can create and ensure a safe space; someone who can encourage reflection and facilitate dialogue; etc. This requires budgeted resources before implementation (to train facilitators) and during (to monitor and mentor facilitators since so much of the learning happens from doing). Building facilitation skills, as with gender training, are skill sets that should be reinforced and re-trained throughout the program. A five-day training on facilitation skills is a solid foundation but supportive supervision and mentoring are crucial elements.

- 3) Are dialogues facilitated by CARE staff or by members of the community? Any advice on who should lead these sessions?**

We typically train community members to facilitate the conversations as peer-led dialogues tend to be more effective. The essential piece is that the people have the skills and practice to facilitate discussion and handle debate. Without these skills, they can end up inadvertently reinforcing some beliefs or practices that you are hoping to change.

4) Do the presenters have any curriculum suggestions for field staff as they work to engage men and women separately and together?

There are curriculum suggestions on this website:

<http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/Engaging+Men+%26+Boys>

It reflects CARE's curriculums as well as other excellent curriculums outside of CARE.

5) Follow up to Josefine Landberg - opposite of resistance, are you seeing any trends for the drivers for men's interest and becoming change agents, sharing roles, etc? Economic reasons? Emotional? Moral?

Economic arguments are often persuasive as a starting point, since men's identities are tied to their provider responsibilities. From that starting point, we facilitate the conversation to broaden the appeal.

The emotional appeal is also very effective. For example, in Bangladesh, a group of men listened to and then reenacted the story of a typical submissive, overworked, undernourished, etc., young wife, choosing an alternative ending to her story. It was very effective, especially because it was a single-sex group, so they felt comfortable (and enjoyed!) playing the women's roles in the story.

Doing participatory exercises or reflections that present actual disparities (in workload-sharing, decision-making, or power imbalances) allow men to see for themselves the inequalities; some women say that even if they don't say anything (at the time), they do take note and women do see attitudinal changes.

Communication and listening exercises between men and women are a relatively neutral point of entry that helps men see and start paying attention to women's views, which can go a long way toward building more equitable relations.

6) Did you have any issues around attendance of men in the discussion sessions and if you did how did you resolve those issues?

Generally, we've found attendance and response positive; men often feel left out of the NGO conversations targeted at women. The main challenge is men's and women's schedules are different; men may be away for migration or in the fields during certain times of year or of the day. One solution is to take the conversations to where the men gather—tea stalls, etc.—and plan community events around times of year when they are around. Informal gatherings can be effective as formal forums for conversation-starters.

7) Are you finding 'copy cat' effects? that is, when others in community see the change agents/champions practicing new behaviors are they adopting the new practices? Do they 'see' the benefits?

Indeed! A good example of this is in Burundi, the Abatangamuco project.

<http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/Abatangamuco>

Seeing other people modeling different behaviors is a very important element. We've learned that people who have traveled outside (even just outside the village, to a neighboring village) are really important catalysts for change in a community; it helps people to recognize that traditions

are not fixed, and that other people have different ways of organizing their lives, that practices can change. We've also heard of men going to another village just to see for their own eyes that, for example, there is a man who cooks and sweeps. So organizing exchange visits can help accelerate the process.

There are always some early adopters, but for reaching the rest, it's important that the influential people (especially community leaders and gatekeepers) not just talk about changes but actually practice them.

8) Are there methods to overcome peer pressure supressing men who show signs of being sensitive to gender equity - particularly workload sharing?

What we tend to see are examples of postive deviance among men who decide they don't care what others think or that this is so important that they become proud to share to demonstrate this new behavior (such as sharing workload). This is also where the agents/champions come in and can serve as promoters of this type of change. In past projects we've seen religious leaders dedicate time after services to talk about how wonderful it is to see changes in the community, or village chiefs who will do the same when they hold these meetings. Having leaders on board with the program and what it seeks to do is so important.

Individually practicing new roles can be risky, and the messages can be hard to absorb if its done too seriously or with scolding. In our activities, bringing in elements of competition and fun, allowing people to try out new behaviors in a public setting first—with a group of others—can give people something to laugh about, which makes it easier to start. For example: cooking competitions (with mixed-sex teams, or between groups of men), or a competition for men to wash their children in public. Making it a special event for starters can kick-start individual changes.

Shared Resources

- Landesa Case Study Mali: <http://www.focusonland.com/for-comment/impact-story-pathways-mali--advocating-for-womens-land-access>
- Landesa Case Study Ghana: (<http://www.focusonland.com/resources/womens-land-tenure-insecurity-overcoming-a-barrier-to-agricultural-productivity-in-ghana/?keywords=ghana>).
- CYN Project: <http://www.iycn.org/resource/infant-and-young-child-feeding-and-gender-trainers-manual-and-participants-manual>
- MenEngage: <http://menengage.org/>
- CARE's training module (French):
http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/Engaging%20Men%20and%20Boys%20GED%20501%20Manual_French.pdf/447696212/Engaging%20Men%20and%20Boys%20GED%20501%20Manual_French.pdf
- Gender Strategies and Synchronization Resources:
http://www.prb.org/igwg_media/synchronizing-gender-strategies.pdf
- Involving Grandmothers: <http://www.grandmotherproject.org>
- Gender Mapping Resources:
[http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/%20Engaging+Men+%26+Boys#Resources-Training Manuals](http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/%20Engaging+Men+%26+Boys#Resources-Training+Manuals)
- Men As Partners Approach: <http://www.engenderhealth.org/pubs/gender/ppasa-manual.php>