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THE ROLE OF MEN AND BOYS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

MEN, GENDER AND EQUALITY¹

INTRODUCTION

Despite the work of Governments, the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, as well as the many years of struggle by women's movements for equal rights, inequalities between women and men persist around the world. Gender-based violence remains prevalent in all societies, and is exacerbated in conflict and post-conflict situations. For millions of women and girls, education and employment opportunities are restricted, leading to inequalities in income and access to decision-making. Maternal mortality persists at unacceptable levels in parts of the world. Women's economic and social dependence leads to persistent vulnerabilities, including in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

By the mid-1990s, some 20 years after the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975,² it was clear that gender equality and the promotion and protection of women's rights required a political strategy that mobilized men in changing gender relations. Garnering sufficient support for the profound social changes required by the gender equality agenda could not be achieved by women alone but also required the active involvement of men.

Two United Nations global conferences—the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in 1994³ and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995⁴—signalled a political shift

with relation to male engagement and responsibility. Other global conferences of the United Nations also brought attention to the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, including the World Summit for Social Development (1995);⁵ the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (2001);⁶ and the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children (2002).⁷ The five-year review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2000 at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”,⁸ and the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (1996-2007), have also drawn attention to men and boys. The outcomes of these processes highlighted, among other things, the important roles of men and boys in the sharing of family and household responsibilities, sexual and reproductive health and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.⁹

In 1997, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in collaboration with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, convened an expert group meeting to discuss male roles and masculinities in the perspective of a culture of peace. The meeting examined gender-related factors that hinder or sustain the development of a culture of peace; addressed the harmful consequences of rigid gender stereotypes; discussed practical strategies for reducing men's violence; and explored the possibility of raising boys in ways that emphasize the qualities needed in building a culture of peace.¹⁰

In 2000-2001, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) mounted a world campaign on the theme “Men make a difference”, emphasizing the positive role men can play in HIV/AIDS prevention and care.¹¹ In 2001, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) initiated a research project on men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence.¹²

The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)¹³ was the first United Nations intergovernmental body to address the engagement and responsibility of men and boys in a comprehensive manner. In 2001, the Commission considered the issue of the role of men and

EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

“Equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women, and a harmonious partnership between them are critical to their well-being and that of their families as well as to the consolidation of democracy.”

Source: United Nations (1995a), *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20) (New York: United Nations) (Sales No. E.96.IV.13), paragraph 15.

boys in achieving gender equality as one of the priority themes at its forty-eighth session in March 2004.

To support the Commission's deliberations on this topic, the Division for the Advancement of Women convened an online discussion in June-July 2003, focusing on three topics: the role of men and boys in the world of work; the role of men and boys in the HIV/AIDS pandemic; and the value of gender equality for men and boys. More than 300 participants registered from 70 different countries, and over 80 postings described local experiences and good practices.¹⁴

VOICES FROM THE ONLINE DISCUSSION

"There is a huge gap between egalitarian attitudes and social praxis. For example, more and more men express the wish to be involved actively in parenthood, not limiting fatherhood to being the economic provider. But only 2 per cent of fathers make use of the possibilities of parental leave."

—Michael Meuser (Germany)

"The group of men who are working in the alliances for gender equality, equal health care, and education, equity at work or in decision-making is too small in numbers."

—Rumana Hashem (Bangladesh)

"Men's partnerships with anti-violence women's groups are critical. They are powerful and practical demonstrations of men's and women's shared interest in stopping violence."

—Michael Flood (Australia)

Source: R. Connell (2003a), report of the online discussion on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, 30 June–25 July 2003, prepared for the expert group meeting entitled "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", held in Brasilia, Brazil, 21–24 October 2003 (EGM/Men-Boys-GE/2003/WP.2) (New York: United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women).

To contribute further to an understanding of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, the Division for the Advancement of Women convened an expert group meeting in Brazil in October 2003. The expert group meeting was organized in collaboration with the International Labour Office, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and was hosted by the Government of Brazil. Independent experts from all regions of the world, as well as observers from governments, United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations, participated in the meeting and discussed experiences of men's promotion of gender equality at different levels.¹⁵

The adoption of the agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session in 2004 was a major step in the development of a global policy framework to facilitate an enhanced role for men and boys in the achievement of gender equality. The agreed conclusions identified men's crucial role in sharing family responsibilities, including caring for dependants; preventing violence against women, including through trafficking and HIV/AIDS transmission; and providing role models for younger men. The important role of men in efforts to mainstream gender perspectives into national and international policies and programmes was also recognized.¹⁶

A large number of the recommendations in the agreed conclusions were directed at enabling men's involvement in gender equality efforts, including by building capacity and raising awareness about gender equality and the empowerment of women. Other recommendations focused on generating the necessary sociocultural change for gender equality, including through upbringing and educational processes. Different contexts in which a large number of men could be reached, particularly in male-dominated institutions, industries and associations, were identified as potential sites for sensitizing men regarding their roles and responsibilities in the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women.

In 2006, at its fiftieth session, the Commission on the Status of Women reviewed implementation of the recommendations on men and boys contained in the agreed conclusions adopted in 2004. Through an interactive panel discussion, initiated by two keynote speakers, Member States shared experiences, lessons learned and good practices in facilitating the involvement of men and boys in efforts to promote gender equality. The discussion highlighted efforts to incorporate attention to men and boys in legislation, policies and programmes

on gender equality and to develop ways to ensure the active participation of men and boys. Research initiatives have been undertaken and training and awareness-raising programmes have been provided to a wide range of stakeholders, including the judiciary, the police and the army, on ways to increase attention to men and boys in gender equality work.

The importance of education and the sensitization of boys in their formative years was highlighted, both through the formal educational system and in informal settings through peer programmes. The need to address gender norms through revision of curricula and materials was noted. Public information campaigns were highlighted as important mechanisms for disseminating positive messages and participants reported on effective use of public figures and opinion makers. Close collaboration with civil society was raised as an effective measure.¹⁷

Areas of particular concern where men's engagement was a priority were highlighted in the discussions. These

included trafficking and sexual exploitation, harmful traditional practices, HIV/AIDS and violence. The discussion also focused on measures, including parental leave schemes, that encouraged men's increased participation in caring responsibilities. The need to scale up initiatives was emphasized by participants. At the same time, however, the need for effective evaluation of efforts undertaken was highlighted. Multi-stakeholder partnerships were encouraged. Participants agreed that to reduce persistent resistance from men, greater attention should be given to highlighting the costs of inequality for men as well as women, and the significant benefits of gender equality for both women and men.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The term "gender" refers to the set of social norms, practices and institutions that regulate the relations between women and men (also known as "gender relations"). Gender relations involve a system of power relations between women and men in the context of sociocultural definitions of masculinity and femininity and economic relations. In many societies, the system of gender relations gives power and privilege to men and discriminates against women.

The overall system of gender relations in a society is sometimes called the "gender order". Women's and men's lives are shaped by gender relations or the gender order in many ways, including through the gender division of labour and different sociocultural norms and expectations.¹⁸ The gender order determines what is accepted, encouraged and allowed for women and men. When the gender order privileges men, the social acceptance of male domination and female subordination may be sustained by many formal and informal institutions and practices.

Gender equality refers to the goal of achieving equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and boys and girls. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality is not a women's issue, but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is both a human right and a precondition for and indicator of sustainable, people-centred development. Achieving gender equality requires that the interests, needs, priorities and contributions of both women and men are taken into consideration, while fully recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.

MASCULINITY/MASCULINITIES AND MALE IDENTITY/IDENTITIES

"Masculinity" is defined as the pattern of social behaviour or practice that is associated, in a given society, with the position of men in gender relations. Some authors speak of masculinity as a gender identity or "male identity". Research by historians and sociologists shows that definitions of masculinity change over time—masculinity is socially defined and is not fixed by biology. Research findings indicate that patterns of masculinity differ from one culture to another, and that multiple patterns of masculinity often exist within one culture. Many researchers therefore use the plural form "masculinities" to indicate the diversity of male identities that may exist in any one context. Changing male identities or masculinities may be an important strategy for achieving gender equality.

Source: R. Connell (2005), "Change among the gatekeepers: men, masculinities, and gender equality in the global arena", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), vol. 30, No. 3.

It is important to keep in mind that the distribution of power between women and men through the system of gender relations interacts with other systems of power relations and privilege. There are significant differences in power among men (and among women) based on other determinants of inequality (for example, class, race, ethnicity and age).

RATIONALES FOR INVOLVING MEN IN WORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Men's power over women in many contexts necessitates working with men to change the conditions of women's lives. The reproductive health field was one of the first areas in which the pragmatic rationale of "male responsibility" was utilized to encourage male involvement. The 1994 Programme of Action of the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development noted: "Men play a key role in bringing about gender equality since, in most societies, men exercise preponderant power in nearly every sphere of life, ranging from personal decisions regarding the size of families to the policy and programme decisions taken at all levels of government."¹⁹

Working for justice and equality in gender relations should be understood as part of the broader effort to secure equality in social relations. A concern for justice has provided a political incentive for many men to seek change in the gender order.

The maintenance of an unequal gender order in societies is likely to have negative consequences or costs for men as well as women. Such costs for men include the suppression of emotions in order to stay "in control"; the absence of nurturing relations with children; exposure to many health risks; narrowing of educational opportunities; and damage in interpersonal relations with women. Such costs are unevenly distributed among men. Recognition of these costs of inequality to men is one of the important rationales for men's involvement in gender equality work.

A further very practical reason for engaging men in work on gender equality is that men often control the resources needed for this work, in particular because of the underrepresentation of women in all areas of decision-making. The existing pattern of gender inequality—men's predominant control of economic assets, political power, cultural authority and armed forces—means that men (often specific groups of men) control most of the resources required to implement women's claims for justice.²⁰

MEN'S MOTIVATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN GENDER EQUALITY WORK

Men's lives are complex and are shaped by more than their gender identity. Race/ethnicity, class, caste, sexuality, religion and nationality all influence how men identify their interests. The increased recognition of the need to involve men in promoting gender equality has been accompanied by the growing motivation of men to become engaged.²¹ This motivation can emanate from a variety of sources, including men's relationships with women, their concern for their own personal well-being or that of their families, or their sense of social justice.

In their families and communities, men live in social relationships with women and girls: as wives, partners, mothers, sisters, aunts, daughters, nieces, friends, classmates, colleagues and neighbours. The quality of these relationships in large part determines the quality of men's lives. Men can increasingly see that their lives are also damaged by a system of gender inequality that has a negative impact on the women and girls with whom they live, work and interact in different ways. Many men make sacrifices for their children and want their daughters to grow up in a world that offers young women security, freedom and opportunities to fulfil themselves. This provides a powerful reason for many men to support gender equality.

SOUTH AFRICAN MEN'S FORUM

Mbuyiselo Botha of the South African Men's Forum emphasizes:

"What has kept me going is the philosophy that says our own liberation as men, as black South Africans, cannot be removed from the total liberation of women in this country. That has been a driving force. It would be very hypocritical to talk of liberation when you know that a large section of the society is still in bondage."

Source: D. Peacock and A. Levack (2004), "The Men as Partners Program in South Africa: reaching men to end gender-based violence and promote sexual and reproductive health", in *Men's Sexual and Reproductive Health: Lessons from the Field*, Barker and Das, eds., *International Journal of Men's Health* (Blindern: Men's Studies Press).

Men may see a collective interest in supporting gender equality because they see its relevance to the well-being of their families and communities. Flexibility in the gender division of labour may be crucial to households in situations of poverty and underemployment, where the incomes of both women and men are critical. In poor communities, in both rural and urban areas, maximizing the total labour resources of both women and men may be vital to prosperity or even survival. Men may recognize that they benefit in the long term from the collective well-being that follows from education, improvements in health, and access to employment or income-generating activities for women and girls.

Personal well-being may also play a role. Research continues to document problems in the current gender order for adult men and boys, including lower life expectancy; premature death from accidents, homicides and suicide; high rates of occupational injury in gender-segregated industries, such as mining, transport and heavy manufacturing; and higher levels of substance abuse, especially alcohol and tobacco. Men's unwillingness to seek health care when it is needed, because of prevailing perceptions of masculinity, has been observed in many countries. These problems are, in part, the result of men's adherence to gender norms that equate masculinity with toughness and invulnerability. Gender inequality can be damaging for men's health, and increased equality can contribute to men's personal well-being and quality of life.²²

Even when men cannot see personal, family or communal benefits, they may perceive a social responsibility to promote gender equality. Those with gender privilege have a responsibility to address systematic gender inequalities. This responsibility may be more evident to those men who are working for social justice in other areas in their own lives, for example, in relation to economic or racial justice. There is increasing recognition that these other struggles are related to women's struggles for gender equality, which are, in part, shaped by women's differing experiences of other forms of injustice. Beliefs about domination and subordination that lie at the heart of gender inequality (the power of the male over the female) also play a fundamental role in other forms of injustice, for example, of rich over poor, or of one race over another. Ending other forms of oppression, for example, racism and economic exploitation, depends, in part, on ending gender inequality.²³

INCREASING THE MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

With the rationale for men's engagement in work for gender equality becoming clear, and the increasing organization of men into groups and networks, a momentum for change is already apparent. Contributing to this momentum are efforts to make male privilege more visible, increased research on the effects of the prevailing gender order and gender identities, the capacity for change among men, the influence of male leaders and role models, and the impact of other social change processes under way.

It is common that those with privilege rarely notice that they have such privilege, while those without are constantly reminded of its absence. Women are very aware of discriminatory gender norms and roles because they are confronted with the resulting disadvantages on a daily basis. While many men are also disadvantaged by gender norms and roles, men tend to benefit overall and less often reflect on gender inequalities.²⁴

Recent years have witnessed a remarkable growth in research on men's gender identities and masculinity and on the links between gender relations and a range of social problems involving men. Academic journals have been founded for specialized research, and many conferences and a rapidly growing international literature in social science have illuminated many issues pertaining to men and gender equality, including those that are reviewed in this publication: violence, health, fatherhood, the workplace and youth.²⁵ A growing debate on men's experiences of the gender order and their gender identities and relations, and the increased visibility of the impact on the situation of women and girls, have clearly increased the momentum for change.

One of the clear findings from historical and cross-cultural research is that gender identities and roles are not fixed. Men in many different contexts have changed their attitudes and behaviours over time, often leading to a shift to more equitable gender relations. The evidence that men have a capacity for change is helping to build the momentum for working with men to promote gender equality. However, the belief that masculinity is intrinsically related to war, sexism, violence and aggression remains strong in some contexts.²⁶ It is therefore important to identify and highlight examples of men who are working to bring about a change towards the goal of gender equality.

While the surge in research and debate on the engagement of men in achieving gender equality is relatively

recent, public advocacy for gender equality by, or with the support of, male leaders has a longer history. Historic gains by women's movements have been won not only in the face of male resistance but also sometimes through alliances with men who held organizational or political authority at the time. As early as 1869, the British philosopher John Stuart Mill argued for gender equality in his work "The subjection of women".²⁷ Other examples of male leaders who have taken action in support of gender equality include Gough Whitlam, the former Prime Minister of Australia, who pioneered the creation of gender equality mechanisms in government in the 1970s, and the late Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, who actively supported gender equality in the same decade. In the 1990s, Nelson Mandela, the President of South Africa, joined male networks in marching to show male support for eliminating violence against women. More recent examples include President Lula da Silva of Brazil, who has supported the allocation of significant budgetary resources to eliminate violence against women; Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain, who supported progressive legislation on violence against women; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, who launched a multi-year campaign, Unite to End Violence against Women, in 2008.

As a result of the increased research and more visible and strategic leadership, a growing number of organizations and campaigns engage men in support for gender equality around the world. Some have a long history of work in this area, such as the National Organization for Men against Sexism (NOMAS) in the United States of

America, which has more than 20 years of continuous work on gender equality.²⁸ Others have been formed more recently, for example, the MenEngage network, a global alliance of non-governmental organizations involved in research, policy initiatives and interventions seeking to engage adult men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and promote the well-being of women, men and children.²⁹

Impetus for change is provided by ongoing socio-economic processes. Changes in ideas about masculinity and relations between women and men continue to both shape and be influenced by changes in the organization of the family, the division of labour, and the transformation in global communications. Some of the changes that have most significantly influenced ideas about gender equality and relations between women and men concern the organization of the family. Male power in society has traditionally been grounded in men's control over women and children within the family—the original meaning of the word "patriarchy". The family is, however, undergoing profound change. A recent authoritative cross-cultural study of the family identified the twentieth century as the century that marked the significant decline of patriarchal family arrangements, that is, the unchallenged rule of men over women and children.³⁰ New forms of the family are emerging as a result of changing social structures, including growing numbers of blended families and female-headed households. The increasing diversity of family formations, and of roles within households, is opening up new opportunities to challenge traditional notions of gender relations.

The entry of women in growing numbers into the paid labour force and the increase in male unemployment in some sectors and societies are changing perceptions of the gender division of labour. There is increased pressure to share child-rearing and household responsibilities more equally between women and men. Given the strong association between education and social mobility, efforts to increase female educational enrolment and attainment enhance the conditions for gender equality.

The information and communications technologies (ICT) revolution, and in particular an increasingly globalized youth culture, which disseminates images of young people's lives that challenge traditional ideas about social relations between women and men, have enhanced impetus for change. The response to the global HIV/AIDS epidemic is creating unprecedented opportunities for frank discussions of gender equality and sexuality.³¹ These and other social and economic changes are sustaining and increasing the momentum for men's greater involvement in gender equality work.

"We can all think of a million examples where if we provide men with a little more information, a few more skills, and a bit of encouragement, they themselves can be far more supportive, communicative and caring for their sexual partners and family members. It's not rocket science, and yet it isn't happening on a significant scale ...".

—Margaret Greene
International Center for Research on Women
(ICRW)

Source: International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo (2007), *Engaging Men and Boys to Achieve Gender Equality: How Can We Build on What We Have Learned?* (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women).

MEN'S RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Despite the increased research and leadership and the social momentum for change, resistance to gender equality persists among significant groups of men. There are multiple reasons for this resistance. Some men want to defend their privileges and power because they fear the loss of authority and economic benefits that they perceive gender equality would involve. Some men may resist gender equality because of a belief in inherent male supremacy. Most difficult to address is the fact that change towards gender equality will require new patterns of masculinity and thus may be perceived as a threat to identity for men. Change is particularly difficult when men and boys also face a range of problems related to unemployment, educational difficulties, economic restructuring, communal violence, and social exclusion and alienation. It is important to recognize that achieving change in gender relations is a complex process, likely to face difficulties and provoke resistance.³²

If social definitions of masculinity include being the "breadwinner" and being "strong", men may be threatened by women's economic and professional progress. Men's resistance may also be grounded in their resentment of what they see as attention and resources being given disproportionately to women. This sentiment underpins the development of fathers' rights groups in developed countries that maintain that mothers have been given too many rights. Such groups regard fathers as an oppressed group.

Experiences from microcredit programmes, for example, suggest that when such programmes empower women to the extent that a threat is perceived to male privilege, a violent backlash is possible. Research in Bangladesh found that microcredit programmes can have a varied effect on men's violence against women. "They can reduce women's vulnerability to men's violence by strengthening their economic roles and making their lives more public. When women challenge gender norms, however, they sometimes provoke violence in their husbands."³³

Over the last two decades, there has been much media attention to a perceived "crisis of masculinity". Some of the discussion has been fanciful and has been a way of avoiding issues of gender equality. In other cases, there has been serious discussion of real changes and problems in the lives of men and boys. The momentum for change in gender equality involves two types of change men may perceive as "crises". Promoting change in masculinities is an important process in engaging men to work for gender equality. The more successful this work is, the more men will rethink what it is to be a man, and how their

identity and self-respect can be sustained in a gender-equal society. A crisis in male privilege and authority is also a necessary part of the change process because of the need to challenge assumptions about male superiority in the current gender order.

In many parts of the world, ideologies that justify men's supremacy on grounds of religion, biology, cultural tradition or organizational mission (for example, in the military) persist. These ideas are not simply "traditional". They continue to be actively modernized and renewed, as it is clear in the resurgence of religious fundamentalisms and militant nationalisms that make use of beliefs about male supremacy in mobilizing support for their cause.³⁴

PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION IN ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS

It is important to identify the principles that should guide men's actions for gender equality, particularly given the resistance still faced from many men, as well as the wariness felt by women's movements about the implications of engaging men. Some women's movements fear that funding will be diverted from activities targeted to women, and that men will assume leadership and divert the focus of the gender equality struggle.

A number of important principles of action have been identified to guide the work on engaging men and boys, including the following.

Commitment to women's human rights and empowerment: The goal of gender equality must be kept central. Any effort to engage men should actively promote women's empowerment and in no way undermine women's human rights. Issues that need to be taken into account include ensuring:

- Partnership with and accountability to groups working for women's rights and empowerment;
- Visibility and leadership of women in activities to engage men;
- Accountability for a focus on gender equality in male-only groups and activities;
- Protection of "women's space" and women-only and women-focused programmes.

Broader context of human rights and social justice: The denial of rights and justice to women must be understood in the context of other forms of injustice

and human rights abuses, and the struggle for gender equality should be seen as part of the broad struggle for social justice and human rights. Framing the gender equality struggle in this manner can be a powerful means to mobilize many men to work for gender equality—linking their desire for justice (such as racial or economic justice) with gender equality.

Structural as well as personal change: The male power that maintains women's disempowerment and that produces gender inequalities is not simply a matter of the actions and attitudes of individual men in their personal lives. It is structured by the major institutions of society—social, cultural, political and economic. Engaging men in work for gender equality involves not only working with individual men on change in their personal lives but also mobilizing their support for structural change, focused on the institutions that express and reinforce male power.

Gender equality—involving both women and men: Gender equality must be defined as a goal that should concern and involve both women and men. It requires the development of integrated gender equality policies, with a focus on both women and men, rather than separate and parallel policies for women or for men, and the equal participation of women and men in all efforts focused on gender equality. It is important to refer to men and boys explicitly in gender equality policies, rather than assume the relevance of such policies for them.

Emphasis on gender relations: It is critical to focus on the pattern of relations between women and men in everyday life, for example, within families, schools,

workplaces and leisure activities. In each of these areas, power can be challenged and more democratic, equitable and respectful relationships constructed.

Accountability in relation to power and privilege: It is important that men be accountable for their complicity (explicit and implicit) in systems and practices of gender inequality. This involves creating spaces and building capacity for reflecting on both individual attitudes and behaviours and institutional policies and procedures, and recognizing the ways in which these serve to disempower women. This self-awareness is the basis of any commitment to change, and requires clarity about men's different experiences of power and privilege, as well as various forms of inequality, for example, based on class and race/ethnicity.

Emphasis on men's contribution: Affirming the role of boys and adult men in promoting gender equality, believing in men's capacity for change, and supporting their individual and collective efforts for positive change are critical elements in advancing gender equality. Specific roles and responsibilities should be explicitly defined for men in gender equality reform processes.

Responsiveness to men's diversity: Engaging men in work for gender equality requires addressing diversity among men. What men have in common is the gender privilege that comes from living in societies that, in many different ways, privilege men over women. Men's lives and experiences are in other ways extremely diverse, shaped by such factors as class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion and nationality. Men's sense of themselves as men and their experience of their gender identity cannot be understood in isolation from these diverse factors that give some men power over other men as well as over women. Such diversity produces different needs, and it is important to respond to specific needs in fostering men's engagement.

MEN'S ROLE IN THE STRUGGLE

Gender equality activist Mbuyiselo Botha of the South African Men's Forum has said:

"We must also be conscious that we do not take over the gender struggle as men. We must always be conscious. The temptation is there, because of men's tendency to take over. We must be constantly vigilant and remind ourselves that this is a struggle that has to be led by women."

Source: A. Greig and D. Peacock (2005), *Men as Partners Program: Promising Practices Guide* (South Africa: EngenderHealth).

STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

The following sections of this publication discuss entry points and opportunities for engaging men in work on gender equality, focusing on issues of violence, health, fatherhood, the workplace and the need to engage youth. Strategies for and lessons learned from male engagement in these areas are presented. In all of these areas, it is important to focus on two levels—working with men on their personal attitudes and behaviours; and mobilizing men to take action on the political, economic and social structures of male power that maintain gender inequalities.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women may be defined as “any act of gender-based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately”.³⁵ It is a form of discrimination and a violation of women’s human rights that derives from historically unequal power relations between men and women.³⁶ Most cases of violence against women involve a male perpetrator and a female victim/survivor.

Forms of violence against women vary according to specific social, economic, cultural and political contexts. However, there is no region, country or culture in which women are free from violence. Women between the ages of 15 and 44 are more likely to be injured or die as a result of male violence than from cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.³⁷

Violence against women occurs in several settings: the family, the community and the workplace, as well as in health-care and educational settings and in connection with law enforcement and custodial institutions. In many countries, violence against women is both perpetrated and condoned by the State. Some forms of violence occur in multiple settings, including trafficking, which involves family, community and the State and crosses international boundaries.³⁸

Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence experienced by women globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women found that the proportion of ever-partnered women who had experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner in their lifetime ranged between 15 and 71 per cent.³⁹ Worldwide, it has been estimated that intimate partners commit 40-70 per cent of murders of women.⁴⁰ There is also an increasing body of literature detailing the use of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women during armed conflict.⁴¹

Because violence against women is rooted in gender inequality and discrimination against women, any effort to eliminate such violence must focus on the achievement of substantive equality between women and men and on the promotion and protection of women’s human rights. This requires a coordinated and multifaceted effort by a variety of stakeholders including Governments, non-governmental organizations and other actors. The involvement of men and boys in the struggle to transform gender relations and eliminate violence against women

is essential. A number of challenges remain with respect to engaging men successfully in such work.

In order to end violence against women, discriminatory sociocultural attitudes that reinforce women’s subordinate position in society must be challenged. The normalization of violence within the family as a mechanism for maintaining male authority is evidenced by research conducted in India that concluded that “violence in the marital home frequently operated as a means of gender subordination and there was a high level of acceptability of violence against wives within families and communities”.⁴²

Gender role stereotypes that emphasize the subordinate position of women in society are reinforced by many of the images of women portrayed in the media and in the curricula of educational institutions. Such stereotypes contribute to an environment conducive to violence against women, including in workplaces,⁴³ educational institutions and sporting environments.⁴⁴

SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

A Nicaraguan anti-violence activist, Oswaldo Montoya, has emphasized:

“Violence in couple relationships is a problem of power and control. It is maintained by the social structures of oppression in which we live—based ... on gender, class, age, and race inequalities. A national history of wars and a culture of settling conflict through force also maintain it. Both men and women learn and practice this logic of human relations based on power and control over others; however, for men the exercise of this power-over-others model becomes almost an obligatory criterion to our male gender identity.”

Source: O. Montoya (2001), “Swimming upstream: looking for clues to prevent male violence in couple relationships” (Bradford: University of Bradford); 1999 version cited by A. Greig in online article (undated), “Men and violence: problems with masculinity”.

Between 40 and 50 per cent of women surveyed in the European Union have reported some form of sexual harassment or unwanted sexual behaviour in the workplace.⁴⁵ According to a 2006 study of schoolgirls in Malawi, 50 per cent said they had been touched in a sexual manner “without permission, by either their teachers or fellow schoolboys”.⁴⁶ Research regarding women in sport in the Czech Republic found that 45 per cent of female athletes had experienced sexual harassment from someone in sport, with 27 per cent reporting harassment from a coach.⁴⁷

While it is important to acknowledge that inequalities faced by many men, including economic exploitation, race/ethnic oppression or caste status,⁴⁸ affect their use of violence against women, it is nonetheless important to challenge any sense of entitlement to power based on gender norms. No experience of other injustices can ever be an excuse for gender-based violence.

STRATEGIES TO INVOLVE MEN IN THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Strategies to involve men in the elimination of violence against women and girls have a variety of starting points, since men are involved in this process in different ways. In addition to addressing the perpetration of violence against women by men, efforts are made to involve men in the prevention of violence against women and as service providers to victims and survivors. Men who hold leadership positions in political and economic arenas, as well as men who are leaders in social, cultural and religious life, can also be actively engaged in the elimination of violence against women and girls. The following section provides examples of entry points for working with men to eliminate violence against women.

MEN AS PERPETRATORS

Programmes involving male perpetrators of violence against women, with the aim of changing their behaviour and preventing future violence against women, are implemented in Australia, Canada, the United States, some countries in Europe, and some developing countries. Such programmes are generally directed at perpetrators of intimate partner violence, but have also been applied in cases of rape and sexual assault. Men may participate in such programmes on a voluntary basis or may be mandated to participate by court order.

Although efforts to evaluate programmes involving perpetrators have encountered some methodological difficulties,⁴⁹ several studies show that participation can reduce or prevent further violence by perpetrators who complete the programme. Such programmes are particularly successful when they are undertaken voluntarily.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, such programmes have high attrition rates. An evaluation of the flagship Violence Prevention Programme in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland showed that 65 per cent of men did not attend the first session, 33 per cent attended fewer than six sessions, and only 33 per cent went on to the second stage.⁵¹

WORKING WITH MEN IN JAMAICA

Brothers for Change, established in 1999 by the Jamaican Family Planning Association (FAMPLAN), was developed in response to concerns about sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies and other gynaecological problems that were the result of non-consensual sex and other forms of domestic violence. FAMPLAN collaborated with local probation officers, correctional services and judges to offer group counselling to male perpetrators referred to the programme by the courts. All men were expected to attend counselling sessions at least once a week for 20 weeks. During the sessions, movies and discussions were used to increase the men's awareness of the consequences of their actions and to identify better ways to behave. More than 40 perpetrators participated in Brothers for Change in 1999 and 2000.

In a survey-based evaluation of the programme, participants indicated that they were increasingly able to identify various forms of violence, control their anger and take responsibility for their actions, and partners reported that the participants had been less violent. However, the evaluation suggested that the programme could be improved by more extensive collaboration with the criminal justice system, increased resources, working with partners and families of perpetrators, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation of its activities.

Source: A. Eckman and others (2005), “The policy environment for male youth in Jamaica: findings from a pilot on the Gender Equitable Male Involvement (GEMI) tool” (Washington, D.C.: USAID).

According to a recent international review of research on the topic, evaluations suggest that programmes involving perpetrators work best if they continue for longer periods of time; have sustained participation; provide an environment conducive to men's discussion of their behaviour; and work in tandem with a criminal justice system that acts strictly when there are breaches of the conditions of the programme.⁵² An expert conference on therapeutic programmes for male perpetrators of violence within the family convened by the Council of Europe in 2004 reaffirmed the important preventive value of perpetrator change programmes.⁵³

Studies have found that men who observed intimate partner violence in their childhood home are significantly more likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence.⁵⁴ There is evidence that working with boys and young men who have grown up in violent homes may prevent them from becoming perpetrators of such violence.⁵⁵

CHANGING MEN'S ATTITUDES

Lee Buthelezi, a 25-year-old from the Johannesburg township of Thokoza, says:

"I was socially brought up knowing that if you want to have sex with a girl and she doesn't want, you just klap [hit] her two or three times and she will give you what you want. I grew up doing those things, you know, beating women and forcing myself [on them] and all that. After being in contact with Men as Partners (MAP) a couple of years ago I realized that the way that I grew up was actually wrong; it wasn't supposed to be like that. If you want to have sex it should be a mutual feeling, both from your partner and you, and you agree on doing that. But when I was growing up I wouldn't wait for [an] agreement or consent of some sort. I'd just do exactly the way I wanted, you know ... We were brought up in a manner that women should be beaten in order to get what you want from them. But we're trying to change that stereotype ... and show [other men] that you should talk, discuss and reach a consensus together with your partner."

Source: D. Peacock (2006), "We exist! Voices of male feminism", in *Defending Our Dreams: Global Feminist Voices for a New Generation*, Wilson, Sen-gupta and Evans, eds. (London: Zed Books).

MEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Strategies to prevent violence against women, whether narrowly or broadly focused, must engage men and boys to reflect critically about masculinities that perpetuate violence against women. Evidence suggests that the participation of men and boys in education programmes for groups and individuals that are intensive and comprehensive, and that use a variety of teaching approaches, can produce positive and lasting change in men's attitudes and behaviours regarding violence against women.⁵⁶ A study of secondary school and university students who attended rape education sessions revealed that they were more likely to condemn rape, and/or report greater victim empathy.⁵⁷ Similarly, an evaluation of the "Safe Dates" programme in the United States found a 25 per cent reduction in self-reported perpetration of psychological violence; a 60 per cent reduction in self-reported physical and sexual violence perpetration; and a significant reduction in physical and sexual dating violence.⁵⁸ A study of men who participated in workshops run by the Men as Partners project in South Africa also found that they were less likely than non-participants to believe that it is acceptable to beat their wives or to rape sex workers.⁵⁹ The Programa H initiative of Instituto Promundo focuses on prevention through a group educational process involving brainstorming activities, discussion sessions, a cartoon series about gender socialization and individual reflections about how boys and men are socialized. This has been effective in various settings in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in India, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.⁶⁰

Research has indicated that many men are uncomfortable with stereotypical and violent behaviour towards women and would intervene if they believed other men would support them.⁶¹ Such initiatives as the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme in the United States work with men to equip them with the knowledge and motivation to intervene in cases of violence against women.⁶² The approach includes the development of skills in de-escalating risky situations and being effective allies for survivors, as well as the promotion of a sense of community responsibility for violence prevention.⁶³

Men are increasingly involved in campaigns and awareness-raising activities regarding violence against women, such as the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, which takes place from 25 November to 10 December each year to highlight the consequences of violence against women.⁶⁴

Men have also initiated new campaigns and organizations to raise awareness. For example, the Men as Partners programme in South Africa supports men in forming community action teams, which work closely with trained staff to host or support a range of community events on violence awareness, including rallies, street theatre and mural painting. The White Ribbon Campaign is the best known and most widespread campaign led by men to end men's violence against women. The Campaign was started in 1991 by men in Canada to encourage all men to look at their own attitudes and behaviour and to challenge other men to stop all forms of violence against women. (See box below.)

In addition, there have been attempts to involve men in different institutional contexts—such as the military, police, trade unions and sports teams—on the issue of violence against women. For example, the mayor of a town in Honduras engaged men in educating the community on violence against women by linking training on the issue to the purchase of new football equipment.⁶⁵

MEN AS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Victims/survivors of violence against women require timely access to a range of services, in particular health care, counselling and legal services, in order to receive treatment for their injuries, protection from further violations and support in addressing their longer-term needs. Service providers, both male and female, must receive training on violence against women in order to provide appropriate responses to victims/survivors of such violence. While there is evidence that victims/survivors may prefer female service providers, it is inevitable that men will be involved in service provision, including as doctors, counsellors, emergency room attendants, psychologists, social workers or lawyers. It is critical that such male service providers receive gender sensitivity training as well as training on appropriate ways of communicating with victims/survivors and on understanding the needs of victims/survivors, so that they can respond to such needs without seeming threatening.

In addition to persons providing services directly, women victims/survivors are also likely to come into contact

THE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Each year, during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence campaign, men wear the white ribbon as a personal pledge never to commit or condone violence, or remain silent on violence. The ribbon also serves as a catalyst for discussion of the issue and as a public challenge to men who commit violence against women. With its widening presence in many countries, the Campaign has also become a call to policymakers and opinion leaders to take violence against women seriously. There are now White Ribbon Campaigns in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Australia and the United States. The Campaign has been adapted in different localities to include concerts, rallies and marches, contests, and school and university initiatives. Prominent politicians and celebrities have also participated to further the cause.

Source: White Ribbon Campaign (2007), "The White Ribbon Campaign: men working to end men's violence against women" (Canada).

PIONEERING WORK ON GENDER AND VIOLENCE SENSITIZATION WITH POLICE AND COURT OFFICIALS IN PAKISTAN

The non-governmental organization Rozan has implemented gender and violence sensitization workshops with police and court officials in Islamabad, Pakistan. This initiative was unusual in the emphasis it placed on exploring police officers' own experiences of and feelings about the gender norms and roles in which they have been raised. Beginning with this discussion of police officers' own experience made it easier to work with them on their attitudes towards women and gender-based violence. An evaluation of the pilot intervention reported marked improvements in attitudes towards gender equality and violence against women and children, as well as an 18 per cent decrease in the number of participants reporting that they "lost control when angry".

Source: Rozan: Working on emotional health, gender and violence against women, children and youth (2008), Mentoring process: Work with National Police Academy (Islamabad: Rozan).

MOBILIZATION OF LEADERS TO END FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

In Deir El Barsha in the Minya governate in Upper Egypt, where female genital mutilation was widely practised, NGOs used community mobilization to inform local and religious leaders of the adverse effects of the practice. The leaders then reached out to families within their areas of influence, and villagers were inspired to create a social contract in which everyone in the village committed to ending the practice.

Source: United Nations (2006), *Ending Violence against Women: From Words to Action—Study of the Secretary-General* (A/61/122/Add.118) (New York: United Nations) (Sales No. E.06.IV.8).

with the police and the judicial system. In order to work towards ending impunity for acts of violence against women, it is essential that the justice system respond appropriately and effectively to cases of violence against women. The majority of police, prosecutors and judges are men, who must be given gender sensitivity training as well as training on violence against women in order to be able to provide appropriate responses.

HEALTH

The Commission on Social Determinants of Health of the World Health Organization (WHO) considers gender inequality as a key factor in the distribution of health and illness within populations.⁷² There is now extensive research that has illustrated the complexity of the relationship between gender equality and health. Patterns of morbidity and mortality differ for women and men, but also vary in different geographical and other contexts, and may differ over time as health behaviour may vary across the life cycle. It is therefore critical to systematically collect, compile and utilize sex- and age-disaggregated data.

An Australian national report on men's health argued that male patterns of health can only be understood in a gen-

MEN AS LEADERS

Men can provide critical leadership through their roles as decision makers, public figures and opinion makers in speaking out against violence against women and ensuring that priority attention is given to the issue. Men can provide role models for male adolescents and boys.

Men have an essential role to play as community leaders in speaking out, standing together, mobilizing communities and taking action to end men's violence against women.⁶⁶ Engaging community leaders, including religious and cultural leaders, has proved to be a successful strategy in improving the response of communal justice mechanisms to violence against women⁶⁷ and preventing trafficking of women and girls.⁶⁸ The participation of positive male role models in campaigns that condemn violence against women has also shown promising results. In New South Wales, Australia, the state government used well-known male athletes in its community education campaign "Violence against women: it's against all the rules", aimed at men aged 21 to 29.⁶⁹ In Brazil, the "Hora H" campaign ("In the heat of the moment") involved major rap artists who appeared as positive role models for gender equality.⁷⁰

The role of legislators in enacting laws addressing violence against women is critical. Globally, the majority of legislators are male, and it is essential that they be supportive of law reform aimed at ending impunity for perpetrators of violence against women. Laws addressing violence against women have been enacted in some 89 countries.⁷¹ While the impetus for such legal reforms has often come from women's groups and civil society, such laws could not have been passed without the support of male legislators.

der relations framework.⁷³ The gender division of labour and cultural definitions of masculinity affect behaviour related to many health issues, from HIV prevention to the care of newborn children. In a gender relations framework, it is possible to see how men's power and privilege and the institutions that sustain them have an impact on the health of both women and men.

This is strikingly so in the case of sexual and reproductive health. In 2007, for example, half of the 30.8 million adults living with HIV worldwide were women. The proportion of women living with HIV in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe has been slowly growing, while in sub-Saharan Africa, almost 61 per cent of adults liv-

ing with HIV are women. HIV may be transmitted to female partners of men who have been infected through unprotected sex outside the relationship or through injecting drug use.⁷⁴ Inequalities in relationships with men can prevent women from taking necessary precautions to protect themselves. Women are made vulnerable to infection through gender norms and practices that constrict their power to control sexual behaviour.

Married women can be vulnerable within marriage when the gender order allows men to have multiple partners, there are strong sociocultural expectations in relation to fertility, and women face difficulties in ensuring condom use within the marriage. In Ndola, Zambia, 27 per cent of married young women were HIV-positive, compared to 16 per cent of young unmarried women.⁷⁵ A study at a health clinic in Pune, India, found that of 400 women—93 per cent of whom were married—25 per cent had sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and 14 per cent were HIV-positive. Of these women, 9 out of 10 had never had sex with anyone but their husbands.⁷⁶

Women's vulnerability to sexual health problems is further exacerbated, both directly and indirectly, by men's violence. Men's violence can deter women from using HIV-related services.⁷⁷ A report from Cambodia, for example, highlights fear of domestic violence as a contributing factor in the low numbers of women accessing voluntary HIV counselling and testing services at antenatal clinics.⁷⁸ A study of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission programmes in six African countries also found that fear of ostracism and domestic violence led to the refusal of some pregnant women to get tested for HIV or to return for their test results. On average, 11 per cent of women in developing countries reported violence as an outcome of an HIV-positive disclosure.⁷⁹

Inequalities related to the gender division of labour can also increase women's vulnerability to ill-health. Studies conducted in the Caribbean and Ghana have found a higher risk for malarial infection for women than for men, linked to the gender division of labour, which determines the nature and frequency of water contact. While men's water contact was related to economic activities (such as fishing), women's contact was more prolonged as a result of domestic roles, including the collection of water, washing clothes and children, and the use of water for cooking and other household activities.⁸⁰ Women's household responsibilities can also lead to exposure to second-hand smoke, which increases the risk of lung cancer. For example, studies conducted in countries where women are more likely to be lifelong non-smokers have found high levels of lung cancer among non-smoking women, associated both with cooking vapours released

from the oil used in cooking and with exposure to fumes from coal used for cooking in the home.⁸¹

The gender division of labour imposes the primary responsibility for caring for sick family members on women.⁸² Research in India has shown that it is generally women who care for men with HIV/AIDS—wives care for HIV-positive husbands, and mothers and sisters-in-law are the main caregivers for unmarried men. Although women provide this care, they are not assured of the same level of care in the event they themselves become infected.⁸³ In Africa, there is widespread evidence that men often leave the burden of caring for the sick and dying at the household and community levels to women.⁸⁴ Taking on this socially prescribed role of caring can have a detrimental impact on women's lives. For example, caregivers reported that looking after people living with HIV and AIDS had drained them both economically and emotionally.⁸⁵ For women living with HIV or AIDS, the time and resources they spend taking care of sick household members minimizes the time they have to meet their own health needs, thus creating additional vulnerabilities to opportunistic infections.

Care responsibilities are particularly heavy for women when they do not have access to running water. It is estimated that caring for a sick person living with AIDS requires up to 24 buckets of water every day—to clean up vomit and diarrhoea, prepare baths and cook—which places tremendous time constraints on the caregiver.⁸⁶ Moreover, as the epidemic continues, school-age girls increasingly drop out of school to assist with household work and take care of sick family members. Older women are also increasingly relied upon to perform tasks previously carried out by younger women, including caring for young children who have been orphaned by the epidemic.

Women's poverty, which is directly related to gender inequalities in access to and control over economic resources, is also a key contributor to ill-health. For instance, in Cameroon, where malaria is widespread and among the leading causes of maternal morbidity and mortality, a study found that the burden of illness fell disproportionately on women of low social and economic status, unemployed women, and women living in poor neighbourhoods and in households with few amenities.⁸⁷ In a study in Benin, researchers found that women's access to income was one of the main determinants of the use of bednets, the main protection against malaria. The seasonal nature of cash income in relation to the production of cash crops was one factor affecting women's purchasing ability. However, it was women's lack of direct control over spending decisions that was the most significant factor. Women's capacity to negotiate the amount of income set aside for health care (including

the cost of nets and anti-malarial drugs) depended on their degree of influence over their male partners, who ultimately held decision-making authority.⁸⁸

Men's control over household resources and over women's mobility outside the home in many societies has a direct influence on women's access to health care. For example, women seek treatment of tuberculosis (TB) less often or later than men, although there are regional variations.⁸⁹ This control by men, combined with women's fear of disclosing symptoms of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), can reduce women's access to STI treatment.

Men also exert influence over women's health through their roles as health-care planners and providers. There is some evidence of a gap between women and men in detection rates for cardiovascular disease. One study found that women have more unrecognized myocardial infarctions than men; approximately a third more silent myocardial infarctions overall; and roughly 100 per cent more among women under the age of 65. This relates in part to differences in symptoms, but also to differences in treatment patterns, although there do not appear to be gender differences in treatment-seeking behaviour.⁹⁰ Research suggests, for example, that tuberculosis may be less well diagnosed in women than in men; studies in Viet Nam and India have found that women are less likely than men to be referred for sputum testing by (mostly) male doctors.⁹¹

STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD

The unequal gender system has damaging health consequences for men as well as women, even though it generally privileges men. These negative consequences for men need to be acknowledged as a legitimate, and indeed important, issue for gender equality health strategies, especially strategies that aim to engage men. Effectively addressing the intersection between HIV and AIDS and gender and sexuality, for example, requires that interventions should, at the very least, not build on or reinforce damaging gender and sexual stereotypes. "Many of our past and, unfortunately, some of our current efforts have fostered a predatory, violent, irresponsible image of male sexuality and portrayed women as powerless victims or as repositories of infection."⁹²

At a seminar entitled "Engaging men and boys in HIV/AIDS prevention, sexual and reproductive health and ending gender-based violence: how can we build on what we have learned?", organized by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Instituto

Promundo in May 2007, discussions highlighted the significant increase in the number of programmes working with men and boys, as a result of increased understanding of men's central roles in determining women's health and well-being, and the fact that traditional health programmes do not address gender-based values and norms. Participants emphasized that positive health interventions for both women and men depend on changing social norms around masculinity. Programmes that question gender-related attitudes that both put men themselves at risk and potentially harm their partners can affect a wide range of health behaviours and result in positive health outcomes. There is ample evidence from programmatic work that involving men and boys has positive outcomes for the health of women and girls as well as men and boys. Participants called for greater dialogue between groups working with women's health and those working with men to promote gender equality in reproductive health.⁹³

Engaging men in gender equality work on health must constructively address the ways in which men's power

MEN IN SUPPORT OF SAFE MOTHERHOOD

There are some useful examples of work with men to support safe motherhood. In Indonesia, the Alert Husband (Suami SIAGA) campaign was developed as part of a larger campaign addressing the three main delays in accessing emergency obstetrical care: recognizing pregnancy-related complications, seeking care and reaching a health-care facility. The campaign was implemented over a six-month period and included a range of print, broadcast and interpersonal communication materials developed for service providers. Husbands who were exposed to the campaign via print media were five times as likely to report taking action than men who were not exposed to the campaign, and husbands who engaged in interpersonal communication about becoming a Suami SIAGA were 10 times as likely to report taking action.

Source: C. Shefner-Rogers and L. Sood (2004), "Involving husbands in safe motherhood: effects of the SUAMI SIAGA campaign in Indonesia", *Journal of Health Communication* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Taylor and Francis), vol. 9.

and privilege adversely affect women's health, particularly their sexual and reproductive health, and especially in areas where women have limited autonomy and are subordinated by men. To address these risks, women should be consulted in programme design and assessment of impact in programmes that engage men and, where necessary, protective measures must be developed for women.⁹⁴

It is important to develop health promotion materials that do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Health promotion strategies should be sensitive to the different circumstances of women and men, for example, with respect to increasing physical activity, changing diet, stopping smoking and dealing with stressful life events and situations.⁹⁵ It has also been argued that there is a need for health promotion material on malaria and other diseases to be targeted at men as well as women, since men often control the resources that are needed to seek treatment.⁹⁶ Similarly, promotional materials on child health should foster the understanding that men as well as women have parental responsibilities.

Work with men on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health has multiple goals—providing information, increasing awareness, and promoting attitudinal and behavioural changes. Research has shown that changing attitudes and behaviours of men leads to better health outcomes for women⁹⁷ and that women would like men to be more involved.⁹⁸ Educating men about sexual and reproductive health ensures safe motherhood, as these men give more support to their partners in prenatal care, birth and post-partum care, and are also able to make better decisions about getting care, for example, during premature labour.⁹⁹ When men have a better understanding of reproductive issues, they use contraceptive and STI/HIV barrier methods more consistently. Research has found that men are generally favourable to family planning methods as ways to delay and prevent pregnancies. Some men believe in planning the number and spacing of their children. They are aware of the cost of caring for a family, especially in times of poverty or unemployment.¹⁰⁰

When men feel encouraged and supported, they also adopt more equitable attitudes and behaviour. A number of organizations have observed that improving communication skills between couples can help in reducing gender inequalities, including through ensuring a more even distribution of housework. At the National Association for People Living with HIV and AIDS in Malawi, 9 out of 10 male members confessed that they were unwilling to disclose their HIV status to their wives. Following the establishment of support groups for young couples, 65 per cent of young men who were

previously unable to admit that they were HIV-positive brought their wives to the group.¹⁰¹

Over the last 15 years, a growing number of health-related programmes involving men and boys have focused on sexual and reproductive health; HIV prevention, treatment, care and support; maternal, newborn and child health; fatherhood; and gender-based violence.¹⁰² Evaluations of these programmes have yielded increasing evidence of the positive impacts of involving men and boys.¹⁰³ (See the box on that topic on page 18.)

MEN AND SAFE MOTHERHOOD IN PAKISTAN

This experimental province-wide project in Sindh, entitled "Male Involvement to Promote Safe Motherhood", organized community seminars for groups of 50 to 60 men in hard-to-reach areas. The activities undertaken included showing a video film on two of the most serious maternal and child health (MCH) problems: haemorrhage and eclampsia; facilitating an open discussion on other MCH problems, including preventable maternal deaths, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS and fertility regulation; and distributing handouts.

The experience of the project challenges much of the conventional wisdom regarding men and safe motherhood. The project found that many men were interested in learning about pregnancy and childbirth. It became clear that it was not only rural or low-literate men who needed information about reproductive health. Urban, educated men were also ill-informed. Most of the men who participated in the project were willing to seek information from a female health-care provider about pregnancy and childbirth-related topics, but wanted to discuss sexuality-related issues with a male health professional. There was no opposition from religious leaders when motherhood was the theme of a community activity or open discussion.

Source: I. T. Kamal (2001), "Field experience in involving men in safe motherhood in programming for male involvement in reproductive health", report of the meeting of World Health Organization Regional Advisers in Reproductive Health, 5-7 September 2001 (Washington, D.C.: World Health Organization/PAHO).

EXAMPLES OF CHANGES IN THE BEHAVIOUR OF MEN AND BOYS THROUGH HEALTH-RELATED PROGRAMMES

Specific changes in behaviour have been confirmed in reasonably well-evaluated programmes with men and boys:

- Decreased self-reported use of physical, sexual and psychological violence in intimate relationship (Safe Dates Program, United States; Stepping Stones, South Africa; and Soul City, South Africa);
- Increased contraceptive use (Together for a Happy Family, Jordan; male motivation campaign, Zimbabwe and Guinea; and involving men in contraceptive use, Ethiopia);
- Increased communication with spouse or partner about child health, contraception and reproductive decision-making (Men in Maternity, India; Together for a Happy Family, Jordan; male motivation campaign, Guinea; and Soul City, South Africa);
- More equitable treatment of children (Together for a Happy Family, Jordan);
- Increased use of sexual and reproductive health services by men (integration of men's reproductive health services in health and family welfare centres, Bangladesh);
- Increased condom use (Sexto Sentido, Nicaragua; and Programa H, Brazil);
- Decreased rates of sexually transmitted infections (Programa H, Brazil);
- Increased social support of spouse (Soul City, South Africa).

Source: G. Barker, C. Ricardo and M. Nascimento (2007), *Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender-based Inequity in Health: Evidence from Programme Interventions* (Geneva: World Health Organization and Instituto Pro-mundo).

There is some evidence that many men are willing to be involved in HIV/AIDS care and support activities but are inhibited from doing so by cultural pressures around masculinity. A 1999 UNAIDS study with men in the United Republic of Tanzania revealed that, on occasion, "male

STEPPING STONES IN RURAL SOUTH AFRICA: A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE HIV PREVENTION INTERVENTION

Stepping Stones is a life-skills package targeting youth that has been implemented successfully in over 40 countries. It aims at improving sexual health by focusing on gender equality between partners. Stepping Stones was adapted by the Medical Research Council and the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa and carried out with 20 young men and 20 young women between 15 and 26 years of age in 70 villages of the Eastern Cape. The different sessions included discussions and activities on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, sex and love, and communication skills. Stepping Stones had a notable impact on men and their behaviour. New HIV infections were less frequent among men participating in the programme, compared to the control group. Men reported fewer sexual partners and more correct condom use the last time they had sex. There was a decline in the number of men perpetrating severe intimate partner violence 12 and 24 months after taking part in Stepping Stones. Qualitative findings have further shown an improvement in communication between partners. Men and women expressed their opinions and feelings more clearly and listened to each others' opinions more attentively. Men also mentioned being more aware of the consequences of their acts, including violence against women, and greater acceptance for condom use. Most Stepping Stones participants took the decision to get tested for HIV.

Source: R. Jewkes and others (2007), "Evaluation of Stepping Stones: a gender transformative HIV prevention intervention" (South Africa: Medical Research Council), Policy Briefs.

heads of households would wish to do more when their partners fall ill but were curtailed by cultural definitions of maleness and the roles defined which determine masculinity".¹⁰⁴ To integrate men successfully in care and support activities, it is important to understand their attitudes and the barriers they face in becoming involved. To address these issues, some home-based care programmes include an element of gender awareness training to build family and community support for men's greater involvement. This approach creates an opportunity to support men to address their own health needs; helps men to learn the skills necessary to provide care and support to people living with AIDS; and encourages men to play an active role in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.¹⁰⁵

There is a need for more community-focused programming (for example, mobilization approaches such as those used in "Stepping Stones"; see the box on that topic on

page 18) to promote shared responsibility between men and women with respect to sexual rights and decision-making over reproduction. Public education campaigns targeting men on reproductive health and safe motherhood have shown some success, especially when they are connected to participatory training activities at the community level.

Men occupy many, and in some cases all, leadership positions in local communities and organizations. Male community leaders play "gatekeeper" roles and have the capacity to shape the norms and services that could contribute to improved sexual and reproductive health for both women and men. It is therefore important to include them in the process of change towards gender equality. A report on HIV/AIDS work with men in South Africa notes that "many respondents emphasized the role that community leaders, usually men themselves, can play in permitting and promoting gender-based HIV prevention work with men and in addressing certain community norms and practices that may inhibit this work".¹⁰⁶

WORKING WITH MALE COMMUNITY LEADERS IN ZAMBIA

Thandizani, a community-based organization working in Eastern Province, Zambia, has had considerable success in its work with male community leaders to change traditional practices of ritual cleansing and widow inheritance that were identified as contributing to HIV transmission. In general, the approach used has been to acknowledge the history and purposes of the custom and either to reach agreement that the purpose served by the custom is no longer pertinent, or to identify a safer way to accomplish the purpose through the substitution of another practice. It is also clear that more efforts must be made to include women in communal decision-making that affects sexual and reproductive health and to involve more men as educators at the communal level.

Source: A. Greig (2003), "HIV prevention with men: toward gender equality and social justice", paper presented at the expert group meeting entitled "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil, 21-24 October 2003.

Work with male treatment providers is needed to overcome provider bias in case detection and treatment provision, including gender-sensitive diagnostic and treatment protocols, staff training in gender-sensitive treatment provision and careful evaluation against gender-sensitive indicators. Consensus guidelines for improving sex/gender sensitivity in the recognition and treatment of heart disease were, for example, recently produced by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology in association with a number of professional organizations concerned with the treatment of women. The perception of coronary heart disease as a male disease may be compounded by gender bias in regarding men's health as more important, resulting in greater time and resources devoted to the treatment of male patients. A key focus of work with the health sector must be to change prevailing gender attitudes, which may be deeply rooted in both clinicians and patients.¹⁰⁷

The lack of gender-sensitization training, especially for male providers and planners, is a significant gap in most health-care systems. For example, there is a need to address male bias in the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and to improve the accessibility and quality of STI treatment for women through gender training for service providers. Providers need skills to address the gender dynamics of couple relationships and to be able to effectively provide voluntary counselling and testing for STIs to married women. Such skills are typically not addressed in the training of health professionals.

FATHERHOOD

Fatherhood has emerged as a key issue in, and opportunity for, gender equality work with adult and adolescent men. Data suggest that, worldwide, fathers contribute far less time than mothers to direct childcare, although there is tremendous variation across countries and among different groups of men. Studies from a range of settings find that fathers contribute about one third to one fourth of the time that mothers do to direct childcare.¹⁰⁸ The promotion of gender

equality in the household, particularly with regard to parenting, is a key step in laying the foundation for a more gender-equitable society. Opportunities to facilitate men's more active engagement in fatherhood are discussed below.

Changes in traditional family composition and relations are, as already noted, occurring as a result of many factors, including urbanization and industrialization, migration, globalization, armed conflict and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as changes in the position of women in the workforce and society. For example, with more women employed in the paid workforce, there has been a rise in the number of families with both parents working outside the home, which has implications for childcare. More children are being brought up by lone parents, usually women but also men. HIV/AIDS and armed conflicts have led to a growing incidence of female-headed families and grandparent-headed families. The impact of these changes on women's caring roles and responsibilities has been significant. There is a need to assist men and boys to play a more active role in ensuring the well-being of their families by sharing housework and caring and nurturing responsibilities.¹⁰⁹

In recognizing that families are changing and ideas about fatherhood are evolving, it is important not to limit definitions of "family" to biological constructions. The term "family" should refer to social aggregations that are the basis for identity and support of more than one generation of individuals. The distinction between biological paternity and social paternity is important because, in the absence of the biological father, other men (grandparents, uncles, older brothers and other adults) may assume fatherly duties.

It is also essential to acknowledge the diversity of men's experiences of parenting. One study in Mexico has noted the variation in the roles men take as parents and the variety of situations in which men are not involved in parenting roles.¹¹⁰ The study also highlighted how men change as fathers at different times in their lives—authoritarian fathers may become tender grandfathers—and fathers' behaviour may differ for each child. The meanings and practices of fatherhood differ across social strata. In Mexico, in working-class neighbourhoods, among families with few economic resources, it is not rare for men to care for small children, whereas in middle-class families with higher incomes, maids and nannies assume most childcare.¹¹¹

FATHERHOOD IN FLUX

Research on fatherhood pioneered by the Central American University has noted a range of roles being taken by fathers. A total of 4,790 fathers, men without children, and women were surveyed in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Three types of approaches to fatherhood were identified:

- "Traditional men" (51 per cent of men surveyed) who assumed that men were "by nature" at the top of the family hierarchy;
- "Modern men" (39 per cent) who were affectionate with their children and shared responsibility for their upbringing, regardless of couple dissolution;
- "Men in transition", the remaining 10 per cent, fell somewhere in between. They expressed uncertain and at times conflicting notions of male identity.

Many of the "modern" or "transitional" men were younger fathers exposed to new ideas and norms about gender equality and sharing reproductive health and rights and responsibilities with women. Higher levels of educational attainment were also found to be closely correlated with more gender-equitable attitudes.

Source: United Nations Population Fund (2005), *State of the World Population: The Promise of Equality: Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals* (New York: UNFPA).

The benefits of increasing men's engagement in fatherhood are increasingly well documented and include:

- *Providing positive role models:* There is some evidence that positive male parental involvement increases the likelihood that sons will grow up to be more gender-equitable and involved fathers themselves, and that daughters will have more flexible views about gender equality and a greater sense of equality within relationships.¹¹²
- *Empowering girls:* There is evidence that involving fathers in addressing gender-based feeding discrimination results in girls' becoming better nourished. Girls whose fathers are more actively involved in their lives tend to have higher self-esteem and are likely to engage in sexual activity somewhat later than girls whose fathers are absent or less involved.¹¹³
- *Addressing male violence:* Because of domestic violence and child abuse, homes are dangerous places for millions of women and children. Many studies show that men involved in the nurturing of young children are much less likely to engage in violence against their female partners.¹¹⁴ At the same time, it has been recognized that, in some cases, policies to promote the involvement of fathers in family life can undermine efforts to address domestic violence by making it harder to remove violent men from their families. In parallel to supporting men's involvement with children, there must therefore be a continued effort to protect and empower women and children and, where necessary, assist them in leaving relationships when men become abusive.
- *Changing men's gender identities and relations:* Some evidence suggests that increasing the involvement of men as parents in the lives of their families will lead to a change in the men's attitudes and behaviours in relation to gender equality more broadly.¹¹⁵ Research from India and Pakistan has highlighted the changes in the lives of men as a result of their experience of becoming fathers, particularly of girls. As one study noted: "By seeing women and girls through their daughters' eyes, these men have begun to think about aspects of gender inequality, such as sexual harassment, inheritance law, and mobility that might not have concerned them before. They have also been moved to find ways to defy restrictive laws, practices, and social pressure, creating strategic models for their children and peer groups to follow, which in turn allow their children to become role models as well."¹¹⁶

Recent research shows that while men may be willing to embrace new models of parenthood (being involved

fathers), they often lack the skills, knowledge and opportunity to do so. Many lack positive role models and support in adjusting to their new roles as fathers. Men's negative experiences with their own fathers may also make it difficult for them to talk about fatherhood.¹¹⁷ A focus on rights to fatherhood has had a positive impact. In several Latin American countries, informing young men that they have the right to be involved in their children's lives led to positive change, while framing their involvement as a duty had the opposite effect.¹¹⁸

Fathers' involvement with their children is often narrowed to a limited range of options.¹¹⁹ When the role of father is confined to that of provider and protector, it can lead to his marginalization within the family. This traditional father figure may be the only role model available for men and boys.¹²⁰ Even when men want to take a more active role as fathers, they may be inhibited from doing so by existing social structures, including the pressure to spend long hours at work and/or the dependence of families on the "male wage", as well as the lack of social acceptance and support.¹²¹

STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD

From existing work with fathers, it is clear that many men would benefit from men-only spaces in which to share their experiences, questions and fears about parenting and benefit from mutual support. Such spaces should not, however, lead to a polarization of men's positions versus women's on family issues, thus increasing tensions and misunderstandings within families. A few experiences of promising support groups for fathers already exist, for example, those established to work with HIV-positive fathers in Uganda; fathers in prison in the United States and the United Kingdom; and low-income, young fathers in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.¹²²

Many men, especially younger men, would benefit from fatherhood training classes. Experience indicates that it is important that those classes include safe spaces for men to talk about their behaviours and feelings as fathers and their questions and concerns about child development. This should include both men-only spaces and structured opportunities for dialogue with their partners about male-female relationships and parenting.

Such fatherhood training programmes have been successfully implemented to reach out to young men in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and the Nordic countries, usually in community

settings.¹²³ An evaluation of a programme in the United States assessed the intervention as successful in achieving higher perceived paternal competence and increased time with children (within non-work time) compared to the control group.¹²⁴

It is also important to develop programmes that address the needs of specific groups of fathers, including young fathers, low-income fathers, fathers in prison and HIV-positive fathers.¹²⁵ More work is needed to address the realities of adolescent fathers. Interventions to reach all adolescent boys with positive messages about fatherhood are important, given that adolescence is a critical time for the formation of views. Greater emphasis should be placed on providing adolescent boys with positive messages about gender equality and masculinity, including their future roles as fathers and caregivers of children. This will be discussed further in the section “Boys and young men”.

Interesting work has been carried out to identify and influence the role played by peers in promoting men’s greater involvement in gender-equitable parenting. This work focuses on identifying men who exhibit positive attitudes and practices with regard to parenting, and supporting them in educating their peers. For example, the Society for the Integrated Development of the Himalayas in India has promoted changes in fathering through

working with men who are the exceptions to the disengaged norm. The goal is to identify those men who do assist their wives in child-rearing and encourage them to speak up about their alternative points of view and act as role models.¹²⁶

Providing alternative role models among peers is very relevant to work with younger fathers. A Jamaican programme uses this approach to improve the image of fathering and the skills of young people in its Fathers Incorporated project.¹²⁷ See the box on page 23 describing an example of the use of this approach in the United States.

Public education can create a cultural environment that supports more positive and active roles for fathers. For example, the Swedish discourse around fatherhood links fathers’ involvement with a positive image of men, thereby encouraging men to become more involved in parenting.¹²⁸ There are encouraging examples of public education to promote male involvement in parenting in countries as diverse as Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.¹²⁹ In South Africa, the Fatherhood Project aims to recognize, encourage and support men’s care and protection of children. It develops educational material on fatherhood and caregiving, masculinity, gender-based violence, sexual risk and HIV/AIDS and disseminates information to create visibility around fatherhood in mass media channels and academic publications. The project also networks with different organizations that advocate men’s care and protection of children to create a sense of shared responsibility for children’s development among men and women and develop broad-based and long-term commitment to men’s involvement with children.¹³⁰

Public-health measures supporting fathers’ involvement include those focused on reproductive health and teen pregnancy prevention, broader perinatal services, infant and child health and nutrition, and early-years services, as well as parenting education. Efforts have been made to increase the involvement of fathers during pregnancy by encouraging their participation at antenatal clinics. For example, the provision of a (physical) seat for fathers in antenatal clinics in Peru has increased the participation of fathers in antenatal classes. Men’s involvement with their pregnant partners is the strongest predictor of men’s sustained parenting involvement with young children.¹³¹

Training of midwives and other health professionals has been used successfully in the United Kingdom, the Nordic countries and parts of Latin America (such as Chile) to equip them with the attitudes and skills they need to promote men’s engagement in antenatal and post-

FATHERHOOD SUPPORT PROJECT IN TURKEY

A fatherhood support project in Turkey involved low-income, urban fathers, aged 20 to 50, with group discussions over 13 weekly sessions, each session lasting 2.5 hours. While the explicit focus of the project was on child rights and not on gender equality issues, the project showed some promising results in that area as well, based on men’s own reports from a post-test questionnaire administered randomly to 1,379 fathers. The men reported improvements in attitudes to gender roles, father-to-child communication and attitudes towards their wives. Qualitative interviews with both husbands and wives corroborated the changes reported by the men.

Source: B. Chevannes (1995), “Fathers Incorporated: helping men become better fathers” (Jamaica: University of the West Indies, Department of Sociology and Social Work).

natal care. Several countries have created more “father-friendly” hospital policies, to allow fathers to be present at the birth of their children.¹³² In Mexico, a longitudinal study of adolescent fathers found that three quarters of fathers who had been present at their children’s births were still involved in their children’s lives four years later.¹³³

The education sector is also key to promoting men’s engagement in more gender-equitable parenting, given its formal role in family-life education and its informal role in formation of boys and young men. There is a clear need to integrate fatherhood issues more fully within the curriculum for adolescent males, especially within family-life education. Some countries have made progress in engaging fathers in early childhood education. There is an increasing emphasis on involving fathers throughout their children’s learning, including in schools.¹³⁴

CREATING ALTERNATIVE PEER GROUPS

In the United States, the men’s component of a Healthy Families Programme targeted low-income, mostly African American, fathers aged 19–44. The intervention used group work, one-on-one counselling and case management, as well as job-readiness training, to support those men in becoming more confident and more gender-equitable fathers.

Both the group work and one-on-one counselling explored gender equality issues, seeking to establish a supportive environment in which the men could question harmful notions of masculinity and discuss the meaning and importance of a positive “masculine transformation”. The intervention emphasized the need to create an alternative peer community for men, which was supportive of gender equality in relationships and in parenting. Although no baseline information was collected against which progress could be more rigorously evaluated, in-depth qualitative interviews with some of the men as a follow-up to the intervention reported anecdotal improvement in interpersonal relationships.

Source: R. E. Aronson, T. L. Whitehead and W. L. Baber (2003), “Challenges to masculine transformation among urban low-income African American males”, *American Journal of Public Health* (United States: U.S. National Institutes of Health), vol. 93, issue 5.

In some parts of the world, the increased participation of women in the labour force has been accompanied by “family-friendly” or “flexible” employment policies. Regrettably, in many cases these policies have reinforced the gender division of labour, as it is mainly women who take up part-time and casual employment and men have not significantly increased their contribution to domestic labour.¹³⁵ Parental leave policies, however, when carefully planned and supported, do increase men’s investment in early childcare. (This will be discussed further in the following section.)

In the United Kingdom, it has been noted that welfare, tax and employment policies are often devised as if fathers do not exist, and that some family legislation and policies treat men as if they are inherently incapable of normal loving relationships.¹³⁶ The United Kingdom recently did away with the institutional mechanisms that had been established to “police” men’s payment of child support, given the numerous problems that were encountered in their implementation.¹³⁷ It has been noted in the United States that the narrow focus on fatherhood in some public policies—emphasizing men’s financial support for their children—has had little to do with improving

RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD LAW IN COSTA RICA

Costa Rica’s innovative Law of Responsible Fatherhood, passed in 2001, frames paternal obligations in terms of the right of children to know their parents and to be supported by them and, in so doing, removes some of the stigma for children born out of wedlock. The legislation, which established procedures for mothers to present legal claims and mandated genetic testing where paternity is in question, is credited with a drop in the number of children who are unrecognized by their fathers—from 29.3 per cent in 1999 to 7.8 per cent in 2003. The law also calls for sensitization campaigns, annual budgetary appropriations to cover the costs of DNA testing and the formulation of a national policy on the promotion of responsible fatherhood.

Source: United Nations Population Fund (2005), *State of the World Population: The Promise of Equality: Gender Equity, Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals* (New York: UNFPA).

men's parenting or the gender equality goal of sharing parenting more equitably, but has been more about cost-saving in welfare support for children.¹³⁸ Paternity establishment legislation in Chile and Costa Rica, on the other hand, appears to have been effective in not only meeting the goal of establishing paternity in individual cases, but also motivating men to fulfil their parental responsibilities.¹³⁹

Public policies on families and parenting are rarely focused on the specific needs of particular groups, such as lower-income, indigenous or ethnic minorities. Policy responses to the problem of some men's lack of engagement in parental responsibilities must be tailored to local condi-

tions and opportunities. Groups working on promoting men's involvement as fathers have called for a review of all aspects of the impact of public policy on families to ascertain how such policies can facilitate men's more active involvement with their children.

Social welfare programmes can encourage responsible parenting. A good example can be found in the Nordic countries, which include special provisions for both fathers and mothers, and parenthood training for future fathers.¹⁴⁰ Carefully designed financial and social policies can help improve the balance between work and family life and encourage men to make an equal contribution to domestic work.¹⁴¹

THE WORKPLACE

The workplace offers a valuable entry point for gender equality work with men, since it is where men spend a significant proportion of their time, and in most societies, workplace relations produce and reproduce gender inequalities. Although in many regions labour-force participation rates for women continue to lag behind those of men, more than 50 per cent of women worldwide are in the paid labour force.¹⁴² Gender-based occupational segregation, however, persists in all parts of the world. Women predominate in the more informal sectors of the workforce¹⁴³ and in work that is equated with the perceived "feminine" roles of caring and supporting, such as nursing, elementary teaching and routine clerical work. There is evidence that gender norms concerning women's attributes and roles continue to be exploited by employers as they seek to maximize profit at the expense of women workers' pay and conditions.¹⁴⁴

Women are often faced with a "double shift", performing both productive and reproductive work.¹⁴⁵ Women in paid employment typically take on the main responsibilities in the home and continue to bear the biggest burden of domestic work, childcare responsibilities, and care for older, disabled or sick family members. In most cases, men have not proportionately increased their share of domestic responsibilities. Where masculinity is centrally defined through paid work, and femininity is strongly associated with childcare and domestic work, the result can be a marginalization of men from family life.¹⁴⁶ More equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities between women and men has been highlighted as critical to ensuring gender equality.¹⁴⁷ There is wide recognition of the need to increase the participation of men in domestic work and family responsibilities by adopting family support policies and encouraging the reconciliation of family and working life for both men and women.¹⁴⁸

Such policies can help to create conditions that allow women to participate in the labour market under the same conditions as men.

Establishing more flexible employment arrangements can contribute to greater gender equality in the workplace. The emergence of family-friendly or flexible employment policies and practices for both men and women marks the recognition by Governments and employers of the increased participation of women in the labour market and the importance of work/home relationships. Family-friendly measures, including part-time and flexible working conditions, should be available to both women and men to create an enabling environment for women and men to share family responsibilities. Men need to be given the same opportunities as women to redistribute their time between productive and reproductive labour.

Parental leave programmes have been established in a number of countries as a way of allowing both parents to share in childcare responsibilities following the birth of a child, rather than the more traditional maternal leave programmes that are restricted to women. In some countries, parental leave systems have been adopted where part of the leave is only available to fathers in order to encourage the greater involvement of men in child-rearing. The goal is to remove the institutional and cultural barriers that make it difficult for men to engage as fathers. A recent detailed study of the impact of these policies in the Nordic countries concludes that they are an important public sector instrument for change towards gender equality.¹⁴⁹

Closing the wage gap between women and men is a matter of justice. It also has a broader impact because relative wage levels influence family decisions regard-

ing who undertakes care activities. In situations where women earn less than men, it makes economic sense for the mother rather than the father to withdraw from paid employment or seek part-time work in order to care for their children and engage in domestic work. Reducing the gender wage gap would remove the financial disincentive for men to be more closely involved with the care of their children.¹⁵⁰

Close associations between work and men's gender identity are evident in many societies. Men have tended to conflate achievement in the world of paid work with proving their manhood. From this perspective, to fail at a job, or to have a job that does not seem worth doing, entails a "blow to masculine self-definition: the inability to support a dependent wife and children".¹⁵¹

The association of male identity with employment is well illustrated by the way men deal with unemployment. If there is no other source of meaning and identity for men than active labour involvement, loss of work can result in a crisis of identity, which can fuel self-destructive or violent behaviour. The increase in male mortality in the Russian Federation in the 1990s has been linked to a significant increase in alcohol consumption and the massive rise in unemployment as a result of the transition to a market economy.¹⁵² Research in contemporary South Africa has highlighted the range of social problems that arise when unemployed men lack the means to fulfil the social expectation of being the "breadwinner".¹⁵³

As already noted, workplaces are also significant sites of violence in women's lives. Sexual harassment in the workplace is directed mostly at women, especially those in less powerful positions. Such violence continues to be significantly underreported and largely ignored by the male power structures that predominate in most work settings. Addressing violence in the workplace must be a priority for gender equality work with men.

STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD

A growing number of initiatives focus on engaging men in gender equality efforts through the workplace (in companies, organizations, cooperatives, factories and unions). Senior management in the public, private and civil society sectors must put in place workplace policies and enforcement mechanisms on gender discrimination in hiring, pay, working conditions and promotions. Strong leadership from senior management levels in all sectors is required to bring about positive change in corporations and organizations with deeply entrenched

cultures of male privilege. There is a need to work with male leaders in government institutions, the corporate sector, trade unions and non-governmental organizations to ensure that they can provide positive role models on gender equality by introducing fair employment practices, anti-discrimination measures and gender-inclusive decision-making.

Gender equality plans at the workplace should be developed in consultation with both male and female workers through a process that encourages reflection on gender equality in the workplace. Women need to be fully and equally represented at all levels in trade unions and employers associations, as well as in management within workplaces, to promote more critical reflection on the role and position of women and men in the labour market.¹⁵⁴ Contexts in which a large number of men can be reached—in male-dominated institutions, industries and associations—should be effectively utilized to sensitize men regarding their roles and responsibilities in the promotion of gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by women.¹⁵⁵

Employers associations, trade unions and civil society organizations all have a role to play in providing the necessary training and technical support to assist employers in implementing gender equality policies. One example of such work is the initiative taken by Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women (MASVAW) in India to ensure fair treatment of women workers. MASVAW is led by male activists from several existing non-governmental organizations in India's northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal.¹⁵⁶ The network operates within a patriarchal context using the workplace as one of its many entry points. MASVAW works, for example, with the owners of "bhatta" (brick kilns) and has facilitated the modification of some discriminatory policies and practices. (See the box on this topic on page 26.)

Provisions on gender equality in the workplace already exist in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and several International Labour Organization conventions, including C100 concerning Equal Remuneration and C111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation). There needs to be more attention to enforcement on the ground.¹⁵⁷ Governments can also take a lead in promoting a more equitable distribution of productive and reproductive labour, for example, through national legislation and/or policies to close the gap between women's and men's pay and reduce occupational segregation.

Some progress has been made in addressing sexual harassment in the workplace, including through training.

A study conducted in the United States has shown that such training has been associated with an increased probability—particularly for men—of considering unwanted sexual gestures, remarks, touching, and pressure for dates to be a form of sexual harassment.¹⁵⁸

There is an increasing body of research examining men's and women's changing relationships to work.¹⁵⁹ Efforts are under way to redefine men's relationships with work by providing opportunities to revisit their understanding of masculinity. The purpose is to reduce the pressure to provide for their families in narrowly defined ways and in the context of restricted occupational choices. Mechanisms to counteract occupational gender stereotypes must be integrated into lifelong learning programmes. From an early age, men should be actively encouraged to choose professions and educational programmes that are currently perceived by some as "unmanly", as well as those traditionally chosen by men.

Greater efforts should also be made to implement policies to better reconcile work and family responsibilities, including expansion of parental leave and flexible working arrangements, such as voluntary part-time or temporary employment, teleworking and other home-based work.¹⁶⁰ While these issues are currently receiving the greatest attention in more industrialized countries, global trends in urbanization, employment and growth will mean that an increasing number of countries will confront these issues in the future.

Policies on paternity leave can encourage men to take on greater roles as caregivers, and allow women to pursue other activities after childbirth. Campaigns and policies giving incentives to fathers to use their parental leave rights should be put in place in countries where substantial legal provisions exist already. Iceland, for example, has divided the paid parental leave into three months for the mother, three for the father, and three months that the parents can share as they like. The "father's quota" has been a success both in Norway and in Iceland, where 8 out of 10 fathers use it.¹⁶¹

WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA

Kilns are often a difficult place for women workers. At the kilns near Gorakhpur, for example, wages for women were lower than men's, and women were often molested and abused on the job. With the support of MASVAW, some of the brick kiln owners have gradually modified the working conditions on their premises. About 40 of the 100 workers at the Shiv Brick Bhatta, for example, are women. Until recently, none of the overseers bothered to learn the names of the women employees, who were referred to with abusive slurs. As a result of the interventions of MASVAW and the owners, each woman is now called by her proper name. Pregnant women who were earlier forced to work throughout their term are now given light work that will not place undue strain on them. They are also provided with free medicine. Women workers' salaries have also been brought to the same level as men's. As one woman worker in Shiv Bhatta relates, "I have spent several years now working in this bhatta because the conditions here are so good that I feel completely secure."

Source: Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women—MASVAW (2007), "A journey towards justice: Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women" (India: MASVAW Secretariat).

PATERNITY LEAVE IN SWEDEN

The principle that both women and men should be able to combine work and family life is reflected in policies and legislation that provide for equitable parental leave. The amount of parental leave taken by both parents can converge over time with the allocation of shared parental leave benefits. In Sweden, for example, all working parents are entitled to take 18 months of paid parental leave. Since 2002, two months of parental leave are reserved for one of the parents. This means that there are 60 days of parental leave that may not be transferred from one parent to the other, and that must be taken by one of the parents, in most cases the father. Of the adults who received parental leave benefits in 2004, 43.2 per cent were men.

Source: Sweden, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications (2006), Sweden's combined sixth and seventh periodic reports submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 14 September 2006 (Stockholm) (report submitted to the forty-ninth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women).

On the other hand, a 2004 survey reveals that the majority of men across the rest of the European Union are aware that they have a right to parental leave but are not taking advantage of it. Of the current or prospective fathers polled, 75 per cent knew of the entitlement, but 84 per cent said they had not taken parental leave or were not intending to do so. Of men polled, 42 per cent said insufficient financial compensation was the main factor that discouraged them from taking leave, and 31 per cent said they felt their careers would be affected. About one in five said they did not want to interrupt their careers, and a similar proportion still saw parental leave as being more for women.

These survey findings are a reminder that the paternity leave policies require not only public education but also action at the level of the workplace to produce occupational cultures that are more supportive of gender-equitable parental leave initiatives.¹⁶² These efforts should be supplemented by the provision of quality and affordable childcare facilities so that men and women have a real choice in relation to sharing child-rearing and other caring responsibilities.¹⁶³

The economic empowerment of women can change gender relations and challenge prevailing notions about the gender division of labour. Where micro-credit has been made available for women of working-class households in India to begin small, home-based industries, research suggests that gender dynamics within households have undergone a perceptible, though still restricted, change. “It seems that younger men in particular—sons, brothers, nephews—become employees of women who run these small household businesses. While these younger men’s invest-

ment in affirming male dominance does not vanish, it does vacillate between treating the woman ‘business head’ as a boss on the one hand and on the other as a woman who needs help to complete her home-oriented responsibilities.”¹⁶⁴ In South Africa, the Micro-finance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE) study, a structural intervention that combined a microfinance programme with a gender and HIV/AIDS training curriculum in rural Limpopo province, showed a dramatic reduction in intimate partner violence—a reduction by half after two years.¹⁶⁵

Initiatives in support of sustainable livelihoods, especially in rural areas heavily affected by AIDS and the outmigration of men for work, are increasingly focused on working with community leaders to challenge the gender division of labour. In situations where the male labour force is depleted, it makes sense for women to be as economically active as possible, since the survival of families and communities as a whole may depend on their economic contribution. There are examples of livelihood initiatives in Southern Africa that are working with communities to enlist their support around women’s economic involvement and empowerment.¹⁶⁶

Research in Latin America shows that men in urban working-class communities are very much aware of the impact of economic crises on their communities in terms of social welfare and human rights. This awareness provides an important context for promoting gender-sensitive politics, highlighting the differential impacts of neoliberal economic policy on the lives and rights of women and men. This work will not only benefit women but also have positive impacts on men and their relations with their families.¹⁶⁷

BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

Boys and young men are important participants in gender equality work, as they are at a key stage in their personal and social development. Young men form attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls during adolescence or earlier, and these attitudes and behaviours often stay with them well into adulthood. Young men receive popular cultural messages about manhood; yet they are rarely presented with positive versions of masculinity that challenge gender inequalities. On the other hand, experience suggests that boys and young men are often more willing than adult men to discuss and challenge gender norms and participate in gender equality project activities.¹⁶⁸

The ways in which boys are raised to be men—sometimes called “gender socialization”—have become a focus

for work with boys and young men on gender equality. Gender socialization is at times regarded simplistically as a one-way process of providing young men with their gender identity and the norms by which they should live. Research reveals, however, that “gender learning” is a highly active process in which both boys and girls seek and process cultural information about gender and gender equality.¹⁶⁹ Girls and boys do not wait to have gender norms imposed on them. Throughout childhood, they actively incorporate gender images into their fantasy, games and forms of social interactions. Boys as well as girls practise, use and reflect on gender, sometimes dividing along gender lines and sometimes crossing gender boundaries. An active negotiation about gender, its meanings, and hierarchies of masculinity begins early and continues through adolescence. This interest and activity

can be used in gender equality education for exploring new possibilities.¹⁷⁰

In many parts of the world, young women and men's information about and experiences of gender relations are undergoing rapid change. A study of young men in sub-Saharan Africa concluded that socialization of young men in Africa must be addressed within the context of social change, urbanization and political upheaval, including civil unrest and, in some countries, the lack of functioning national-level social institutions.¹⁷¹ With the urban population about to outnumber the rural population for the first time in history, a large and increasing number of young people live in informal urban settlements. Residents of slums constitute 78.2 per cent of the urban population of the least developed countries and fully a third of the global urban population—and at least half of them are believed to be under the age of 20.¹⁷²

These trends are likely to have complex impacts on young men's gender identities and relations. The study of young men in sub-Saharan Africa found that many young men simultaneously hold traditional views about gender relations alongside newer ideas about women's equality.¹⁷³ Urbanization, and the resulting trends in education and employment, are creating new conditions in which young men and women must negotiate their identities and relationships.

Some progress has been made towards the elimination of gender disparities in education, with most gains in enrolment ratios at the primary level. Progress is, however, not fast enough and gains have been very uneven. While in some parts of Latin America enrolment of girls has surpassed that of boys, girls continue to be disadvantaged at the primary level in sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East/North Africa and South Asia.¹⁷⁴ Even where enrolment of girls has increased, positive outcomes are not guaranteed. Gender disparities in primary completion rates persist in many areas, with girls more likely than boys to repeat classes or to drop out of school. There are, however,

significant regional differences, with achievement rates higher for girls than boys in some regions.¹⁷⁵

Because of stereotypical attitudes, girls are less motivated to pursue studies in science and technology and have lower achievements in those subjects compared to boys.¹⁷⁶ In secondary, tertiary and higher education, young women are markedly underrepresented in courses in technology, engineering, mathematics and social sciences, business and management. On the other hand, in most countries, young men are underrepresented in courses in arts, humanities, social sciences and the caring professions. The massive de facto gender segregation results in part from stereotypical ideas about men's and women's talents and capacities, and contributes to gender segregation and inequality in the economy and to the maintenance of damaging stereotypes.

Research on schools has shown that in some contexts, gender inequalities are deeply embedded in the organizational structure of schools. Inequalities can be found in the division of labour among staff, the curriculum, physical education programmes and dress codes, as well as in policies and practices with regard to violence and sexual harassment within schools. One study of primary school boys in Australia found that the dominant peer culture among the boys cultivated "physical domination, aggression and violence underpinned by constructions of females and femininity as the negative 'other'" and that this culture was normalized through the philosophies and practices of the teachers and principal.¹⁷⁷

There has been increasing public debate about boys' difficulties in schools and educational underachievement—notably in parts of the Caribbean and Southern Africa, as well as North America, the United Kingdom and Australia.¹⁷⁸ In some developed countries, research shows that boys currently learn to read later than girls, have more conflict with schools, have a higher rate of drop-out from secondary schooling, and proceed to higher education in smaller numbers.¹⁷⁹ Such educational problems, combined with concerns about young men's involvement in crime, violence and antisocial behaviour, have created a picture of young men in crisis in some societies. This sense of crisis has created opportunities to develop innovative gender-based work with boys and young men. This work has, however, also made it clear that not all boys and young men are in crisis. Boys from privileged social backgrounds, who benefit from class and ethnic advantage, for example, do extremely well in schools and universities. Boys' difficulties in schools are concentrated among those from social backgrounds marked by poverty, ethnic or racial inequality, and social disruption.¹⁸⁰ Use of education as an entry point for gender equality work with young men must take into account other inequalities experienced by such young men.

With a growing gender equality movement, it is possible that the next generations of young men will grow up in a society where mutual respect, support and a shared sense of responsibility between partners is the norm.

Source: International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo (2007), *Engaging Men and Boys to Achieve Gender Equality: How Can We Build on What We Have Learned?* (Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo).

The close relationship between gender identity and employment suggests a need to consider employment policies for young people in relation to the impacts on gender equality. Youth employment policies should give attention to the social as well as the economic aspects of employment. In many countries, employment is an attribute of manhood. In Nigeria, for example, the importance of having stable employment is a precondition for being publicly recognized as a man.¹⁸¹ In this context, unemployment can have significant impacts on young men's gender identity.

A study of young men in several sub-Saharan African countries found that young men's involvement in different forms of conflict and violence was related to their inability to fulfil social expectations of financial independence. In those parts of Africa where bride price remains common, marriage and family formation are dependent on a man's income and/or property. Young men's gender identity is directly linked to the ability to start a family through achievement of financial independence, and lack of economic opportunity impedes this ability. As a result, young men's sense of manhood suffers. Some young men find a way to reassert their masculinity through violence against women,¹⁸² while others reject that path.

Young people's attitudes to gender and sexuality are shaped by many forces, ranging from contemporary globalized youth cultures to distinctive local histories and traditions. It has been suggested that, despite the proliferation of a more global youth culture, the most important determinant of young people's attitudes towards gender and sexuality remains traditional culture.¹⁸³ Research in sub-Saharan Africa has found that initiation practices, some of which include male circumcision, remain important in the socialization of boys and men throughout the region. The researchers note: "While it is difficult to make overall generalizations about the various rites of passage in Africa, it is clear that they may simultaneously reinforce strict sex segregation and gender inequalities, while also serving as a form of positive social control in some settings."¹⁸⁴ In seeking to address gender equality issues in the context of sexuality, it is important that opportunities for change include working with traditional leaders.

Boys and young men can play an important part in promoting gender equality in sexual and reproductive health. Health choices are affected by decision-making power and gender roles, as an unequal balance of power within gender relations can be the cause of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. Young men should be encouraged to take care of their own sexual and reproductive health needs, as well as the needs of their partners. Young men and

women should be provided with the opportunities to talk responsibly about sex, sexuality, drug use and HIV/AIDS; and they should be informed about sexual and reproductive health and rights and offered youth-friendly health services.¹⁸⁵

Research has shown that involving young men in sexual and reproductive health leads to better health outcomes for both young women and men. Young men's knowledge leads to safer sex practices and to a more consistent use of contraceptive and STI/HIV barrier methods. Providing youth-friendly health services also ensures safe motherhood. Young men tend to give more support to their partners in prenatal care, birth and postpartum care and to show more responsibility concerning the health and education of their children. Interventions should increase young men's awareness of the need to preserve the sexual and reproductive health of their partners and themselves.¹⁸⁶

Work with young men on violence against women has usually not focused on young men's own experiences of violence and the impact of such experiences on their attitudes. A review of studies from 20 countries, including 10 national surveys, has shown rates of childhood sexual abuse of 3 to 29 per cent for boys (compared to 7 to 36 per cent for girls).¹⁸⁷ Addressing young men's experiences of child sexual abuse and violence can interrupt existing cycles of violence and build men's understanding of the impact of gender-based violence on women and girls.

The exposure of boys and young men to violence in situations of armed conflict must be explicitly addressed.

NEW VISIONS PROGRAMME IN EGYPT

In Egypt, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) runs the New Visions Programme, which involves boys aged 12 to 20. The programme teaches life skills and seeks to increase the gender sensitivity of the participants. Over 15,000 boys have completed the course. A 2004 evaluation found that participants had adopted more gender-equitable attitudes, including less tolerance for female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.

Source: Centre for Development and Population Activities (2005), "New visions: life skills education for boys" (Washington, D.C.: CEDPA), information sheet.

There is a need to address young men's recruitment into and transition out of militias and militaries. It is estimated that 300,000 child soldiers are involved in armed conflict worldwide, as many as 80 per cent of whom are boys and young men.¹⁸⁸ Child soldiers are recruited by force or abducted and are often subjected to extreme brutality. "Insurgency groups often choose the youngest boys who are more likely to feel a sense of powerlessness and to be the most susceptible, malleable and traumatized by these experiences. Drugs and alcohol are often used as a way to 'lose control' and to carry out acts of brutality."¹⁸⁹

Because of the trauma and coercion involved in their participation in militias, conventional armies and insurgency groups, young men need significant support in reintegrating into civilian life.¹⁹⁰ It is likely that the trauma of these experiences will play out in young men's subsequent relationships with women. Addressing this trauma, and finding ways to provide missing education and skills development, is a neglected area in work with young men.

STRATEGIES FOR MOVING FORWARD

EDUCATION

Research has highlighted the importance of starting gender equality work with boys from a young age to facilitate the early development of positive perceptions about gender relations. In Sweden and France, for example, some pre-primary schools offer gender-neutral creative toys and games, not commonly available in homes, to avoid inculcating stereotypical attitudes and behaviours in girls and boys.¹⁹¹

This can be supported through gender sensitization in teacher education and in in-service training.¹⁹² Teachers' attitudes and practices in the classroom may condone or reinforce gender inequality, both explicitly and implicitly. Teachers may give more attention to boys, call on them more often, and listen and respond to boys more than to girls, while praising girls for being neat and good. The classroom may, however, also be a setting where gender equality is promoted through encouraging discussion of gender equality issues and establishing a culture and climate of mutual respect.

Formal education systems, structures and processes can reinforce discrimination but can also be powerful forums for promoting gender equality. To ensure that the school environment is conducive to gender equality, all aspects of school functioning should be reviewed and reassessed from a gender perspective, using a "whole

school" approach.¹⁹³ Specific programmes promoting gender equality, or programmes addressing specific gender inequalities, will be ineffective if overall structural inequalities within the school environment are not addressed.¹⁹⁴ Addressing gender inequalities in a cross-disciplinary manner requires the involvement of families and communities. This approach is currently being implemented in a number of sub-Saharan African countries with the support of the Safe Schools Programme of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).¹⁹⁵

To address gender inequalities in schools, efforts have been made to reform curricula to ensure attention to

PRESCHOOL PROJECTS IN SWEDEN

A project undertaken in a number of preschools in Sweden filmed the teachers' interaction with students, and analysed the video material from a gender perspective. The videos provided evidence of boys being prioritized and treated differently in key ways. Communication with boys was command-oriented, with little space for verbal interactions. Girls were expected to be competent and independent in getting dressed and tying their shoelaces, etc. Boys were left to play on their own, while girls were kept at a closer distance to the staff and prevented from playing "physically".

On the basis of this evidence, the preschool staff started to change their behaviour with both girls and boys. In the boys' group, boys were encouraged to tell stories, something that they normally would not have done. As a result, boys gradually changed their behaviour in mixed groups, becoming more cooperative, calmer and focused. Although initiatives such as these have shown some success, further development of the approach is necessary. For example, a huge discrepancy between the numbers of male and female preschool staff continues to exist. At present, only 3 per cent of preschool staff in Sweden are men, and status and salary for this profession remain low.

Source: L. Jalmert (2003), "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality: some Swedish and Scandinavian experiences", paper presented at the expert group meeting entitled "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality", organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil, 21-24 October 2003.

gender equality and fully incorporate gender perspectives. To challenge gender stereotypes, gender-neutral¹⁹⁶ and non-segregated school programmes have been developed and promoted.¹⁹⁷ Reversing gender segregation in the education system and damaging stereotypes requires the redesign of curricula and institutions, as well as encouragement to girls and boys to enter non-segregated and non-traditional areas of learning.

In some school contexts, programmes on gender equality for boys have been established using what has been called a “boy-friendly” approach. These programmes typically cover issues of masculine identity, personal problems, friendship, relationships with girls, families, sexuality and violence. The quality of these programmes varies greatly, and there has been little evaluation of their effectiveness. In many places they appear to be popular with school administrators and with parents, as a way for schools to “do something for boys”.¹⁹⁸ However, if these programmes segregate boys, there is a danger of reinforcing gender inequality by emphasizing gender differences. Spaces and opportunities must also be provided for boys to talk about gender/gender equality in their lives in order to help them to question supposed natural or essential differences between girls and boys and enlist them in work to promote gender justice. A review of such initiatives has concluded that pedagogies directed towards boys must place issues of gender justice at the forefront.¹⁹⁹

There are a few examples of innovative educational programmes targeting boys and young men with training for employment that also address the connections between work and gender identity. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation supported Working with Men, a United Kingdom-based non-profit organization, in carrying out research on the topic “Young men, the job market and gendered work”. While the focus was on young men’s attitudes towards “women’s work”, one major finding was that most of the young men interviewed felt poorly prepared for the workplace. The research was followed up with practical work in schools. The aim was to develop a programme that would effectively prepare socially excluded young men for the workplace. In three South London schools, 51 boys in year 10 (aged 14 and 15) participated in a classroom- and workplace-based programme. The programme concentrated on practical approaches and methods, and aimed to develop skills and attitudes essential to the rapidly changing workplace. It also focused on what it means to be a man in the workforce. Since the delivery of the programme, the schools involved have reported a change in attitude for some of the young men, and a change in attitude towards particular subjects for most of the young men.²⁰⁰

CREATING SPACES FOR INTERACTIVE LEARNING WITH PEERS

Establishing peer groups on gender equality, gender relations and sexuality for young men in community settings or in institutional settings (schools, residential care facilities or custodial institutions) has been a common approach for gender equality work.²⁰¹ There are some well-evaluated models of group work with young men that offer examples of promising practices. Evidence suggests that the most promising approach is providing interactive and experiential learning opportunities that allow time for reflection and discussion. To reach particularly marginalized boys and young men, it is critical to work with them outside of formal school settings.²⁰²

PROGRAMA H IN BRAZIL AND MEXICO

One of the most well-documented programmes of group work with young men has been developed by Programa H, a consortium of non-governmental organizations based in Brazil and Mexico (ECOS in São Paulo, Brazil; PAPAI in Recife, Brazil; and Salud y Género in Mexico). Programa H has developed training manuals—on sexual and reproductive health, mental health, violence prevention, fatherhood and caregiving, and HIV/AIDS—which provide information and group activities on each theme. On the basis of research about the causes and factors associated with violence, the manuals include discussions on the “costs” of traditional forms of masculinity and male “honour”, role plays in which young men act out violent and non-violent relationships, and discussions on the impact of violence on the young men’s personal lives and in their communities. The project also developed cartoon videos that cover issues of gender socialization, health, sexuality, homophobia and gender equality. These are videos without words and can be used in any language setting. In programmes where young men participated in weekly educational workshops (and a social marketing campaign), they developed improved attitudes towards violence against women and other issues.

Source: J. Schueller, W. Finger and G. Barker (2005), “Boys and changing gender roles: emerging program approaches hold promise in changing gender norms and behaviors among boys and young men”, *YouthNet: Youth Lens on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS* (Arlington, VA: YouthNet), No. 16 (August).

A successful example is the UNFPA-supported Reproductive, Educative and Community Health Project in Uganda, carried out in partnership with the Sabin Elders Association, where young men spontaneously formed pressure groups to oppose female genital mutilation after receiving training.²⁰³

Campaigns on university campuses in the United States have highlighted the difference between young men's perceptions of the degree to which other men accept violence-supportive and sexist norms and the actual extent of this acceptance. By gathering and publicizing data on men's attitudes and behaviour, these campaigns seek to undermine men's conformity to sexist peer norms and increase their willingness to intervene in cases of violent behaviour.²⁰⁴ Such approaches have proved particularly effective,²⁰⁵ and could be useful in workplaces and other public institutions.

Interventions aiming to change peer culture seek to identify male role models of desirable norms and promote and support them within their peer groups. These peer-to-peer programmes are based on the recognition that multiple models of masculinity exist, as well as on the hypothesis that young men and boys are more likely to be influenced by their peers than by parents or teach-

ers. In an environment that is more socially and culturally accepted, young men learn about alternative and non-violent constructions of masculinity.²⁰⁶ The aim of these programmes is to equip young men with tools to negotiate conflicts, find alternative ways to deal with tension and aggression, and better understand their emotions.²⁰⁷

Social marketing and media communication strategies have also proved useful in gender equality work with young men. There is evidence that the spread of a global youth culture via radio, television and movies is changing attitudes towards young women's sexuality. The expansion of programming on HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health is also creating space for young men to talk with each other as well as with young women and with adults about sex, gender equality and relationships in ways that were never available to their fathers and grandfathers. Innovative gender equality programming with young men is also revealing the diversity among young men with regard to their attitudes to gender and equality.²⁰⁸

In Brazil, Programa H developed postcards, banners and comics that drew on mass media and youth culture to promote respectful identities and gender-equitable lifestyles among young men and women. Programa H is introducing these campaigns in India and elsewhere. This social marketing component has served to extend the work beyond helping young men perceive the costs of traditional versions of masculinity to also promoting positive attitudes and norms within the wider community, among families, teachers and community leaders and within peer groups.²⁰⁹

GUY-TO-GUY PROJECT IN BRAZIL

Instituto Promundo's Guy-to-Guy Project recruits and trains young men as peer promoters from low-income areas of Rio de Janeiro who, in turn, reach out and engage other young men in school and community settings with messages related to HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. Peer promoters help design and use educational materials, special condoms for young men, a lifestyle magazine with messages about gender equality for and by young men, and plays about reducing violence against women and promoting greater involvement by young men in sexual and reproductive health matters. Adult men from the same low-income communities serve as mentors for the young men. This mentoring component has proved important in offering young men opportunities to develop supportive relationships with gender-equitable men in the community.

Source: G. Barker, M. Nascimento and W. Marcondes (2002), "Guy-to-Guy Project: engaging young men in violence prevention and in sexual and reproductive health" (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Instituto Promundo).

SPORT AS AN ENTRY POINT

The sport arena provides an important opportunity to reach out to boys on issues related to stereotypical attitudes, gender-based discrimination and violence. Since men and boys are active participants, as both athletes and spectators, sport can educate and inform on issues such as violence against women and girls and break down entrenched attitudes and stereotypical behaviours. Sport teams and facilities have proved valuable for outreach to young men. Sporting metaphors have been useful in developing messages that appeal to young men. Male athletes who speak out on such issues can be particularly effective, given their position as role models in communities and at the national and international levels.²¹⁰

Projects that use sport as a vehicle for engaging young men in work in gender equality face, however, a number of challenges. Although such approaches undoubtedly have great potential for reaching large numbers of

young men, given the significance of sport activities in many young men's lives, they do not automatically produce changes in men's attitudes and behaviours towards gender equality. Sport-based approaches seek to relate gender equality messages to values that are central to sport: dignity and self-respect, teamwork in pursuit of a shared goal, and strength and courage in the face of opposition. Sport-based approaches to gender equality work with young men are, however, confronted with other values that are also central to competitive sports, namely, competition, aggression and physically dominating the opponent in pursuit of victory. These values are at the heart of patriarchal gender norms that justify inequalities between women and men on the basis of "natural" differences between dominant, aggressive males and submissive, passive females. Contact sports, dominated by men, are a major public arena of legitimated violence.²¹¹ Therefore, it is important when using sport to carry out gender equality work with young men

to be explicit about the values being promoted and the values being challenged.

One means for improving impact on gender equality is to challenge the gender segregation in sport that helps to strengthen the association between sport and patriarchal gender identities. Given that sport was traditionally a male domain, women and girls' participation in sport challenges a multitude of gender stereotypes, not only related to physical ability but also regarding women's role in communities and society. By directly challenging and dispelling misconceptions about women's capabilities, integrated sport programmes help to reduce discrimination and broaden the roles prescribed to women.²¹² An increase of women in leadership positions in sport can also have a significant influence on social attitudes towards women's capabilities as leaders and decision makers.

Girls' participation in sport carries with it an enormous potential for an impact on attitudes towards gender equality among the younger generation. An analysis of the Mathare Youth Sports Association found that although boys in the Association expressed stereotypical attitudes to the girl soccer players (for example, girls do not learn quickly, are fragile and give up easily), seeing girls achieve success in soccer, which had previously been a male domain, had begun to reshape their notions about girls' roles and capabilities.²¹³ Examples such as this indicate that sport can be an effective way to both reach young men and provide models for them on gender-equitable values and practices.

COACHING BOYS INTO MEN INITIATIVE

In the United States, where sport is not only a major pastime for millions of young people but also a multimillion-dollar business, the Family Violence Prevention Fund has developed a "Coaching Boys into Men" initiative. This initiative began in 2002 with a set of public service announcements encouraging men to communicate with boys about violence, modelling appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, and posing questions about the appropriate way to raise the issue of violence against women and girls with boys. A brochure, *Coaching Boys into Men*, was developed to advise men on talking to boys of different ages, and provide sample talking points, examples of times to talk, starting points for conversations, and much more. The brochure was developed in partnership with the National High School Athletic Coaches Association, which has over 60,000 high school coaches as active members. The Association has assembled national and local advisory committees to advise on the development of coaching materials intended to give coaches the tools to talk to high school athletes about violence against women and girls and to assist with the dissemination of these coaching materials within high schools across the nation.

Source: Family Violence Prevention Fund (2007), *Coaching Boys into Men: What You Can Do* (San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund).

ENTRY POINTS RELATED TO HEALTH, HIV/AIDS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Increasing attention needs to be given to improving young men's access to and use of health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, for their own benefit and as a way to create further opportunities for work on gender equality. Innovative efforts in this area have included creating youth-friendly health clinics and training health staff in the attitudes and skills they need to work constructively with young men.

There has also been an expansion of HIV prevention activities with young men that focus on the connections between HIV risk behaviour and gender norms. For example, the Botswana National Youth Council works with young men on their needs and anxieties about sexuality, gender identity and intimate partner relations, through a programme focused on preventing HIV infection.²¹⁴ Instituto Promundo's work with young men in Brazil has suc-

cessfully challenged norms of masculinity that put them and their partners at risk of HIV infection. Significant shifts in gender attitudes were reported after 6 and 12 months, and those young men with more equitable attitudes were 2.4 times as likely to report using condoms with a primary partner the last time they had sex.²¹⁵

Young men's involvement in addressing violence against women has become an important entry point for gender equality work. As the pertinent section earlier in this publication makes clear, violence against women is a cause and consequence of gender inequalities and discrimination. Focusing on the causes and consequences of violence

against women provides an opportunity to build young men's empathy with women's experience of living in a society marked by gender inequalities. Such a focus also draws young men's attention to the gender norms that promote violence (for example, the equating of masculinity with dominance and aggression) as well as to the links between violence against women and other systems of inequality (for example, economic exploitation, racism and religious oppression). In this way, work with young men on violence against women can, in addition to promoting individual behavioural change, lead young men to challenge the institutions of male power that perpetuate violence against women.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a growing consensus on the need to involve men and boys in gender equality work, stimulated not least through the consideration of this issue by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2004 and its review of the implementation of the recommendations in 2007. The work with men to end men's privileges and promote gender equality is already well under way; many men around the world are engaged in promoting gender equality in a wide range of areas. There is a growing consciousness among men of gender equality as a critical societal goal and an increased awareness that gender norms, roles and identities can be, and are being, transformed by social action. What is needed now is widespread commitment among men to participate in this process of transformation towards gender equality, through increased partnerships with women.

Men can take specific action in partnership with women to transform unequal gender relations in families, communities and social institutions—such as workplaces and schools—to ensure equality in power, resources, opportunities and benefits in all areas. Men's engagement in gender equality work should influence all aspects of their lives, increasing justice, equity, democracy and social inclusion—with critical positive outcomes for men and boys as well as women and girls.

Many men, however, still benefit from gender inequalities and resist change towards more equal gender relations. As a result, men are still often considered as the “problem” in gender equality policy discussions and documents.²¹⁶ The challenge for gender equality policy is to present gender equality as a positive project for men, encourage an active debate about change among men as well as women, and create the means

for continuing development of constructive approaches and the exchange of ideas, knowledge, experience and methods at the national, regional and global levels.

MOVING FORWARD

There are a number of important overall lessons from the work carried out so far in engaging men and boys in gender equality work, many of which have been raised in relation to the areas covered in this publication. A number of these will be outlined briefly below.

Engaging men and boys in work on gender equality involves not only working with individuals on change in their personal lives but also mobilizing their support for structural changes in the institutions of society that express and reinforce male power over women, including in the sociocultural, economic and political arenas.

Programmes for men and boys that do not specifically address the need for changing gender norms and attitudes will limit themselves to treating symptoms without addressing the underlying causes. Promotion of gender equality and the involvement of men and boys in this work involves a process of social transformation that is complex and challenging.

Despite many positive experiences in working with men and boys within small, promising programmes to bring about change at individual levels, there is little systematic replication of good practices. The challenge is to move from small groups of 10-15 men to larger programmes that can have a major catalytic impact through the dissemination of models developed and efforts to replicate them and bring them to a larger scale.

Not all women's organizations are fully open to the idea of working with men on gender equality. Women's movements around the world have worked hard for decades, and faced significant opposition and backlash, to gain the achievements made. It will be important to reassure these movements that involving men and boys in the promotion of gender equality is positive and critical to moving the efforts forward and will not take away hard-won resources and power from women.

Alliances and partnerships must also be established with other social movements. Although gender equality is fundamental to social justice, the promotion of gender equality is not well integrated into social justice efforts. Broader social movements can provide the momentum for expanding the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality.

Although the gender mainstreaming strategy is a critical instrument in ensuring effective involvement of men and boys in the promotion of gender equality, and there are significant global commitments to its implementation, gender mainstreaming has not been utilized to its full potential in institutions at the national, regional and international levels. Evidence-based research is needed to provide examples of why integrating men and boys into work on gender equality is essential, and how that can best be done.

Public policy action is required across a wide range of sector areas, including in relation to family, education,

health and labour markets. A range of specific-purpose programmes have already been developed and tested, including on fatherhood education, parental leave, youth development, violence, community leadership, sexual and reproductive health, education and sport. Critical elements for the required institutional change have also been identified, including the need for gender balance in decision-making, support to gender equality from top management levels, and training for key actors in all areas. Innovative approaches have been developed, including identifying role models, using public figures and opinion makers, creating forums for discussion of gender equality, developing creative outreach programmes, using peer programmes, developing new alliances and partnerships, and encouraging research and policy development. There is a need for increased dissemination of success stories of positive change and good practices in relation to all the approaches and methodologies described above.

The agreed conclusions adopted by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session in 2004, and reviewed in 2007, are an important resource and should be used widely as a framework for action in strengthening men's involvement in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States, United Nations entities, other international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations at all levels, and all other stakeholders, including the private sector and media, should use the policy recommendations provided by the Commission systematically and effectively in all areas of their work.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For the sake of brevity, this report will use the word "men" to encompass males of all ages, and thus it should be taken to refer to boys, young men and adult men. Where it is of particular importance to take age into consideration, the report will refer to "boys and adult men".
- 2 United Nations, 1976.
- 3 United Nations, 1994.
- 4 United Nations, 1995a.
- 5 United Nations, 1995b.
- 6 United Nations (2001).
- 7 United Nations (2002a).
- 8 United Nations (2000a).
- 9 For an overview of the outcomes of these processes, see: United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2003.
- 10 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1997.
- 11 Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2000.
- 12 United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2007.
- 13 Further information on the Commission on the Status of Women available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/>
- 14 Connell, 2003a.
- 15 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2004a.
- 16 Agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session in 2004. See United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2004a.
- 17 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2007a and 2007b.
- 18 There is increasing emphasis on a more complex understanding of gender, one that takes account of the range of ways in which people may feel about their gender identity. For example, there are a

- number of people who do not see themselves as fitting neatly into one of the two gender categories of "male" and "female" prescribed by most societies.
- 19 United Nations, 1994.
 - 20 United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2004; and Connell, 2005.
 - 21 This subsection draws heavily on Connell, 2003b.
 - 22 Among the men with the keenest personal interest in seeing change in the gender order are those men whose gender identities are a threat to the dominant norms. These men not only face legal sanctions in most societies but are also at high risk of violence.
 - 23 Peterson and Runyan, 1999.
 - 24 Connell, 2005.
 - 25 For an overview of this research, see Connell, 2003c.
 - 26 Goldstein, 2001.
 - 27 Mill, 1869.
 - 28 Further information available at the official website of the National Organization for Men against Sexism: www.nomas.org
 - 29 For further information, see the official website of MenEngage, at <http://www.menengage.org>
 - 30 Hobsbawm, 2005.
 - 31 Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2006.
 - 32 For a discussion of the impact of labour market changes on masculinity, see Chant (2000). For a discussion of education, masculinity and young men, see Connell, 2003a. For a discussion of crises of masculinity in relation to men's violence, see Hurst, 2001.
 - 33 Schuler, Hashemi and Badal, 1998.
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 - 66 Barker and Acosta, 2001.
 - 67 In Cambodia, leaders in five villages have supported a pact not to allow sex traffickers to take young women from the community. This pact to protect their children is a major step for many community members, who previously did not fully understand the seriousness of sex trafficking in the country (United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2000).
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 - 81 See Gao and others, 1987; Granville and others, 2003; Keohavong and others, 2003; and Cheng and Lee, 2003.
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- 97 Blanc, 2001; and Maharaj, 2001.
- 98 Blanc, 2001.
- 99 Watchirs, 2003.
- 100 Maharaj, 2001.
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- 109 The Commission on the Status of Women will consider as its priority theme for its fifty-third session in March 2009 "The sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS". The Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on "Child and dependant care, including sharing of work and family responsibilities" in 1996 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/AC-1996-3.pdf>).
- 110 Greene, 2000.
- 111 Foubi and Lovich, 1997.
- 112 Greene, 2000.
- 113 Foubi and Lovich, 1997.
- 114 De Keijzer, 2004.
- 115 Rogers, 2004.
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 De Keijzer, 2004.
- 118 Lyra, 2004.
- 119 National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice, 2002.
- 120 Greene, 2000.
- 121 Barker, Nascimento and Marcondes, 2003.
- 122 Lamb and Lewis, 2004.
- 123 Fatherhood Institute, in Abergavenny, United Kingdom. For information on fatherhood training programmes, see the Institute's official website: <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/>
- 124 Greene, 2000.
- 125 Aronson, Whitehead and Baber, 2003.
- 126 Plantin, Mansson and Kearney, 2003.
- 127 Henwood and Procter, 2003.
- 128 Greene, 2000.
- 129 Fatherhood Institute, in Abergavenny, United Kingdom. For information on public education initiatives, see the Institute's official website: <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/>
- 130 Fatherhood Project, Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) (Durban: Human Sciences Research Council). For further information, see <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/RPP-Fatherhood-1.phtml>
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- 134 Fatherhood Institute, in Abergavenny, United Kingdom. For information on engaging fathers in children's education, see the Institute's official website: <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/>
- 135 Connell, 2003b.
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- 138 Boggess, 2003.
- 139 United Nations Population Fund, 2005.
- 140 United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2004.
- 141 The recommendations of the report of the expert group meeting organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women entitled "The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" (2003) included expanding paternal leave provisions, creating disincentives for employers to demand overtime work, and creating a legal structure for permanent part-time work and incentives for men to use it. It also suggested providing work-based day-care centres in all enterprises and creating education programmes to impart skills to men to allow them to take on new roles in households.
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- 143 Morrell, 2001.
- 144 Willis, 1999.
- 145 International Labour Office, 2007.
- 146 Connell, 2003b.
- 147 United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2003.
- 148 Ibid.

- 149 Holter, 2003.
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 Willis, 1999.
- 152 United Nations, 2006.
- 153 Hunter, 2005.
- 154 European Women's Lobby, 2004.
- 155 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2004a.
- 156 Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women—MASVAW, 2007.
- 157 See Convention C100: Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value of 1951 (Geneva: International Labour Organization); and Convention C111: Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation of 1958 (Geneva: International Labour Organization).
- 158 Antecol and Cobb-Clark, 2003.
- 159 Oxfam, 1999.
- 160 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2004b.
- 161 Lorentzen, 2004.
- 162 European Opinion Research Group, 2004.
- 163 European Women's Lobby, 2004.
- 164 Chopra, 2003.
- 165 Rural AIDS and Development Action Research Programme (RADAR), 2002.
- 166 For example, see the work done by the Chiedza Child Care Centre in Zimbabwe running after-school programmes, nursery schools, women's support groups, wage-earning activities, community gardens and training for community caregivers. Cited in Stephen Lewis Foundation, 2008.
- 167 Connell, 2003b.
- 168 Barker, Nascimento and Marcondes, 2002.
- 169 Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005.
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- 171 Barker and Ricardo, 2005.
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- 173 Barker and Ricardo, 2005.
- 174 United Nations, 2007a.
- 175 Ibid.
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- 188 Foreman, 2002.
- 189 Barker and Ricardo, 2005.
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- 198 Connell, 2003a.
- 199 Mills and Keddie, 2007.
- 200 Lloyd, 2002.
- 201 See Barker, Nascimento and Marcondes, 2002; Barker and Ricardo, 2005; Centre for Development and Population Activities, 2005; Eckman and others, 2005; Jewkes and others, 2007; and Schueller, Finger and Barker, 2005.
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