



Learning Brief

Asia Pacific Snapshot: Engaging Men and Boys in GBV Prevention

OVERVIEW Gender-based violence is pervasive throughout the Asia Pacific region, with the **South and East Asia regions showing the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world**¹. A violation of women and girls' human rights, gender-based violence is among the leading causes of death and disability of women of all ages². Women who have experienced violence can suffer further negative impacts on their participation in education, employment, their community and public life, which serves to **increase poverty and inequality**. There are also consequences for communities and wider society; gender-based violence can have tremendous **economic, social, legal and health costs and consequences**³.

CARE's strategy to enable women and girls to exercise their right to a life free from violence focuses on two key areas: domestic violence and child, early & forced marriage. These share common underlying causes which deny women a life free from violence: gender inequality and harmful social & cultural norms. CARE works to strengthen services for survivors of gender-based violence, for example through training providers and advocating for policy change, and also works to stop violence before it starts, through comprehensive prevention programming. A key component is the multiple tactics used to engage with men and boys.

CARE continues to address other aspects of gender-based violence—preventing **sexual harassment and violence** in the workplace—through our regional **Made by Women program**⁴ targeting garment workers, and our work on **Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies**.

Engaging with Men and Boys

Since the late 1990s, CARE has worked with men and boys as allies for gender equality. CARE recognises that men and boys are key actors in gender social transformation and can be obstacles or allies for gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence. We seek to involve men and boys as part of our prevention work as clients, partners, allies and beneficiaries. The guiding principle for engaging men and boys is working to challenge gender inequality and violence against women and girls, while at the same time supporting men and boys to find personal and society wide ways to support and create an enabling environment for gender equality and empowering women and girls.

This means we have moved past earlier approaches that focused on engaging men and boys as gatekeepers in order to get their support for gender equality. CARE works to involve men as allies for a broader gender justice agenda so they are accountable for actions and change, and emancipate themselves and grow through collective action to influence and inspire other men as well. Globally, CARE adopts a Framework for engaging with men and boys, which combines evidence based socioecological models with a gender synchronised approach.



1. CONSCIENTIZATION

Structured spaces for men and boys to reflect on masculinities, gender, power and privilege in their lives,

2. INTIMATE DIALOGUES

Conversations with intimate partners, and within families to promote more open communication, equitable relationships, non-violence, support and trust;

3. BUILDING THE BASE

A mix of individual outreach and regular meetings to share testimonies and strengthen relationships among male allies to build and expand social support and solidarity;

4. STEPPING OUT, STEPPING UP

Capacity building and support to men to facilitate discussions and campaign around gender and masculinities to transform social norms; and

5. ALLIANCES FOR ADVOCACY

This element focuses on linking with advocacy efforts led by women's and feminist movements for social and policy change at local, regional and national levels

¹ WHO, 2013 *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women* & UNFPA, 2016 kNOWVAWdata project.

² WHO, 2012 *Understanding and addressing violence against women*.

³ World Bank, 2014 *Violence against women and girls*.

⁴ <https://www.care.org/madebywomen>

Asia Pacific Practice Snapshot

Across the Asia Pacific Region, CARE's GBV prevention programming and advocacy is built from an **early investment in formative research and gender analysis**, to ensure interventions are age-appropriate, target different groups of men appropriately, address barriers and drivers of change, and content is grounded in realities relevant to context.

For example, research in Bangladesh and Nepal has informed social norms programming targeting child marriage, driving interventions targeting adolescent boys, youth and men through same and inter-sex discussions interspersed with intergenerational dialogue.

In Vanuatu, CARE's gender analysis has informed appropriate entry points for work addressing intimate partner violence through family financial management skills building involving women and men.

In Sri Lanka, Chrysalis (a CARE Affiliate organisation) leveraged its study *Broadening Gender: Why Masculinities Matter* to initiate national level advocacy interventions which included a focus on engaging men and boys to address gender-based violence.

Community level interventions use multiple strategies to promote change across the dimensions of *concientisation, intimate dialogues, building the base and stepping out, stepping up* in CARE's **Framework**, linking with broader GBV community programs transforming individual attitudes, and challenging social norms and behaviours.

For example, CARE International in the Lao PDR is seeing changes though discussions structured through a community dialogue approach, combined with a stand up, speak out mass campaign.

In Viet Nam, CARE is working with men as community change agents for social norms changes. Men are engaged with women in a capacity building process to facilitate discussion on gender-based violence and organizing community events to challenge social norms that reinforce GBV.

In CARE Bangladesh programs, men are engaged on gender and ending GBV through Men's Forums, informal Tea Shop talks, and men's dialogues with men on intimate partner violence and harmful practices. These run parallel to work to empower women and girls, couple's dialogues bringing men and women together, and dialogues with local decision makers. Similar interventions are gaining traction through CARE's work in Myanmar and Nepal. A focus on men in roles exerting structural and institutional authority is a key feature, for example in CARE Vanuatu and CARE Nepal's work with police and chiefs, work with trishaw and taxi drivers in Myanmar, and work with religious leaders in Afghanistan and Nepal.

Context specific tactics have also been developed to link engaging with men and boys strategies with CARE's work with others on advocacy initiatives, for example bringing evidence and learning to national level dialogue in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.



A man in Nepal runs a visioning exercise for boys to help them express their hopes and fears for the future around relationships, education and health.

It is important to ensure gender-based violence prevention interventions are age-appropriate, target different groups of men appropriately, address barriers and drivers of change, and content is grounded in realities relevant to context.



Dr. Ye Myat Oo, Assistant Director from the Department of Social Welfare in Myanmar, speaks out as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Key learning

- The process of **critical reflection** among groups of individuals, who can join together to publicly model positive deviance against unjust practices is key in transforming the behaviour and attitudes of individuals as well as communities. CARE's programming in the region draws on a number of proven reflection tools, adapted for local contexts, in local engaging with men and boys strategies
- **Age appropriate** approaches are required, matching objectives of interventions to age group specific tactics. For example, some teams are using school curriculum, boys clubs, games and sporting events with adolescent boys aiming to promote early adoption of positive behaviours; while work aiming to build respectful relationships with male youth employs strategies such as film competitions, peer outreach and facilitating male youth solidarity platforms to promote change.
- **Entry point topics** are important to establish safe spaces for open dialogues. For example, some teams begin to discuss gender-based violence through the lens of household financial management or positive relationships. As the same time, conventional methods of community outreach can be shallow, risk information fatigue, or saturation points where men and boys know what responses facilitators are seeking. Innovative approaches such as CARE Bangladesh's work mobilising men and women to calculate the costs of violence in communities can lead to deeper change.
- **Urban/rural contexts** – Entry points and tactics for engaging with men and boys need to be different in urban and rural contexts, reflecting the different community structures, power dynamics, drivers and barriers across these contexts.
- **Accountability** – CARE's programming has highlighted the need to ensure that work with men and boys is accountable to women and girls, and that it is gender transformative, rather than risk reinforcing negative gendered norms, such as men as 'saviours' of women and girls.
- **Linkages with women's rights organisations** – Some teams have seen the value of having women's rights organisations on board for men's engagement work, particularly so intentions are clear. Engaging with men and boys interventions can attract critical attention for the focus placed on men and men's empowerment, however this initial reaction turn to support once the intent is clear.



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