



CASE STUDY:: YMI IN KOSOVO, 2011-2015

Care International – Balkans
Young men initiative (YMI)

CARE INTERNATIONAL - BALKANS YOUNG MEN INITIATIVE (YMI)

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January, 2016

Acronyms

FGD	Focus group discussion
KBB	Klubi Bonu Burrê (Albanian for “Be a Man” club)
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IDI	In-depth interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PEN	Peer Educators’ Network
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
YMI	Young Men Initiative

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Preface

The importance of engaging men and boys to end violence, promote gender equality, and encourage healthy masculinities has gained increased international attention in recent decades.¹ More and more activists, policymakers, educators, researchers and others are realizing that everyone – regardless of gender identity or sexuality, profession or background – has a vital role to play in bringing about a gender-just world. Furthermore, evidence suggests that it is particularly critical to engage adolescents, whose lives are marked by transitions and identity formation, in conversations about gender norms and identity.² This group – especially adolescent boys who are too often surrounded by messages supporting a restrictive, violent definition of what it means to “be a man” – needs particular support in developing healthy, gender-equitable expressions of masculinity.

The Young Men Initiative (YMI) has been bravely hosting such conversations with adolescent boys across the Balkans region for the better part of the last decade. The initiative, coordinated regionally by CARE International Balkans, engages with young men and their schools and communities to promote good health, nonviolence, and gender equality through a combination of educational workshops, community campaigns, and advocacy with policy makers.

The initiative’s first activities in Prishtina, Kosovo took place in 2012. Since then, CARE has been collaborating with the Peer Educators’ Network (PEN), an organization based in Prishtina that implements the initiative’s local activities and workshops, to conduct influential activities in schools, communities, and policy conversations in Kosovo.

This case study document aims to present a concise summary of the major activities, outcomes, and achievements of CARE and PEN’s collaboration in coordinating YMI activities in Kosovo since 2012. The document will present a succinct overview of the setting, program, outcomes, and future of YMI in Kosovo, with the implicit goal of boosting the program’s visibility and long-term viability in the country. On behalf of the authorship team, thank you for reading, and please don’t hesitate to reach out to CARE International Balkans to learn more about the YMI in Kosovo and around the region.

PREFACE

Roles and Responsibilities – YMI in Kosovo

CARE International Balkans coordinates the YMI across the Balkans region, supervising and supporting the actions of Peer Educators Network in Kosovo and liaising with evaluation partners, advisors, and donors.

Peer Educators Network implements all the school-based activities as well as community campaigns and public events related to the YMI in Kosovo.

International Center for Research on Women has facilitated the year-by-year and phase-by-phase evaluations of YMI activities, in collaboration with local data collection agencies and researchers in each location.

Promundo provided technical assistance to CARE, PEN, and other YMI implementing partners, specifically connected to the Balkans-specific adaptation and implementation of activities inspired by Promundo's Program H.

I. THE SETTING

Why redefine manhood with young men in the Balkans? In Kosovo in particular?

The Balkans Region

YMI participants (young men aged 14 to 18) across the region were born during or immediately after the Yugoslav wars. These young men grew up in a time of tumultuous post-conflict recovery characterized by ongoing ethnic polarization, economic insecurity, and rigid ideas of masculinity.³ The lasting impacts of this period of conflict are visible in norms throughout the region that remain patriarchal, violent, and homophobic.⁴ Qualitative research shows that many young men in the Balkans explicitly link “real manhood” with traditional notions such as: physical strength, sexual prowess, and providing for the family.⁵

This legacy of conflict and harmful norms has led to a situation where interpersonal violence remains high across the region, including violence experienced and perpetrated by youth. A baseline study connected to YMI in four Balkans countries found that 41% to 59% of male youth respondents have kicked, punched, or beaten another boy in their lifetime.⁶ Further evaluation findings reveal the pervasiveness of gender norms that encourage violence. There is general acceptance of violence in intimate relationships and of violence prompted by homophobia, and boys tend to subscribe to the notion that physical strength is a core feature of “being a man.”⁷ Data also demonstrate high rates of alcohol use and abuse across the region, with young men in the Balkans drinking at higher rates than in other European countries.⁸ Participatory research in four Balkans countries showed that young men recognize a link between drinking and increased violence.⁹ Research showing a lack of basic knowledge about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) among adolescent boys is also a concern.¹⁰

THE
SETTING

Kosovo/Prishtina

While all of the above contextual factors – and many of the aforementioned studies – apply to Kosovo as well, this young country offers additional, specific challenges for promoting gender justice and nonviolence. Kosovo faces continued ethnic tensions and economic struggles, which often manifest among youth as unhealthy and violent behavior.¹¹ The unemployment rate is 70% for youth aged 15-24.¹² Gender attitudes remain rigid: recent research in Prishtina found that 80% of youth believe a man should have the final say in decisions at home, and 44-52% believe a man is justified to beat a woman if she cheats on him.¹³ Violence - at home, in schools, and on the streets - is common and normalized. In a 2005 UNICEF study, nearly half (47%) of 11-18 year old respondents in Kosovo stated that they were afraid to go to school because of potential violence along the way. In the same study, 37% of youth respondents felt that violence against children in schools as a widespread issue, while 27% reported having personally experienced physical violence.¹⁴ Research done in 2013 found that 14% of youth in Prishtina have been beaten or physically punished by a teacher.¹⁵

Substance use and limited SRH knowledge among Kosovo youth are also relevant concerns. Drugs and alcohol are prevalent in the lives of youth in Kosovo. A 2011 survey of Kosovar youth found that 35% of boys and 15% of girls have drunk alcohol at least once during their lifetime, and about 10% reported drinking heavily at least once in the last month. While these rates of alcohol use are notably lower than rates from elsewhere in the Balkans region, they are nonetheless notable. The same study revealed that while use of illicit drugs is relatively low, one in ten youth in Kosovo reported that marijuana is readily available and easy to find.¹⁶ Tobacco use is much higher; some 44% of Kosovar youth reported ever smoking cigarettes in a 2009 World Health Organization study. The aforementioned 2013 YMI baseline study found that boys in Kosovo have only very basic knowledge of SRH topics: for instance, 84% of respondents correctly identified that condoms protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), but only 19-21% knew that some STIs don't show symptoms in men.¹⁷

All in all, both the regional and country-specific factors addressed here present a compelling case for the importance of YMI in Kosovo to help shift cultural norms related to violence and gender, and to encourage young men in Kosovo to embrace more peaceful, equitable, and healthy masculinities.

II. THE PROGRAM

What activities did the YMI in Kosovo entail – both inside and outside the participating schools?

YMI seeks to promote healthy, nonviolent and gender-equitable lifestyles through the combination of immersive activities with students, campaigns in the community, and advocacy/training at the policy level. This section will introduce the theory behind the program, emphasizing how the array of activities in Kosovo drew upon implementation lessons from elsewhere in the Balkans region. It will also present an overview of YMI activities as delivered, both inside and outside participating schools.

YMI Theory, Design, and Development

YMI in Kosovo understands boys not as obstacles to peace and gender equality, but rather as critical allies in promoting nonviolent, healthy relationships and communities. Operating from this basic understanding, while not minimizing the fact that girls and women bear a disproportionate burden of gender injustices in Kosovo and around the world, the initiative has designed an array of activities engaging boys in their school settings and also empowering these boys to be change-makers in their communities and beyond.

The in-school components of YMI are adapted from Program H*, a group education methodology designed to promote gender equality, decrease violence and reduce STIs. Adaptations of Program H have been implemented in some 20 countries, with many evaluations demonstrating significant program effects, including improvements in reported condom use (Brazil, Chile and India) and decreased self-reports of perpetrating intimate partner violence (India).¹⁸

THE PROGRAM

* Program H went through an adaptation process in 2007 for use in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and again in 2011 for finalisation for Kosovo. The manual is referred to as Program M (Program: Young Men).

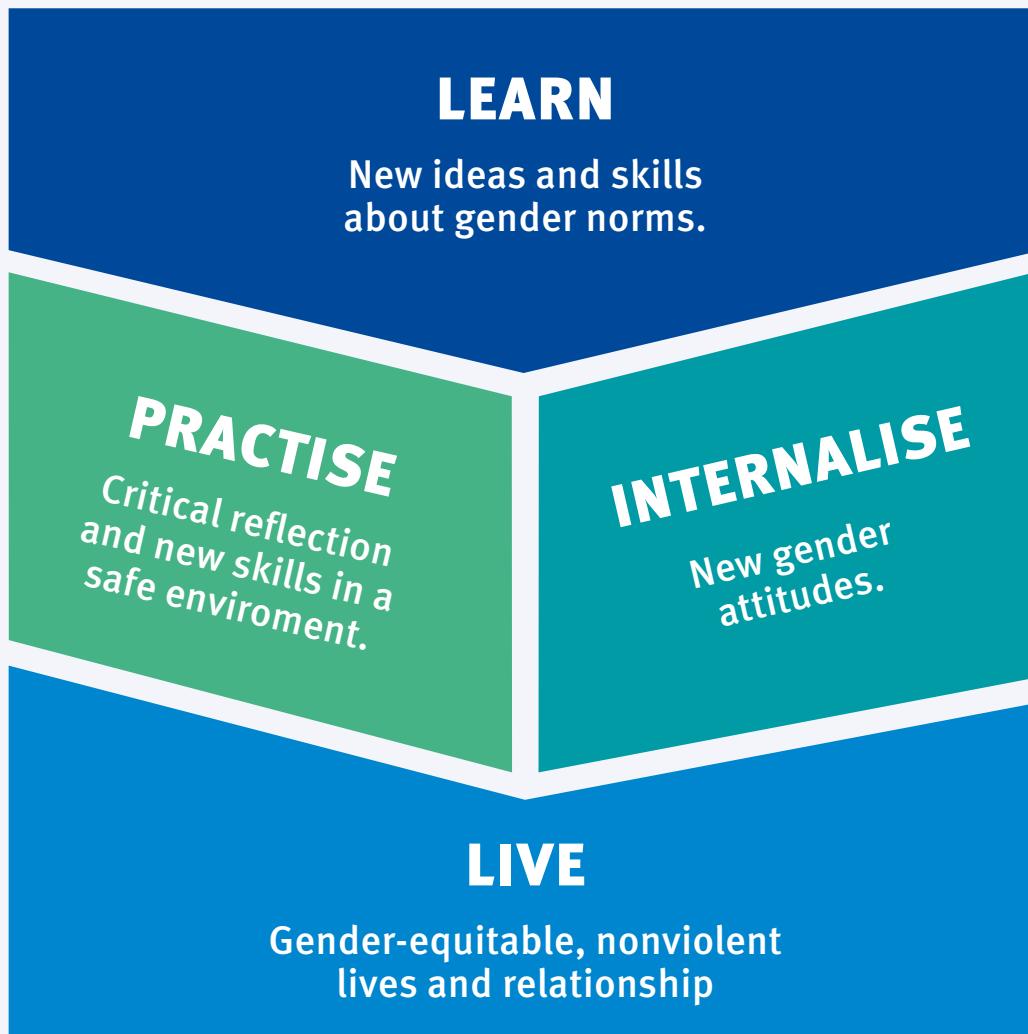
It is rare that adaptations of Program H work directly with adolescent boys in their school settings, however. **These two choices – to work with adolescents, and to embed activities within school curricula – were based on the understanding that adolescence represents a pivotal moment in boys' socialization process, when attitudes towards violence and gender roles are formulated and solidified,¹⁹ as well as the recognition that schools are important institutions in constructing and reinforcing gender norms.²⁰** These and other elements of the adaptation of Program H for use in the Balkans were based on extensive formative research with boys in five Balkan countries.²¹

Program M and YMI both hold as a “theory of change” that if students learn to recognize harmful gender norms and are provided safe spaces to practice questioning these constructs, then there is a greater likelihood of internalizing new ideas in support of gender-equitable, healthy and non-violent behaviors. But this process of change cannot happen only at the individual level. It must also be supported by certain broader influences and structures, such as positive peer groups and role models, and the existing policy environment. See the figure below for a basic presentation of the essentials of YMI’s Theory of Change.²²

Phase 1 of the initiative, running from 2007 to 2010, included formative research and implementation in five cities across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. During Phase II, running from 2011 to 2013, CARE adjusted the program across the region in two important ways, based on results from the first phase. First, basic YMI sessions became a compulsory part of the curricula in participating schools. Voluntary offsite retreats were also added for more intensive training and engagement. In 2012, the second academic year of Phase II, YMI expanded to Prishtina, Kosovo. The programme design in Prishtina reflected revisions based on lessons from six prior years of implementation in other locations. Notable adjustments included: basic YMI sessions as a compulsory part of the curricula; inclusion of four additional sessions focused on violence prevention; and intensified efforts to recruit students for the optional offsite retreats.

As such, the Prishtina implementation cycle (2012-2013) represents the most mature version of YMI to date, at an optimal stage for more rigorous evaluation. The program as presently delivered in Kosovo, is drastically evolved from the initial version of YMI piloted elsewhere in the region. And as this case study will show, the Kosovo program shows very convincing evidence of program effectiveness, perhaps as a result of these research-informed, collaborative decisions to revise the program.

ESSENTIALS OF THE YMI THEORY OF CHANGE



SUPPORTING INFLUENCES AND STRUCTURES

Peer groups critically reflecting together;
Process led by influential role models;
Relevant institutions, services and policies support programme aims

Activities Inside Schools

The school-based Program M is the cornerstone of YMI's activities in schools, but it is by no means the only core program component. YMI activities inside schools include:

GROUP EDUCATION SESSIONS LED BY YOUTH FACILITATORS (TYPICALLY MALE AGED 20 TO 25), INTEGRATED WITHIN THE REGULAR SCHOOL SCHEDULE



All first and second year students attending intervention schools participated in eight hour-long classroom sessions. Rather than using didactic training methods, YMI classroom sessions utilize participatory and interactive techniques (e.g. role play, group brainstorming, games, etc.). Facilitators emphasize asking provocative questions and creating space for boys to reflect on issues themselves, as opposed to top-down instruction. The YMI curriculum in Kosovo included 21 total modules organized into four content areas (gender, violence, SRH, and substance use). Twelve of these basic workshops were delivered as part of the academic schedule.

OPTIONAL RESIDENTIAL RETREATS



In addition, many participants opted to join one intensive residential retreat during the program period. The extended time – often an entire weekend – and immersive space of the residential retreats allowed facilitators to both review the same content covered in the classroom sessions and facilitate the remaining nine “advanced” sessions.²³

Starting Workshop: Talking Stick – Developing the Group

To encourage dialogue based on respect and to establish ground rules for the group education sessions.

A. Gender

1: What is this thing called gender

To understand the differences between sex and gender and reflect on how gender norms influence the lives and relationships of women and men

2: Expressing My emotions

To recognize the difficulties young people, face in expressing certain emotions and the consequences for themselves and their relationships

3. Power and relationships

To increase awareness about the existence of power in relationships and reflect on how we communicate about and demonstrate power in relationships

4: Labeling

To recognize how labelling people can limit individual potential and affect relationships.

B. Violence

1. Can a Man Like Another Man?

To discuss homosexuality, homophobia and the need for greater acceptance of sexual diversity.

2. Negotiating Skills

To discuss and practice skills for conflict resolution and negotiation.

3. What is violence?

To identify different types of violence that may occur in intimate relationship, families and communities.

4. Understanding the Cycle of Violence

To discuss the relationship between the violence that boys suffer and the violence that they use against others.

5.What is Sexual Violence?

To discuss sexual violence and the different situations in which it can occur.

6.A live fool or a Dead Hero: Male Honor

To discuss how “male honor” is associated with violence and think of alternatives to violence that boys can use when they feel insulted.

7.What Do I DO When I am Angry?

To help the participants to think about how to identify when they are angry and how to express their anger in constructive, non – violent, ways.

8.From Violence to Respect in Intimate Relationships

To discuss the use of violence in intimate relationships and how to construct intimate relationships based n respect.

C. Sexual and Reproductive Health

1.Young Men’s Health

To discuss how gender norms, influence boys most common health problems and review basic hygiene practices.

2.Men and Contraception

To provide information on contraceptive methods and discuss male involvement in contraceptive use.

3.Health, STIs, and HIV and AIDS

To increase knowledge about STIs and HIV? AIDS and the importance of diagnoses and treatment

4.What.... Don’t Want, Want.... Don’t Want

To discuss the challenged in negotiating abstinence or sex in intimate relationships

D. Substance Use

1.What are drugs?

To discuss the different types of drugs that exist and how they are viewed and used by society, particularly young people.

2.Decision – Making and Substance Use

To reflect on peer pressure and decision – making related to substance use and to understand the concept of dependency.

3.Drugs in our Lives and Communities

To discuss various situations in which men and women might use drugs and the consequences of this use in their lives and relationship.

Ending Workshops: Community Action: Making Changes in our Lives and in our Communities

TO help boys reflect on what they have learned throughout YMI and how it can help them to make changes in their lives and communities

THE “BE A MAN” CLUB OR KLUBI BONU BURRE



All program participants are invited to join the “Be a Man” club, or Klubi Bonu Burre (KBB) in Albanian. This group is responsible for leading and coordinating a social marketing campaign aimed at changing popular conceptions of what constitutes ‘manhood’. The clubs lead the process in challenging harmful social norms that exist within the peer culture and broader society. The young leaders act as change makers and role models in their schools help promote new attitudes and behaviors, challenge misconceptions about what is the norm (social norms approach) and promote values that incorporate healthy concepts of masculinity, that support gender equality and works in solidarity with the women’s rights movement.

The campaign utilizes a variety of educational materials, social media, and “actions” organized and carried out by student members of “Be a Man” clubs. To bolster demonstrations and activities within the school setting, the Prishtina KBB maintains a very active online presence, which will be presented in

more detail below. While Prishtina's KBB was formed within the school setting and comprises classmates, their impressive array of activities extends outside of the school environment, as the following section will show.

For the time period addressed by this case study, the full array of YMI activities was carried out with male students of one technical school in Prishtina, while students in a second school were involved as a “comparison group” for the evaluation of program effects. Beginning with the 2015-2016 academic year, however, the program has expanded to two additional high schools, where the aforementioned activities are ongoing. More details about future implementation of the initiative follow in section IV.

The clubs continues to lead the process in challenging harmful social norms that exist within the peer culture and broader society. The young leaders act as change makers and role models in their schools help promote new attitudes and behaviors, challenge misconceptions about what is the norm and promote values that incorporate healthy concepts of masculinity, that support gender equality and works in solidarity with the women’s rights movement.



Activities Outside Schools

YMI in Kosovo also includes an array of activities outside the school setting, aiming to raise public awareness of the program's goals, shift community attitudes, and influence relevant education policies. In some cases, activities are coordinated and led by CARE and PEN staff. But very often, it is student participants in the KBB who take leadership in conceptualizing, organizing, and carrying out public campaigns and activities. While the initiative's public and online activities are too many to capture comprehensively in this case study, major focuses and activities are summarized below.

ADVOCACY WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



CARE, PEN, and KBB participants frequently interact with the Ministry of Education of Kosovo and other government officials. This outreach includes: gender sensitization trainings, raising awareness of YMI activities and messages, and advocating for increased government support of YMI both inside and outside of schools. A central effort of this advocacy focused on securing accreditation by the Ministry of Education for the YMI in-school curriculum. As CARE and PEN continue building a reputation as experts on engaging boys and youth, they have received invitations from both the government and private organizations to participate in discussions on policy and program design. Case studies and evaluation reports on YMI are frequently used in advocacy efforts with ministry officials and other stakeholders.

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, AND REGIONAL NETWORKING

PEN and CARE regularly represent YMI at round table discussions, panel presentations, and national and regional conferences. This includes events organized by CARE and/or PEN as well as those organized by others. These public platforms are used to raise awareness of YMI activities and results, and to promote YMI's message related to gender equality, non-violence, and healthy lifestyles. YMI facilitators, school staff, youth members of KBB, and non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives are frequent attendees at events.

CARE organizes regional conferences for the organizations that implement YMI across the Balkans. These conferences are spaces to discuss successes and challenges, share program results, and continue strengthening the design and implementation of YMI across the region. Representatives from PEN regularly attend these conferences, which began in 2011.



Additionally, CARE and PEN participate in the international conversation on engaging men and boys. Representatives from both organizations attend international conferences on men and masculinities. Further, both organizations are active members of MenEngage Europe, a coalition of individuals and organizations from across Europe who work with men and boys to promote health, reduce violence, and achieve gender equality.

PUBLIC ACTIONS, “FLASH MOBS” AND OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS

YMI participants and facilitators regularly host events in public spaces in Prishtina with the aim of bringing increased awareness to the program’s priority issues. YMI frequently leverages local, national, and international events to raise awareness of the program and YMI messages. For example, program participants plan a particularly intensive action each year for December 10th, International Human Rights Day. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence – an international campaign that takes place each year at the end of November into December – is another annual time with intensive engagement.

Throughout the year, YMI participants plan additional “flash mobs” and demonstrations on topics such as bystander intervention, fatherhood, violence, and other topics. These demonstrations, actions, and campaigns – both in the school and in the community – are often filmed and distributed to wider audiences through the KBB Facebook and YouTube sites.



TRAININGS ON THE YMI APPROACH

CARE and PEN staff provide trainings for teachers, school staff, and peer organizations on the YMI curriculum and approach. They have also begun YMI trainings for university students studying education and pedagogy. Recently, a coalition of organizations serving Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in Kosovo was trained on the YMI approach, and plans are in place for this coalition to deliver an adapted version of YMI with members of this community in the near future.



MUSIC VIDEO, DOCUMENTARY FILM, AND STUDENT FILMS

CARE and PEN have coordinated various formal video products, including one music video and one short documentary film. These productions typically include an opportunity for KBB members to attend workshops to learn performance and multimedia skills (e.g., video editing, theatre performance, etc.) while simultaneously exploring and expressing their views related to YMI themes of gender equality and healthy masculinities. Several KBB participants have also made original short films themselves that address program themes, many of which are available for viewing on the KBB YouTube channel.



MEDIA OUTREACH AND MEDIA COVERAGE

CARE and PEN frequently engage with media partners, not only to bring attention to YMI itself but also to train journalists, editors, and others on themes related to the program. For example, a recent round table with journalists, organized jointly with the Journalist Association of Kosovo, provided gender sensitization training for journalists.



YMI's public activities and media engagement have also attracted attention from media sources, both in Kosovo and elsewhere. Representatives from PEN and CARE have been invited to speak on many television programs to discuss YMI and what the project is about. A selection of articles and news clips featuring YMI-related stories appears in the box below.

FEATURE ARTICLES AND VIDEOS COVERING YMI IN KOSOVO INCLUDE:

 <http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life/from-boys-to-modern-men-how-teenagers-are-being-taught-to-stop-sexual-violence-in-kosovo-9522599.html?origin=internalSearch>

(From boys to modern men: how teenagers are being taught to stop sexual violence in Kosovo)

 <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/jun/09/kosovo-care-international-project-sexism-sexual-violence>

(Teaching young men to break the cycle of sexual violence)

 https://www.change.org/p/end-violenceagainstwomen-teach-boys-and-young-men-to-challengeattitudes?share_id=mvbauBKRBO&utm_campaign=share_button_action_box&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=share_petition

(End violence against women in a generation: teach boys and young men to #challengeattitudes and overcome everyday sexism)

 <https://chrismon.evangelisch.de//artikel/2015/31498/bildungsprogramm-kosovo-nachkriegsgeneration>

(be a men be different)

 <http://www.kosovotwopointzero.com/en/article/2164/paternity-provisions-excluding-kosovar-dads>

(promoting fatherhood in Kosovo)

 <http://www.kosovotwopointzero.com/en/article/2139/promovimi-i-atesise-pozitive-ne-kosove>

(promoting fatherhood in Kosovo)

 http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/nikki-van-der-gaag/the-beautiful-show-father_b_10392186.html

('The Beautiful Show' - Fathers for Gender Equality in Kosovo)

<http://blog.care.de/lippenstift-fuer-harte-kerle-steffen-groth-im-kosovo/>

III. THE OUTCOMES

What can we say about the effectiveness and influence of the program?

Overview of Evaluation History

The evidence of program effectiveness presented in this section builds upon many years of evaluation research connected to the YMI program across the Balkans region. Highlights of this intensive, collaborative evaluation effort include:

- **2007:** Participatory action research, with boys from across the region, to inform the design of the YMI program and the regional adaptation of the Program H curriculum.
- **2007-2010:** “Phase 1” of YMI, including the initial implementation of school-based activities in five cities across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. Evaluations in each of these sites included comparison schools, and the results pointed toward the two key program adjustments mentioned above: (1) making YMI classroom activities compulsory, and (2) adding the residential retreats.
- **2011-2013:** “Phase II” of YMI, with implementation and evaluation in four schools located in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Zagreb (Croatia), Belgrade (Serbia), and Prishtina (Kosovo). Phase II data from Prishtina are presented below. Findings draw on data from quantitative surveys administered before and after the eight month program with all participating students; in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDS) with student participants, teachers, and YMI facilitators; and monitoring records. In Prishtina, data were also collected from a comparison school that did not implement YMI activities. The core evaluation tasks in Phase II sought to achieve three objectives:
 - › To appraise the YMI implementation process;
 - › To identify outcomes in the project’s four thematic areas: (1) gender attitudes, (2) violence, (3) sex, health, and wellbeing, and (4) alcohol and drug use; and
 - › To identify any differential effect of participating in a voluntary off-site retreat, as compared to participating in classroom sessions alone.

THE OUTCOMES

2014: CARE staff and research consultants conducted a follow-up arm of data collection with Prishtina program participants from both intervention and comparison sites, in order to test the sustainability and otherwise validate the program effects uncovered in an evaluation by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in 2013. These data are referenced below as well.

2015: In preparation for this case study, some twenty-five key informants completed online surveys about their reflections on the relevance, aims, effectiveness, and shortcomings of the YMI initiative in Prishtina. Respondents included student participants, teachers, education ministry staff, journalists, and other influential community members. Details appear below under the headings “Student Reflections” and “Community and Policymaker Reflections.”

Student Outcomes

Student outcomes in Prishtina were evaluated using a quasi-experimental, mixed method evaluation design. Quantitative data were collected in one intervention and one control school prior to (October 2012) and immediately after (May 2013) the program’s implementation over the eight-month 2012-2013 academic year. These two rounds of data collection are referred to as “baseline” and “endline” hereafter. In April 2014, an additional round of “follow up” data collection took place to test the sustainability of observed changes in the initial evaluation. Qualitative data – in the form of FGDs and IDIs – were collected at endline to explore how boys experienced programme participation and their perceptions of any resulting changes. This ‘mixed methods’ approach allows for the triangulation of findings and deeper exploration of mechanisms of change.²⁴

METHODS AND SAMPLE

All first and second year students attending the intervention and comparison schools were invited to participate, with a 99 percent response rate among boys physically present on the day of the survey. The table below summarizes the baseline and endline sample sizes. Lost-to-follow-up analysis conducted by ICRW concluded that no systematic bias was introduced due to attrition in the intervention school. In the comparison school, however, the loss of students reporting higher rates of substance use may have artificially decreased prevalence of substance use at endline, making it more difficult to detect

any measurable program effect for these outcomes. A broader analysis of baseline data also confirmed the overwhelming similarity of students in the two schools, with only three statistically significant differences: compared to the intervention school, students in the comparison school were less likely to report their mother had worked for pay in the last six months; less likely to report perpetrating emotional violence against a peer; and expressed slightly less homophobic attitudes.

Site	Baseline	Endline	Matched Sample	Attrition
Intervention School	353	285	285	69 (19.5%)
Comparison School	340	276	276	64 (18.2%)
Total	693	560	561	133 (19.2%)

At follow up, researchers connected to the original evaluation were able to administer the same survey with 188 students from the intervention school and 193 students from the comparison school. While the significant attrition rate at follow up does decrease the reliability of this third round of data, its findings offer an illustrative glimpse at the sustainability of program effects and are included where salient below.

All qualitative interview respondents were from the intervention school, using a two-stage randomization process to select IDI participants and a purposive sampling process to select FGD participants (to achieve a mix of ages and at least two students who had opted into the voluntary offsite retreats). The qualitative sample is presented in the table below:

School	IDIs (male students)	IDI (male YMI facilitators)	FGD (male students)	FGD (teachers)
Intervention	8	2	1 (8 students)	1 (6 teachers)
Control	0	2	1 (8 students)	0
Totals	8	4	2 (16 students)	1 (6 teachers)

All quantitative data were collected via a self-administered survey, including the following sections: demographic and background characteristics; attitudes and behaviours related to gender, violence, and SRH; substance use (including alcohol); and programme exposure and engagement (end-line only). FGDs were facilitated using a semi-structured guide focused on identifying school-level norms and any perceived changes over the past year. The IDI guide was structured to elicit personal reflections on ‘being a man’ in the Prishtina context, including normative expectations of how boys ought to behave in contrast with reflections on actual behaviours. We also presented respondents with hypothetical scenarios related to violence to explore whether and how violence-related intentions may have shifted over the programme year.

These methods were used to produce conclusions on the program’s effects related to its four main focus areas: (1) gender attitudes, (2) violence, (3) sex, health, and wellbeing, and (4) alcohol and drug use. Results per theme are presented in turn below.

YMI'S INTENDED OUTCOMES RELATED TO FOCUS AREA 1 – GENDER ATTITUDES INCLUDED: INCREASED GENDER-EQUITABLE ATTITUDES AND DECREASED HOMOPHOBIA.

The evaluation used a modified Gender Equitable Men Scale to assess changes in participants' gender-related attitudes. **For the vast majority of survey items measuring gender norms and homophobic attitudes, YMI participants showed significant shifts not observed in the comparison school.** In most cases, boys who opted in to the residential retreats showed particularly large shifts in a more gender-equitable direction, suggesting that increased exposure to the program leads to more meaningful changes.

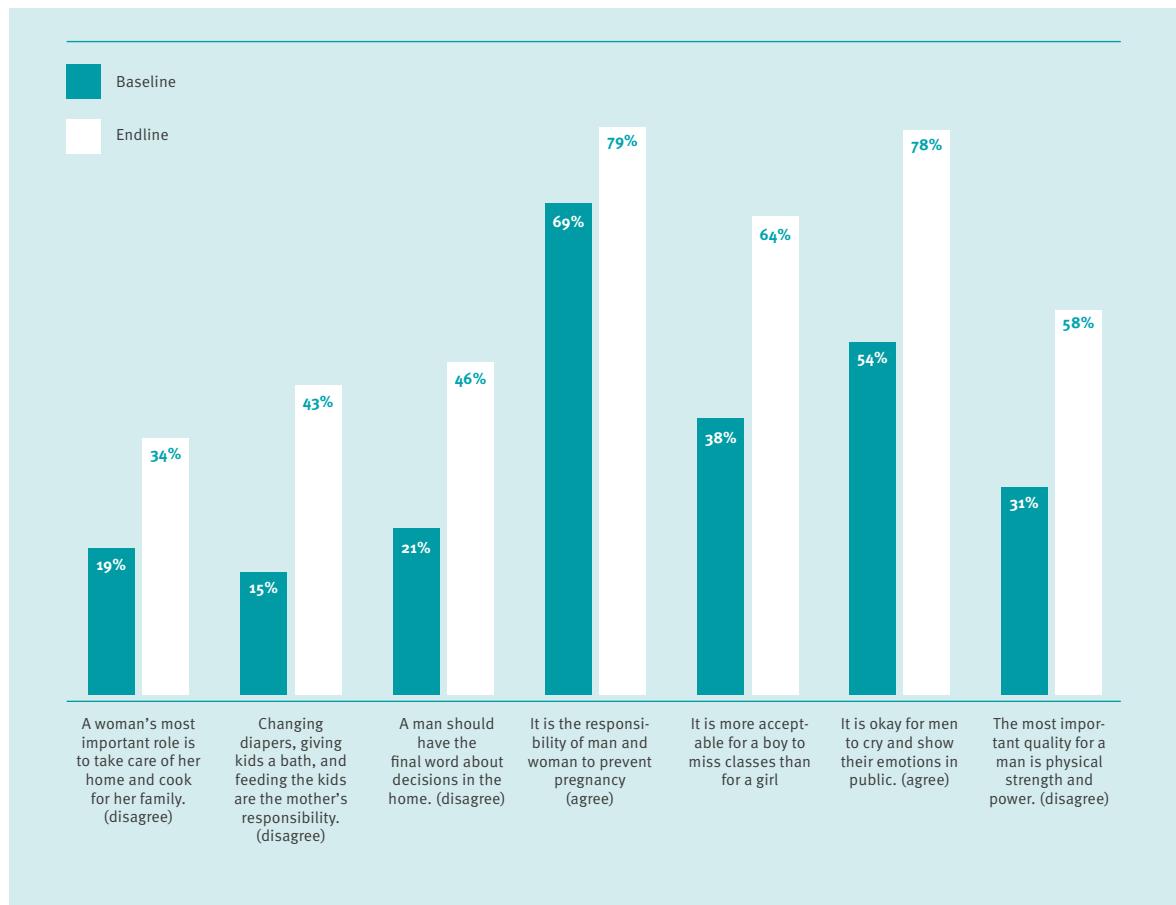


Figure 1 – Intervention students' rates of response to seven gender norm attitude items at baseline and endline. For all seven measures, the increases are statistically significant. The size of the change is also statistically significant when compared against changes in the comparison school for all items except the “It is both a man’s and woman’s...”

Boys attending the intervention school also reported less homophobic attitudes after participating in YMI, whereas no change was observed in the comparison school. These shifts were not universal, however, and even at endline the majority of boys agreed with all three homophobic statements, suggesting the persistence of homophobic norms.

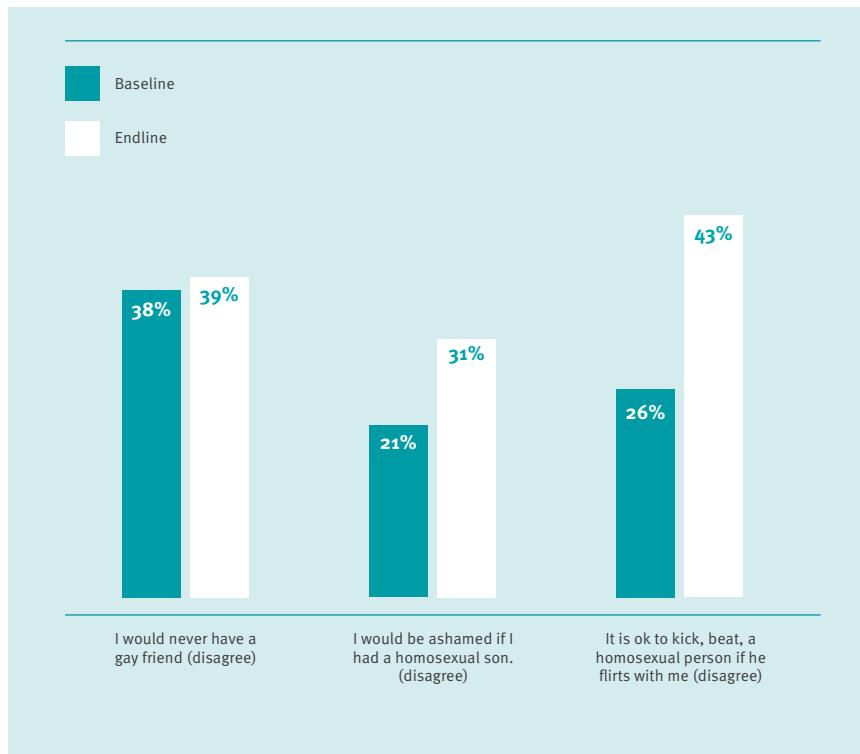


Figure 2 – Intervention students' rates of response to three items measuring homophobic attitudes at baseline and endline. For the second and third measures, boys' baseline-to-endline changes were statistically significant, and these changes are also statistically significant when compared against changes in the comparison school.

Follow up data collection in April 2014 suggests that these shifts in gender-related attitudes have proven sustainable. By combining the above attitude items into three scales – focused on “Gender Roles,” “Gender Norms,” and “Homophobia,” – researchers were able to conclude that attitudes among 2012-2013 participants remain statistically significantly more equitable than their peers from the same year/cohort in the comparison school, even a year after concluding YMI classroom activities. Among participants in all three rounds of data collection, the significant increase in gender-equitable attitudes observed over the program year had not significantly regressed for any of these three scales in this intervening year²⁵



Figure 3 – Demonstration of sustainable program effect among smaller sample of students available at follow-up. For all measures, higher scores indicate greater alignment with gender-equitable views. Although the sample available at all three data collection points is significantly smaller than the original baseline-endline evaluation sample, these findings nonetheless point toward the sustainability of program effects with regard to participants' attitudes. Discussion of attitudes on violence follows in the next focus area.

Participants in qualitative research also reflected on the program's effectiveness in shifting gender attitudes, as these quotes demonstrate:

To become a man here in our country, we smoke cigarettes, we drink alcohol... Now [I realize] all the smoking and alcoholic drinks do not make a man, but the opposite of a man... I changed my opinion through these trainings... Those values which we discussed have changed all the rules.
– IDI participant, Prishtina

Before I came to the advanced training, I didn't have that opinion [that I could be friends with a gay person]. I have made friends with such a boy. I would never have done that before, because on the one hand, I was afraid of him, and on the other hand, I was afraid ... people would say that I was gay, too. But today, I think Be a Man! has changed my opinion completely.
– FGD participant, Prishtina

YMI'S INTENDED OUTCOMES RELATED TO FOCUS AREA 2 – VIOLENCE INCLUDED: DECREASED TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN; DECREASED INTENTION TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS THROUGH VIOLENCE; AND DECREASED PERPETRATION OF PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE.

In addition to the attitude items presented above, the survey included five attitude measures related to violence against women. **Overall, intervention school students reported a decreased tolerance for violence across all measures and a greater recognition of emotional violence.** Even after the program, however, the majority of boys agree with the victim-blaming statement ‘When a woman is harassed it is commonly because of how she dresses,’ suggesting that this view was not effectively addressed or that boys do not consider harassment to be a form of violence.

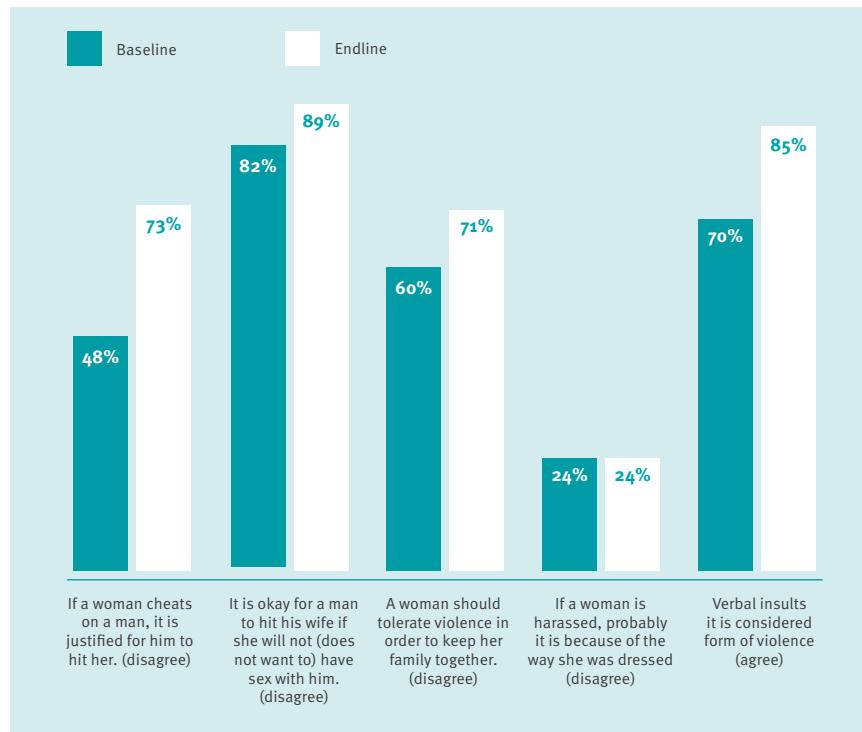


Figure 4 – Intervention students’ rates of response to five items measuring attitudes related to violence against women at baseline and endline. For all but the fourth measure, boys’ baseline-to-endline changes were statistically significant. For the first and fifth measure, these changes are also statistically significant when compared against changes in the comparison school.

In the follow up dataset, program participants’ attitudes rejecting violence against women remain, on average, significantly higher than the comparison school cohort (see Figure 3 above). Within this limited sample, however, intervention students’ attitudes had slightly (not significantly) regressed

since endline, while comparison school student' attitudes had slightly shifted toward greater rejection of violence against women. Regardless, follow up one year after the program indicates that program participants have made a meaningful change on these attitudes that is not observed among the comparison sample.

The evaluation also measured boys' intentions to commit or prevent violence in the future. **Findings indicate that intervention school students expressed a decreased intention to fight—even against individuals 'disrespecting their family or friends'—and a stronger intention to stop a fight in progress after participating in YMI.** This decrease was statistically significant both on its own and in comparison with shifts over the same time period among comparison school students. Boys' qualitative reflections also emphasized this outcome of the program:

Before the [Be a Man] club existed, when two boys were involved in violence—when they fought each other—everyone expected his friend to be involved as well. Now friends try to keep friends out of violence, so that it does not come to the level of killing or death. – IDI participant, Prishtina

'Be a Man' changed us for the good... like not using name calling, not exercising violence against those who are not as strong, and many other things. – IDI participant, Prishtina

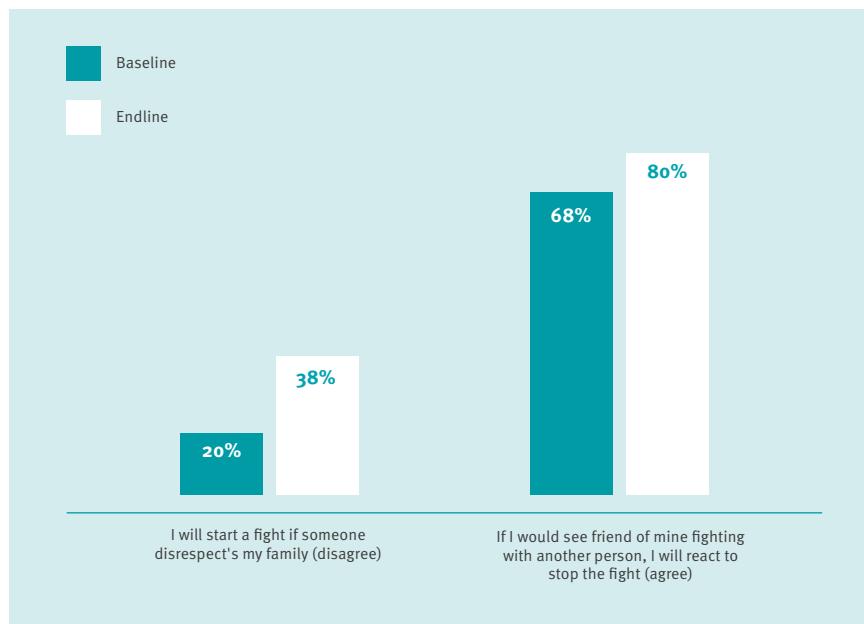


Figure 5 – Intervention students' rates of response to two items intentions to commit or forestall violence, at baseline and endline. For both measures, boys' baseline-to-endline changes were statistically significant both on their own and when compared against changes in the comparison school.

Data also suggest a positive shift in boys' behaviours in following through on these intentions: at endline, 69 percent of YMI participants reported having intervened to stop a fight in the last three months, compared to 42 percent at baseline, a statistically significant increase.

Boys' reported perpetration of physical and emotional violence against a peer was the final topic addressed under the focus area of violence. **Baseline data indicate high levels of violence; 39 to 45 percent of respondents (comparison and intervention school, respectively) reported having kicked, punched, or beat another boy in their lifetime.** The pervasiveness of violence is also reflected in the qualitative data:

Those of us that grew up in Prishtina, it was tough to grow up in these streets. As soon as you went on the street at school, they are there, and they start fighting with you. Once, twice, and then on the third time, you punch them back. What can you do? (FGD participant, Prishtina)

Despite the short program duration, survey results suggest that YMI may have contributed to stemming violence. **At endline, the percentage of boys at the comparison school who reported perpetrating physical and emotional peer violence in the past three months had increased dramatically, whereas no change was registered at the intervention school for either measure.** Both of these differences between changes in the intervention and comparison schools were statistically significant.

At follow up, these encouraging trends had continued: only 14 percent of participant boys reported having used physical violence against a peer in the preceding three months, while 26 percent of comparison school boys reported perpetrating this violence. This was a statistically significant difference, as well as a statistically significant decrease from participant boys' endline levels of reporting violence. These findings should be interpreted as illustrative of a potential, not proven trend, however, due to data limitations. Among the curtailed sample available at the follow-up round, all levels of reported violence – at baseline, endline, and follow-up – were significantly lower than levels in the more complete baseline and endline datasets. This discrepancy indicates a bias in the follow up sample whereby the boys available at this additional data collection round were those with lower levels of reported violence at all data collection rounds.

YMI'S INTENDED OUTCOMES RELATED FOCUS AREA 3 – SEX, HEALTH, AND WELLBEING INCLUDED: INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OF SRH TOPICS AS WELL AS IMPROVED SELF-ESTEEM AND MENTAL HEALTH.

Programme sessions on SRH topics sought to improve boys' basic knowledge and sexual health behaviours. **By endline, YMI participants showed significant improvements in six of the seven measures used to test SRH knowledge.**

MEASURES OF SRH KNOWLEDGE (higher percentages indicate more accurate knowledge)		INTERVENTION (n=260-273)		
		Baseline	Endline	P value
1	Condoms protect against STIs (true)	83.9%	91.2%	0.002*
2	You can get HIV by kissing (false)	17.0%	35.8%	0.000*
3	Many STIs don't show symptoms in men (true)	18.8%	20.3%	0.638
4	Only homosexual men can be infected with HIV (false)	36.0%	63.3%	0.000*
5	You can get HIV from oral sex (false)	4.6%	15.0%	0.000*
6	People can get HIV by sharing needles (true)	55.0%	76.6%	0.000*
7	A healthy looking person can have HIV (true)	31.7%	52.4%	0.000*

For all items in the above table except #3 and #5, baseline to endline changes among the program participants were statistically significant as compared to changes among the comparison group. At follow up, participant boys responses on a scale combining all seven above items remained statistically significantly higher than the scale score of the comparison group cohort, suggesting that in the year since the program, participants have likely not regressed on these basic knowledge items.

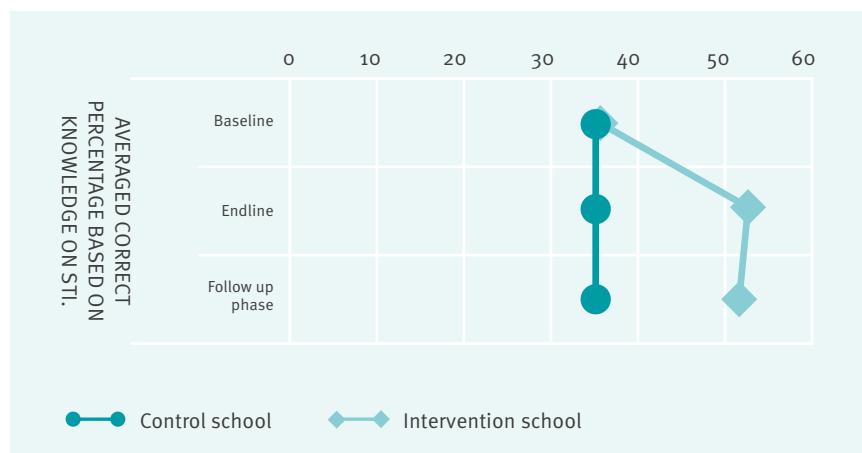


Figure 6 – Assessment of sustainability of SRH knowledge improvement. Among boys available at all three data collection rounds, evidence suggests that intervention students' increase in SRH knowledge had proven sustainable one year after program completion.

The evaluation's measurement of boys' self-esteem using the Rosenberg Scale showed that mean self-esteem scores improved slightly in both schools, but with no significant change or program effect observable among participants.²⁶ The survey also asked more direct questions about boys' experiences of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. No statistically significant improvements were observed in either site. In fact, YMI participants reported a small increase in feelings of stress or anxiety (73 percent at endline versus 59 percent at baseline, $p<.001$). Taken as a whole these results indicate that YMI has no positive effect on mental health outcomes within the evaluation period. Follow up data collection was equally inconclusive on these measures.

YMI'S INTENDED OUTCOMES RELATED TO FOCUS AREA 4: SUBSTANCE ABUSE INCLUDED: DECREASED ALCOHOL USE, PARTICULARLY BINGE DRINKING, AND DECREASED USE OF MARIJUANA AND OTHER SUBSTANCES.

Over three-quarters of students at both Prishtina schools reported never consuming alcohol at baseline, unsurprising given the predominantly Muslim student population. Reported binge drinking at baseline (defined as having six or more drinks on a single occasion) was also low—around five percent (both sites)—with no statistically significant change over the course of the program in either measure. Qualitative data are consistent with these findings. **Overall, participants frequently indicated that no one in their families or immediate peer groups consumed alcohol. Reported rates of other drug use were minimal (less than four percent at any data point).**

SO WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE ABOUT STUDENT OUTCOMES IN PRISHTINA?

There is consistent evidence that YMI had a positive influence on the lives of student participants in Prishtina. Key lessons and findings emerging from evaluation of YMI's school-based efforts in Prishtina from 2012-2014 include:

- Participating students developed a more critical awareness of norms related to gender and violence. For example, YMI participants are more likely to reject statements expressing rigid masculine roles and condoning violence against women after the program. While we detected a statistically significant decrease in expressed homophobia, the majority of boys do continue to agree with homophobic statements even after the program, however.
- Given the short duration of the study, the positive trends related to violent attitudes and intentions are encouraging, even though violence-related behaviours did not change.
- Survey results indicate meaningful improvements in participants' knowledge of SRH topics, a particularly salient finding in a location with significant gaps regarding sex education in classrooms.²⁷

Taken as a whole, the above shifts are particularly encouraging given the life stage of participants—a time when gender identities begin to solidify, often in conjunction with intimate relationship formation and sexual initiation. Certain behaviours proved more resistant, notably peer violence perpetration, where results showed promise but are inconclusive overall. **Despite these gaps, the Prishtina evaluation overall provides strong evidence of YMI's potential to help boys think critically about the link between harmful gender**

norms and violence; shift beliefs about gender roles, homophobia, and masculinity; and impart highly pertinent SRH information. Our confidence in the link between YMI participation and the many observed changes is bolstered by a positive relationship between increased program participation (attending the residential retreats) and positive outcomes, and because of indications of the sustainability of program effects produced by the follow up study.

Student Reflections

In alignment with the preparation of this case study, several Prishtina participants in YMI activities were approached to provide additional reflections on the purpose, successes, challenges, and future of the initiative in Prishtina. While this selection in no means purports to be a scientific sample, the salient quotes below give an impression of the lasting influence of the program among participants in Prishtina.

Respondents were articulate in their expression of the aims of the program. Framing the program goals of reducing violence, increasing gender equitable attitudes, eliminating ‘labeling’ and other outcomes, students clearly grasped the core motivations of program organizers. As two participant boys stated:

“I think the aim [of YMI] is to remove the negative attitudes that push adolescents to offend and hurt each other by teaching us how to behave with each other, not to use different and negative labels and how to be a good father.”

“I think that the aim of YMI has a positive impact on our society for not using violence, labeling, respecting gender equality, and so on. My cooperation with Be a Man Club is very good considering things that they teach us and the freedom of expression that we have when discussing different problems.”

Student respondents report witnessing a positive impact of YMI on the community, schools, and themselves. Several respondents say they have seen a reduction in labeling and violence among their peers.

“The effect that I have noticed is that there is way less violence in the school comparing to what it used to be.”

“Most of the students who have attended Young Men Initiative’s workshops do not use labels anymore and gender based harassment is very rare.”

At the same time, students are able to pinpoint shortcomings of the program and provide suggestions for increased and ongoing efforts around the city and country. Some respondents emphasized that the reach and intensity of YMI was not sufficient to eliminate all problems related to violence and gender inequality.

“I believe that the effect of Be a Man Club is not as big as it should be. Even though we try to encourage students to stay away from negative attitudes such as violence and labeling, they still continue to happen. Although there has been a considerate decrease in such incidents after the lectures from the Be a Man Club.”

“In my school ‘Be a Man Club’ hasn’t held lectures with all generations and considering this it did not have a great impact. But in some of the classes there are groups of students that because of Be a Man Club have had an impact in their friendship circle, eliminating labeling and a lot of other problems.”

Some respondents say that YMI created a safe space where they could express themselves freely while discussing sensitive topics. In one boy’s words:

“I think its [YMI’s] impact is very positive for the society and also generally for our life. I feel free to express myself regarding all the topics that we cover.”

Mirroring the advice from school leaders and community members below, student respondents advised YMI organizers to intensify and expand program activities. Students suggested that YMI expand to other schools, increase engagement with girls, and continue reaching new generations of students. One respondent suggested that YMI increase its’ social media presence because it is a venue for students to find out about Be a Man Club activities.

“For the moment I believe that all the programs and activities that are being held are very good and awareness raising but I would only hope that this initiative won’t stop in order that the new generations are aware of what is good for us and what is not.”

“My advice would be to include more students in such projects and to encourage them to make positive changes in our society. But I believe that they should work with girls as well and not only boys, because many girls use very negative labels towards other and negative behaviors.”

The presentation of YMI outcomes in Kosovo now steps outside the schools to consider the achievements of the initiative at the community and policy level.

Community and Policymaker Outcomes

YMI efforts to engage the community and policy makers in Kosovo have resulted in many significant achievements. A summary of major achievements and events are provided below.

ADVOCACY WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Outreach efforts with the Ministry of Education and other government officials has produced several significant milestones:

1. After extensive advocacy efforts, the YMI in-school curriculum was officially accredited on 2012 by the Ministry of Education for use in Kosovo schools. This accreditation is important for the continued expansion of YMI within Kosovo. Further, the accreditation highlights YMI trainings as a professional development opportunity, thus encouraging principals, teachers, and other school staff to become trained as YMI facilitators. Since the accredited, several successful trainings have been held for teachers, school staff, and university students (see “Trainings on the YMI approach”).
2. A roundtable event titled, “Gender Equality and Life Skills Education: Results from the Young Men Initiative” was organized with the Ministry of Education on June 2014. The purpose was to share and discuss findings and lessons from the first year of YMI implementation in Kosovo. Round table participants included the Ministry of Education, ADA, CARE UK, CARE Kosovo, Innovations Lab Kosovo, PEN, Journalists, the Swedish Embassy, the University of Prishtina, and YMI participants.
3. CARE and PEN representatives participated in a 4-day workshop in 2014 organized by the Ministry of Education titled “Action Planning for the Strategy of Safe Schools for Elementary and Secondary School 2014-2017.” The workshop resulted in a strategy document, which was then sent to the Prime Minister’s office and was approved.

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, AND REGIONAL NETWORKING

On the international stage, representatives from CARE, PEN and other regional YMI implementing partners attended the 2015 International Conference on Masculinities: Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality held in New York. CARE and partners gave a presentation at the conference – “Among the ‘Macho Men’: Innovations in Working with Young Men in Post Conflict, Contested Societies” – gaining international attention for YMI.

CARE organizes regular conferences to bring together YMI implementers from across the Balkans region. For instance, PEN representatives attended a regional partners meeting held in Albania in December 2014. The meeting resulted in guidelines for implementing YMI with peer educators, youth workers, teachers, school staff, pedagogy students, and journalists. A great strength of YMI is the connections that have been established between implementing partners. This synergy among implementers across the region provides the opportunity for shared learning, innovation, and improvement.

In July 2012 a conference was organized call Kosovo Young Men: Promoting Gender Equity and the Transition to Manhood in order to present the findings and results of Participatory Learning and Action from Kosovo– PLA Kosovo Exploring Dimensions of Masculinities, Femininities and Violence with Young Men and Young Women in Kosovo. There were representatives from Embassy of Norway, Ministry of Education, CARE PEN and other partner organizations from the region.

in October 2013, for the International day against violence, a YMI event was organized in the National Theater where results were presented from Be a Men Club school "28 Nentori" as well young men prepared short movies related gender equality, violence prevention and drug abuse. The films were all awarded by Kosovo famous actor and singer (Donat Qosja, Flaka Krelani).

By 2013, PEN had developed into a recognized “M Center,” serving as a national resource center to support those implementing YMI across the country as well as those involved in working with boys and youth more broadly.



CARE and PEN regularly organize and participate in local, public presentations on YMI. For instance, PEN organized a panel discussion on December 3, 2015 with an array of experts including representatives from UNICEF and the local police. KBB members in attendance raised insightful questions on how to stop bullying from professors, how are the police protecting children, and how to prevent school violence. Such events serve to raise awareness of YMI and are opportunities to discuss the initiatives core messages.

PUBLIC ACTIONS, “FLASH MOBS” AND OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS

PEN and KBB members have implemented an impressive number of public actions and demonstrations over the years. While far from a complete listing, highlighted here are a few of the more major actions:

- In 2011/2012, CARE and its partners across the Balkans region formed the “Forum of Real Men”, a campaign engaging celebrities to promote the healthy lifestyle messages of YMI. Men and boys in the community were encouraged to sign a “Declaration of Real Men” as a public commitment to living a healthy, non-violent lifestyle. Participants were encouraged to organize local campaign events to compliment the national campaign. The “Forum of Real Men” campaign was designed specifically to challenge broader societal views related to gender, violence, and health.



- On December 10th, 2014 (International Human Rights Day) participants organized a campaign on the issue of interpersonal violence among youth in Kosovo. YMI participants publicly signed a declaration to reject violence and encouraged peers to sign as well.
- On March 8th, 2015, “Be a Man” club members handed out gifts in the main squares of Prishtina in honor of International Women’s Day.
- On April 22nd, 2015 the “Be a Man” club organized a recycling activity to recognize Earth Day.
- Also in 2015, during International Men’s Health Week (June 15th – 21st), YMI participants held a lecture on health.
- On December 10th, 2015, (International Human Rights Day) YMI participants made a short film of themselves learning to cook a recipe provided by their parents. The aim was to transform common notions about the gendered task of cooking within the home. Additionally, as in previous years, participants publicly signed declarations against gender injustice.
- Also in 2015 in honor of International Human Rights Day, YMI participants organized a flash mob highlighting the slogan “React as Human” in order to draw attention to an overarching theme of non-violence. The flash mob lasted 30 minutes and reached an estimated live audience of 1000 passersby.
- In 2015 as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (November 25th – December 10th), students and staff completed two murals, one in a primary school and one in a high school, reflecting themes of non-violence. While making the murals, much discussion occurred among the broader school community as curiosity inspired them to question and discuss what the murals meant. The murals continue to be viewed by hundreds of students, staff, and parents who pass the murals every day.
- Also as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign in 2015, KBB members and YMI peer educators co-led two days of workshops with 30 boys and girls (15 male/15 female) in primary schools. The two days consisted of YMI sessions on gender equality, non-violence, and health. The sessions included a strong focus on empowering participants to spread the information to their peers, teachers, friends, and relatives.

To watch videos of some YMI actions and demonstrations, visit the KBB YouTube channel.

TRAININGS ON THE YMI APPROACH

In 2015, PEN conducted three trainings on the YMI approach with peer organizations. The first took place in Fushe, Kosovo in May 2015 and included 18 participants who work with the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. The second training took place in Shtimein in September 2015 and reached 22 participants, including 8 Albanian youth workers. The third training took place in Prishtina in October 2015 with youth workers, youth centers, and local NGOs with a total of 10 participants. Each training provided participants with the knowledge and skills to facilitate YMI workshops. Thus, these trainings are an important component of the efforts to expand YMI in Kosovo.

Additionally, in February of 2015, CARE and PEN staff delivered a 20-hour training for teachers. At this training, 27 teachers from three high schools in Prishtina were certified as facilitators of the YMI in-school curriculum. A second training was organized for university pedagogy and education faculty students with a total of 28 participants.



MUSIC VIDEO, DOCUMENTARY FILM, AND STUDENT FILMS

Videos and films produced by KBB members, PEN, and other partners have reached thousands, even millions of viewers with YMI's central messages of gender equality, non-violence, and healthy masculinities. Audio and visual productions to highlight include:

- A music video produced with KBB members and featuring a popular local hip-hop artist delivering lyrics related to program themes. As of the writing of this case study, the video has been viewed on YouTube nearly 2 million times.
- A short documentary, “21st Century Men,” investigating the predominant definitions of “manhood” in and around Prishtina through a series of colorful interviews.
- In the winter of 2013, a German TV station produced a documentary on YMI in Kosovo. Titled “Lipstick for Tough Guys,” it featured a German actor, Steffen Groth, who engaged local young men in a theatre workshop. The documentary aired in Germany in the spring of 2014.



MEDIA OUTREACH AND MEDIA COVERAGE

On May 15th, 2015 (International Family Day), YMI partners in Prishtina participated in the regional launch of www.pazisex.net / www.kujdessex.net. The website aims to provide comprehensive SRH information for young people. Launch activities included distribution of promotional materials (e.g., t-shirts, cards, and stickers) as well as posters placed on billboards and other public places. Representatives from YMI organizations gave numerous interviews about the campaign with local and national TV and radio stations.





A round table held in November 2015, organized jointly with the Journalist Association of Kosovo, attempted to shift journalists' tendencies to sensationalize stories about gender based violence in Kosovo. Additionally, the event aimed to raise awareness of the YMI methodology and campaign activities. The round table was attended by a total of 19 participants – 9 male and 10 female. Participants included journalists, deputy members from parliament, and a representative from the Ombudsman office. During the meeting, many journalists discussed witnessing problematic actions by colleagues, such as relying on gendered stereotypes, employing sexist language, and a lack of understanding of violence against women. A general agreement was reached that the media should do better reporting and to give priority to gender sensitization efforts. The president of the Journalist Association of Kosovo committed to increasing the capacity of journalists to report utilizing gender sensitive language. A deputy member from parliament committed to raising with parliament the need for more educational programs on gender. There are plans for all YMI project partners to carry out a similar training with journalists next year.

Community and Policymaker Reflections

Not unlike the additional questionnaire circulated to student participants as part of the preparation of this case study, key community members, teachers, ministers, and other policy-level influencers contributed reflections on the program in response to a short online survey. The most instructive reflections from this non-scientific follow-up exercise appear below.

The selected school leaders and community members agree that there is a significant need for YMI in Kosovo. All respondents expressed a positive view of YMI program activities and the majority said the program accurately addresses the challenges facing adolescent boys in Kosovo. Several respondents were able to identify the goal of YMI as shaping participants' gender attitudes, encouraging positive behavior, and building supportive networks.

"It is a very spot on initiative where students are educated to respect the other gender, not to be ashamed to help but [to the] contrary to take initiatives in order to contribute to the house work." (Teacher)

"The purpose of the Young Men's Initiative is to promote gender equality, greater participation of men in childcare and development which provides the importance of the welfare of the child." (Policy Maker)

Nearly all respondents said they have witnessed a positive impact of YMI on program participants. Specific changes identified by school leaders and community members included an increase in gender equality, tolerance, and cooperation. One community organizer said the following about the effect of YMI in schools:

"You can notice a lot of positive changes [among] the participants who take place in these trainings. They leave with a different mindset regarding equality in general especially gender equality." (Community Organizer)

A member of the media who responded to the questionnaire identified YMI as an important factor that is contributing to a gradual cultural shift in attitudes about gender roles:

"I'm going to talk about a concrete example. Before it was taboo when a father helped his baby by feeding, changing the diaper, walking the baby or just generally taking care of it, that is not the case any more. This phenomenon is starting to change gradually especially in the last years, but the biggest impact has come through the 'Be a Man Club' and their campaigns." (Media)

When asked what advice they would give to YMI organizers, the large majority of respondents feel that YMI activities need to be expanded. A teacher in a technical school where YMI was implemented said the following:

“I would not recommend anything because I like this initiative a lot, the only suggestion would be to expand their activities in more schools and visit these schools more often.” (Teacher)

Several respondents suggested that YMI increase engagement with a variety of stakeholders, specifically girls, women, parents, and families. One respondent mentioned that YMI needs a bigger presence on social media. A school administrator offered the following advice for YMI organizers:

“To continue with this work and to expand their activities by including more girls as well.” (School Administrator)

IV. THE FUTURE

What plans exist to expand the program and build upon its success?

CARE International Balkans and our partners in Kosovo continue to plan on scaling up this important work. As part of a regional program, CARE and its partners regular discuss gaps and next steps in increasing the scope, scale and impact of our gender justice work. Some areas for the future will include;

- Program Y and scaling up –we see the importance of working a gender transformative approach in all schools with young men and young women. CARE and its partners have developed Program Y (Youth) for use in all in all secondary schools incorporating all the lessons learned from the Program M (and Program D, a curriculum for work with young women) into a school led process that includes educators and peer educators working together to educate, liberate and change the school social norms. A regional, multi country approach to institutionalize gender equality education and GBV prevention at a mandatory subject into the schools can have long terms effects on the countries involved.
- Fatherhood and care giving- CARE and its partners in Kosovo and the wider Balkan region have begun working on promoting men's involvement as equitable, nonviolent fathers and caregivers in order to achieve family well-being, gender equality, and better health for mothers, fathers, and children. We aim for men to be allies in supporting women's social and economic equality, in part by taking on more responsibility for childcare and domestic work. CARE and its partners has joined the global Men Care campaign supported by Promundo and is working to address policies that hinder greater participation of men in caregiving.
- Bystander intervention and social norms change – building on the “react as human – against violence” campaign that works to build skills in young people to more actively challenge harmful norms in their environment. Our research has often highlighted young people have the intention to change or speak out but feel like the lack the skills to do this is a positive way. This campaign seeks to change wider peer and cultural norms in schools and community that we all have obligations to “react” to violence in our everyday lives.

THE
FUTURE

Conclusion

This case study document has attempted to present a concise summary of the major activities, outcomes, and achievements of YMI activities in Kosovo. All in all, evidence suggests that the YMI has had a positive, lasting influence on the lives of student participants and broader community members in Kosovo. Participating students developed a more critical awareness of norms related to gender and violence, the positive trends related to violent attitudes and intentions are encouraging, and survey results indicate meaningful improvements in participants' knowledge of SRH topics. Community members interviewed for this case study emphasize the broad contributions that the program has made in Kosovo.

This evidence based program has a commitment to continue to learn, adapt and build new relationships. We aim to continue to build on our work and make more efforts to engage with women's and feminist organisations to support their efforts at broader social and political change necessary to address gender inequalities within society. In addition to joining national and regional advocacy efforts we continue to support the increase voice and participation of young men and young women as important change makers in their communities.

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