

Concept Note

MenEngage European Consultation Meeting Stockholm 14-16 January 2009

Background

Challenging Rigid Versions of Manhood Must be an Urgent European Priority

For a long time, indeed many centuries, men, masculinity and men's powers and practices have generally been taken-for-granted. Gender has largely been seen as a matter of and for women. Men were - and still are for the most part - generally seen as ungendered, as 'just like that', natural or naturalised. In research and activism, this is now changing; it is much less the case than even ten years ago. However, European policies at all levels yet do not integrate a critical masculinities approach, and current gender policies seldom seek to actively address or involve men and boys.

While considerable progress has been made in achieving gender equity and fulfilling the rights of women and girls in Europe in the past 50 years, much remains to be done. Although the situation may vary in different regions of Europe, data confirms that a large portion of European women and girls still report having been victims of physical violence by their male partners or other men and boys. Many women still report that they have experienced coerced or forced sex. In spite of efforts to engage men in sexual and reproductive health, women still assume nearly 75% of contraceptive use. In addition, women spend three to four times more time in caring for children.

In addition to this, current European policies yet fail to effectively identify and address many issues and problems facing men and boys. Often, problems such as the shorter life expectancies of men, higher rates of suicide, accidents, substance abuse, crime, violence etcetera are not recognized as gendered issues. The missing notion of masculinities as social constructs in current policies lead to loss of effectiveness and - in the worst case - no policies addressing these matters at all. This, in turn, contributes to the problems facing women and girls and degrades the results of existing gender policies.

All of these issues require urgent action. It is time to bring men and boys more substantially into all aspects of gender policy in Europe to more effectively promote the wellbeing of girls and boys and women and men.

The Mandate is There

UN agencies, governments and civil society have affirmed the need to engage boys and men in achieving gender equality, reducing violence against women and girls, reducing HIV and AIDS and promoting the rights and well-being of girls and boys, women and men. Numerous UN documents and statements – including the ICPD Program of Action and agreed conclusions from the UN Committee on the Status of Women – have urged the need to engage men and boys to redress gender inequalities. This can in fact also result in benefits to men and boys themselves; for example, studies confirm that for many men, playing a more complete and active role in parenthood enhances men's well-being and confers a sense of purpose and fulfillment, as well as promoting better life quality also for partners and children.

The Program Base is There and Showing Impact

A growing number of NGOs and community-based groups are engaging men and boys in sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment, promoting men's involvement as fathers, and reducing men's violence against women as well as men's violence against children and other men. A recent WHO-Promundo review of such programs found nearly 60 evaluated programmes that demonstrated changes in men's attitudes and behaviors as a result of such program interventions. Such programs are achieving impact at the local and generally small-scale level, improving the well-being of women and girls, and of men and boys themselves.

The Time Has Come to Scale Up and Engage the Public Sector

In spite of a growing base of program experiences and evaluation confirming the impact of such efforts, most initiatives to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality have been small-scale and short-term. To achieve large-scale change in gender norms and to achieve gender equality, efforts to engage men and boys must be scaled up and must engage policymakers and the public sector in strategic ways.

What is MenEngage?

In 2006, a group of international and national organizations formed an international alliance to develop and promote the engagement of men and boys in achieving gender equality. This alliance – called MenEngage – is working in diverse parts of the world to promote this dialogue and to identify concrete, strategic opportunities for scaling up and engaging the public sector.

The Alliance is involved in an array of research, interventions, and policy initiatives seeking to engage men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and promote health and the well-being of women, men and girls and boys. The alliance includes several major international organizations, as well as local and national groups with extensive experience in engaging men and boys in gender equality and reducing violence. The organizing members of MenEngage include EngenderHealth, Instituto Promundo, Save the Children Sweden, Sahayog, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the White Ribbon Campaign.

MenEngage is currently building a global network of organizations dedicated to addressing gender inequality and violence prevention with men and boys.

A series of regional consultation meetings have been - and are being – held in order to assess the needs and capacities of potential MenEngage members. The consultation meetings are designed to allow the network to best serve its members. Regional networks and country level networks have so far been formed in South-Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America. Work is in progress to form similar region networks in other parts of the world.

A temporary web site for MenEngage can be found at www.menengage.org. This will be replaced by an official web site during November/December 2008.

Core Principles of MenEngage

A first version of common core principles for the MenEngage Alliance have been developed and agreed upon by the organizing members. The full set of core principles are attached to the end of this document as an Appendix. Here follows an extract.

- **Gender as relational:** The Alliance believes that men should be engaged in achieving gender equality and in advancing the rights, health and well-being of women and girls.
- **Questioning men's violence against women:** The Alliance is dedicated to engaging men and boys to end violence against women and in questioning or challenging violent versions of manhood.
- **Working as allies with existing women's rights processes:** We are committed to working as allies with women and women's rights organizations to achieve equality for women and girls.
- **Sexual diversity and sexual rights:** We are dedicated to promoting cultures of masculinities that respect sexual diversity and sexual and reproductive rights of all, and that engage men so that reproductive health and contraception are more evenly shared between men and women.
- **The vulnerabilities of men:** The Alliance believes that the specific needs and experiences of men and boys have often not been well understood nor taken into account in the development of public policy or professional practice across a wide range of areas. We believe that some men and boys are made vulnerable by non-equitable and violent versions of manhood.

- **Engaging men from a positive perspective:** The Alliance believes that women and girls and boys and men and the wider society would benefit from recognition of these issues and appropriate action to transform non-equitable and violent versions of manhood and redress power inequalities related to gender. We seek to build examples of men already acting in more gender-equitable and non-violent ways.

What does MenEngage do?

The goal of MenEngage is to increase the number of men and boys reached by interventions that promote and engage them in gender equality, violence prevention and the promotion of well-being of women, men, girls and boys. To achieve this, MenEngage implements three complementary strategies:

- 1) Advocacy and policy;
- 2) A learning and leadership network; and
- 3) Resource sharing in the form of a global online web-based portal, with subsections for every region network

Each strategy will be continuously developed through a consultative process with MenEngage members in each region.

The purpose of a MenEngage Europe network is to develop a presence at the European level to more powerfully address European gender policies, as well as to support and develop policy and the activities of civil society organizations that engage men and boys in all European countries.

What is the purpose of this 3-day consultation meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to

- explore and consult on the formation of a MenEngage Europe network
- assess the needs of support from MenEngage Europe
- allow participants to feed into the development of MenEngage, regionally and globally
- network, build relations and exchange experiences
- orient participants to different approaches and promising interventions to engage boys and men

This meeting also represents an opportunity for organizers of White Ribbon Campaigns and other community wide campaigns in Europe to come together and share ideas and best practices around community mobilization. For this purpose a special workshop will be provided within the meeting agenda.

Objective of the meeting

The objective of the 3-day meeting is to provide participating organizations with a process that allow them to make a post-meeting decision whether or not to become members, and partake in the development, of a MenEngage Europe network.

Expected Participants

The consultation meeting is primarily directed towards organization representatives from civil society and non-governmental organizations across Europe with past experience and interest in working with men and boys in achieving gender equality, ending violence and/or promoting health of women, men and children.

The consultation meeting is however also open to organizations without prior experience in this field but with an interest in initiating such programs or projects. Organizations with past experience and on-

going projects will however be prioritized should there be an interest to participate that exceeds the available resources.

The expected number of participants is 50-75.

Please note that there will more chances to participate in MenEngage Europe meetings as the work develops – this meeting is not the only chance to partake. Also note the global symposium “Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality” in Brazil in March/April 2009, hosted by MenEngage among others. For more information, please visit www.engagingmen2009.org.

Please observe that the working language at the meeting will be English. No translation will be provided. For the future development of MenEngage Europe, language issues will need to be addressed to ensure inclusion of all parts of Europe.

Application procedure, participation fees & financial support

The consultation is supported by a grant from the European Union. This grant is however fixed and relatively limited. It will be used primarily to cover the costs of the meeting itself, such as costs for invited speakers, for the venue, documentation, meals etcetera. The grant will also be used to – if needed, and to the extent that is possible – provide financial support to participants without sufficient funding of their own as well as to enable diversity in representation in terms of European regions, countries and minorities.

Application to participate: Organizations wishing to participate in the consultation are requested to send an e-mail *as soon as possible* to menengage.europe@mfj.se requesting an application form. Applications will be accepted up to December 31, 2008, but the sooner one applies, the better the chance to participate.

Participation fee: There is no participation fee. For organization representatives that are admitted to the consultation, all costs directly related to the meeting will be covered. This includes lunch and other servings during the meeting as well as a joint dinner the second evening of the meeting. For details regarding other expenses, please take part of the logistics information below.

Air fare and hotel expenses: As a starting point, organizations wishing to participate are requested to cover air fare and hotel expenses for their representatives.

We are still working to find good accommodation solutions; costs and procedures to book accommodation will be included in the logistics information sheet distributed together with the application form. However, for the time being you may base preliminary calculations on 50 Euros per night per participant *as a minimum for budget accommodation*. Hotel nights may however range up to 150-200 Euros for single occupancies.

Financial support: If your organization does not have funding to cover travel and accommodation expenses it is possible to request financial support. Please e-mail menengage.europe@mfj.se to request the financial support application form. No guarantees are given that financial support will be provided.

Logistics

The meeting will be held either at a venue in central Stockholm or at a conference facility in the city's vicinity.

Note that most accommodation includes breakfast in the price. Lunches and other servings during the meeting, including a dinner reception the second evening of the meeting, are included. Meals outside of the program are at participants' personal expense.

Airports that serve the Stockholm area include Arlanda, Skavsta (Nyköping) and Bromma (Stockholm Airport). All these airports are served by train and/or bus services into Stockholm city at prices ranging from approximately 10 to 25 Euros one-way.

If you require a visa to enter Sweden please take immediate action since acquiring a visa may be a lengthy process. Contact the Swedish Embassy or Consulate in your country to find out what rules apply.

We will distribute a separate and detailed logistics sheet together with the application form.

Other Information

Planning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Klas Hyllander, Men for Gender Equality – Sweden ▪ Nicklas Kelemen, Save the Children - Sweden ▪ Jørgen Lorentzen, University of Oslo, Norway ▪ Eva Nordfjell, Save the Children - Sweden ▪ Tim Shand, International Planned Parenthood Federation, U.K. <p>Several advisors from across Europe are supporting the planning team. Please feel free to contact the planning team if you are willing to support the work up to the consultation in any way you can think of. Write to menengage.europe@mfi.se. Thank you.</p>
Dates	14 th January – 16 th January, 2008
Venue	To be decided.
Logistics Support	Åsa Söderberg, Save the Children Sweden
Meeting Coordination	Klas Hyllander, Men for Gender Equality - Sweden

Draft Agenda

Please note that the agenda is designed with participant-driven approach with a focus on interaction and discussion.

Day 1 – Wednesday, January 14

- 09.00 - 09.30 Sign in – Coffee and tea
- 09.30 – 10.00 Welcome and Introductions
Overview of the Program
- 10.15 – 11.00 Building a sustainable European Network – Guest speaker from European Women's Lobby, *to be confirmed*
- 11.00 – 12.00 'It works!': Why work with Men and Boys?' – Speaker from MenEngage partner
- 12.00 – 13.30 LUNCH
- 13.30 – 15.00 Gallery Walk: each participant provides information about his or her organization in an interactive format
- 15.00 – 15.30 Coffee & tea
- 15.30 – 16.30 Joint Discussion on Gallery Walk – moderated by MenEngage partner
- 16.00 – 18.00 Orientation: Framework and approaches to engaging men and boys on the individual, service delivery, and community levels – speaker from MenEngage partner

Day 2 – Thursday, January 15

- 08.30 – 09.00 Informal meetings, Coffee & tea
- 09.00 – 09.45 Presentation of MenEngage regional network in Asia, Africa or Latin America – Speaker from MenEngage regional network
- 10.00 – 11.00 Presentation of the MenEngage Alliance: what is MenEngage and what does MenEngage do – Speaker from MenEngage partner
- 11.15 – 12.00 Group discussions in small working groups
- 12.00 – 13.30 LUNCH, in working groups
- 13.30 – 15.00 Time slot reserved for workshops for skills and capacity building or for continued group discussions, by choice of participants.
 - MenEngage partners or guest speakers will be prepared to lead workshops within different relevant subjects.
 - Includes a workshop for representatives from European White Ribbon campaigns or other community wide campaign efforts seeking to engage men and boys in violence prevention.
- 15.00 – 15.30 Coffee & tea
- 15.30 – 16.30 Skills building: approaches to evaluations of work with men and boys – Speaker from MenEngage partner
- 16.45 – 17.00 Individual Reflections on Lessons Learned and Implications for our work

19.00 DINNER RECEPTION

Day 3 – Friday, January 16

- 08.30 – 09.00 Informal meetings, Coffee & tea
- 09.00 – 09.30 Personal reflections on how participants became involved in work with boys and men
- 09.30 – 10.15 Presentation from a European network for research in masculinities or men's health issues – Guest speaker, *to be confirmed*

- 10.15 – 10.45 Coffee & tea
- 10.45 – 12.00 Groups reports from pre-lunch and lunch working groups from Day 2
- 12.00 – 13.30 LUNCH
- 13.30 – 14.30 Group discussion on MenEngage Europe – moderated by MenEngage partners
- 14.45 – 15.45 Next steps: planning ahead and commitments to plans
- 16.00 – 16.30 Evaluation and Closing

Appendix

Full set of MenEngage Network Core Principles, first version

- **Gender as relational:** The Alliance believes that men should be engaged in achieving gender equality and in advancing the rights, health and well-being of women and girls.
- **Questioning men's violence against women:** The Alliance is dedicated to engaging men and boys to end violence against women and in questioning or challenging violent versions of manhood.
- **Promoting existing UN mandates:** We are dedicated to engaging men and boys to fulfill the mandates, statements of action, and principles of ICPD, CEDAW and CSW statements (48th session), and CRC and working collectively to encourage governments to do the same.
- **Engaging men as caregivers:** We are dedicated to promoting more equitable participation by men and boys in caregiving, the care of children and domestic tasks.
- **Working as allies with existing women's rights processes:** We are committed to working as allies with women and women's rights organizations to achieve equality for women and girls.
- **Sexual diversity and sexual rights:** We are dedicated to promoting cultures of masculinities that respect sexual diversity and sexual and reproductive rights of all, and that engage men so that reproductive health and contraception are more evenly shared between men and women.
- **The vulnerabilities of men:** The Alliance believes that the specific needs and experiences of men and boys have often not been well understood nor taken into account in the development of public policy or professional practice across a wide range of areas. We believe that some men and boys are made vulnerable by non-equitable and violent versions of manhood.
- **Engaging men from a positive perspective:** The Alliance believes that women and girls and boys and men and the wider society would benefit from recognition of these issues and appropriate action to transform non-equitable and violent versions of manhood and redress power inequalities related to gender. We seek to build examples of men already acting in more gender-equitable and non-violent ways.
- **Participation:** The Alliance will strive to include and take into account the voices of men and women, boys and girls, at the community level, and the voices of community-level NGOs.
- **Non-discrimination:** The Alliance will actively advocate against, question and seek to overcome, sexism, social exclusion, homophobia, racism or any form of discriminatory behavior against women or gay/bisexual/transgender men and women, or on any other basis.
- **Transparency:** The Alliance will be transparent, honest, fair and ethical in all of its actions, including making public its sources of funding and annual budget.
- **Collaboration:** The MenEngage partners seek to work in collaboration, dialoguing openly about institutional differences and achieving consensus whenever possible.
- **Evidence base:** The MenEngage partners seek to build on evidence-based approaches to engaging men and boys.
- **Human rights perspective and life cycle approach:** The partners recognize the need to apply a human rights perspective in all their activities and to take into account a lifecycle and ecological approach that incorporates both the individual as well as the broader social and structural contexts that shape gender inequalities.