

Partnerships for Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls in Southern Africa

Lesotho: Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls

Confronting the Challenge

In Southern Africa, gender-based violence (GBV) and especially violence against women and girls (VAWG) is among the most **severe and widespread human rights violations**. The prevalence and acceptance of VAWG is high in international comparison. A study by Gender Links shows that 86% of women in Lesotho have experienced GBV in their lifetime, with violence by a male intimate partner being the most common form. The VAWG epidemic poses a serious obstacle for efforts to achieve global, regional and national development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Across the globe, there is widespread recognition that VAWG cannot be sustainably addressed without the **active involvement and support of men and boys**. This is because harmful perceptions of what it means to be a man, or a woman, cause and perpetuate VAWG. Patriarchal notions around manhood (“masculinities”) that are often underpinned by traditional views of gender relations grant boys’ and men’s superiority over women and girls, condone or promote violence against women and give men the power to initiate and dictate the terms of sex.

In Lesotho, however, the baseline study for the PfP programme found that **few stakeholders have experience with implementing male engagement approaches** for social norms change. For example, only very few survey respondents had implemented bystander interventions focused on empowering people to intervene and stand up against VAWG.

Building Partnerships

In view of promoting **multi-stakeholder partnerships**, the project has partnered with the Men Engage Network Lesotho (a network of civil society organisations), the Ministry of Gender and Youth,

Sports and Recreation, faith leaders and chiefs. Further engagement is planned with sports associations, a media umbrella body, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship and private sector partners. Selected stakeholders form an Advisory Group that steers the initiative.

Flagship name	Men’s Initiative
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Lesotho
Key stakeholders	Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation, Men Engage Network Lesotho, CCROA, HelpLesotho, Kick4Life, Media, Private sector
Duration	12/2017 – 11/2020



Taking Action

The overarching goal of the flagship project is to promote social norms around masculinity that protect women and girls from violence. One specific objective is to **stimulate reflection and discussions** amongst men and boys, as well as between men and boys and women and girls, on current notions of masculinity (i.e. what it means to be a man). Furthermore, the flagship aims at

sensitizing men and boys, as well as women and girls, on GBV, women's rights and the benefits of positive masculinity for both women and men.

To achieve this, the flagship follows three complementary approaches:

1. Capacity building of the Men Engage Network Lesotho

Six network members are capacitated on strategies for engaging men and on gender-transformative approaches through targeted support and study visits.

2. Piloting of approaches to engage men

Help Lesotho pilots the Generation Dialogue, an intensive cross-generational methodology to reflect on notions around 'Making men tough'. As part of a joint initiative with the GIZ Sector Programme 'Human Rights', herd boys are trained on child rights and child labour and are empowered to become champions against VAWG. Furthermore, CCROA and Kick4Life target men in the community and younger men through sports.

3. Development of a mobile solution

PfP has developed a SMS-based solution to promote dialogue amongst men on positive masculinities and VAWG prevention.

All interventions relate to one of three themes that flagship partners have identified as promising entry points to reach boys and men: culture and faith; sports and art; and the media.

The PfP flagship projects will be accompanied by operational research to **create relevant and practice-oriented information** through different forms of evaluations as well as lessons learned-studies that document processes and results. This will help to better understand what works under which conditions and provide useful information on how to replicate interventions.

The findings and lessons learnt will be **documented and publicised** so that they are shared among and used by policy-makers and practitioners in Southern Africa (research uptake) and fed into the global research agenda.

In addition, the programme supports specific **formats for regional exchange** - such as conferences, communities of practice and exchange visits amongst flagship partners - to **promote scaling-up**.

Sharing Evidence

Despite global investment and publications that demonstrate progress in the past years, **evidence on which approaches are effective in preventing VAWG** - in which context, under which conditions and by means of which processes - is still much needed to inform policy-making and programme development.

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