

Journeys of Transformation

*A Training Manual for Engaging
Men as Allies in Women's
Economic Empowerment*



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Allies in Women's Economic Empowerment*

A partnership between:
CARE International - Rwanda
Promundo-US

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“Based on the way Rwandans live, there are things that men do or do not do. For me, I have embarked on the journey of transformation. I am inviting you to join me in this journey. This will transform us, and other men, together.”

Male training participant. Kibuye, Rwanda, October 2011.

CARE Rwanda

CARE's vision is to seek world of hope, tolerance, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE International will be a global force and a partner of choice within a worldwide movement dedicated to ending poverty. CARE will be known everywhere for their unshakable commitment to the dignity of people.

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Promundo is a Brazilian NGO founded in 1997 that works to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women, children and youth in Brazil, regionally in Latin America, and globally. Headquartered in Rio de Janeiro with an office in Washington, D.C., USA, and representation in sub-Saharan Africa, Promundo carries out research; implements and tests interventions; and carries out advocacy and activism to achieve gender justice and gender equality, with a focus on engaging men and boys in changing inequitable and violent forms of masculinities.

Promundo is a co-founder and co-chair of the MenEngage Alliance, a global network of NGOs and UN agencies working to engage men and boys in achieving gender equality. Promundo also coordinates global and national-level research on men and boys, and women and girls, including the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES). Promundo is co-coordinator of MenCare – A Global Fatherhood Campaign (www.men-care.org), an international effort to promote men's involvement as nonviolent caregivers.

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OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

This manual provides group education sessions for engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment. It emerges from CARE's experience, in Rwanda and elsewhere, that women's economic empowerment works, but that it can be made to work better and to achieve even more movement toward equality when men are deliberately engaged as allies. The activities presented in this manual were developed through a process of action-research involving qualitative and quantitative methods and incorporating the responses, realities, and perspectives of women beneficiaries of economic empowerment (via CARE's Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations, or VSLAs or VSLs) and their male partners. It was developed together with CARE-Rwanda staff, as well as with partners from the Rwandan Men's Resource Centre (Rwamrec).

This manual provides detailed information on how to implement the activities. It also provides a summary of the results of the field-testing of the process in Rwanda in 2011–2012, which, although pilot in nature, affirmed transformation of men's practices and attitudes, and greater empowerment of women. While developed in the specific context of Rwanda, the partners believe the activities and the approach are relevant for other settings and other women's economic empowerment initiatives.

Outline of the Manual

Globally, most livelihood and economic empowerment initiatives in the Global South currently focus on women, and with good reason. However, many women's economic empowerment interventions find that household decision-making continues to be dominated by men and that efforts to empower women economically may inadvertently reinforce norms that women are caregivers and invested in their families, while men are assumed negligent. With this in mind, we have developed "*Journeys of Transformation: A Training Manual for Engaging Men as Allies in Women's Economic Empowerment*."

The manual is organized as follows:

- The ***Introduction*** section of this manual presents some research on what we know about men's participation in women's empowerment around the world. We also ask what we know about Rwandan men and their attitudes and practices in terms of gender equality, and provide reflections from a national household survey of Rwandan men and women carried out in 2010 as part of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES).
- In the ***Objectives of the Manual*** section, we present the reasons for the development of the intervention and manual, and explain why it is important to engage men as the husbands and partners of the women beneficiaries of CARE's VSL groups, which were formed under the ISARO program. We explain why it is important to address the needs of men in rural areas of Rwanda by allowing them to fully explore the advantages of gender equitable behaviors. Also, although it is designed for and tested in Rwanda, we provide arguments supporting the applicability of this manual, including many of its activities and themes, beyond Rwanda and the region.
- In the section ***About the Pilot-Testing of This Manual***, we provide detailed information on the results from formative, baseline and endline research conducted by Promundo with stakeholders—the key informants who informed the development of the intervention and manual. To give a clear sense of the intervention's impact, we also present findings from baseline and endline research using control and comparison groups
- The ***Using the Manual*** section offers suggestions for implementation and field supervision, and provides practical information on how this manual is organized, including its format and that of each training session.
- In the section ***Training Manual: Sessions Overview***, we present each thematic block and session from the training manual. We provide practical information about the time to be allocated to each session, about who should participate (men and women, or men only), and what practical information should be shared with the

participants, as well as the objectives for each training session. We list and explain educational activities, group or individual exercises, and homework. This section also offers practical information for the experts in each of the three thematic “blocks,” followed by the guidelines on how to organize and what to include in the training’s Closing Ceremony.

- In *Annex I*, we offer tips and guidelines for facilitators, including ‘Know-how’ for facilitation of group activities, how and where sessions should be carried out and how the group should be set up. We also offer practical suggestions for establishing ground rules and keeping the group on track, and for involving participants and encouraging openness, honesty, and sharing of personal experiences. We present a few tips on how to motivate participants, as well as how to manage conflicts and deal with difficult people or situations. Finally, we provide a few useful guidelines for the experts involved in the training on how to prepare their presentations. Supporting photos from MenCare – A Global Fatherhood Campaign are included in *Annex II*, followed by a list of *Resources* and the *Bibliography* that supported development of this manual.

TERMS AND ACRONYMS

CARE	CARE International/CARE Rwanda
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEM Scale	The Gender-Equitable Men (GEM) Scale
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
POWER/ISARO	Promoting Opportunities for Women Empowerment in Rwanda (now ISARO)
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VSL	Voluntary Savings and Loan
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

What We Know About Men's Participation in Women's Empowerment

Globally, most livelihood and economic empowerment initiatives in the Global South currently focus on women, and with good reason; women's income is lower than men on average globally, and research from numerous settings confirms that men on aggregate contribute a lower percentage of their income to the household and to children than do women (Bruce, Lloyd & Leonard, 1995; Wyss, 1995). And evidence has confirmed that women's participation in microfinance and other economic empowerment approaches can have a number of positive results, including reduced risk of HIV, reductions in violence from male partners, and increased social status and mobility, in addition to the benefits of the income itself (Kabeer, 2009).

However, many women's economic empowerment interventions find that household decision-making continues to be dominated by men and that efforts that focus solely on women's economic empowerment with the goal of improving family well-being may inadvertently reinforce norms that women are caregivers and invested in their families, while men are assumed negligent. CARE's experience supporting Rwandan women in their Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations, or VSLAs, has been that men react in diverse ways when their female partners or wives are VSLA beneficiaries:

- ✓ Some men are supportive and appreciate the economic benefits to their wives and households.
- ✓ Some men continue to dominate household decision-making.
- ✓ Some men keep more of their own income for personal use, arguing that their wives now have money.
- ✓ Some men reduce the use of gender-based violence.
- ✓ Some men increase the use of gender-based violence as household dynamics and power balances shift (Barker and Kato, 2012; Barker and Schulte, 2010).

Research in other contexts has also affirmed this diversity in how men in low income, Global South contexts react when their wives are beneficiaries of microcredit programs (Ahmed, 2008a). In spite of this diversity and complexity, few efforts have been made to engage men as allies or partners in women's economic empowerment, and when such efforts have been made, they have often started with untested assumptions about men.

This manual and the action-research that framed it sought to ask:

- ✓ How do men react when their female partners are involved in VSLAs?
- ✓ What do men think about VSLAs? What do they understand about them?
- ✓ How would men like to be involved in such efforts? What information do they want about their wives' participation?
- ✓ What do women say about their husbands' reactions to their participation in VSLAs?
- ✓ How do women think their husbands can be involved to achieve greater equality in household decision-making and to reduce gender-based violence?

Using formative research conducted with men and women around these issues, Promundo and CARE-Rwanda developed a series of group sessions for men, together with women, and tested them in a pilot process, which is described in the next section. The objective of the overall project is to improve the economic empowerment, gender equality, and poverty-alleviation effects of VSLAs by engaging men as allies in the process and by taking into account men's realities and needs, and doing so in a way that does not cause harm to women and that acknowledges the need for women's empowerment.

What We Know About Rwandan Men and Their Attitudes and Practices in Terms of Gender Equality

This intervention and manual is also informed by the results of a national household survey of Rwandan men and women that was carried out in 2010 as part of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES). Specifically, the IMAGES-Rwanda study examined the relationship between perceptions of masculinity and gender-based violence in Rwanda (Rwamrec, 2010).

Rwandan men are often portrayed in traditional songs and dances as the defenders of the country and protectors and reproducers of the family. The IMAGES-Rwanda study findings confirmed these traditional attitudes and perceptions among Rwandan men and women. However, several major forces — including the genocide and the post-genocide period — have led to changes in men's and women's roles in Rwandan society. Indeed, as affirmed in IMAGES, gender relations are undergoing tremendous transformation in Rwanda, particularly in the aftermath of the genocide and the resulting migration, displacement, and loss of livelihoods. With the loss of husbands and families, women have taken on new responsibilities. They have also gained more rights, thanks to new laws and policies. Even in the face of these changes, however, the social norms transmitted through informal institutions (e.g., family, school, and church) remain out of tune with the modernization and new gender equality policies in place in Rwanda.

For example, IMAGES-Rwanda data found that:

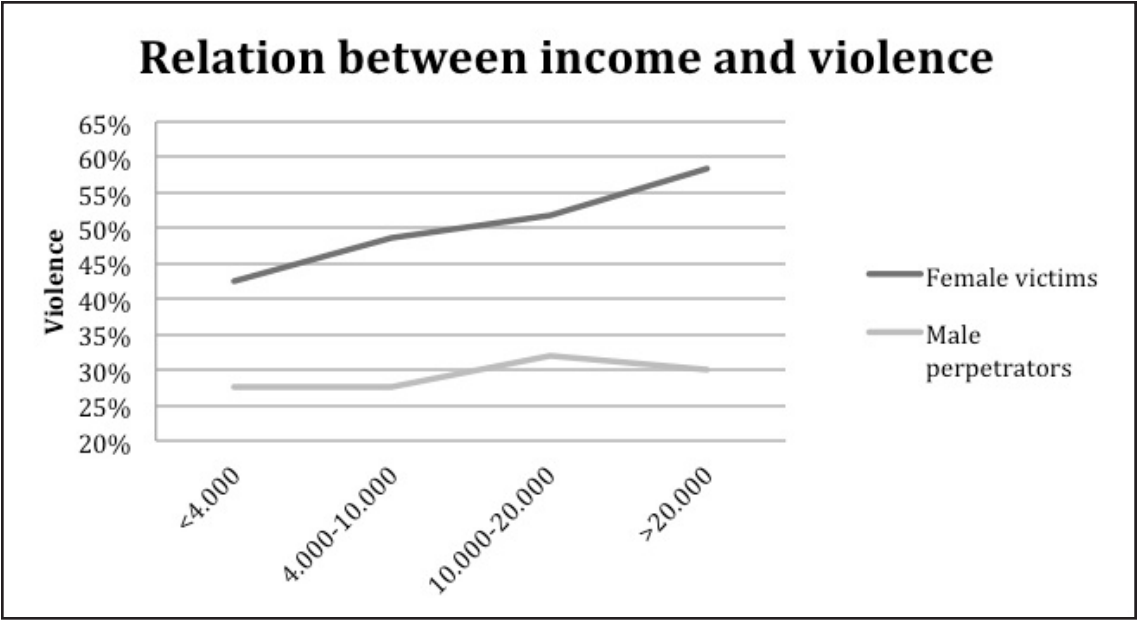
- ✓ More than 95% of women were taught to carry out household duties as children, while just 49% of men were.
- ✓ 73% of Rwandan men and 82% of women said that a woman's most important role is to take care of her family.
- ✓ 40% of women are dissatisfied with their sexual relationships with their partners, compared with 14% of men who report they are sexually dissatisfied with their partners.
- ✓ 75% of Rwandan women interviewed said that their husbands dominate household decision-making, while 57% of men interviewed said they dominate household decision-making.
- ✓ 46% of Rwandan men and 54% of women said that a woman must respect and accept her husband's decisions in everything.
- ✓ About 17% of men regularly abuse alcohol.
- ✓ 15% of Rwandan men said they had had sex with sex workers, while 18% said they had paid for or traded goods for sex.
- ✓ Nearly 40% of Rwandan men reported having carried out violence against a female partner.
- ✓ More than 50% of women and 57% of men said that men should earn more than women.

In addition, the vast majority of Rwandan men (more than 96%) believe that current Rwandan law on GBV is too harsh on toward men. This view suggests that men misunderstand the law, and perhaps also indicates that they know that the law has reduced the impunity with which GBV can be committed.

The IMAGES-Rwanda study also found that women who are more economically advantaged are more likely to experience gender-based violence, as seen in Table 1. On the other hand, we did not find a correlation between men's income and their self-reported use of violence, implying that men who commit violence against partners likely represent all income levels of men. This data also seems to support other research findings showing the complex relationship between women's income and experiences of intimate partner violence. As noted earlier, research in some settings has found that as women are more economically empowered, some men react negatively and their use of violence increases. It may also be that in the context of Rwanda, more economically empowered women feel more secure to be able disclose violence they have experienced. The key point is that this research affirms the importance of economic empowerment for women along with other forms of social empowerment – as well as engaging men in GBV prevention efforts.

Finally, the study also found that men who witnessed or were directly affected by the genocide had higher rates of reported use of violence against their female partners, as did men who reported witnessing violence by their fathers against their mothers in their household of origin. Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of understanding the roots of men’s attitudes and practices, and in particular the disempowerment felt by some men, particularly low income men, in Rwanda. The findings affirm the need to understand men’s perspectives on these issues while at the same time working to expand and improve our efforts to empower women. The data also affirm the large gap between Rwandan policies on gender equality – which are very progressive – and the lived daily realities of women and men, as well as their attitudes toward these policies.

Table 1: Women’s and men’s income and women’s experiences of gender-based violence



Source: Slegh and Kimonyo 2010

OBJECTIVES OF THE MANUAL

“I thought that ‘being a man’ means that I have to do nothing in the house, but now I learned how I can do things together (with my wife).” (A 60-year-old participant. Huye, Rwanda, November 2011)

“I thought that I have to be the boss and when I grow older I should do nothing in the house. Now, I know that a man can do what a woman can do.” (A young participant. Huye, Rwanda, November 2011)

This training manual is designed to engage men as the husbands and partners of the women beneficiaries of CARE’s VSL groups, which were formed under the ISARO program. The goal of the ISARO Project is to improve gender equality and social, political, and economic empowerment for 100,000 people (80% of them women) by 2013.

Through participation in the group educational activities, men are encouraged to reflect on rigid gender norms, to examine their personal attitudes and beliefs, and to question traditional ideas about household decision-making and division of labor, caring for children and sharing household tasks. These activities also promote men’s acceptance of and support for their wives’ participation in the VSL groups and for their economic empowerment, and encourage men to see women in a different light and treat them with greater respect. We do not, of course, propose that group education alone nor VSL and group education are enough to achieve gender justice and equality at all levels in Rwandan society, but given the gap between the progressive gender equality policies in Rwanda and gender inequalities at the household levels, particularly in rural areas, engaging communities in discussions about such issues is a key strategy for connecting these policies to everyday life.

This training manual also attempts to address the needs of men in rural areas of Rwanda by allowing them to explore the advantages of gender equitable behaviors for their wives, their children, and for the men themselves. Activities are included that educate men about the management of time and resources, as well as about access to markets — information their wives receive as part of the VSL groups.

Finally, this training manual was designed for and tested in the Rwandan context, and the background information as well as the research cited is from Rwanda. We have left the examples and activities as they were developed and tested — to be culturally relevant for the country. Nonetheless, we believe that many of the activities and the themes included here are relevant beyond Rwanda and the region.

Men Only, Women Only or Women and Men?

The activities in this manual were designed to focus on engaging men in group discussions as part of activities or interventions – in the area of economic empowerment – that already focus on women. They were developed in the context of an initiative in which women were already offered opportunities for group workshops (on topics of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence) and where men had not previously not been included in such workshops. In settings in which women's economic empowerment initiatives do not already include other topics – around couple relationships, sexuality, health and violence prevention, for example – we recommend using activities like the ones included here for women.

Facilitators implementing the manual should also carefully consider if they should carry out some or more activities as couple activities, that is with both husband and wife participating. In the setting in rural Rwanda where the activities were tested, it was useful for men to have separate spaces to discuss these issues, so they could feel open to discuss the themes in ways they might have felt constrained if their partners were present. If time is available, we would recommend carrying out the sessions included here, as noted, in men-only groups, and for women to have separate spaces to discuss the same or similar themes, and to have more couple sessions as well on the same topics.

In all cases, facilitators should check in with women and men to determine their level of comfort in single-sex or mixed-sex groups and to find ways to promote couple involvement where possible (and where this does not put a partner at risk of violence, for example) and where desired by the women and men themselves.

ABOUT THE PILOT-TESTING OF THIS MANUAL

In order to assess the impact of VSL participation on household and partner dynamics and to develop an intervention for the involvement of men in women's empowerment, Promundo conducted formative research with stakeholders and key informants from CARE International in Rwanda in Kigali. Promundo also conducted two focus-groups with beneficiaries of CARE's VSL program in the Huye District: one with approximately 20 women, and one with approximately 20 men, their husbands/partners. Based on the findings of the formative research, a study was designed that involved baseline research, intervention, and endline research with two groups: *an experimental group and a comparison group*. Each group was organized around 30 women beneficiaries of the VSL program. In the case of the experimental group, husbands of the women beneficiaries of the VSL were engaged in 16 weeks of group-education activities called "the training," while the comparison group only had VSL for women and did not have group sessions with men.

Baseline research was conducted with the experimental group made up of 30 couples identified by CARE Rwanda field staff in Huye District in the Southern Province of Rwanda, sectors Mukura and Gishamvu through the usual VSL criteria of being vulnerable households (meaning that they are poorer than many other households in the area). The research included a survey with 130 questions for males (aged 20–76) and females (aged 21–61); five focus group discussions (two men's groups, two women's groups, and one group with couples); and 10 in-depth individual interviews with five women and five men. The majority of the survey questions were adopted from the 2010 IMAGES¹ study in Rwanda and included questions about gender attitudes and gender dynamics within the household. Two questions were added: (a) What is the impact of women's VSL participation on household management and partner relations? and (b) How are men doing and what is needed for men to support their partners positively in their VSL activities?

A baseline and follow-up study was also carried out with a comparison group in the Kirehe District, in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. A sample of 30 married couples — 30 men (aged 22–75) and 30 women (aged 21–53) — was studied using the same questionnaire for men and women; three focus group discussions: one with men, one with women, and one with couples; and six individual in-depth interviews: three with women and three with men. Based on the baseline findings, an initial training manual was developed and implemented with the study group in the Huye District. CARE field staff were trained in the application of the training manual in a week-long workshop.

Baseline study results found in both the experimental and comparison group that:

- ✓ Traditional gender roles dominate the way VSL benefits are used: The women are instructed by their husbands about the use of loans and the husbands help to pay back the loans, with the majority of household financial decisions made by men.
- ✓ According to most men and women in the research, the VSL programs have contributed to a reduction of GBV. However, these findings contradicted responses about family conflicts as well as the accounts of key informants among the CARE staff, who reported persistent use of multiple forms of GBV by men, in the form of physical violence as well as economic and sexual violence.
- ✓ The main sources of conflict between partners are money, men's alcohol abuse, and sexual relations. Women reported more couple conflicts than men did.
- ✓ Interestingly, men's general health was reported to be worse than women's. Furthermore, men seem to cope differently with stress and problems — they reported drinking and talking with friends in bars — while women more frequently reported praying, talking to friends, and seeking health services.
- ✓ Men said they would like more information about the VSL program and income generation in order to

¹ The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) is a comprehensive household questionnaire on men's attitudes and practices — along with women's opinions and reports of men's practices — on a wide variety of topics related to gender equality. From 2009 to 2010, household surveys were administered to more than 8,000 men and 3,500 women aged 18–59 in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, and Rwanda. Topics in the questionnaire included: gender-based violence; health and health-related practices; household division of labor; men's participation in caregiving and as fathers; men's and women's attitudes about gender and gender-related policies; transactional sex; men's reports of criminal behavior; and quality of life.

collaborate with their wives to increase family income. Women said they want their husbands to be better informed about their VSL work in order to make them more collaborative. The women also want their husbands to be educated about gender laws, family planning, and GBV.

Based on the findings, we designed this training manual that includes the following emphases:

1. Business skills, information about the VSL program, and income-generation planning and activities. The module includes sessions that focus on negotiation and decision-making patterns between men and women.
2. Health and well-being. The module includes practical information about general health, reproductive health, sexuality, alcohol consumption, and coping strategies.
3. GBV laws and policies promoting gender equality in Rwanda.

The following are the results from the assessment study. While preliminary in scope and limited in sample size, the pilot study provides evidence of the positive impact of the group educational training with couples/husbands when combined with the VSL, in the following two areas:

1) Economic improvement:

In interviews and focus group discussions male and female participants in the *experimental* group indicate that the economic situation of participating families improved significantly after participating in the combined VSL activities (for women) plus the cycle of couple and husband group activities. The economic improvement is reflected in an income increase among the families with the lowest income levels (which was an even higher increase than the control group families). *These improvements were higher than those reported by the comparison group where VSL “as usual” was offered.*

In terms of qualitative results, several husbands in the experimental group said that they acknowledge the VSL activities of their wives as an economic empowerment activity. Several men in the experimental group also said they started to collaborate with their wives for the repayment of loans. Men from the experimental group said they also collaborated more after the cycle of workshops in household activities and income generation work. Couples in the experimental group said that the basic knowledge on planning and budgeting provided in the workshops encouraged and enabled them to increase their incomes within 17 weeks. While positive changes were seen in income among women in the comparison group, the changes were not as extensive and did not reach as many areas or aspects of the women's lives as in the experimental group.

2) Partner relations and family dynamics

In addition to these more economic changes, *women and men in the experimental group reported that some men became more supportive of family planning and many men became more involved in child care activities* – changes that were not seen in the comparison or VSL “as usual” group.

Other changes in family dynamics reported include:

- ✓ Conflicts between partners were reported to have been reduced and men and women report better health.
- ✓ Knowledge about different forms of violence, the laws related to gender equality as well as the overall experiences in the training raised awareness about acts that are, post-sessions, considered to be violent.
- ✓ The improved partner relations were reported to have a positive spin-off for children and family life and are observed by neighbors.
- ✓ The new insights from the workshops for men in the experimental group have, according to women and men participants, resulted in acceptance of the laws in Rwanda that promote gender equality.
- ✓ The positive engagement of men in sharing household activities, taking care of children and positive relations with their wives is considered by participants in the group sessions to be a way out of poverty and toward family life improvement.

Again, while the comparison group, or “VSL as usual” reported improved household dynamics, none of those changes were as far-reaching as those in the experimental group.

Motivations for change: A final note from the assessment study

Based on the findings from the experimental group, in Huye, where the group sessions with men were carried out, men and women seem to be ready to discover alternative ways to manage their households and partner relations. They seem genuinely motivated to create greater peace at home and women realize that their male partners should collaborate more as they seek ways to escape the daily hardship of extreme poverty. While these results are preliminary, they suggest the potential of scaling up the engagement of men as partners in women's economic empowerment in ways that bring benefits to children, women and men themselves. They also suggest that it is possible to maintain a focus on women's empowerment while also taking into account men's expressed needs in ways that do not have to be oppositional. In other words, women's and men's lives can improve at the same time.

USING THE MANUAL

Suggestions for Implementation and Field Supervision

When implementing this manual, to ensure effective impact of the intervention, we recommend establishing an ongoing and continuous dialogue between facilitators and the main office coordinating the intervention. We suggest that an outside supervisor (not one of the facilitators) be designated for the implementation oversight. In addition to assuming a supervisory role, he or she will offer ongoing feedback and mentorship for the facilitators throughout the entire implementation period. It is crucial that this person be a senior trainer who is knowledgeable about intervention dynamics and experienced in gender equality, women's economic empowerment programs, and male engagement. He or she does not have to attend training sessions, but rather will be available for consultations, meetings, and regular check-ins with the facilitators. We recommend that regular meetings between the supervisor and the facilitators be scheduled (at least once a month, approximately four times per entire intervention, for approximately half a day). The objective of such meetings will be to reflect on personal and group challenges in the training, including any concerns about group dynamics, the need to enforce "do no harm" procedures, and other challenges or lessons learned during the training. Communication between the supervisor and the facilitators should also be possible whenever an urgent concern arises. In Annex 1, we provide more detailed suggestions and tips for facilitators for implementing the group sessions.

Who is this manual for?

The manual is designed for trainers and group facilitators, who should receive training in the use of the manual. Trainers who implement these activities should have basic knowledge about gender concepts and male engagement approaches. The manual is a guide for trainers to work with men and their partners in economic empowerment programs for women.

How This Manual Is Organized

The manual consists of 16 two-to-four-hour sessions divided into three thematic "blocks:" a Business block, a Health block, and a Laws and Policies block. Each thematic block includes one session with an expert on the topic. Those experts are professionals in the topic who preferably work in the same region where the workshops are carried out. These include experts in income generation initiatives, health professionals and human rights experts (see more information on these on page 74).

The structure and number of sessions is informed by previous research suggesting that a cycle of two- to two-and-a-half-hour weekly group education sessions over a period of 10 to 16 weeks is the most effective "dose" with regard to achieving sustained attitude and behavioral change.²

The activities included are structured in a series of sessions. Each session includes one to three exercises, lasting from 30 minutes to 3 hours. The exercises are designed for use in men-only or mixed-sex groups. Each session includes new information ('know-how'), skills and capacity building, exercises or a lecture, and homework or an assignment to be done outside the training session. Notes for facilitators are also included to provide additional

2 As quoted in Barker et al, 2007/WHO, 2007.

information or guidance for each activity. Each session specifies its approximate duration (including the time designated for each exercise) and its participants (men and women, or men only), and each follows the same structure that includes:

- **check-in;**
- **objective of the session** (an explanation of the objectives and themes of each session);
- **homework follow-up;**
- **knowledge** (practical information that the facilitator imparts to the participants
- **activity** (an exercise or set of exercises for each session);
- **action** (assignment of homework and check-out).

TRAINING MANUAL: SESSIONS OVERVIEW

“Journeys of Transformation: A Training Manual for Engaging Men as Allies in Women’s Economic Empowerment”

Block I – Business Management

1. Introduction of the group and the VSL (Men + Women)
2. What is men’s role in the VSL and how can they support their partners in economic empowerment/VSL activities? (Men + Women)
3. Business Knowledge — session with an expert (Men + Women)
4. Building time-management skills and learning task-sharing (Men + Women)
5. Obstacles and challenges to doing business with your partner in the VSL (Men + Women)
6. How to manage business with your partner/wife, including roles in business, necessary skills, money management, and decision-making (Men + Women)
7. Summary/Wrap-up (Men + Women)

Block II – Health

8. Reproductive Health Knowledge — session with an expert (Men + Women)
9. Sexuality: practices, norms, and the meaning of sexuality (Men)
10. Alcohol use and men’s health (Men)Summary/Wrap-up (Men)

Block III – Laws and Policies

11. Violence: perceptions and knowledge about different forms of violence (Men + Women)
12. Gender-based violence: what it is and how to prevent it (Men)
13. Laws and Policies Knowledge — session with an expert (Men + Women)
14. Perceptions and implications of the laws (Men)Summary/Wrap-up session (Men)

Closing Session

15. Closing session (Men + Women)

BLOCK I – BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

This block addresses basic business and management skills and provides information and tips on income-generating activities, on managing profits from the VSL program and on investing VSL benefits, etc. In this section, we present detailed, practical information about the structure, purpose, and objective of the VSL program, as well as about what the women do in the VSL groups, what they learn, and how VSL involvement impacts them and their families. The block creates awareness about the differences between sex (biological roles and differences) and gender (social differences and roles), and defines important terms, such as “gender,” “sexuality,” and “gender equality,” among others.

Sessions in this block also discuss power relations, collaboration and negotiation skills between partners, the respective responsibilities men and women have, and the different values and roles associated with those responsibilities. In this block we offer a series of group educational activities for use with men and women.

BLOCK I

Session 1: Introduction of the Group and the VSL

Participants: Men and women together

Duration of the Session: 2 hours and 30 minutes

Check-in

The facilitator welcomes participants, introduces the program, asks “How is everyone doing?” and asks participants to introduce themselves. This should take up to 30 minutes.

Objective of the Session

To get to know each other and to learn about the VSL program.

The facilitator’s goal is, first, to provide detailed and practical information about the training (please see the “Program Objectives”), including what it is about, the schedule, the ground rules, transport money, the timetable, etc. The facilitator will also explain the ground rules of the training (see the “Setting the Rules” section in the annex). Next, the aim is to describe the VSL program, including its structure, purpose, and objective, as well as what the women do in the groups, what they learn, and how the VSL impacts them and their families. The facilitator may also explain how the VSL program teaches women to build savings and take out loans.

Knowledge

CARE Rwanda’s VSL program aims to empower women in villages by enabling them to start small businesses, earn some money, and build savings. The focus of the program is on women because the evidence has shown that women have less access to money and means in the household than men do, which makes them more vulnerable to abuse and violence. VSL programs for women do not aim to exclude men; women’s economic empowerment depends on the support and collaboration of their partners and of men in general. That is why we have developed a program for men to support their partners’ involvement in VSL.

The goal of the VSL program is to improve gender equality and social, political, and economic empowerment for 100,000 people (80 percent of them women) by 2013. The target groups are the neediest, according to Rwanda’s classification (Ubudehe). These include: the poorest families, families with women as head of the household, historically marginalized people including, families living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of sexual or gender-based violence and those at risk of GBV. ISARO works to strengthen the business skills of Voluntary Savings and Loan groups; increase women’s capacity to make decisions regarding their reproductive health; prevent GBV and rehabilitate women and girls who have been victims of GBV; strengthen

the skills and capacities of women and men at the grassroots level, as well as those of local civil society organizations to carry out evidence-based advocacy on GBV; increase women's participation and representation in politics at all levels; and build institutional and organizational capacity for implementing partners for their commitment to governance efforts and advocacy.

Activity

Exercise 1: "Hello" – Welcome and introduction

Objective of the Exercise: To get to know each other for the purpose of the training.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: None

Steps:

- Facilitator welcomes all participants by introducing himself/herself and explaining the purpose of the training
- Facilitator asks each participant to introduce himself/herself

Exercise 2: "Making the Rules" – Setting ground rules

Objective of the Exercise: To establish ground rules concerning behavior during the training, both personal behavior and group behavior.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: None

Steps:

- At the beginning of the first session, the facilitator takes some time to explain to the participants the importance of respect and confidentiality (please refer to the "Setting the Rules" section in the facilitator's guide, below in Annex I).
- The facilitator asks the group what agreements and rules are needed to create a safe working environment.
 - o What rules would you like to create/have in the training to help provide a good learning environment?
 - o What agreements can we make together that are important to participants in order to protect their safety and trust?

NOTE: after participants provide rules, the facilitator checks if all important agreements are mentioned (see Annex 1) and in case some topics were not mentioned, the facilitator may include these.

Exercise 3: *A Safe Group: In Our Group You Find Respect and Share*¹

Objective of the Exercise: To create trust and confidentiality in the group, and between the partners. Everyone should be treated with respect, and each participant should respect the others. In order to create a positive atmosphere in the group, participants need to feel safe. This exercise helps the facilitator foster such an atmosphere, and helps individual participants feel that they are in a safe environment.

¹ Developed by Henny Slegh (training and treatment of victims of violence).

Time: Approximately 30 minutes

Materials: None

Steps:

The group makes a circle and the facilitator, also part of the circle, explains the following:

- The circle should be closed. Check this by holding hands with your neighbor; after that, hands are free.
- The exercise is an experiment: the goal of the circle is to create a safe space. The circle symbolizes a wall of protection. Inside that wall, participants can safely experiment with walking with their eyes closed. Walking with their eyes closed makes participants feel vulnerable and dependent on the trust of others. This exercise helps participants to experiment with helping others to feel safe and builds their own image of how to create trust. The facilitator should invite a volunteer for the experiment to walk with their eyes closed while others provide the safe place.
- The volunteer stands in the middle while the facilitator explains to him/her: “You will close your eyes and start to cross the circle until you reach one of the group members. That group member will receive you gently and guide you to turn and go the next person. the group will take care that you feel safe.” Before the volunteer closes his/hers eyes, the facilitator explains to the group: “While the volunteer walks, your job is to ensure that he/she feels safe. That means: don’t make jokes, don’t laugh, just concentrate on your task. When he/she reaches you, reach out and hold him/her by the shoulders (don’t touch anywhere else). You then gently turn the person to face the center of the circle and give a small gentle push to start walking again; the person continues to walk. If the volunteer reaches a gap between two persons, one should insure that the volunteer does not walk out of the circle but rather is protected by the nearest persons. The volunteer can experiment for a few minutes, but can stop anytime she/he wants.”
- The facilitator asks the volunteer to close his/her eyes and start walking.

Facilitator’s Note:

Be very active and strict in following the rules. If anybody laughs or makes jokes, please remind them immediately but politely about the rules of the exercise and the risks of breaking the safety of the circle.

After the Exercise:

- Ask about the volunteer’s experience: “How did you feel? What experiences did you encounter — moments of anxiety or safety, perhaps? How did others receive you in the circle?”²
- Ask the circle: “How did it feel to be responsible for and to direct another person?”

Exercise 4: “*What is a VSL?*” – A Quiz

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: None

² The above questions are to encourage sharing of thoughts and feelings. Facilitators are welcome to use them, but are also encouraged to formulate their own questions related to the subject.

Steps:

- The facilitator asks several questions about a VSL, including:
 - o What does VSL stand for?
 - o What do VSL members do during a meeting?
 - o What are the rules of the VSL?
 - o How much can a person save and how large a loan can a member take out?
 - o What is the loan used for?
- The facilitator pays attention to engaging men in providing answers, but also gives women the opportunity to share their knowledge.

Facilitator's Note:

At the end of this exercise the facilitator summarizes the key features of the VSL, and adds comments or details. The facilitator should make sure that his/her knowledge about the VSL is strong and sufficient to provide constructive feedback and a detailed explanation.

Action

Homework: Because the Business Block will be conducted with men and women together, the partner-participants are asked to discuss at home ways that the man can support his wife/partner to make her involvement in the VSL more successful.

Check-out: The facilitator mentions to the group that the next time they come, it would be good to hear from them how the husbands can support their wives, and what the wives need in terms of support from their partners — it will be a sharing-of-homework experience. The facilitator confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

BLOCK I

Session 2: What is men's role in the VSL and how can they support their partners in doing business in the VSL?**Participants:** Men and women together**Duration of the Session:** Approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

The facilitator checks in, asking the group how it has been since the last session, if anything new has happened, and if they have talked to anyone about the issues discussed in the last session. Participants discuss their experience with the homework. Allow 10 to 30 minutes for check-in and follow-up.

Objective of the Session

To create awareness about the distinction between sex (biological roles and differences) and gender (social differences and roles), and to encourage a dialogue about behavior change between partners.

Knowledge

Some definitions:

Gender, as opposed to sex, refers to the ways that we are socialized to behave as men and women; it is the way these roles are taught, reinforced, and internalized. People are born female or male, but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what the appropriate behavior and attitudes, roles and activities are for them, and how they should relate to other people. This learned behavior is what shapes the social roles and practices of men and women in a society. Gender roles can vary greatly from one culture to another and from one social, political, and economic group to another within the same culture.

We sometimes assume that the way men and boys behave is “*natural*” and that “*boys will be boys*.” However, many of men's practices — whether in terms of negotiating with partners about family planning, shared decision-making, caring for the children they father, or using violence against a partner — are, in fact, rooted in the way they are raised in their families of origin and their society. In many settings, men and boys may learn that being a “*real man*” means being strong and tough and that as the “*head of the family*” they are entitled to have the final word in their relationships and families. They may also be raised not to express their emotions and to use power or violence to resolve conflicts in order to maintain their “*honor*.” Changing how we raise boys and view men is not easy, but it is a necessary part of promoting healthier and more equitable communities.

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human and encompasses sex, gender identity and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, sexual pleasure, and intimacy and reproduction, as we experience these things throughout our lives. Sexuality is expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles, and relationships. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethnic, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors.³

Gender Equality refers to the equal responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities should be equitable and should not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality means that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration — recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not only a “women's issue” but should concern and fully engage men as well. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.⁴

Knowledge for the session:

Sex differences are defined by nature. A woman and a man have different physical features, e.g., women can bear children and men cannot. The male body is different from the female's. Social roles are defined by a society but have nothing to do with physical differences. These include the perceptions that men cannot do household work or caregiving, and that women cannot do so-called men's jobs, like making decisions, or being responsible for or doing construction work. Those assumptions are based on beliefs and explanations passed down over generations. Becoming aware of the differences between facts and beliefs can help to create new opportunities for exchange of social roles between men and women. The changes in behavior of men and women as they relate to each other can contribute to improved social, economic, relational, and physical well-being.

Gender as a concept helps us understand that social roles designed for men and women are not the same as biological differences between males and females. Human beings are born male and female with different reproductive capacities; these are called sex differences. Gender is the set of social roles accorded to males and females – the ways we are socialized to “act” like women and men.

Activity

Exercise 1: *Ideal and Reality*⁵ – Social roles of men and women

³ Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as cited in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Protection and Legal Advice Section. Division of International Protection Services. Geneva 21 November 2008.

⁴ World Health Organization Technical Consultation on Sexual Health. January 2002 as cited in the MenEngage, Promundo and UNFPA. 2010. “*Engaging men and boys in gender equality and health. A global toolkit for action*”.

⁵ Adapted from Medical Research Council (2010) *Stepping Stones: A training manual for sexual and reproductive health communication and relationship skills*. Edition III. Adapted from the original *Stepping Stones* manual; Family Health International and Instituto Promundo. Promundo (2007) *Kakawaleo: Working with young men to promote gender equity and health*. Arlington, VA: Family Health International

Objective of the Exercise: To discover the differences between the ways men and women are expected to behave.

Time: 2 hours

Materials: Flip-charts, markers

Steps:

- Explain that we are now moving on to explore how different people in our society are expected to behave.
- Ask participants to break into mixed groups of three or four and give each group some flip-chart paper.
- Have participants discuss how men are expected to behave in their families, among peers, in the community, and in relationships. Ask them to divide the paper into two columns. In the first column, ask them to note how people expect men to behave in the family and community, and in the second to note what they are expected to say and do, or not to say and do, in partner relationships.
- After the participants have done this, give them more flip-chart paper and ask them to discuss how women are expected to behave in their families, among peers, in the community, and in relationships. Again, have them divide the paper into two columns. In the first column, ask them to note how people expect women to behave in the family and community, and in the second to note what they are expected to say and do, or not to say and do, in partner relationships.
- After a few minutes of small group discussion, ask the participants to form a large circle and share their ideas with the larger group. Use the questions below to help facilitate a discussion among the larger group. Note that some of these questions are for the men only.

Discussion Questions:⁶

- What are the main differences between the ways men and women are expected to behave in your community/in your family?
- How do these differences affect your daily lives?
- How do these differences affect your relationships with family and partners?
- How do these differences affect the way you do business, make decisions, or spend money and loans?
- How does being men and being women differ from the time of your parents?
- How does being a men or being a woman influence VSL activities?
- Why have VSL activities mostly focused on women?

Facilitator's Note:

Throughout men's lives, they receive messages from family, media, and society about how they should act as men and how they should relate to women and to other men. It is important to understand that although there are differences between men and women, many of these differences are constructed by society and are not part of our inborn nature or biological make-up. Even so, these differences can have a fundamental effect on men's and women's daily lives and relationships. They place different pressures on us, as well as provide us with different opportunities. Sometimes

⁶ These are just a few suggested discussion questions. Facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own related to the discussed subject, considering any particular group dynamic, unforeseen circumstances or other situational components specific to this particular session.

we are under pressure to behave in ways that we do not want to, ways that don't make us happy and that may undermine our ability to achieve our goals in life. Generally, men are privileged and have control over their relationships with women, but they may have other disadvantages. Men may be expected to be strong and tough and, for example, to drink a lot and settle arguments with a fight. But some men do not want to behave like that and would rather help their mothers or grannies at home; they may be called names for doing this. Women may be expected to be submissive and to help most at home. This can make them feel happy if they receive appreciation for the work they do, or very unhappy because they feel they have few options and little control over their life. Many of these rigid gender stereotypes have consequences for both men and women, as you will be discussing throughout these sessions.

As the men participants become more aware of how some gender stereotypes can negatively impact their lives and their collaboration with women, they might think constructively about how to challenge the stereotypes and promote more positive gender roles and relations in their lives and communities.

Action

Homework: For homework, the men are asked to identify activities that they do at home or outside in the community but which traditionally (normally) have been or are done by their wives/female partners. The men choose an activity that normally is done by wife because it is considered "female" work but that they as men carry out at times.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

BLOCK I

Session 3: Business Knowledge – session with an expert**Participants:** Men and women together**Duration of the Session:** Up to 3 hours**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

The facilitator checks in, asking the group how it has been since the last session, if anything new has happened, if the men talked to anyone about the issues they discussed in the last session, and if so what their experience was. Participants gather in a circle and, one by one, the men share their experiences about the tasks/activities they are doing that in the past have been done by their wives. If someone has not done their homework, the facilitator asks for the reason and explains the importance of doing the homework outside the sessions as part of the learning experience. People have busy lives, and if someone has not paid attention to the homework, it should be addressed in a caring manner. Allow 10 to 30 minutes, depending on how many couples wish to present activities identified as traditionally done by women/men

Objective of the Session

To provide practical information about the management of VSL benefits, as well as about (together with one's partner) identifying, choosing, and starting income-generating activities in the community.

Knowledge

This session features an expert. The knowledge to be provided during this session includes practical business skills, including how to save, plan, and manage your income, and how to gather information that will support your income-generating activities (harvest, etc). It is important in this session to provide practical information about the basic elements and practices involved in starting income-generating activities, but also to discuss possible obstacles and challenges that one may encounter while starting and building a business and how to overcome them. Participants should receive practical guidance on how to choose from many possible activities (please consult with the expert prior to the session: additional guidelines are below).

Activity

"The sessions about VSL helped me to understand what my wife is doing, and sessions on business helped to save money and invest the savings. Now we doubled shares from 2 to 4 shares per week. So we tested the information and it works!" (Male participant. Huye, Rwanda, November 2011).

Presentation Time: Approximately 2 to 3 hours

The expert's presentation should explain why it is important to have some income-generating activities rather than just waiting for support from family members, neighbors, or the community, or even from the outside. Living dependently on others contributes to poverty. Income-generating activities helps us to be self-sufficient, and to meet basic household needs.

There are *Five Core Elements* necessary to the sustainability and profitability of income-generating activities. Therefore, before starting such activity, one should ask five core questions. They are:

- Will people buy my products/services?
- Do I have the skills and knowledge necessary to provide those products/services?
- Do I have money to start and sustain a business?
- Will my products/services bring me profits?
- Can the profits help my family to meet basic needs?

What can happen if one does not consider the *Five Core Elements*:

- There will be not enough customers for your product.
- Your activity will be difficult to handle.
- The activity will become very expensive in terms of the first expenses needed to start operating.
- There will be no returns.
- The activity will not help your family to meet the basic needs.

How to identify promising income-generating activities:

- What opportunities for income generation do they have? (do they have land, banana trees, money, special knowledge, etc.)?
- We must understand existing income-generating activities from which we will choose one (these can involve activities, products, or services in your community).
- We must determine what activities, products, or services are already in place/being provided, and what activities, products, or services are missing in the community.

Here are a few income-generating activities to think about (the list is not complete but can give ideas):

- Bee-keeping and selling honey, selling meat, carpentry, selling cassava, preparing and selling banana beer (or other drinks such as Team), selling chickens, repairing (shoes, radios, bicycles, etc.), selling firewood and charcoal, grilling fish, breeding goats, knitting by hand, weaving baskets or mats, making pots, selling used clothes, tailoring, growing and selling vegetables

At the end of the expert's presentation, participants should have the following knowledge:

- What the income-generating opportunities in the community are
- What activities are already in place, and what businesses could be developed
- How to start, and what is needed to start a business
- How to save money, how to invest, how to make budgets and a money action plan
- How to maximize VSL benefits for the entire family

Homework: Participants are asked to select at least three income-generating activities they might like to develop/undertake and to prepare a presentation about these activities for the next session.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session or what was learned, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

Session 4: Building time-management skills and learning task-sharing

Participants: Men and women together

Duration of the Session: 2 hours

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

Participants present ideas about income-generating activities. Allow up to 30 minutes for the check-in and the presentation of business plans.

Objective of the Session

To reflect about the different roles and responsibilities of men and women, and the different values associated with them.

Knowledge

“I realized that my wife is doing everything in the house, and with the kids. I experimented at home and I now like to share things with her, I even cook. But making the beds, that is too difficult for a man.” (Male participant. Huye, Rwanda, November 2011)

Women and men do different things throughout the day. Women often work longer hours when we count both their work at home and their work outside the home, and men sometimes have more leisure time. Many of the activities that consume women’s time, however — cooking, child care, and cleaning, among others — are not considered “work” because they are unpaid. Women’s time is therefore considered less valuable than men’s because they may not earn cash. When women are involved in earning income for the family, they generally continue to have all of the traditional responsibilities within the home. The perception of women’s activities as not valuable, as well as women’s limited opportunities to earn an income, results in women having less power in the family and the community. In turn, men’s roles as the expected breadwinner, authority figure, and protector carry a higher status and give men more power and privileges in society. But these roles also put considerable stress and pressure on men; men who do not have adequate income or employment may believe they are “failures.”

Activity

Exercise 1: *“The 24-hour day”*⁷

Objective of the Exercise: To become aware of the different tasks and roles men

⁷ One Man Can. Workshop Activities: Talking to men about gender, domestic and sexual violence and HIV/AIDS. South Africa: Sonke Gender Justice; UNDP (2007) Gender Awareness and Development Manual: Resource Material for Gender Trainers. Kabul: Gender Equality, UNDP Afghanistan; Promundo et.al. (nd) Working with Young Women: Empowerment, Rights, and Health. Rio de Janeiro: Promundo

and women do/share in the household and discuss if and how those roles could be exchanged.

Facilitator's note (before the exercise):

The “24-hour day” activity is a good way to understand the idea of gender roles — that women and men are expected to play different roles in the family, community, and workplace because of society's ideas about the differences between them. But remember that class, caste, ethnic, and other differences may affect these gender roles.

Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials: Flip-chart, marker, tape

Steps:

- Divide the participants into small mixed groups, two or three per group.
- Ask each group to imagine a typical day in the lives of a wife and husband in their community, and to list, on flip-chart paper, the activities or tasks performed by women and men in a household over 24 hours. For low-literacy groups, ask participants to depict the tasks in different ways (through images, drawings, etc.), or make sure that each group has one person who is able to make notes. The participants should also identify each task as paid or unpaid.
- After about 10 minutes, ask each group to stick their flip-chart on the wall. Ask participants to walk around the room and study the work of the other groups, looking for what is the same and what is different from theirs. Ask participants to briefly present what they wrote/pictured.
- Talk about what they are learning about how men and women spend their days.
- Use the questions below to lead a discussion about women's and men's roles and status in society. Note that some of these questions are for the men only

Discussion Questions:⁸

- What differences do you notice between the ways in which men and women spend their day?
- Who generally carries out more activities or tasks during the day? Men or women?
- Who generally has more leisure time? Men or women?
- How do you define work?
- Which of the activities or tasks are considered work?
- FOR MEN: What activities or tasks can your wife never do? What activities can you as men never do?
- FOR WOMEN: What activities or tasks can your husband never do? What activities can you as women never do?
- FOR BOTH: Think about one or two activities that could be exchanged between you and your wife or husband.
- If you had more time in the day, what would you use it for?

Notes for Discussion/Closing:

The idea that certain types of work should be done by women and others by men is based on socialization, not biology. Women's greater participation in jobs requiring caregiving and domestic skills is directly linked to the fact that girls and young women

⁸ These are the suggested discussion questions, however, facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own questions related to the discussed subject, considering any particular group dynamic, unforeseen circumstances, or other situational components specific to this particular session and group.

are often raised to help with this type of work in the home. Unfortunately, those activities predominantly carried out by girls and women, including domestic chores, caregiving, and informal market activities, continue to be undervalued or ignored by society — and sometimes, by women themselves. It is important to recognize the immense contributions that women have always made inside and outside the home and to know that it is possible for women to assume activities traditionally carried out by men, just as it is possible for men, in turn, to assume activities traditionally carried out by women, including domestic work and child care. The facilitator should help the men consider how they are affected by pressure to be the breadwinner or provider, and how sharing this role with women might reduce their stress.

Action

Homework: Husband and wife are each invited to choose one activity/household task/responsibility that has traditionally been done by the opposite sex (man takes traditionally woman's task and woman takes traditionally man's task), and to carry out that task for one week. They are asked to report, at the following session, on their experiences and feelings about taking on the new responsibility.

Ideas for men (as inspiration and encouragement for men, facilitators are welcome to use Promundo's photos from the MenCare – Global Fatherhood Campaign;⁹ please see Annex II at the end of this manual):

- to cook for the family
- to carry babies/young children
- to play with the children
- to pick up children after school
- to feed children
- to wash dishes
- to fetch water
- to collect firewood
- to make the bed
- to wash the clothes

Facilitator's Note:

At the end, the facilitator might ask men and women participants to discuss why they do not or cannot do some of the activities traditionally done by the opposite sex. Are there any men in the community who carry babies, cook, etc.? It is recommended that such men be identified. The facilitator can then stimulate additional discussion among the men by asking: What do you think about Man X? How does he perform?

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

⁹ MenCare – A Global Fatherhood Campaign is coordinated by Promundo, Sonke, and the MenEngage Alliance as an effort to promote men's involvement as fathers and as caregivers. It seeks to provide support materials, messages, policy recommendations and research to encourage local MenEngage partners, NGOs, women's rights organizations, governments, and UN partners to implement campaign activities in their settings. The MenCare website (www.men-care.org), in particular, provides access to high quality community and mass media messages, technical assistance and training, policy and program recommendations and evidence. MenCare is conceived as a complement to global and local efforts to engage men and boys in ending violence against women and girls. It is part of the MenEngage Alliance's global vision to achieve equitable, nonviolent relationships and caring visions of what it means to be men.

BLOCK I

Session 5: Obstacles and challenges to doing business with your partner in the VSL**Participants:** Men and women together**Duration of the Session:** 2 hours and 30 minutes**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

Participants gather in a circle and discuss the new responsibility they had — they share their observations and feelings about their “new” roles at home. Allow 30 minutes for check-in and discussion, depending on how many participants are interested in sharing their experiences.

Objective of the Session

To teach about power and the use of power in social relations — to explain the many ways in which men and women have power, or are limited by power.

Knowledge

This session is about power and the use of power in social relations. The session should highlight that power is always present, but it is the way it is used that will determine the nature of the social dynamic. Power can mean privileges and responsibilities. It has many forms — leadership, responsibility, influence, control, money, etc. But it can also be wielded dangerously, resulting in abuse and violence.

Activity

Exercise 1: “POWER” – Word play

Objective of the Exercise: To discover different forms of power (for example, being “powerful” in the community and/or in the family, having responsibility and being responsible for things). The goal of this exercise is also to explore how power can be used in positive and negative ways, how to use power positively, and how power is divided between men and women. The exercise is intended to create awareness about gender (social expectations). The role of the facilitator is to encourage the participants to rethink the definition and implications of power.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Flip-chart, marker

Steps:

- The facilitator writes the word “POWER” in the middle of a flip-chart and hangs it on the wall.

- Ask participants, “What comes to your mind when you hear the word ‘power’?” Write their responses around the word “power” on the flip-chart.
- Ask participants to group the collected associations into positive powers and negative powers.
- Identify the characteristics of negative power, or abuse of power
- Explain to participants that each association can be both positive and negative, depending on personal experience.

Facilitator’s Note:

Power has many different faces and meanings, with positive and negative sides. Power, in itself, is neither positive nor negative; its definition is neutral. Each of us can use power one way or the other — in a relationship, in the family, and in the community.

Exercise 2: “Let’s Talk About Power”

Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials: Flip-chart and markers, yellow and blue stickers

Steps:

- The facilitator hangs two separate charts on the wall, one showing Man and one showing Woman (facilitator can prepare two pictures prior to the session). Both charts are divided into the following categories: sex, children/childcare, money, land, and free time.
- Ask participants to reflect on the following questions: “Where do you have power?” Ask men to use one color of paper or marker and women use another. They think about those areas in their lives where they – as women or men – have power, or “have the final say” about an issue in the household.
- After all the stickers are used, reflect with the group on the results. Look at which areas have the most stickers; who has more power in each of the listed categories?
Encourage participants to consider a few questions:¹⁰
 - o Which areas are dominated by men and which by women? Why?
 - o Can you think of examples of family problems caused by the way power is used?
 - o How is power related to control over resources like land or money?
 - o Do you have any idea how to change power inequalities?
 - o How would it be to give up power?
- After 5 minutes of discussion using the questions above, ask, “Who believes in change?” Divide the entire group into two groups: those who believe in equal power between men and women and those who do not
- The facilitator gives the “equal power” supporters three minutes to convince the others.
- After three minutes, the facilitator stops discussion (even if it is very vibrant and active).
- Following the debate, the facilitator leads an additional discussion using the following questions:

¹⁰ These are the suggested discussion questions, however, facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own related to the discussed subject, considering any particular group dynamic, unforeseen circumstances, or other situational components specific to this particular session or group.

- o For the men: What is the meaning of power for you as a man?
 - o Is there a difference between having power as a man and as a woman?
 - o Is there a difference in the way power is used by men and women?
 - o How does it feel when you have power and when you don't (for example, when your wife has the power in a certain situation or when your husband does)?
 - o How does it feel when you lose power?
 - o When have you felt that you have lost power?
 - o For the men: When you look at the charts, what possibilities for sharing power with your wife do you see?
 - o For the men: What are the benefits of sharing power with your wife?
- The facilitator asks the men to think about their own power compared to that of other men. Ask:
 - o How do you see your power compared to the power of other men in the community?
 - o Which men have power over you?
 - o How do you feel about this?

Facilitator's Note:

This activity, with its emphasis on helping men examine how they see themselves relative to other men, is critical for establishing a clear understanding, first, of the extent and impact of men's power over women (and vice versa), and second, of what equality of power between men and women means. The attitude of the facilitator — neutral, helping to explore — is crucial for this exercise. If men react defensively, make clear that the aim of the exercise is to explore and learn, not to judge.

Make it clear that you're not accusing anyone in the room of exerting power over women. Remind the group that you are trying to show how constructive/destructive power can be.

This exercise is for men and women. Both sexes can explore why and how men more often have power over women; why women have less power and why they might give power away to men; and what it's like when a woman has power over a man, or when a man has less power than another man. Explore and debate opinions, and question rigid statements and statements that support abuse of power (abuse and violence).

Be aware that some men (and women) may think that men need to have power over women. If anyone expresses this opinion, remind the group that it is important for each of us to work to create a world where power can be shared and used in positive ways and emphasize that this starts in families and between partners.

Action

Homework: Together with your partner, make a budget plan for one week. This is to exercise the ability to share decisions with your partner, in particular decisions regarding money. The facilitator explains to the group: you add up all available money and plan, together, how best to spend it (for example, to pay for food or other nutrition items, soap or other everyday household items, drinks, transport, children's needs, etc.).

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

Notes:

BLOCK I

Session 6: How to manage business with your partner/wife, including roles in business, necessary skills, money management, and decision-making

Participants: Men and women together

Duration of the Session: 2 hours

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

Check in on what was different in participants' lives in the past week. How did the way they manage resources at home change, and why? Ask participants to present their budgets and how they plan to use them — focus on their experiences with the decision-making process and how each item in the budget was voted for or against. Allow 30 minutes for the check-in and sharing of the budgets, depending on how many participants are willing to share.

Objective of the Session

To learn new ways of collaborating with your partner around money and doing business — and, in general, different ways of partnering.

Knowledge

To collaborate, you need certain skills: listening, advising, negotiating, creating trust, etc. Doing business with your partner also demands that you to look at and listen to her/him in different ways. Be aware of the capacities of the other person, and encourage your partner to learn more new things.

Activity

Exercise 1: *“Gender Fishbowl”*¹¹

Objective of the Exercise: To share experiences related to gender issues (gender roles) and to develop a better understanding of and empathy for the experience of the other sex.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: None

Steps:

- Divide the male and female participants.
- Ask the women to sit in a circle in the middle of the room facing each other, and the

¹¹ Adapted from: The ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth and Promundo (2008) Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation: The Group Education Manual.

men to sit around the outside of the circle, facing in.

- Begin a discussion by asking the women the questions listed below.
- The men's job is to observe and listen to what is being said. They are not allowed to speak.

Questions for Women:¹²

- o What is the most difficult thing for you as a woman involved in VSL activities?
- o What do you want to tell men that will help them better understand women?
- o What do you find difficult to understand about men?
- o How can men support and empower women in their VSL efforts?
- After 30 minutes, close the discussion and have the men and women switch places. Lead a discussion with the men while the women listen.

Questions for Men:

- o What do you want to tell women to help them better understand men?
- o What do you find difficult to understand about women?
- o What is the most difficult thing for you to do in support of your wife in her VSL efforts?
- o How can men support and empower women in their VSL efforts?
- Discuss the activity after both groups have taken a turn. Use the questions below to wrap up the activity.

Discussion Questions:

- o What surprised you about this activity?
- o How did it feel to talk about these things with others listening?
- o For the men: Based on what you learned, what opportunities do you see for supporting your wife in her VSL efforts?
- o What have you learned from this activity? How can this help you in your life and in your relationship?

Notes for Discussion/Closing

Often, our opinions and perspectives about the other sex are informed by stereotypes, and gender and social norms, that are reinforced over time by many sources, such as the media or our peers. This often makes it difficult for us to understand the other sex and their needs and concerns. By having a better understanding of the opposite sex and their needs and experiences, we are able to have greater empathy for how they experience gender and how it affects them.

Facilitator's Note:

This is a mixed-gender group of participants so it may be difficult for some, especially when both husbands and wives are attending the session, to speak openly in front of their spouses/partners.

Exercise 2: "Trust Me"¹³ – Trust exercise between partners

¹² These are the suggested discussion questions, however, facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own related to the discussed subject, considering any particular group dynamic, unforeseen circumstances, or other situational components specific to this particular group.

¹³ Henny Slegh developed this exercise based on her experience as a psychotherapist, and her long-term work with survivors of sexual violence in Africa and the Netherlands.

“The exercise about roles in the house showed that women can guide men and men can guide women. I never thought like that.” (Male participant. Huye, Rwanda, November 2011)

Objective of the Exercise: To build trust between partners.

Time: Approximately 30 min.

Materials: None

Steps:

- Start the exercise with women leading the men.
- One partner leads another, whose eyes are closed, around the room. The leading partner asks the follower how he/she likes to be guided and supported: hand in hand, arms around the shoulders, standing behind, etc. The follower is also invited to indicate what he/she needs in order to feel supported and guided, what builds his/her trust.
- The leader should ensure that his/her partner both is safe and feels safe (no jokes, no clashes with others). After a few minutes roles change.
- To make the exercise more challenging, the facilitator can place some obstacles around the room. The leaders have to guide their partners around these obstacles, guide them to sit, to step over, etc.
- Couples discuss their impressions between themselves.

Questions after exercise:¹⁴

- How was it to be led? How was it to lead? (Explore sense of responsibility as the guide, and trust and sense of safety as the guided person.)
- Which position was the easiest?
- Which one was more difficult?
- Did you feel power in this exercise, and if so, how did you deal with this?

Facilitator’s Note:

The facilitator observes and can give feedback to participants about reactions and statements.

Action

Homework: Couples are asked to make a “plan of action” to support each other. How can a man support his partner in her VSL involvement? For example, when the woman is at a VSL meeting, the man can do some work at home; the wife can discuss logistics with her husband and ask him to help out at home, e.g., by preparing a meal. Likewise, while the wife is on the way home from the VSL meeting, she can visit a cassava field or run an errand normally assigned to the husband.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

¹⁴ These are the suggested discussion questions, however, facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own related to the discussed subject, considering any particular group dynamic, unforeseen circumstances, or other situational components specific to this particular group.

Session 7: Summary/Wrap-up**Participants:** Men and women together**Duration of the Session:** 2 hours and 45 minutes**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

The facilitator encourages and coordinates the sharing of the “plans of action.” Participants come forward and present what they have discussed, agreed upon, decided about. Allow up to 30 minutes for the check-in and the presentation of the plans of action.

Objective of the Session

To conduct a summary of all topics that have been addressed and discussed in this block, and to address topics that were omitted.

This wrap-up session could be organized outside the community in a venue with facilities for showing a film/video that covers the topic.

Summary Activity**Exercise 1:** “*What Have We Learned?*” – Open discussion**Time:** 1 hour**Materials:** None**Steps for the Summary:**

The facilitator summarizes, in his/her own words, each session of this block, giving a brief review of the new knowledge presented, the practical information communicated, and the exercises conducted during each session. The following topics from each session are important to address:

Session 1:

- ✓ Setting ground rules to create an atmosphere of trust (*Safe Group* exercise) – why safety is important for couples and a group
- ✓ The VSL program — what it is about, how it works, and what women do in it

Session 2:

- ✓ The differences between men and women (biological and social)
- ✓ The concept of gender (social roles of men and women, how men and women are expected to behave in society, etc.)
- ✓ The different roles that men and women are expected to fulfill in their particular society (*Ideal and Reality* exercise)

Session 3:

- ✓ Visit from a business expert (choosing available income-generating activities; looking at businesses that are already in place; developing and starting a new business; saving money; making household budgets and financial action plans; maximizing VSL benefits)

Session 4:

- ✓ The responsibilities and activities that men and women do during the day
- ✓ How men and women spend their time during the day
- ✓ Exploring possible task-sharing opportunities

Session 5:

- ✓ The different types of power in a household (and the different uses of those powers in a household)
- ✓ The division of power between a man and a woman (*Let's Talk About Power* exercise)

Session 6:

- ✓ Ways that a couple can collaborate in VSL involvement
- ✓ Creating understanding between partners by listening to each other (*Gender Fishbowl* exercise)
- ✓ Importance of trust between partners (*Trust Me* exercise)

Facilitator's Note:

The facilitator can organize the wrap-up session in various ways. A suggested activity is *Open Discussion*, in which the facilitator divides the group into pairs and asks the pairs to discuss the following questions:¹⁵ What did you learn in this session that you would like to take home, to work, to your family, or community? What new knowledge did you like, and what new knowledge did you dislike? What knowledge would you like to leave here (because it is too difficult, or confusing, or uncomfortable)?

By asking questions in the wrap-up session, the facilitator can encourage discussion and expression of doubts, concerns, and misunderstandings about the block.

Action

Homework: There is no homework in the wrap-up session.

Check-out: At the end of the Business Block, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session or what was learned, any doubts or confusion, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. Here it is also essential to announce the upcoming Health Block.

¹⁵ These are just a few examples. Feel free to formulate your own questions related to this particular exercise and the discussed subjects.

BLOCK II – HEALTH

This section presents and discusses different aspects of the sexual practices and reproductive health of men and women. Such practices and behaviors are determined by a complex set of factors, including culture, gender, and economic conditions, among others.

In most settings around the world, men are socialized to be knowledgeable and powerful where sexual matters are concerned. As a result, many men believe they cannot express doubts about their bodies or about sexuality or reproductive health. In fact, when we look closer, we find that, contrary to the prevailing myth, men often lack knowledge about their own bodies, about reproductive health and services, and about available contraceptives and their use. Furthermore, in most of the world, there are few sexual education and reproductive health programs directed at men, and fewer still that incorporate a wider gender perspective.

In this section we offer, through participatory exercises, practical information about the following issues: (a) Family planning methods, birth control, and places where contraceptives are available; (b) Sexual organs and their biological functions; (c) Risks, prevention, care, and treatment of STIs and HIV/AIDS; and (d) Pregnancy and how men can support their wives/partners during and after pregnancy. Moreover, this block provides information on how to communicate about sexuality with one's partner to avoid misunderstanding and conflict, and discusses the dangers of alcohol use. Following this introduction, we offer a series of group educational activities for use with men and women.

BLOCK II

Session 8: Reproductive Health Knowledge – session with an expert**Participants:** Men and women together**Duration of the Session:** Approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes**Check-in**

The facilitator checks in: What is new in participants' lives? What has changed since the last session? Allow about 30 minutes for the check-in and presentation of a new block, as well as for introduction of the visiting expert.

Objective of the Session

To convey practical information about reproductive and sexual health and the available services in the community.

Knowledge

A local health expert is to lead this session. The essential knowledge to be provided during this session includes practical information about family planning, including contraceptive methods and where they can be found. The health expert should also provide basic information about the sexual and reproductive organs and their form and biological function (including the menstrual cycle and how it relates to contraception). Participants should be informed about STIs and HIV/AIDS and how to protect themselves and their families from them, as well as available treatment and care and where it can be found. It is also important to provide participants with practical information about pregnancy and ways men can support their wives/partners during and after pregnancy.

Activity

"We share the new knowledge about reproductive health at home, with my wife, but also with the older children. We informed our daughters about this and even the neighbors." (Husband and wife, former participants. Huye, Rwanda, November 2011)

Presentation: The expert provides the content of this session. (The content to be used in Rwanda is attached to this manual and was developed specifically for the Rwandan context and situation in the field. The content of this lecture may serve as a model but must be developed and adapted separately to reflect the specifics of other local contexts.)

Presentation Time: Around 2 hours

At the end of the expert's presentation, participants should have the following knowledge:

- What family planning is, what contraceptive methods we can use and where we can find them
- What sexual and reproductive organs are, and what is their form and biological function, as well as what the menstrual cycle is and how it relates to contraception)
- What STIs and HIV/AIDS are, and how we prevent them and protect our family from them
- What treatment and care is available, and where it can be obtained
- What is important to know about pregnancy and how men can support their wives during and after pregnancy

Facilitator's Note:

The facilitator stands by and lends a helpful hand, if needed. After the presentation, initiate questions and group discussion about the new knowledge. If necessary, the facilitator can start the discussion by asking the following questions:¹⁶

- o What obstacles do you see to using contraception and family planning?
What is needed to overcome these obstacles?
- o Why is men's support important during pregnancy?
- o What is men's role in and contribution to family health and well-being?

Action

Homework: Couples are asked to discuss with each other the ways they practice family planning.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session or what was learned, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. The facilitator reminds the participants that the next session is for men only.

¹⁶ These are just a few suggested discussion questions in case there is a need to discuss the expert's presentation. Facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own questions, depending on the situation after the presentation.

BLOCK II

Session 9: Sexuality: practices, norms, and the meaning of sexuality**Participants:** Men only**Duration of the Session:** Approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

The facilitator invites men to share how each of them discussed family planning with his wife/partner. Allow up to 30 minutes for the check-in and homework discussion.

Objective of the Session

To enable participants to discuss topics related to sexuality, to improve their ability to communicate about these topics, and to create awareness about perceptions that can fuel misunderstandings and problems. The aim is also to affirm that having a healthy and pleasurable sexual life is both a human right and contributes to happiness and well-being.

Knowledge

Everybody wants a pleasurable sexual relationship with his/her partner. However, men and women may not only have different desires or expectations about their sexual relationship but may also find it difficult to express their sexual wishes or desires through discussion and conversation. Communication about one's sexuality, about sexual relations and intimacy, and sexual experiences or practices is not easy. Sexual misunderstanding and frustration are often the reasons for conflict in a relationship; talking about problems is even more complex and difficult. Moreover, several things can cause sexual problems for a couple: many are caused by misunderstandings between partners about each other's desires and needs; others are more specific, such as difficulty maintaining an erection, premature/non-ejaculation, uncontrollable sexual desires, etc.

Activity

Exercise 1: *"Talking about sexuality"* – Group discussion (two-part exercise)

Objective of the Exercise: To exchange perceptions, cultural norms, beliefs, and practices about sexuality among men. To identify and exchange ideas about the different meanings of sexuality for men and women, about cultural norms surrounding sexuality, and about male sexual problems, in order to establish new ways of approaching sexuality and sexual problems between partners.

Time: Up to 2 hours

Materials: Chart, markers

Steps (Part 1):

- Group warming-up activity: group discussion (15 minutes). The facilitator asks the following questions to spark the subject:¹⁷
 - o What is the meaning of sexuality and sex for men?
 - o Is sex important for 'being a man'?
 - o What is the purpose of sex: reproduction or pleasure?
 - o What is the meaning of sex for women?
 - o Is it different than for men?
 - o Do men need sex more than women do?

Steps (Part 2): Work in small groups and discuss the subject of sexuality (15 minutes).

- The facilitator divides the group into pairs and gives each the following questions to discuss:¹⁸
 - o What are the cultural norms surrounding sexuality that define the roles of men and women (e.g., "women are not allowed to initiate sex")? Find at least three other examples.
 - o What do you consider important in your sexual relationship and what contributes to more pleasurable sex with your partner?
 - o What do men get from sex or what is it about sex that gives them pleasure? What about women?
 - o What are the most common male sexual problems that you know of or have heard about from others? (Probing by facilitator: What about problems with cultural explanations?)
 - o What are the most common problems in sexual relations between partners? Please give examples (e.g., a man's impotence being caused by his wife's demons/witchcraft).

Facilitator's Note:

At the end of this exercise, all the pairs come together to share their conclusions. The men discuss their answers to the questions with the group. The facilitator makes notes on a flip-chart. He/she should encourage group members to come up with possible solutions to the sexual problems they've identified.

Action

Homework: The facilitator invites participants to share the knowledge they gained in this session with their wives/female partners.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. The facilitator reminds participants that the next session is for men only.

¹⁷ As facilitator, you should feel free to either use the suggested questions, or formulate your own in order to warm up the group for this session's discussion.

¹⁸ Please use the suggested questions.

BLOCK II

Session 10: Alcohol Use and Men's Health

Participants: Men only

Duration of the Session: Approximately 2 hours

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

The facilitator checks-in and welcomes everyone, then jumps into the subject of sharing about sensitive issues such as sexuality, its meaning, norms, and practices. The men share their experiences talking about sexuality with their partners/wives. Allow 30 minutes, depending on participants' willingness to share.

Objective of the Session

To learn how to help each other in preventing substance (alcohol) use.

Knowledge

Alcohol and drinking have many different meanings and uses for men, including some that are positive and others that are negative. The abuse of alcohol creates serious problems in families and contributes to violence and conflicts between partners. It also perpetuates poverty (e.g., money spent in bars).

Activity

Facilitator's Note (before the exercise):

In preparation for the "*Throw the Drunk Ball*" game, the facilitator should take stock of the various alcoholic drinks (wine, banana beer, etc.) and other substances (drugs) that are known to participants and/or used in their community. Using the exercises below, discuss what is perceived as too much alcohol (in terms of quantity and frequency per day/week/month).

Exercise 1: "*Throw the Drunk Ball*" – A game

Objective of the Exercise: To encourage discussion about alcohol abuse and related problems in families

Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Materials: Paper or plastic ball (cultural, traditional round object), chart, marker

Steps:

- The facilitator briefly explains the game and its objective and asks all the men stand in a circle.

- Part one: men pass (toss) a ball from one to another. Whoever receives the ball has to give one reason (positive or negative) why men use alcohol (each participant is encouraged to give a different reason) while the facilitator writes the answers on a chart. Here are a few questions that the facilitator can choose from to stimulate a discussion:¹⁹
 - o Why do men use alcohol?
 - o Do you think men use alcohol to be “real men”?
 - o Is there any connection between alcohol use and masculinity (being “real men”)?
- In the second round of passing the ball, whoever receives the ball has to name a problem caused by drinking excessively (e.g., physical and mental health complications, poverty, etc.).
- Part two involves participants turning to each other in the circle and discussing the following questions in pairs:²⁰
 - o How could you help your neighbor/friend to control his abuse?
 - o What would you need in order to stop or control your abuse (or what support would help you)?
 - o What is the difference between healthy drinking and drinking that leads to problems?
- After discussing these questions in pairs, the facilitator asks the men to turn back to the circle, and then asks them to share their experiences and solutions. The men open a discussion and share their ideas while the facilitator writes them on the chart.

Action

Homework: Each participant should try to discuss his drinking behavior with his wife/partner at home (including asking her opinion about the quantity and frequency of his drinking), and make a plan to control (change) his drinking behavior. (If this is too difficult or not applicable for an individual, have him meet once with a friend, neighbor, etc., who drinks and discuss that man’s drinking behavior and offer him the knowledge, help, and advice learned in this session).

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

¹⁹ Suggested discussion questions: however facilitators are encouraged to formulate their own related to the subject.

²⁰ These are a few suggested questions. Facilitators are encouraged to consider the environment, situation, and group dynamic, and develop a set of his or her own questions related to the session and the exercise.

BLOCK II

Session 11: Summary/Wrap-up

Participants: Men only

Time for the session: Approximately 2 hours

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

The facilitator gives participants the opportunity to share their experiences of talking about their drinking behavior with their wives/partners. Participants are encouraged to present their plans to control their alcohol use (if they drink). Allow 1 hour for the check-in and follow-up on the control plans.

Objective of the Session

To address topics which have not yet been addressed in the block (remaining issues or items — this can easily take up to 30 minutes). To present a brief summary of each session in the block and to remind participants about issues and topics covered earlier in the block.

Summary Activity

Exercise 1: *“What Have We Learned?”* – Open discussion

Time: 1 hour

Materials: None

Steps for the Summary:

The facilitator summarizes, in his or her own words, each session of this block, giving a brief review of the new knowledge presented, the practical information communicated, and the exercises conducted during each session. The following topics from each session are important to address:

Session 8:

- ✓ Family planning methods and birth control
- ✓ Places where contraceptives are available
- ✓ Sexual organs and their biological functions
- ✓ Risk, prevention, care, and treatment of STIs and HIV/AIDS
- ✓ Pregnancy and how men can support their wives during and after pregnancy

Session 9:

- ✓ Communicating about sexuality to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts between partners

Session 10:

- ✓ Risks and dangers of alcohol use (Throw the Drunk Ball exercise)

Facilitator's Note:

The wrap-up session can be organized in various ways. A suggested activity is *Open Discussion*, in which the facilitator divides the group into pairs and asks the pairs to discuss the following questions:²¹ What did you learn in this session that you would like to take home, to work, to your family or community? What new knowledge did you like, and what new knowledge did you dislike? What knowledge would you like to leave here (because it is too difficult, or confusing, or uncomfortable)?

By asking questions in the wrap-up session, the facilitator can encourage discussion and expression of doubts, concerns, and misunderstandings about the block.

Action

Homework: There is no homework assigned for the next session.

Check-out: At the end of the Health Block, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. Here it is also essential to announce the upcoming block, Laws and Policies.

²¹ These are just a few examples. Feel free to formulate your own questions related to this particular exercise and the discussed subjects.

BLOCK III – LAWS AND POLICIES

This block presents practical legal knowledge, including information on Rwanda's laws and policies related to land and succession, to gender, and to gender-based violence (GBV). It aims to help participants to share their perceptions about the laws, what these laws mean for them and how they could benefit from it. Likewise, participants may learn how to access legal services in a proper way.

This block also educates participants about the roots of violence, calling particular attention to gender-based violence. We discuss different types of violence and raise awareness about various levels and forms of violence in our society, hoping to encourage reflection on participants' own experiences with violence. With the help of suggested exercises, we sensitize the participants to gender-based violence, perpetration of interpersonal violence, and in particular, to examples and forms of GBV in the family.

BLOCK III

Session 12: Violence: perceptions and knowledge about different forms of violence

Participants: Men only

Duration of the Session: Approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

The facilitator checks-in with the participants and provides basic information about the session (please see description under “Block III – Laws and Policies,” above). Allow approximately 1 hour for the introduction of this block.

Objective of the Session

To learn about violence, to raise awareness about the different levels at which violence takes place and the various forms violence takes in our society, and to encourage reflection on participants’ own experiences with violence, including GBV.

Knowledge²²

The facilitator explains that violence occurs at different levels in society: the State level (violence from armed forces during war, for example), the community level (e.g., violence between ethnic groups and tribes), the interpersonal level (violence in the family and/or between partners), as well as the intra-personal level (violence towards oneself, such as drinking or suicide). Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force, whether threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that results in, or could result in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation (WHO, 2002).

Being exposed to violence can encourage the use of violence, consciously and unconsciously. But this cycle of violence can be stopped. In this session, we focus on violence that happens in the family and between partners. Violence has many different faces, including GBV. In order to recognize what acts are perceived or experienced as violence, we need to understand the different forms of violence that can occur between partners: psychological, economic, physical, and sexual.

Facilitator’s Note:

The facilitator gives examples — for example, a soldier or combatant in the war who came home can be deeply affected by what he saw, and easily start fights with others at home (interpersonal violence). The facilitator leads a very quick discussion (question-and-answer session), asking: Do you know of any ways that violence can be transmitted from one person to another?

²² For more detailed data and analysis, please see the IMAGES findings presented in the section “What We Know About Rwandan Men and Their Attitudes and Practices in Terms of Gender Equality?” of this manual.

Introduction to the exercises:

In this session there are different exercises and we ask participants to talk about personal experiences with GBV (as either actors or victims). We know this is never easy, because it reminds us of things we'd prefer to forget. However, the exercises in this session can help participants to be honest with themselves and give them the courage to think about violent events. If you are able to reflect on your past experience, you may become stronger in dealing with them, and you may gain new insights for the future.

This session must be introduced with a very good reminder from the facilitator regarding confidentiality. None of the information received or shared will be shared with others outside the group. The object here is not to convict anybody for their past behavior but to prevent future violence in any form at the community or family level.

Exercise 1: "4" – Four forms of violence

Objective of the Exercise: To allow participants to speak about different forms of violence.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Four flip-charts, markers

Steps:

- The facilitator asks the group to think together about examples of the four forms of violence, and writes them on a flip-chart.
 - o What are some examples of GBV?
- The facilitator points out that what all these examples have in common is the abuse of power by one person over another related to professional status, to physical appearance, to social (gender) role, etc.
- The facilitator explains that differences in power can be abused as well as used to justify violence. The facilitator asks a question:
 - o How did unequal power play a role in the examples you gave?
- The facilitator indicates the role of power on the chart and makes sure everybody understands the relationship between power and violence.

Exercise 2: "Violence Clothesline"

Objective of the Exercise: To reflect on personal experiences with violence, and to rethink personal behaviors and attitudes about violence.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Small pieces of paper (can be colored), markers/pens, clothesline or tape

Steps:

- The facilitator asks participants to think about situations in which they were the victim, but also about situations in which they used violence against another person. Participants choose examples that still disturb them when they think

too much, or when they feel nervous. (In case people don't have any examples from their lives, the facilitator asks them to give examples from the lives of people they know — examples they have witnessed. If a participant does not want to disclose his/her own experiences, the facilitator should respect it.)

- The facilitator encourages participants to think about one or more of the four previously discussed forms of violence (physical, sexual, economic, and psychological) that they have been the victims of or that they committed against another person (did something harmful to another person).
- Every person gets a few pieces of paper. Each sheet of paper represents one experience — committed or experienced. The participants sit and think on their own and write their experiences down (in case of low-literacy level, choose one person who can write to be a secretary for the rest).
- The facilitator asks participants to drop the papers in a large box. When all papers are collected, the facilitator hangs their papers on the wall (clothesline), one end called “*Actors*,” another “*Survivors*” of violence. Participants should not write their names on the papers and the facilitator should encourage participants to not read the papers of their fellow participants.
- The facilitator asks a volunteer to read each experience out loud — and the rest of the participants, by discussing as a group, try to place each experience in one the four categories.

Facilitator’s Note:

The above exercise should stimulate the men to rethink their experiences, confrontations, and problems with violence, without being forced to openly disclose their personal experiences to the group.

After the exercise:

The facilitator asks the group how it felt to undertake this exercise. If somebody feels offended or touched, give that person time to talk. If nobody wants to share anything, that is okay, too, and you should continue the session. Thank the participants for their courage in remembering and rethinking their own experiences, and emphasize that after this session all the papers with the written memories will be burned and nobody will see them. Idea: taking part in burning the bad memories may help the men to leave them behind mentally as well as physically, and create “space” for new and different behavior. If you plan to do this, burn the papers outside in a pot.

Action

Homework: Due to the intensity of the session, there is no homework assigned.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session.

BLOCK III

Session 13: Gender-based violence: what it is and how to prevent it**Participants:** Men only**Duration of the Session:** Approximately 2 hours**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

The facilitator checks in with the group: What is new since the last session? Allow up to 30 minutes for check-in.

Objective of the Session

To follow up on the knowledge from the previous session and to sensitize participants about gender-based violence, how it occurs in their lives and families, and how they can prevent it.

Knowledge

In this session, we reflect on one form of interpersonal violence: acts of violence that occur between family members, and in particular by men's use of violence against female partners, spouses or wives. One of the most common forms of interpersonal violence is gender-based violence (GBV). The term refers to violence that is directed towards another person and in which his/her gender is a factor. As we know, violence is related to power. When one has power, he/she can abuse this power and become violent. In general, men are assumed to have power over women, and that is one of the reasons that conflicts between partners often turn into violence against women. This is gender-based violence. Similarly, GBV occurs when a woman beats a man (this is less common, however, due to the position of women in society). In our session, we focus on men and the different ways that men can abuse power and become violent against women — wives/partners, female colleagues, daughters, etc.

Exercise 1: *"What is GBV?"* – A quiz

Objective of the Exercise: To learn, explore, and understand what gender-based violence is

Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes**Materials:** flip chart**Steps:**²³

- On a chart, the facilitator writes the four forms of violence discussed in Session 13 and asks the following question:
 - o Who can give examples of GBV between partners: psychological, economic, _____ sexual, physical?

²³ Please use the suggested questions outlined in the steps for this exercise.

- The facilitator allows discussion about examples and then continues with the following questions:
 - o When is an act perceived as violent?
 - o What ideas, beliefs, and perceptions in society may fuel violence? (E.g., men have to beat women.)
 - o How can a nonviolent relationship contribute to increased profits from VSL involvement?

Next Steps:

- Divide participants into two groups. One group prepares arguments that support each statement below, the other group prepares arguments against each statement below:²⁴
 - o A husband who has sex with his wife against her will is using his natural power and therefore we cannot call this sexual violence.
 - o Sexual violence does not happen between partners.
 - o A woman who does not ask her husband for permission to go to the VSL group does not respect her husband, and the husband can force her to stay in the house for a week.
 - o Psychological violence cannot be considered a serious offence because it does not hurt.
 - o A husband who spends all his money in the bar, without permission of his wife, commits a form of economic violence.
 - o A woman who talks in public in the presence of her husband is a bad woman and should be called a “*bad wife*” or a “*witch*.”
 - o A husband who allows his wife to spend the VSL savings on her own needs must have been “*poisoned*” by her; he is not a normal husband.
 - o A husband who beats his wife when she disappoints him is showing his love for her. This is not physical violence.

Exercise 2: How to stop the use of violence

- Divide participants into small groups (of 2–3 people).
- Ask the groups to discuss how they can stop GBV (in the four forms of violence) and prevent themselves and their neighbors from using GBV.
- The groups come together and share their findings. Together, the larger group makes a plan of action for educating other families in their village about GBV and supporting community members in efforts to prevent men from committing violence.

Action

Homework: Each participant should ask his wife/partner how she perceives the way he deals with his role as “the boss” or the most powerful member of the household and what she would like to change or to do differently. (Note: only ask and listen. No debate.)

²⁴ Facilitators are welcome to use the suggested statements, however, they are also encouraged to consider any particular group dynamic, history and any circumstances from the surrounding and environment to develop set of additional or more relevant statements.

Notes:

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. The facilitator reminds the men that they are to bring their wives/partners to the next session.

Session 14: Laws and Policies Knowledge — session with an expert

Participants: Men and women together

Duration of the Session: Approximately 3 hours

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

The men report what their wives/partners said when asked for their perception of the way the men deal with being “the boss” and what the wives/partners wish that the men, or their husbands, would do differently. The follow-up on the homework encourages and stimulates the process of rethinking their own male behavior and the way men act in general. Allow between 45 minutes and 1 hour to check in and follow up on the homework, as well as to introduce a new expert and a new topic.

Objective of the Session

To learn about Rwanda’s laws and policies related to land and succession, gender, and GBV.

Knowledge

At the end of this session, participants should have the following knowledge:

- The new land and succession law in Rwanda: what it says and what it means for me and my family
- The GBV law in Rwanda: what it says and what it means for men and for women
- The gender laws in Rwanda that promote gender equality between men and women: what they say and what they mean for men and for women
- How to comply with these laws
- Where and how to seek justice
- What structures of justice are present in my village

Activity**Facilitator’s Note:**

It is recommended that the expert provide simple printed materials (brochures or pamphlets) about the different laws in the country.

Time: 2 hours

Exercise 1: “*Let’s discuss*” – Open discussion among participants ²⁵

Objective: To address any remaining questions about the laws, and to allow space for opinions and views about them.

²⁵ This exercise may be conducted if time allows.

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: None

Steps:

- Based on the lecture, the facilitator asks follow-up questions and encourages an open discussion. The following questions may be asked:²⁶
 - o Are the laws and policies clear?
 - o Which policies or laws are still unclear?
 - o Which policies or laws did you know about prior to the session?
 - o How do you imagine implementation of the laws will affect your community and/or your family?

Action

Homework: The couples are asked to discuss the laws and policies and how they can support and implement them in their daily lives.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. The facilitator reminds participants that the next session is for men only.

²⁶ If any additional questions are needed to spark a discussion or clarify the expert's presentation, facilitators are welcome to ask them.

Session 15: Perceptions and Implications of the Laws**Participants:** Men only**Duration of the Session:** Approximately 2 hours**Check-in/Homework Follow-up**

The facilitator can ask, “Who has been talking to his wife or partner and what ideas did she have?” The facilitator encourages the men to share the discussions they had with their wives/partners about the laws and policies. Allow up to 1 hour for this portion of the session. It is important to encourage as many men as possible to share their afterthoughts from the previous session.

Objective of the Session

To encourage reflection about the new legal material regarding land laws and gender policies and to highlight the importance of and need for support and implementation of existing laws in everyone’s life. The aim is also to connect the new knowledge with their own life and enable men to overcome their resistance against laws that are perceived as disempowerment for men’s traditional power. When the new laws are well understood and men can accept that equality between men and women is a benefit for all, they may connect these laws also with the importance of supporting women’s participation in the VSL program.

Knowledge

Studies about the implementation of the gender laws established in Rwanda indicate that most people are informed about the laws (Sleggh and Kimonyo, 2010). However, many men and women do not see these laws as important to protecting their rights. Some men even see the laws as *“taking the power away from men and giving it to women,”* and others see the laws as causing conflicts in households and families. These misperceptions need to be addressed by disseminating information, but also by debates. This session gives participants space to discuss the new laws within the context of their culture and society.

Activity**Exercise 1:** *“Implement or not to Implement?”* - Discussion panel

Objective of the Exercise: To reflect on the last two sessions regarding violence, GBV, and gender knowledge, laws, and policies, and to encourage not only implementation of the laws, but the integration of new insights on the laws into participants’ personal lives.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: None

Steps:

- The facilitator explains that the exercise focuses on the question: How can my new insights about GBV and gender-equality laws contribute to the betterment of my life and ultimately to the support of my wife/female partner in her VSL involvement?
- The facilitator creates two groups of five men each: “*Supporters*” and “*Opposition*” to the new laws. *Supporters* defend women’s rights and the GBV laws for the benefit of family and VSL activities; *Opposition* sees the law as too harsh for men and as making it too easy for women to send their husbands to prison; they protest against the new laws and policies and oppose the gender-equality policy as a new way to disempower men.
- Each group sits facing the other.
- The facilitator conducts two discussions of 10 minutes each. After the first 10-minute debate, the two groups switch — *Supporters* become *Opposition* and *Opposition* become *Supporters*.
- After the double-debate, the facilitator brings *Supporters* and *Opposition* back together in one group and asks the following questions:²⁷
 - o What did you learn from the panel and the debates?
 - o How can the laws be supported? How can YOU support the laws to keep peace in your family?

Facilitator’s Note:

It is important that participants create two opposing groups, with the groups facing each other, and, after the specified time, switching positions. This format will allow sharing of ideas and encourage group reflection.

Action

Homework: Discuss the laws with neighbors, male friends, and male relatives in your village, and present the various arguments that support equal rights for men and women as they are defined in the laws.

Check-out: At the end of the session, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. The facilitator reminds participants that the next session is for men and women together.

²⁷ Facilitators are encouraged to develop and use more questions to encourage reflective discussion between the two groups (*Supporters* and *Opposition*).

BLOCK III

Notes:

Session 16: Summary/Wrap-up

Participants: Men and Women

Duration of the Session: Between 2 and 4 hours

Check-in/Homework Follow-up

The facilitator asks: What has changed since the last session? Did you debate with other men in your village? How did they react? Were you able to communicate the arguments defending equal rights for men and women? Allow approximately 15 minutes for this portion of the session.

Objective of the Session

To address topics that have not yet been addressed in the block (remaining issues or items — this can easily take up to 30 minutes). To present a brief summary of each session in the block and to remind participants about issues and topics covered, and practical information received, earlier in the block.

Summary Activity

Exercise 1: “*What Have We Learned?*” – Open discussion

Time: 2 hours

Steps for the Summary:

The facilitator summarizes, in his/her own words, each session of this block, giving a brief review of the new knowledge presented, the practical information communicated, and the exercises conducted during each session. The following topics from each session are important to address:

Session 12:

- ✓ The different levels of violence in a society
- ✓ The different types of violence that can occur in a family and between partners (*Violence Clothesline* exercise)

Session 13:

- ✓ Gender-based violence: what it is and how to prevent it (*What is GBV – panel* exercise)

Session 14:

- ✓ Land and succession law in Rwanda
- ✓ GBV law in Rwanda
- ✓ Gender equality laws in Rwanda
- ✓ What the new laws mean for men, women, and families

- ✓ How to seek justice; the local justice structure

Session 15:

- ✓ How to integrate the new legal knowledge into your life, especially in connection with the VSL program (*Discussion Panel* exercise)

Facilitator's Note:

The wrap-up session can be organized in various ways. A suggested activity is *Open Discussion*, in which the facilitator divides the group into pairs and asks the pairs to discuss the following questions:²⁸ What did you learn in this session that you would like to take home, to work, to your family or community? What new knowledge did you like, and what new knowledge did you dislike? What knowledge would you like to leave here (because it is too difficult, or confusing, or uncomfortable).

By asking questions in the wrap-up session, the facilitator can encourage discussion and expression of doubts, concerns, and misunderstandings about the block.

Activity

Exercise 1: "Sharing the Benefits Together"

Objective of the Exercise: To acknowledge other couples' efforts in the training, and to provide feedback. To share final experiences and knowledge acquired during the training.

Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps:

1. The facilitator asks each couple to think about the whole training and to think of some words of appreciation for others in the group, including what they learned from others and what they enjoyed about working with the other couples. They are also asked to think about words of advice that they would like to offer others or share based on their own learning experience.
 - The facilitator conducts a group evaluation: each couple will get about 10 minutes to express their appreciation of and feedback about the training. You can encourage such feedback by asking the following questions:
 - o What did you like or dislike about the training?
 - o What did you learn from the group?
 - o What do you take home?
 - After providing training feedback (about 5 minutes), each couple will also receive feedback about their participation and performance in the training from the other couples. Encourage the other couples to offer support by asking some questions:
 - o What did you like about Couple X?
 - o What did you appreciate about them the most?
 - o What advice and recommendations would you offer to Couple X?

²⁸ These are just a few examples. Feel free to formulate your own questions related to this particular exercise and the discussed subjects.

Facilitator's Note:

As a facilitator, please make sure that each couple shares their own personal observations and experiences in the training, but also has a chance to receive feedback, recommendations, and advice from others.

Action: Ask participants how they want to celebrate the final sessions and what they like to share with the public in the celebration sessions.

Homework: preparations for the celebration

Check-out: At the end of the Laws and Policies Block, the facilitator asks if there are any remaining questions about the session, any doubts or confusion, makes sure the homework is clear, and confirms the time, date, and place of the next session. The facilitator reminds the group about the approaching end of the training and informs them that there will be a celebration at the next week's session.

BLOCK III**Session 17: Closing Session**

Participants: Men and women together

Duration of the Session: Approximately 4 hours

Location: The location for the closing ceremony should be determined by the implementing organization, and can be chosen based on specific local settings and circumstances.

Objective of the Session

To celebrate the successful completion of the training. Couples celebrate their commitment to a new partnership between them.

Facilitator's Note:

It is important that the entire closing ceremony be focused on the training participants. The participants can share their experiences with the broader public through storytelling, drama, dance, or any other creative media.

Ideas for the Closing Session/Celebration

- Watch a related movie/documentary on gender, gender equity, or masculinity (to be in the local language)
- Graduating couples have their pictures taken and given to them as a token of their “new partnership”
- Certificates of Graduation/Certificates of Appreciation for the couples
- Food and drinks for the couples and guests
- Invitation of local government representatives, gender experts, facilitators of all other groups in the training, representatives of implementing partners, office country/regional directors and managers, dance or drama groups or other performers
- Invitation of local media (community radio station, local TV, newspaper, or other print media)

ANNEX I

Guidelines for the Facilitators

‘Know-how’ of Group Activities Facilitation²⁹

There is no single best way to facilitate a group discussion and group educational activity. Each facilitator has a different style. Different groups have different needs. But there are some common aspects of good group facilitation which are described below.

The role of a facilitator is to create an open and respectful environment in which the participants can feel comfortable sharing their own experiences and learning from each other. The activities in this manual are designed to generate a process of reflection and participatory learning — a process that is facilitated, not taught. Many of the themes are complex and sensitive. There may be groups of men who open up and express their feelings during the process, while others simply will not want to talk. The key factor in this process is the facilitator. He or she should approach the activities with no prior judgments or criticisms of the knowledge, attitudes, languages, or behavior of the participants. It is the facilitator’s responsibility to pay extra attention to the comfort level of the men and women who participate and to be aware when any of them need individual attention.

Group Set-up

Is it better to work with men in male-only groups or in mixed-sex groups? Our response is: *Both*.

We believe that sometimes it is more effective to work in men-only groups, as some men feel more comfortable discussing subjects like sexuality and health issues among other men, or are better able express their emotions without women present. In a group context, with a facilitator and other men, men can often be encouraged and feel supported enough to talk about their emotions and subjects that they may not have previously discussed. Some men may complain or show little interest if there are no women in the group, and of course, having women in a group can make it more interesting. But it can also inhibit men from opening up. Still, men and women live and work together, and we believe that facilitators who work with them should promote respect and equality in their relationships, and at least part of the time, should also work with mixed-sex groups. Therefore, this manual offers sessions for men-only as well as mixed-sex groups, and we recommend that each session follow the suggested group composition.

Before beginning implementation of this manual and facilitation of each session, it is recommended that a facilitator have a basic understanding of the concepts of gender and sexuality, and have undertaken some degree of self-reflection regarding his or her own experiences and struggles around those themes. Very often, a facilitator will become an important role model, champion of change, and source of information and support for participants. It is essential that activities and discussions be led in an encouraging and respectful way rather than with a “you must” attitude.

Facilitators are encouraged to follow the BASK model.³⁰ BASK is an acronym for Behavior, Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge, features that are needed to enable learning by doing.

B (Behavior): The facilitator is a role model for the participants and should behave accordingly (no phone calls during sessions, dressing appropriately, respecting the local context, etc.);

²⁹ Text taken from UNFPA and Promundo (2007) Young men and HIV prevention: A toolkit for action. Brazil, UNFPA and Promundo; The ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth and Promundo (2008) Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Transformation: The Group Education Manual.

³⁰ For the purpose of this training manual, Henny Slegh adopted the BASK model from the *BASK Model of Dissociation* developed by Dr. Bennett G. Braun, which maps the process of dissociation along the lines of Behavior, Affect, Sensation, and Knowledge.

A (Attitude): The attitude is open, friendly, and nonjudgmental, respectful regarding different opinions and views of participants, and positive and encouraging (the learning process is most efficient with positive feedback and constructive criticism rather than with negative criticism);

S (Skills): The facilitator must be able to lead group activities and discussions, explain the objectives of each session, and give clear instructions for the exercises. He or she must also be able to deal with group dynamics, as well as difficult situations and people;

K (Knowledge): The facilitator must have a good understanding of the concepts of gender, GBV, masculinity, and male engagement, as well as solid knowledge about the VSL program.

How and Where Should the Sessions be Carried Out?

We recommend using group education activities as a means of reaching men. Group education involves creating dynamic discussion spaces in which men can reflect critically about gender norms, relationships, and health, as well as “rehearse” the skills and abilities they will need to reduce risk behaviors and act in more equitable ways. Men often experiment with and rehearse masculine roles and behaviors in peer groups. Thus it stands to reason that group educational learning provides the most appropriate environment in which to engage men in discussing and questioning how gender is socially constructed. It also provides opportunities to rehearse more equitable models of what it is to “be a man” (MenEngage, Promundo and UNFPA. 2010. “Engaging men and boys in gender equality and health. A global toolkit for action.”)

The goal of group education activity should not be to *tell* men how they should or should not behave, but rather, to encourage them to question and analyze their own experiences, attitudes and behaviors and come to their own conclusions

The group educational activities included in this training manual can and should be used in various venues — in community centers where the VSL groups meet, in church settings known to the participants, or in local or community-based health clinics where they feel comfortable, etc. In other words, they are designed to be used in a variety of settings where men and women normally gather. What they require are a private space, available time, and willing facilitators. And while it may seem obvious, participants will spend significant time discussing and debating, and may require caloric intake; we recommend offering snacks and beverages, when possible.

Participatory activities included in this manual, such as role-playing, are designed to enable participants to develop and practice various skills, such as negotiation and shared decision-making. Skills-based sessions included here provide guidance on how to talk with your partner about reproduction and contraception, and how to resolve conflicts around important life decisions or your day-to-day relationship.

Practical Tools for the Facilitators

Setting the Rules

It is important to create ground rules within which the group agrees to work. Ensure that rules are established, explained, and implemented regarding respect, listening, confidentiality, and participation. The most basic condition is the creation of a learning environment where participants feel safe and trust each other. The role of the facilitator is crucial in ensuring safety, confidentiality, and sensitivity in the group. Therefore, the group sessions start with setting rules.

At the beginning of the first session, the facilitators must take some time to explain the importance of respect and confidentiality to the participants. People need to feel safe in a group before sharing personal information. It is

crucial to create an environment in which participants feel they can share their experiences and opinions without fear of backlash or ridicule. Therefore, the facilitator must also work together with the participants to establish some group rules. Among other things, these should address:

- **Privacy:** The personal experiences that group participants share need to be handled with respect and care by all group members, including facilitators. The privacy of personal experiences must be secured. That is why participants are asked not to talk outside the group about the personal information they hear during the training sessions (for example, they are not to share what they have heard from other group members with neighbors, friends, family members, coworkers, etc.). Participants are encouraged to talk outside the group about their own personal experiences in the group, but they should not talk about things they heard from others.
- Participants should not talk about the stories and input from group members but they can share with others what they learned in the sessions, what they do, what it does with them.
- **Trust:** The facilitator should ask group members to contribute to the rules that will govern the group, basing their input on what they feel is important in order to feel safe and trusting. The facilitator writes down three to five rules based on group input.

Involving everyone

“At the beginning, I felt very anxious because I did not understand the content, but when I found out that this was about normal life, I started to like it.” (Male participant during the mid-term assessment. Huye, Rwanda. January 2012)

“Men confirmed that they have doubts at the beginning of the training, but now, they like it very much, and are even willing to participate more often.” (A facilitator during the mid-term assessment. Huye, Rwanda, January 2012)

It is essential for each facilitator working with a group to pay extra attention to the organization and attractiveness of the first training session. The first session can make a big difference in future participation, and therefore in the overall success of the training, and thus must be prepared with great attention to detail. Facilitators should also bear in mind the circumstances of members' participation: is it voluntary or are they obligated to attend? This can be crucial to making sure the participants are motivated to return for more sessions. It is important that the participants are made to feel welcome, and that the facilitator be clear about the training objectives, the methods used, the expectations and outcomes. It is normal that participants may have doubts and questions at the beginning; it is the facilitator's role to make them feel at ease and comfortable and to enable them to find out what they can gain from the training.

Helping all group members to take part in the discussion is a really important part of group facilitation. This involves paying attention to who is dominating discussions and who is not contributing at all. If a participant is quiet, try to involve them by asking them a direct question, but remember that people have different reasons for being quiet. They may be thinking deeply! If a participant is very talkative, you can ask him/her to allow others to take part in the discussion and then ask the others to react to what that person was saying.

Encourage Honesty and Openness

Encourage participants to be honest and open, and promote sharing of personal experiences and stories. Facilitators are seen as role models and they can share personal examples with the participants as they see fit or feel comfortable in doing so. Sensitive issues such as sexuality or intimacy or experiences of violence demand courage, trust, and confidentiality. Facilitators should be able to demonstrate knowledge of these subjects. Encourage the participants to honestly express what they think and feel, rather than say what they think the facilitator(s) or other participants want to hear.

Keeping the Group on Track

It is important to help the group stay focused on the issues being discussed. If it seems as if the discussion is going off the subject, remind the group of the objective of the session or activity and get them back on track.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers are an effective way of starting or finishing a training session, or simply of helping people relax. They are interactive, often fun activities to help people get to know each other, or buy into the goals of a session, or to ease tensions. Through icebreakers participants can become more engaged in the proceedings and can contribute more effectively to a successful outcome. As a facilitator, the secret of a successful icebreaking session is to keep it simple: design your icebreakers with specific objectives in mind and make sure the activity is appropriate and comfortable for everyone involved.

Checking-in

Always have a check-in at the beginning of each session. It is the time when you can ask participants questions such as “How have you been since we last met?” and “How are things at home?” It is essential to ask participants if they talked with anyone about the issues discussed in the last and previous sessions, or if anything has changed in their lives. Some participants may be very interested in reflecting on former sessions. You can also ask for feedback on the homework at this time.

If important issues come up during the check-in, do not be too rigid about the planned agenda. Allow some space to deal with the participants’ issues.

Checking-out

Always have a check-out at the end of every session. It is a time when you can ask participants, “What did you learn today?”; “Are there any questions?”; and “Is the homework clear — do you know what to do at home?” You can also confirm the time, date, and place of the next session at this time.

A check-out is meant to close, not to open, a discussion. If an important issue comes up during the check-out, make sure that it is well-received but reserve further exploration for the next session.

Homework

Homework is an important part of the training. Its primary objective is to keep the thematic discussion and learning experience alive, especially between the sessions, at home, and outside the training circle. As one of the Rwanda training participants stated: “The homework gives an opportunity to practice at home, to show the new things to others. We discuss all with the neighbors; they also like what we learned.”

Motivating Participants – Questions to Encourage Sharing

All questions in the manual (in each session) are designed to encourage sharing of information, thoughts, and feelings, and are constructed in such a way that they evoke men’s reflection on topics related to health, household decision-making, livelihoods, the quality of their relationships, and their rights. Facilitators are welcome to use the suggested questions but are also encouraged to formulate their own. Just make sure that the questions welcome and encourage participants to share what they feel, think, or believe in, as well as what they do or did.

Managing Conflict

Because the workshops touch on and include discussion of sensitive issues and difficult problems, there may well be disagreement between facilitators and participants or between participants themselves. People have strongly-held views about gender and gender roles, for example, and their views about health or income may differ significantly. This means that disagreements can easily turn into conflicts. Disagreements are healthy and should be welcomed; it is often through disagreement that we come to better understand our own thoughts and feelings. But conflicts

are not healthy. They distract from the objectives of the workshops. Conflicts drain energy away from exploring and learning. Managing conflicts is an important task for facilitators. A good way to deal with a participant who is challenging you or the group is to turn the challenge into a question directed to the whole group or to the participant him/herself.

Avoiding Conflict

Disagreements that develop into conflicts may start with accusation and judgment of the other. For example, one participant might say to another, *"You are a bad person", "You are always teasing me", or "You never listen to me"*. Ask a participant who is talking this way to make statements starting with *"I feel"*, as in *"I feel angry when I listen to Person B, because his/her statement reminds me of..."* If issues are too sensitive to share with others in the group (e.g., experiences of violence and rape), request that participants give examples they know of from other people (using the third-person and without mentioning names). As facilitator, always provide space for expression as well as for withdrawal to avoid pressuring someone to share something they don't want to: remind the participants that they are free to speak out or share as they wish, or alternatively, not to talk about anything they feel uncomfortable talking about.

Dealing with Difficult People

As the training progresses and the group is exposed to various exercises, views, and ideas, some participants may assume certain roles within the group, such as leader, fighter, challenger, peacemaker, complier. Some of these roles can interfere with the learning experience of others as well as with the flow of the workshop. Facilitating a group discussion may involve dealing with difficult or disruptive individuals. Reminding the group of the ground rules and of their responsibility to behave appropriately can be helpful in such situations. If someone complains, the facilitator is free to ask for an explanation, address the complaint, or refer the complaint to the group. If a participant is disruptive, the facilitator can involve the group by asking others for their reactions.

Dealing With Difficult Situations

The topics addressed in this manual are sensitive and can be difficult to discuss. The specific activities can help participants to discuss these topics openly in a comfortable group setting. But it is likely that a facilitator will have to deal with participants who say things that are not in keeping with the views and values of the program. These could include sexist or "macho" remarks or otherwise offensive comments. Everyone has the right to express his own opinion, but intimidating or offending others with negative comments or behaviors is strongly discouraged. For example, a participant might say, *"If a woman gets raped, it is because she asked for it. The man who raped her is not to blame."* It is important that the facilitator challenge such opinions and offer an alternative viewpoint that reflects the philosophy of the program. This can be difficult, but it is essential in helping participants work toward positive change. The following process is suggested for dealing with such difficult situations:

Step 1: Ask for clarification

"I appreciate you sharing your opinion with us. Can you tell us why you feel that way?"

Step 2: Seek an alternative opinion

"Thank you. So at least one person feels that way, but others may not. What do the rest of you think? Who here has a different opinion?"

Step 3: If an alternative opinion is not offered, provide one

"I know that a lot of people completely disagree with that statement. Most men and women I know feel that the only person to blame for a rape is the rapist. Everybody is responsible for respecting another person's right to say 'no'."

Step 4: Offer facts that support a different point of view

"The facts are clear. The law states that every individual has a right to say 'no' to sexual activity. Regardless of what a woman wears or does, she has a right not to be raped. The rapist is the only person to blame."

Please note that even after the facilitator takes these four steps to address the difficulty, it is very unlikely that the participant will openly change his or her opinion. However, by challenging the statement, the facilitator provides an alternative point of view that the participant may consider and, it is hoped, adopt later.

Sharing Personal Experiences

Because the training touches on some very sensitive issues and involves personal subjects, participants may use the third person to describe their experiences, using examples of someone else, such as a neighbor, a friend, or a person they know of. This is normal and very typical for participants in a new group, and will most probably change as the training progresses. Also, as a facilitator of a mixed group, you may find that men and women are uncomfortable speaking out in public when the spouse or other members of the opposite sex are present (this may be due to some rigid cultural norms). With time, however, they can grow to trust the training, become interested in it, see its benefits for them and for their families, experiment with some subjects at home, and start sharing with others in the group.

Achieving agreement

It will not always be possible to achieve agreement, either with one or several participants or among all of them. But a good facilitator will highlight areas of disagreement within the group, as well as points of agreement, that merit further discussion. The facilitator should also sum up the main points of each discussion and any action-points that have been agreed upon, and always thank the group for their contributions and participation in the workshop.

During the implementation process, three experts in relevant business, legal, and medical³¹ matters will conduct three separate, thematic presentations, or “blocks”. They will discuss, with both men and women, existing in-country laws and policies on gender-based violence, issues related to sexual and reproductive health, and the basic elements of income-generating activities. The section below provides guidelines for the experts on how to develop their presentations, what materials to include, and what thematic areas to cover.

Guidelines for the Experts

Three expert presentations, one per thematic block, are included in this training manual. The objective of each presentation is to provide participants with specific, practical information about: (1) business, including basic information and tips on various income-generating activities, the core elements of managing profits from a Voluntary Savings and Loan program (VSL, investing, VSL benefits, etc. (for additional guidance please see *CARE International Rwanda SPM Module*³²); (2) health, including STIs and HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment, as well as available contraception and family planning methods, and access to health services in their own communities; and (3) legal matters, including the country’s laws and policies relating to property, gender, and GBV, as well as available legal services and how to access them. The new information should be simple, practical, and applicable, and should be offered using participatory methods.

Each presentation should be accessible, friendly, comprehensive and respectful, and, if possible, should make use visual aids such as photos, posters, pamphlets, or brochures. Some content might need to be adjusted to reflect and respect cultural norms. Some sessions might be conducted in comfortable and well-equipped community centers, some in very simple settings with no electricity or modern technology. It is important to take such factors into consideration when planning a presentation. The training supervisor/facilitator should inform the experts well in advance about the context of the intervention (and its objective), and how the expert session fits within it as well as about the nature of the setting and the participants’ educational levels and livelihoods.

31 Please refer to the Business Block, Health Block, and Laws and Policies Block in this manual. The content of the expert’s lecture is also attached to this manual

32 CARE International Rwanda: Intambwe Buri Cyumweru. Amahugurwa y’abanyamuryango b’amastsinda yo mu cyaro akora ibikkorwa byo kuzigama no kuguriza. Yavuguruwe muri Kamena 2010.

ANNEX II

Supplement to Session 4

Supporting photos from MenCare – Global Fatherhood Campaign, for the homework in Session 4 (“Building time management skills and learning task-sharing”).





RESOURCES

Instituto Promundo - *Program H Working with Young Men*

www.promundo.org.br/en

<http://www.promundo.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Introd-Sexuality-Rep-Health.pdf>

CARE International and CARE International in Rwanda - *Power/ISARO Project*

www.care.org and <http://www.care.org/careswork/countryprofiles/93.asp>

<http://www.care.org/careswork/projects/RWA083.asp>

EngenderHealth - Kenya

www.engenderhealth.org/our-countries/africa/kenya.phpp

EngenderHealth- Champion Project (Men as Partners project) – Tanzania

www.engenderhealth.org/our-work/major-projects/champion.phpp

MenCare - Global Fatherhood Campaign

www.men-care.org

Rwanda Men's Resource Centre

www.rwamrec.org

MenEngage Global Alliance

www.MenEngage.org

Sonke Gender Justice Network

www.genderjustice.org.za

Engagingmen - Gender Justice Information Network (Partners 4 Prevention)

www.Engagingmen.net

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