GLOBAL VOICES FOR GENDER JUSTICE

MANHOOD: FROM SELMA TO AMERICAN SNIPER
PARTYING WITH CONSENT
GAY FATHERING IN LATIN AMERICA
WHY INVOLVE MEN IN FEMINISM?
By Rob Okun

The inaugural conference of the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities is one sign. The global MenEngage symposium in India was another. The movement of men promoting women’s rights and men’s transformation is not just growing, it’s linking up in greater numbers than ever before. That two major international gatherings—one in New Delhi, the other in New York—took place within four months of one another is a welcome development. Some 2000 delegates—from every continent on the globe—convened in India in November and the U.S. in March for symposia with similar names: Men and Boys for Gender Justice in Delhi and Men and Boys for Gender Equality in Manhattan. From activists to researchers, NGO staff to independent change agents, the delegates exchanged more than information on the latest studies concerning gender justice and equality. We broke bread and clinked glasses; shared photos of each other’s families; listened carefully to one another’s struggles and triumphs. The political became the personal.

For a global gender justice and equality movement to flourish, maintaining and deepening personal relationships across boundaries of language, culture, class and religion is essential. Anecdotal evidence bears out this contention. For as much valuable data and inspiring speeches I read and heard, it’s been the relationships I’ve developed with colleagues who don’t look or sound like me that have moved me to deepen my commitment to gender justice. Our global movement will have the greatest chance to cultivate conditions for a peaceful world if we continue to get to know one another.

At the global MenEngage symposium in India I felt those conditions. For five days I was “home”—living with my tribe of 1200 women, men and transgender delegates from 94 countries—putting our shoulders to the wheel of change (see pages 18–19 for photos and our Delhi Declaration and Call to Action). That feeling sustained me even after we’d disbanded and I was alone on an overnight train to Varanasi to speak to gender studies classes at two universities not far from the banks of the holy Ganges River.

The students, two-thirds men and one-third women in one class, the reverse in the other, were uniformly optimistic about changing gender expectations. They are part of an Indian movement putting cracks in a Berlin Wall of oppression that not only prevents women from achieving equality but also threatens their physical safety in their native land—“the world’s largest democracy”—a contradictory nation of creativity and chaos, possibilities and poverty. In the same issue of The Times of India, I read a story on one page quoting a ministry of education official describing advances that promoted women’s equality, and on the next an article about an “honour” killing of a woman by her father and uncle. Her “crime”? Marrying a man from a different caste. In this cycle of hope and despair, I am ever alert for good news. In Varanasi, I got it.

A heterosexual female student said she would only marry a man “who didn’t just share equally in domestic chores and childcare when we’re home alone. My partner will act the same way when his parents come to visit,” alluding to the pressure many men feel to perform patriarchal masculinity in front of other men; in India, especially their fathers. When I asked a male student what inspired him to embrace women’s equality, he replied without hesitation. “My mother was sick and our family’s laundry was piling up. I realized that I should take over washing the clothes. We live in a small village and when I went to the communal well with the laundry basket men there ridiculed me. They said, ‘Why are you doing women’s work?’ That was eye-opening.”

My hosts in Varanasi, Prof. Madhu Kushwaha, who teaches at Banaras Hindu University, and her husband, Sanjay Singh, a professor at Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith University, embodied an egalitarian relationship. Sanjay told me his father had disinherit him because he refused to dominate Madhu. (Stories about their work and research can be found on pages 8 and 12 respectively.)

Among the delegates in Delhi were contingents from Africa and Latin America. When Benno de Keijzer, a warmhearted Mexican and leading member of Cómplice por la equidad (MenEngage Mexico), learned I’d be in his country in December, he invited me to their meeting in Mexico City. The group was preparing for the fifth Latin American colloquium on men and masculinities in Chile in January, where they were presenting findings from a study they’d conducted on masculinity and violence in Latin America. At the daylong meeting, we decided to collaborate: translating several articles from Voice Male into Spanish and distributing them to the delegates at the gathering in Santiago.

Unlike many long meetings I’ve attended in the U.S.—where everyone usually disperses when a meeting ends—after our rich exchange of ideas was over we gathered outside for a leisurely meal on the grounds of Radio Educación at a table laden with homemade Mexican food prepared by several members of the group. Cómplice por la equidad’s Guadalupe (Pita) Cortés served as our host. A producer who’s been at Radio Educación for decades, as we laughed and talked and took photos, she made sure our plates were full.

Pita was a presenter in Delhi, describing the long-running program, Entre Hombres (Men), which regularly features first-person accounts of men across all Mexico’s 32 states sharing insights about their growing understanding of their identities as men. As if to underscore the shared commitment among women and men in the global gender justice movement to collaborate, she interviewed me for a segment of Entre Hombres that aired at year’s end (www.entrehombres.net/128-2dosimposio-global-menengageindia-rob-okun-primera-parte/).

Our tribe of gender justice advocates may only gather periodically—and, of course, only a fraction of our members in this growing movement are able to attend—but when we go back to our home countries, it’s up to each of us to share the passion and possibilities of a world where women and men work together to redefine manhood and boyhood, fatherhood and brotherhood. May the day come soon when a program called Entre Hombres is renamed Entre Hombres y Mujeres.

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Male Positive • Pro-Feminist • Open-Minded
Mail Bonding

AND A CHILD SHALL LEAD US

On a peaceful snowy day, as we sipped cups of hot cocoa, my six year-old daughter seemed upset. “Mom, why does everyone want to make snowmen? I want to make a snowgirl. Why do people always talk about firemen, or policemen? It makes me so mad.” Where would I begin? This would be the start of a conversation we’d continue over the years. My daughter’s already aware of some hard truths. At five she noted that TV sports was nearly all men and told us that she wanted to watch women play basketball. We quickly switched to WNBA games.

She accompanies me to the polls every time I vote and so I shared with her that women had to fight for our right to vote and that even though we can vote now, the fight continues. We looked at the ruler on the table with a picture of all of the presidents. She understood immediately without any explanation. I told her an issue being fought for today is equal pay for women. What if I paid her brother more for the same chore? She was angry and shocked. “This is so unfair.” We talked about girls around the world and why it is so important to get an education and follow her dreams.

She paced around the room, thinking. “I know!” she exclaimed. “We need a day, no wait, a ten-day, celebration of girls and women. It will be like Chanukah and we’ll light a candle each day for girl’s dreams. The first day will be a celebration of girls and we’ll pray that every girl can live her dream. On the last day we will invite boys and men to come and have a very serious talk about fairness. But, Mom, some boys and men are really good, like Daddy and brother. So we should celebrate them for being fair and loving. “ I agreed.

I told her about International Women’s day. She was pleased to hear about it but said the day cannot be a conference; it must be a fun day for everyone. I told her that there are men who work to remind other men about the fairness that she is talking about. Then I told her about Voice Male. She said, “I want every boy and every man to read it and to treat everyone fairly. This is actually my dream.”

Lyssia Lamb Merriman
Takoma Park, Md.

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ONE MAN CAN IN SUDAN

In Sudan, efforts to address gender-based violence typically have focused on women and girls. Men and boys are often left out of the conversation, or worse, are portrayed only as perpetrators of violence. Rarely are they viewed as agents of change. The One Man Can (OMC) initiative believes that real change requires men and boys to be active partners in preventing violence against women and girls. Launched in South Africa by SONKE Gender Justice Network, OMC “supports men and boys to take action to end domestic and sexual violence and to promote healthy, equitable relationships that both men and women can enjoy passionately, respectfully and fully.”

Through OMC, South Sudan’s Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Program (DDR) has been working closely with the UN Development Program and SONKE to prevent violence against Sudanese women. As part of postwar social reintegration efforts, a priority is engaging men and boys to work to prevent violence in postconflict communities.

When the One Man Can manual was piloted in war-torn communities in the states of Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Khartoum, efforts focused not just on reintegrating male and female ex-combatants into their communities, but also on encouraging their peaceful coexistence with other residents. Given the success of these efforts—and follow-up outreach activities by One Man Can trainers in leading coed reflection-discussion groups on gender and violence—the manual was replicated in other areas of Sudan. In the past five years, more than 500 peer educators and community facilitators were trained, and 100,000 men and women in South Kordofan and Blue Nile have been reached through OMC campaigns. Participants include religious and community leaders, teachers, and youth ambassadors.

Since 2013, the One Man Can national network has grown to include 34 NGOs working across Sudan.
Men @ Work

Dr. Leith Dunn, a senior lecturer and director of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies.

The Kingston-based professor of men pursuing gender studies reports an increase in the number of University of the West Indies, Development Studies (IGDS) at the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies, reports an increase in the number of men pursuing gender studies. The Kingston-based professor attributes the rise to a global shift in focus on women to gender and development in gender studies departments. The result? More courses incorporating issues faced by male students, including parental rights and the role of men in traditionally female-populated occupations.

At UWI, men have emerged from these classes more committed to gender equality and more aware of gender. Prof. Dunn noted. Through IGDS activities tailored for male students, the program has been successful in promoting men’s awareness of sexual discrimination and their own treatment of women. The growth of gender studies has allowed “men to become aware of the role of gender-based expectations and power structures, both in society at large and in their interpersonal relationships,” according to Prof. Dunn. Men previously uninterested in the subject are increasingly committed to promoting human rights and overturning oppressive practices of female subordination.

No Men, No Cry

More male students taking gender studies classes? That’s what a Jamaican researcher has discovered.

Dr. Leith Dunn, a senior lecturer and director of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies, reports an increase in the number of men pursuing gender studies. The Kingston-based professor attributes the rise to a global shift in focus on women to gender and development in gender studies departments. The result? More courses incorporating issues faced by male students, including parental rights and the role of men in traditionally female-populated occupations.

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Boys n Toys

Wonder Crew, a fledgling Massachusetts-based toy company, is developing a line of toys to encourage empathy, emotional intelligence, and strong relationships among boys. Called “Crewmates,” they’re a cross between action figures and a child’s favorite stuffed animal, according to Wonder Crew founder Laurel Wilder. A psychotherapist and mother, Wilder says, “Toys influence the way kids think about themselves and the world around them,” so by developing toys that depart from traditional narratives of masculinity she hopes to foster healthier messages about what it means for “boys to be boys.”

The Winding Road to Equality

Members of an anti-violence organization in Mexico City have designed a board game to educate participants about sexual violence and gender inequality. The Men’s Movement for Equitable, Nonviolent Relationships (Centro MHORESVI A.C.) created the “Snail of Equity” game, as a “tool to generate a playful, fun process of reflection and reeducation.”

The four creators of the game—like the rest of the organization’s members—work as volunteers to support men who have renounced violent behavior. They hope that introducing the Snail of Equity will make the work “more fun and less threatening for those who, out of curiosity or necessity, are questioning what it means to be a man (or woman) in this patriarchal culture and in so doing, raise awareness about the possibility of identifying, preventing, and eradicating gendered violence,” says German Ortiz Pacheco, one of the game’s creators.

The rules on the back of the board begin by advising players to play “without stress, anxiety, worry, or any pressure to compete to win.” They ask participants to prepare themselves to “listen and learn new concepts and ideas that may seem strange, uncomfortable, or unfamiliar.” As players move along the winding path of the snail’s shell, they encounter concepts such as “empathy,” “commitment,” “communication,” “cultural equity,” “trust,” “security,” “gender roles,” and “sexual violence,” which are among the many terms defined in the comprehensive glossary the group prepared.

MHORESVI currently distributes the game to the men in their groups, and their friends and families. In the days ahead they hope it will spread to feminist, LGBTQ and indigenous organizations, among others. To learn more, go to www.https://mhoresvi.wordpress.com/.

—Amber Rounds

“Builder Will,” one of the new Wonder Crew line of toys to encourage empathy, emotional intelligence, and strong relationships among boys.
Wilder says she was inspired to create Wonder Crew after her son came home from preschool and told her “boys aren’t supposed to cry.” Dissatisfied with the emphasis in boys’ toys on muscles and violence—which set boyhood goals few can achieve—she noted, “If you want anything nurturing, or empathetic, or even friendship oriented, you have to go to the ‘pink aisle....’ When it comes to boys’ toys, Wilder says, “Action figures have a way of prescribing how boy’s play. My goal with Wonder Crew is for kids to create their own narrative.” Wonder Crew is initiating a Kickstarter campaign this spring to fund initial production of the toys. The first run will feature the Crewmate “Will” as a superhero, a rock star, and a builder. Future products will include a diversity of races, genders, and adventures. To learn more, go to www.wondercrew.com.

Keep Your Laws Off My Body

Missouri State Rep. Rick Brattin looks like a corn-fed line-backer from Middle America U. Truth be told the legislator has suited up to try and sack women’s reproductive rights. In a career marked by efforts to criminalize legal abortion, the 34-year-old Republican has proposed legislation requiring adult women to seek permission from the baby’s father before being allowed to terminate a pregnancy. Brattin says his bill would allow exemptions for pregnancy resulting from rape but only if the rape is “legitimate”—reported to police and proven as a rape. In cases of deceased fathers, women would need to provide a death certificate.

Ohio proposed similar legislation in 2009, but it died in committee, as legislative observers believe Brattin’s bill will. If the proposed legislation does progress in Missouri, it’s unlikely to be enacted because of a 1979 Supreme Court ruling (Planned Parenthood v. Danforth), making illegal requiring spousal permission prior to an abortion. Nevertheless, Brattin’s proposed law could be one more hurdle for Missouri women seeking abortions, and leave the door open for potential lawsuits from biological fathers who want to have control over abortion decisions.

I Am (Wo)Man

The UN Women Knowledge Gateway initiated a new campaign in February to promote women’s economic empowerment. I Am (Wo)man is rallying women and men from around the world to speak out about the importance of women’s economic empowerment.

Men were particularly encouraged to be vocal. Members of MenEngage, the global alliance of some 700 NGOs that support gender equality, were among the networks UN Women wanted to reach. “I think this can be an opportunity for MenEngage members to visibly express support for women’s economic empowerment,” said Joni van De Sand, MenEngage global coordinator.

The first phase of I Am Wo(man) called for submissions of photos and captions sharing one’s commitment to action on behalf of women’s economic empowerment through digital and social media. The campaign encouraged first-person multimedia stories of women who have made a difference in an individual’s life, or that of their family or community, because they were economically empowered. Stories of men who benefited from an economically empowered woman were also sought.

People interested in participating can upload their photo and caption at EmpowerWomen.org. For more information, write empower.women@unwomen.org.

Resisting Patriarchy in Latin America

Activists, researchers, and public policy makers across Latin America and the Caribbean met in Chile in January for the region’s Fifth International Symposium on the Study on Men and Masculinities. The conference, “Patriarchy in the 21st Century: Changes and Resistance,” explored transformative actions promoting gender equality, especially those involving men.

Delegates to the gathering in Santiago came from throughout Latin America. Topics included masculinity and violence, fathers as caregivers, men’s health, sexuality and reproductive rights, sexual diversity and homophobia, sexual exploitation, trafficking and sex work. Radio Educación, producers of Entre Hombres (Among Men)—an ongoing series of sound explorations to discover what contemporary Mexican men are thinking through interviews across Mexico’s 32 states—aired a report on the symposium (www.entrehombres.net).

Voice Male editor Rob Okun was a guest on Entre Hombres in December after attending a meeting in Mexico City of the country’s chapter of the global MenEngage Alliance (Complices por la equidad). It can be heard at: www.entrehombres.net/128-2do-simposio-global-menengageindia-rob-okun-primera-parte.

In Memoriam: The Cartoonists of Charlie Hebdo

That the four slain cartoonists for the French satirical journal, Charlie Hebdo, could be crude no one would deny. They were also fiercely radical and their body of work championed France’s rich history supporting freedom of expression.

The deceased—Stéphane Charbonnier, the editor, 47, known as Charb, and cartoonists Georges Wolinski, 80, Jean Cabut, 77, and Bernard Verlhac, 57—were among the 12 people murdered in the January attack at the newspaper’s Paris office.

To Daniel Leconte they were “like columnists for a very important journal.” Leconte is a filmmaker who was making a documentary about the cartoonists when they were murdered.

“Voice Male celebrates these men’s commitment to speaking truth to power,” said editor Rob Okun. “Their voices may have been silenced, but artists from around the world are stepping in to take their place. Je suis Charlie.”

Rep. Rick Brattin lobbying to sack women’s reproductive rights.
In a break from tradition in the discourse about violence against women, a group of Indian men is offering an alternative view of Indian masculinity.

The Men’s Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW) includes social workers, students, academics and journalists who organize meetings, hold rallies, and use street media to spread the word about new ideas about men and masculinity.

MASVAW promotes gender justice in Uttar Pradesh, a rural northern state, along with parts of Uttarakhand, also in the north, and the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. Their message is direct: promoting equality between men and women and denouncing violence against women. They work to change men’s mindsets which believe a woman’s role at home should be limited to domesticity, that her sartorial choices justify harassment, that her right to free movement needs to be vetted by her family, and that masculinity means asserting a “tough guy” image.

“In the first meeting, most men tell me that I don’t make sense. But sometimes, one meeting is all it takes for a man to go home and apologize to his wife for years of violence and forever,” says Dr. Shishir Chandra, one of the conveners of MASVAW. “Eve-teasing (an Indian euphemism for sexually harassing women in public) is seen as a rite of passage to becoming a man by many students.”

Traditional masculinity, where boys are brought up to believe that they have the right to control women, that they should be aggressive and dominant, lies at the heart of many men acting violently toward women. “In rural India, the worlds inhabited by the two genders are poles apart,” says Dr. Abhijit Das, one of the founders of MASVAW. “In the early 2000s, I realized that many men were playing a passive role in the movement against violence towards women. Through MASVAW, we motivate men who disagree with violence and make their disagreement stronger and better organized,” he says.

Das points to a policy gap in addressing the root of the problem—sensitizing men to curb violence against women. “In India, gender parity is routinely replaced by women’s empowerment, undermining the need for men to be held accountable. Whether it is Aanganwaadi workers (health workers involved in improving education, nutrition and health care)—these are mostly women interacting with women,” he notes.

Preeti Sudan, a secretary at the Ministry of Women and Child Development, agrees. “There is a need for a schematic approach in the government’s engagement with men on gender equity, involving a continuous dialogue. There is a tendency in the government to focus gender equality policies entirely on women. The government has been shy of talking to men,” she says.

According to surveys conducted by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) across India in 2014, nearly two-thirds of men said that they had acted violently against their wife or partner at some point in their lives. Nearly...
a quarter reported perpetrating sexual violence at some point against her as well. Apart from physical and sexual violence, emotional violence remains one of the most prevalent—and most accepted—forms of violence. Emotional violence is also common: limiting a woman’s movement, restricting her to home, and forcing household and childcare work upon her.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported in a survey that an average Indian man spends only 19 minutes a day on unpaid routine housework—among the lowest in the world. Women, on the other hand, are forced to spend 298 minutes—nearly five hours a day—on unpaid housework such as cooking, laundry and childcare, the highest globally. This results in limiting women’s movement and restricting their chances of participating in paid work.

According to Jashodhara Das Gupta, coordinator of the Lucknow-based nonprofit Sahayog (which promotes gender equality and women’s health employing a human rights framework), the government’s efforts to involve men to promote gender equity has been limited to paternity leave for central government employees and a recently approved Saksham plan to encourage gender-sensitive behavior in adolescent boys. Although the National Population Policy 2000 specifically recommended appointing male health workers to promote contraceptive use and encouraging fathers to do more childcare, not one male health worker has been appointed yet.

A study on Indian masculinity by the ICRW concluded that a major reason gender-based violence in India is so prevalent is because Indian men have been socialized to believe that dominance is “normal” and violence against women is justified. For violence-prevention efforts to be effective, it recommends directly engaging with men to alter men’s attitudes and sense of sexual entitlement.

Kamla Bhasin, founder of Jagori, a women’s resource and training center, says that women’s organizations believe that in order to prevent violence against women, men have to stop being violent. “The focus at the policy level has primarily been on punishing violent crimes against women.” It’s clear, Bhasin believes, that “The government’s failure to address men’s attitudes facilitates violence.”

A version of this article was first published in Tehelka, an Indian magazine. The publication (whose name means “sensational” in Hindi) began as an investigative news organization, in 2004 a tabloid newspaper, and reconfigured as a magazine in 2007. www.tehelka.com/masvaw-gender-sensitization-ending-violence-against-women/
The emaciated, malnourished, and openly scared women gently whisper to each other as if they are frightened of being heard. Before them is a little hip of firewood and some charcoal which my hosts confirm are the only sources of income for their families, sometimes as large as 10. The women, still in their early twenties, are seemingly overwhelmed by the burdens they started carrying when they were only 10 years old. They are known to walk for days looking for firewood and charcoal which they sell to refugees in the expansive Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. According to Akiru Emaeti, a 16-year-old widow, a mother of three, Turkana girls and women are beasts of burden, destined to a life of subservience.

Social commentators continue to point to the destructive customs and traditions entrenched in a patriarchal system and enforced through a set of rules and practices that includes child marriage, beatings, and being sold outright. To the Turkana, a girl’s and woman’s destiny is firmly in the hands of the men and boys who claim it is their right to control females.

The Turkana

The 250,000 members of the Turkana tribe live in remote northern Kenya in an area bordered by South Sudan and Ethiopia. Since the area in which they live is arid and dotted with volcanic rocks, they depend on livestock to survive. Since water is strictly for drinking, they are known to use butter or animal fat to wash and using both to stop their necklaces chafing. Boys initiation from child to male warrior is achieved through a ceremony that involves killing an animal. Their elaborate beaded necklaces reflect their social status and men refuse to look at women who don’t wear them.

Reso Akilana, a 14-year-old, and the sixth wife of Elikana Akwamu, describes her life as a living hell. According to her, Turkana girls are denied an education and bought like goats (not to mention being forced to take care of real goats). “I was bought when I was six and brought here to be taken care of by Elikana’s oldest wife, who taught me the chores of a wife. She taught me how to take care of the goats and sheep. At 10 she started teaching me about sex before having my first sexual encounter at 12. I now have two children who he hardly supports. I have to fend for myself as well as for him. He spends his day playing games with other elders at the public park and returns home at night asking for food. He rarely sells any of the goats, sheep or cows to support us. I have considered killing myself several times,” she wails loudly as I struggle to hold my tears back.

More than 85 percent of Turkana girls are illiterate. A survey by the antiviolence organization I direct, the Coexist Initiative, confirmed that of the women and girls interviewed, 96 percent were survivors of multiple forms of
violence, the most common being domestic and sexual. A group of Turkana women told me that sexual violence was the norm. “Which rights do we have when we are bought and used like sheep? They attack us when we go looking for firewood or while taking care of animals in the wild. While young, they prepare us for the adversity. They even teach us the things to do when we get sexually violated. We were taught that a woman’s body belongs to the clan of her husband and therefore is available for all and sundry. We have no one to complain to when beaten and tortured by our husbands and their relatives. I have never heard of a woman who has walked out of marriage because here, we are married to be tortured and used till death,” lamented Atianga Akisa, a mother of eight and a seventh wife of 85-year-old Charaka Monding.

According to Peninah Akiru, a community mobilizer at the Kenya Education Equity Project in Kakuma refugee camp, and a development studies student at Mount Kenya University in Lodwar, the fate of a Turkana woman and girl lies in the hands of barbaric customs and traditions. “They married me off when I was only 12, but I managed to run away from the marriage and walked for several days to Lodwar town where a good Samaritan took me in and enabled me to go back to school. I could not stand that nonsense around those customs that turn Turkana women and girls into objects available for use and not [treated] as human beings whose rights are respected.”

Akiru emphatically insists that the world must focus on women from marginalized communities to prevent perpetuating a vicious cycle of hopelessness, despair, agony and death. How long, she asks, will Turkana women and their babies continue to be eaten by hyenas as they collect firewood to sell to refugees so they can provide for their useless husbands?

At the Kakuma stadium, I come across a group of more than 40 Turkana elders playing peiarei, a famous game using a set of stones thrown in holes dug out of a piece of wood. This remains the most revered pastime for elders. It is while playing peiarei that the elders negotiate child marriages and cattle raids. According to Epael Okwang, a spokesman (self-proclaimed) of Turkana elders in Kakuma, they meet daily to play, then take some alcohol and plan the way forward for the community. Another elder, the drunk Okiri, interjects, telling me that Turkana men do three things in their lives: “We go get cows that we in turn use to marry women who in turn take care of the cows from which we marry more wives. So women, cows, donkeys, sheep and all else are the same,” he shouts as the rest of the elders nod in approval.

During the course of the conversation, a few elders start plaiting each other’s hair as they sing and dance to edonga, the revered tune of the Turkana. A few invited women arrive to join the party. I am told they spent the entire day getting high on a local brew called Kaada. At the gathering, I am also told that polygamy is the norm and that women support it because it is a way of lessening the burden of being a Turkana woman.

The Coexist Initiative

Modern African Men Believe

- All girls have a right to an education
- No girl should live as a slave or a prostitute
- No girl should be married before she is 18 years old
- No girl or woman should be married against her will
- No infant should be killed on account of her sex
- No girl should undergo female genital mutilation
- Girls should have actual legal protections
- No girl or woman should be subjected to sexual/gender-based violence

Founded in 2002, the Coexist Initiative is a nonprofit network for men and boys organizations working to prevent sexual- and gender-based violence and HIV in Kenya.

They believe that unequal relations between women and men are rooted in deeply entrenched beliefs that men and boys have social, economic and political “privilege” at the expense of girls and women’s vulnerability.

www.coexistkenya.com/info@coexistkenya.com

Wanjala Wafula is a founder and CEO of the Coexist Initiative, a not-for-profit synergy of men’s and boys, community-based organizations committed to eliminating all forms of gender-based violence in Kenya. He has authored three books. He dedicated this article to his friends Nakwamekwa, Balaba and Naiyenaiemen. www.coexistkenya.com or Wafula@coexistkenya.com
Modern nation-states have long used education to control discussions of citizenship and nationality, dissent and conformity. India is no exception. Schools are among the most favored state institutions to carry forward a nationalist agenda and have become an important place where students learn about gender identities. School life experiences (curriculum, textbooks and subject choices, pedagogical practices, learning materials and school ethos) are organized to invite conformity, not confrontation, in existing societal gendered norms. That was the conclusion of Karuna Chanana after her 2007 study of female sexuality and education of Hindu girls in India.

Since nationalism itself is a masculine project, most nationalist ideologies are rooted in patriarchal social systems. The ideology of hegemonic nationalism is not complete without the ideology of hegemonic masculinity because the latter is about protecting “one’s women” whereas the former is about protecting the motherland. As the scholar Joanne Nagel has noted, the “‘microculture’ of masculinity in everyday life articulates very well with the demands of nationalism, particularly its militaristic side and terms like honor, patriotism, cowardice, bravery and duty are hard to distinguish as either nationalistic or masculinist, since they seem so thoroughly tied both to the nation and to manliness.”

Schooling is a complex process and textbooks are among the most tangible and concrete aspects of school life. Since children’s textbooks are a dominant blueprint of shared cultural values, meanings, and expectations, they contribute to how children understand what will be expected of them as women and men, and shape the way children will think about their own place in the world. Nationalist, masculine discourses get solidified in textbooks and are the battleground between the state and future generations. Examining textbooks provides an opportunity to decode—and better understand—the landscape the children will someday inhabit.

I examined 13 sixth-grade textbooks, analyzing them from a social constructivist framework. Additionally, I interviewed three students to examine their reactions to the textbooks’ messages. A number of interrelated themes emerged during my analysis of the textbooks.

War, Militant Nationalism and Patriotism

Although we live in the 21st century, textbooks, particularly Hindi and moral education volumes, have a fascination with war and war heroes. There were numerous references to war against enemies—real, mythological or symbolic. War heroes are celebrated for demonstrating their courage, both for the clan and the nation, and masculine ideals are prominent.

The second dominant theme in the textbooks was vivid, bold and direct descriptions of militant nationalism, which carried exclusively masculine overtones. Most texts were about male characters except for one poem about a female protagonist, Rani Laxmibai, a revolutionary freedom fighter of the Indian freedom movement (who was depicted as “manly” for her qualities of bravery and sacrifice for the nation). The discourse on nationalism, particularly militant nationalism, was seen as incomplete unless there were men ready to sacrifice their lives for the protection of national pride. Cynthia Enloe, who writes from a feminist perspective about international politics, has demonstrated the connection between masculinity and nationalism, observing that “nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope.”

Indeed, nationalism extends man’s individual sense of honor and pride to the national level. As a consequence, patriotism legitimizes control over the nation by some men. It provides a cover for the aggressive, brutal side of masculinity, all the way from abusive behavior interpersonally to waging war.

Gendered Account of Nation

The whole discourse about Indian nationalism has been gendered. The nation is defined as women and men are defined—in the roles of custodian and protector. Analyzing textbooks revealed that the Indian nation has almost always been referred to as female—think of...
Mother India. The boundary between nationhood and womanhood is presented to suggest that the nation’s pride and women’s pride are interexchangeable; an insult to a woman is analogous to an insult to the nation. Women’s contributions were filtered through the lens of maternity. Mothers’ roles in the nation’s identity were highlighted through autobiographical accounts of revolutionaries:

“Mother, I believe that you will patiently understand that your son has sacrificed his life for the supreme mother—Mother India—and he didn’t betray the family name and kept his promise.”

“The way I embrace death by going to the gallows (and sacrifice my life for the nation), would inspire Indian mothers to have children (sons) like Bhagat Singh (the Indian freedom fighter).”

Texts like these sent clear messages to boys and girls regarding what is expected from them as citizens of the nation. India belongs to men; they are its owner and protector. Women are incorporated into the nation in different capacities, including as the symbolic mother nation and sometimes as actual producers of future citizens (virile men).

Positive Masculinity

Usually, men and hegemonic masculinity were shown in the context of nationalistic patriotism, in war, or other conflicts. But when men were not represented in those areas, bravery was still a basic quality of manhood. Bravery, benevolence, kindness, adventure, and reason were some of the qualities attached to nearly all male figures represented in textbooks. There were no accounts of men facing dilemmas, and no expressions of weakness (moral or physical). Contempt for weakness was prevalent.

Very high moral standards were set both in Hindi texts and those addressing moral education. It seemed at times, the textbooks were meant more for adults than children, not surprising because children were so central to advancing the nationalist project of the Indian state. The analysis of the textbooks also revealed that most of the masculine ideals expressed reflected the values of the upper, ruling class. Women were underrepresented in all but three of the 13 textbooks examined.

Student Reactions

In order to understand how children receive textbook messages about masculinity, the researcher individually interviewed three sixth-grade students, two male and one female. Each student was given texts to read before engaging in an informal talk about their perceptions and feelings.

Nationalist discourses had a powerful influence on the students. One said he liked most the chapter about Jhansi ki Rani, the mid-19th-century Indian queen and warrior who was a symbol of resistance to the rule of the British. He liked her because she fought for the nation’s freedom, one boy said; “Everybody should be a patriot and should fight for the mother nation.” To the question who can fight for the nation, all the students responded only male soldiers. The researcher asked whether women could be patriots. After a long pause, each said, “Yes.” Pressed to describe how, two students said that they didn’t know and one male said women could show their patriotism by buying only Indian goods. At the end of the interview the same student said that women could nurse wounded soldiers on the battlefield. One student said that soldiers have more respect than others in Indian society but said he would not become a soldier. The girl student said that it was men’s military duty to protect the nation.

Of the texts she’d read, she reported appreciating two stories with moral lessons about “care and sacrifice for mother,” stories that never addressed violence or war. Unlike the boys, the girl student liked the stories that had themes of care and sacrifice rather than patriotism and violence.

Why do people refer to the nation as “Mother India?” the students were asked. One of the males said that it is because it is written in the textbooks. All of them said that they didn’t completely understand the meaning of the country’s national anthem. One male student said that though he couldn’t understand it, the anthem filled him with enthusiasm.

Analyzing the students’ interview suggests that at the sixth-grade level students generally accepted a gendered account of the nation. They have clear ideas about what was expected from males, but weren’t sure what women could do for “Mother India” (although one of the boys suggested supportive roles—as nurses).

Students should not be seen as passive recipients of patriarchal messages presented in their textbooks. They read, interpret and construct meaning out of these messages. They have agency in terms of how they respond to the texts. Their agency is limited by textbook narratives advancing an outmoded expression of masculinity. That limitation is reinforced through other children’s literature, popular culture, and the mass media.

In the 13 textbooks examined, nationalism and masculinity were intertwined. As fertile ground for indoctrinating students with an aggressive brand of hegemonic masculinity, students are being duped with texts that disguise, under the cover of patriotism and nationalism, patriarchal notions of India that must not just be challenged but dismantled.

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When he was in college nine years ago, Sunil Chachar did masonry work and sold flowers for a living. After attending a residential camp on gender sensitization, Chachar, 28, who grew up in Mavdi village, a district in Pune, India, realized that his mother was doing all the household chores. He’d also believed housework was beneath him. Questioning the male dominance in all spheres of life—including the decision to do housework—Sunil started doing domestic chores, including cooking and cleaning. Despite the taunts of relatives and neighbors who called him a sissy, he continues doing them today. Now working with boys in shanties near the Pune railway station, and other neighborhoods, Sunil engages young males on a range of gender matters.

Five years ago, Anand Jadhav, 24, joined a similar youth initiative in his village in Satara, a district of the state of Maharashtra in western India, near Pune. Deeply troubled by how women in Indian society are deprived of decision-making and property rights, he started speaking out on behalf of his sister who was being forced to marry. He argued with his parents to allow her to have a say in who and when and if she wanted to marry. Gradually, he began working to ensure that all the women in his family had a say in family matters. Anand, who married recently himself, promotes healthy conversations with peers at work, advocating for healthy relationships between women and men.

Participating in a workshop on gender, Vivek Kumbhar, a college student in Mumbai, reflected on how the roles of men in his family dictated the roles his mother and sister played. “In my family, Papa used to scream at Mummy. She did everything for all of us, yet she was not allowed to have a job. My father used to get angry if she ever spoke about it. Default decisions were made only by my father, and the next authority figure was me,” recounted Vivek. After attending a youth camp six years ago, Vivek started to speak up for his mother. He began washing his own clothes and doing his own dishes; his father eventually followed suit. After going to school for four years, his mother got a job as a kindergarten teacher and now, her son reports, she has her own friends and a social life.

Like Sunil, Anand and Vivek, there are more than 500 young men in their twenties addressing gender issues—too long seen primarily as “women’s issues” in India (and most other countries). These young men are not only taking active stands against gender discrimination against women in their personal lives, but they are engaging and mentoring hundreds of adolescent boys and young men in many districts across Maharashtra, spreading the message about women’s right to dignity and safety.

These young men’s ideas and actions have been shaped by their involvement with Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA), which for more than two decades has been working with boys and men to address gender issues and help prevent gender-based violence and abuse of women. Established in 1993, MAVA sees young men as key stakeholders in the movement for gender equality. MAVA addresses gender issues from three directions: cultural advocacy, direct intervention and youth education programs.

The genesis of MAVA dates back nearly a quarter century. In September 1991 an advertisement ran in an English-language newspaper, and two other vernacular journals in Mumbai. “WANTED: MEN WHO BELIEVE WIVES ARE NOT FOR BATTERING. If you are a man strongly opposed to violence towards wives from their husbands, and would like to help stop it, then send us your name, address and phone number, if you have one.” The journalist C.Y. Gopinath had put out the appeal. A total of 205 men and young men answered the ad; the youngest was 14, the oldest 66. The group met periodically for a year during which a core group of members emerged. I stepped forward to lead the group. Men Against...
Violence and Abuse was formally launched in March 1993. Its goal? Deconstructing conventional masculinity, helping men break out of the dominant image of masculinity, and helping bring about a more equitable society where women would be regarded with respect.

In 1995, after a 19-year-old female was the mistaken target of an acid attack by a jealous husband, MAVA created a campaign asking citizens to donate money for the young woman’s facial reconstruction surgeries. The organization also spearheaded discussions about the cruelty that can arise out of jilted love. Nearly a hundred people from various walks of life responded to MAVA’s appeal. Among the most touching contribution was the gesture of prisoners from Nashik Central Jail; they raised $200, money they donated from their own savings. They also wrote the woman a poem expressing their anger and pain at the inhumanity of acid attackers. Such a strong statement of hope reinforced our commitment to continuing to work on what we had set out to do regarding gender equity.

MAVA’s initial work focused on intervening in specific cases of violence against women in Mumbai and encouraging both media advocacy and collective action by men. Contemporary gender injustices in Indian society, including dowry harassment and other forms of domestic violence; cruelty arising out of jilted love; the rape of a minor girl on a suburban train; a proposal from the state legislature to ban sex education in schools; and sex-determination tests to identify sex-selective abortions were among topics MAVA activists took on. Formats included discussion groups, public forums, and protest demonstrations. (All of our activities included representatives from women’s groups.) Additional campaigns and interactive sessions exhorted the general public, especially targeting young men.

Over the years, a number of other initiatives have been piloted, including poetry readings by male poets, gender-themed traveling film festivals, premarital workshops underscoring gender equality and respect, International Women’s Day observances, and campaigning in the annual 16 days of global actions challenging violence against women (November 25 – December 10). Participants ranging from internationally acclaimed filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker to respected men from diverse fields, including playwrights, musicologists, psychiatrists, and educators, started joining and lending support to MAVA’s efforts.

One of MAVA’s landmark initiatives was Purush Spandana (Men’s Expressions), a regional magazine for and by men, published annually at the time of the Diwali festival. In Maharashtra state, we have had a rich, century-old tradition of celebrating the festival of lights with the buying and reading of special Diwali ankhs (magazine issues) on various social themes. More than 400 different ankhs are published annually. In 1996, a special ank, “Men on Relationships,” included poetry, anecdotes, stories, interviews, first-person accounts, surveys and analytical articles. From its inception, the magazine made waves across the state. More than a third of readers are women—many hoping the men in their households will read the magazine and begin questioning traditional gender roles, including their own attitudes. The magazine encourages men to share their own experiences, including their questions (and insecurities) about alternatives to conventional male stereotypes. The tone of the writing is intimate, inviting readers into the author’s experience. In 2007, translations of selected writings from past magazine issues were published as a book, Breaking the Moulds: Indian Men Look at Patriarchy Looking at Men. It was hailed by women’s activists and the media as “India’s pioneering exploration of masculinities.”

MAVA’s Counseling and Guidance Centre

The need for a safe, open space for men to come to terms with their own vulnerabilities crystallized in the creation of a drop-in center in the suburbs of Mumbai. There, MAVA counselors address men’s problems directly, including those that may lead to violent behavior. Eminent psychologists host sessions on issues from anger management to dealing with anxiety. To date more than 7000 men and women have contacted MAVA’s Counseling and Guidance Centre.

For the past eight years, MAVA—under its Yuva Maitri initiative (Friendship Among Youths)—has been closely working with a number of 18 and 19-year-old college males in communities in seven districts addressing issues ranging from sexual health to gender-sensitive behavior. The youth are being trained to communicate with their peers on gender, healthy relationships, and other matters related to masculinity. Activities include workshops, FAQ booklets, street theater, storytelling, folk music, film festivals, youth meets, social media and other outreach efforts designed to reach the wider population. They emphasize personal dialogue and experiential sharing. “Personal Change Plans” invite young men to learn about both the benefits of women’s empowerment and the burdensome ways patriarchy undermines men’s full expression of their humanity.

Today, mentored young men like those introduced at the beginning of the main article—Sunil, Anand and Vivek—have been engaging thousands of boys and young men in wide-ranging interpersonal dialogues, including sexual health issues. They’ve collaborated and partnered with universities, youth organizations and women’s groups across the state. Youth mentors are periodically invited by several developmental bodies, corporations, and colleges across the country to conduct sexual harassment prevention workshops, build capacities among young men, and share tools and innovative perspectives to address gender issues.

The MAVA Yuva Maitri helpline offers younger males and females not just an outlet to express their inner turmoil, but also an opportunity to make important decisions to improve their lives. The majority of callers are between 14 and 24. They phone in from across the state seeking support for emotional problems, relationship issues, and questions about their sexual orientation. MAVA has found that adolescent boys and young men in both India’s urban and rural areas desperately need a safe platform to express themselves about stresses that give rise to violent behavior, including those related to sexuality. The helpline was the first of its kind in the country. To date, more than 90,000 young men and 30,000 young women have been reached through MAVA’s various youth initiatives that promote gender-equitable models of masculinity. In 2010, the Yuva Maitri initiative was selected over 155 other entries to win the Ashoka Changemakers international global competition award as the most promising solution for preventing violence against women. In 2011, it was featured on an Indian government website as an example of “Best Practice in Public Service Delivery” in the country.

MAVA’s persistence—and its successes—in engaging boys and men is a hopeful sign that men can also be partners in the movement for a healthy, gender-equal society.

—Harish Sadani

Mumbai-based Harish Sadani has been passionately addressing gender issues for more than two decades. He is a founder, member and principal of Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA). To learn more about MAVA, visit http://www.mavaindia.org or write him at saharsh267@gmail.com.
Gay Fathering in Latin America

By Marcos Nascimento

For 20 years Marcos Nascimento has been working with groups of young and adult men, practitioners, educators, and policy makers on how to promote gender equality in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America. In recent years, fatherhood has become a major area of interest and in 2012, Nascimento was invited to be part of a new initiative developed by a Rio de Janeiro–based NGO. A group of professionals, mostly family therapists, were starting a new project that offered a safe space for gays and lesbians who had children—and those interested in having children—a place designed to share experiences and learn from one another. All participants were establishing or trying to establish their own families with partners and children. Through his experience with LGBT families, Nascimento’s interest grew in understanding not only the personal and social challenges gay and transgender fathers face, but also how society—from a contemporary understanding of evolving notions of masculinity—can better support these fathers.

From public policy planners to men’s groups, over the past decade, fatherhood has been increasingly recognized as a critically important topic around the world. Campaigns to encourage men to be more involved in maternal and newborn health care, debates around paternity leave, and educational programs for young fathers are among the issues organizations are addressing. However, there are few references to gay fatherhood or to transgender fathers. The majority of studies about fatherhood are seen through the lens of the heterosexual experience, an experience primarily expressed through virility, sexual power, and one’s own (heterosexual) masculinity.

In Latin America, discussing ideas about fatherhood and motherhood with LGBT parents is a relatively recent development. For 20 years Marcos Nascimento has been working with groups of young and adult men, practitioners, educators, and policy makers on how to promote gender equality in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America. In recent years, fatherhood has become a major area of interest and in 2012, Nascimento was invited to be part of a new initiative developed by a Rio de Janeiro–based NGO. A group of professionals, mostly family therapists, were starting a new project that offered a safe space for gays and lesbians who had children—and those interested in having children—a place designed to share experiences and learn from one another. All participants were establishing or trying to establish their own families with partners and children. Through his experience with LGBT families, Nascimento’s interest grew in understanding not only the personal and social challenges gay and transgender fathers face, but also how society—from a contemporary understanding of evolving notions of masculinity—can better support these fathers.

In Latin America, discussing ideas about fatherhood and motherhood with LGBT parents is a relatively recent development for many professionals working with these parents and prospective parents. Although debates on marriage equality, adoption, and access to assisted reproduction technologies for LGBT people have been addressed—and have led to important rights achievements in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Uruguay—there is still much work to be done. In Latin America, there are few statistics regarding the number of same-sex parents. It is evident that gay fathers (and lesbian mothers) have always existed, either through previous heterosexual relationships, as gay couples, or individuals seeking adoption services and assisted reproductive technologies to establish families. For gay and bisexual men, official and informal adoption is the preferred pathway to having children. For most transgender people, informal adoption is often their only recourse since discrimination against them is even harsher than what gays face.

In 2010, the Brazilian census reported for the first time the number of same-sex families in the country. The figure of 60,000 was undoubtedly an underestimated number (because of the tremendous prejudice facing the LGBT community, many gays and lesbians may not have reported their sexual orientation to census takers.) Meanwhile, studies conducted by the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) have revealed that between 40 and 70 percent of respondents in Brazil, Chile and Mexico are against gay men adopting children. Their argument is that gay male couples are “suspicious” because of their sexual orientation—and their gender—and are seen as “unable” to effectively care for children (compared to lesbian couples,) who at least have “natural” maternal feelings as women (suggesting no equivalent paternal feelings exist in men).

Any orientation other than heterosexual is perceived negatively; indeed, in some Latin American countries being gay, lesbian, or transgender is a crime, considered a deviant behavior. It reflects a deep-seated prejudice that often leads to homophobic violence, including homicides.

In our project with LGBT adults, there were few men in the groups. However, for those men who were a part of the group, becoming a parent was not some “fatherhood project” but part of a life plan, not an “accident” or something that just “happened.” There was a great emotional (and financial) investment in realizing their dream of becoming fathers. Such men expect a lot of themselves and feel the stress of wanting to be good fathers. They were afraid, for instance, that if their children struggled in school it would be attributed to their fathers, being gay.

Creating a family with a partner and children that has full legal recognition is new for these men, for their families of origin, and for society as a whole. For that reason, the men face a range of problems related to being a “new family”—legal (do you list both father’s names on the birth certificate?); paternity leave (for one father only? For both? How long?); and, heartbreakingly, dealing with schools that refuse to admit their children (because the schools
are not “prepared” to receive their families as part of the school community). As one man in the group said (referring to gay and lesbian families), “We are in the middle of a changing process. We are the change.”

In spite of the social barriers they may encounter, fatherhood remains an important goal for many gay, bisexual, and transgender prospective parents. They face challenges and barriers as gay fathers that society eventually will have to address. For those men who have had children in a previous heterosexual relationship, what help might they need with others in their lives navigating their new sexual identity? What does it mean for a gay man to come out to his children? Does it change their benchmarks of masculinity and fatherhood? For those who have sons, does it change their understanding of boyhood and manhood? And what do we know about the experience of transgender fathers? Isn’t the lens through which we analyze their male experience necessarily going to have to be different from the traditional heterosexual masculinity framework?

As researchers and activists Gary Barker and Fabio Verani have reported, “The discussion around same sex couples highlights the fact that fathers have many other unique issues that cannot be addressed by simply focusing on traditional heterosexual nuclear families.”

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REFERENCES


Men and Boys for Gender Justice

The Delhi Declaration and Call to Action

At the second MenEngage Global Symposium (November 10–13, 2014), some 1200 activists, researchers, practitioners, and other professionals converged in New Delhi, India. The “Men and Boys for Gender Justice” delegates, represented by individuals from a mix of NGOs from 94 countries, met for four days at the Indian Habitat Centre, where plenaries, presentations, and breakout sessions allowed for a rich exchange of ideas. Equally rich were the informal lunchtime and tea break gatherings the women, men and transgender delegates held in the center’s spacious, sunny courtyard. Attendees held a shared awareness of living in a world of profound inequalities and unbalanced power relations, where rigid norms and values about how people should behave fuel and exacerbate injustices. As a consequence, the symposium reflected the full complexity and diversity of gender justice issues. It challenged delegates to reflect, think strategically, reach out across socially constructed boundaries, and strengthen partnerships, and acknowledge that there are gaps. As an outcome of this historic event, and as a shared commitment, the following Declaration and Call to Action expressed both the delegates concerns and their affirmations.

1. Patriarchy and gender injustice remain defining characteristics of societies around the world, with devastating effects on everyone’s daily life. No matter who we are, and no matter where we are in the world, these forces make our relationships less fulfilling, less healthy and less safe. From an early age, they introduce suffering, violence, illness, hate and death within our families and communities. They strip us of our fundamental human rights and hinder our ability to live a life with love, dignity, intimacy and mutual respect. They hamper the development of our economies and keep our global society from flourishing. These are the root causes of many barriers to sustainable development around the world. We urgently need to overcome these immense threats to human wellbeing.

2. Patriarchy affects everyone, but in different ways. Women and girls continue to face significant, disproportionately high levels of gender injustice and human rights violation. Men and boys are both privileged and damaged by patriarchy, but are rarely aware of that fact. Men and boys are also gendered beings. Gender equality brings benefits to women, men and other genders. We urgently need to acknowledge that gender inequalities are unacceptable no matter who is affected.

3. We build on a precious heritage. We owe our awareness of gender injustices, our efforts to promote equality, and the existence of this symposium itself to the pioneering courage and vision of feminist and women’s rights movements. We align with the work of women’s rights organizations and recognize all achievements in transforming social, cultural, legal, financial and political structures that sustain patriarchy. Keeping its historical context in view, we shall continue our work with men and boys towards gender equality informed by feminist and human rights principles, organizations and movements and in a spirit of solidarity.

4. We believe in an inclusive approach to realize gender justice. We are men, women and transgender persons calling for everyone to participate in the gender justice movement. Though engaging men and boys is an essential part of such efforts, this has often been overlooked. We seek to make visible the most effective ways men and boys can contribute to gender equality, without being used as mere instruments.

We commit to promoting social and economic inclusion, gender identity, religion, ability and other orientations, gender identity, religion, ability and other factors.

We value the diversity of our world, and cannot allow our work on deep personal and political convictions. Whenever our work makes this work more comprehensive. It should not detract from investment in other effective strategies, especially those undertaken by women’s rights organizations.

We advocate for all activists, civil society organizations, private sector partners, and-call-to-action.html. We call on policy makers and donors to dramatically increase strengthening our shared vision of comprehensive gender justice work.
Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women, and MenEngage

1. Patriarchy and gender injustice remain defining characteristics of societies around the world, with devastating effects. We urgently need to acknowledge that gender inequalities are related to inequalities based on race, age, class, caste, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ability and other factors. We value the diversity of our world, and cannot continue to address these intersecting injustices in isolation.

2. Patriarchy affects everyone, but in different ways. One thing is clear: we cannot afford to neglect the dimensions of gender justice in our work on deep personal and political convictions. Whenever and wherever any of us says one thing but behaves differently, it fundamentally undermines our cause. We must speak out both in private and in public when we see others acting unjustly; being a silent bystander to an unjust act means being complicit in that act.

5. Patriarchal power, expressed through dominant masculinities, is among the major forces driving structural injustices and exploitation. We are particularly concerned about the many manifestations of militarism and neoliberal globalization, for example: war; the proliferation of weapons; global and local economic inequality; violent manifestations of political and religious fundamentalisms; state violence; violence against civil society; human trafficking; and the destruction of natural resources. We urgently need to expose the link between patriarchy and the exploitation of people and environment, and to help boys and men change their behavior from “power over” to “power with.”

6. Gender inequalities are related to inequalities based on race, age, class, caste, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ability and other factors. We value the diversity of our world, and cannot continue to address these intersecting injustices in isolation. We commit to promoting social and economic inclusion through meaningful participation, deepened partnerships, and joint actions among social justice movements. Gender equality brings benefits to women, men and other genders.

7. It is essential that each of us live the values of gender justice. This requires men and boys in particular to reflect critically on their own power and privilege, and to develop personal visions of how to be gender-just men. It requires all of us to base our work on deep personal and political convictions. Whenever and wherever any of us says one thing but behaves differently, it fundamentally undermines our cause. We must speak out both in private and in public when we see others acting unjustly; being a silent bystander to an unjust act means being complicit in that act.

8. Investment in engaging men and boys in gender justice work makes this work more comprehensive. It should not detract from investment in other effective strategies, especially those undertaken by women’s rights organizations. We reject attempts to weaken our alliances or to put complementary gender justice approaches in competition with one another. We are representatives of diverse organizations, pursuing multiple complementary approaches. We stand in solidarity with each other and commit to strengthening our shared vision of comprehensive gender justice work. We call on policy makers and donors to dramatically increase the resources available for all gender justice work and to include effective gender justice strategies in all development programs.

9. Priorities for specific policy areas and actions for engaging men and boys in gender justice work include: gender-based violence; violence against women; violence against girls, boys and trans-children; violence among men and boys; violence in armed conflict; violence against human rights defenders; caregiving and fatherhood; gender and the global political economy; sexual and reproductive health and rights; sexual and gender diversities and sexual rights (LGBTIQ); men’s and boys’ gender vulnerabilities and health needs; sexual exploitation; HIV and AIDS; youth and adolescents; the education sector; work with religious and other leaders; environment and sustainability; and strengthening the evidence base.

10. The Post-2015 Development Agenda must embrace a human rights approach and also transform unequal power relations. We believe that achieving gender justice requires engaging men and boys for the benefit of women and girls, men and boys themselves, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. For a world that is just, safe and sustainable. We advocate for all activists, civil society organizations, private sector partners, governments and UN agencies to actively promote these principles and ensure that the new international development agenda is just and inclusive.

The Declaration and Call to Action was translated into multiple languages; versions in Hindi, Spanish and Portuguese can be found at http://www.menengagedili2014.net/delhi-declaration-and-call-to-action.html.
After reading the article “From MenEngaged to Men—and Women—Being Enraged” (Fall 2014), by Gary Barker, White Ribbon Campaign cofounder and longtime pro-feminist activist Michael Kaufman was moved to write a response. Barker, cochair of MenEngage, the global alliance of men’s organizations advancing women’s equality and the transformation of manhood, had cautioned his colleagues not to indulge in premature self-congratulation (as Michael Kimmel puts it) by uncritically applauding the movement’s successes. “We should celebrate only when we see true and sustainable progress toward gender equality...” Barker wrote. “Until then MenEngage[d] must be MenEnRaged.” With sobering data from around the world to bolster his contention, Barker warned against the movement cheering too loudly both the impact and the growing interest in engaging men. While he doesn’t disagree with his colleague and frequent writing partner—the pair are coauthors of the new antiwar novel The Afghan Vampires Book Club (appearing in May)—Kaufman does believe a little celebrating is in order.

Back in the 1980s, only a handful of activists and scholars believed that men could be allies for gender equality and that men’s lives could be enhanced by ending our dominant practices of manhood. Right into the 2000s, to raise these issues in UN agencies, for example, was to often be met with skepticism or hostility.

Nowadays, there are programs and campaigns, activists and professionals in nearly every country in the world. Governments, UN agencies, women’s rights groups, international NGOs, researchers, and funders are all interested. Large international conferences and some truly impressive NGOs are focusing on this work. Tens of thousands of service providers, policymakers, activists, and researchers have at least some explicit focus on engaging men and boys.

But wait, Gary cautions. Yes, these are gains, but so long as men’s violence against women remains rampant, so long as gender-based income inequality is with us, so long as women continue to do a disproportionate amount of domestic work and remain so underrepresented in governments, so long as girls still face massive barriers in many countries to education and women face barriers in health care (in particular concerning sexual and reproductive rights and health), we should contain our optimism about our successes to engage men who, after all, still enjoy disproportionate power and privilege.

I Agree and I Disagree

My agreement is simple. All those grim realities of gender inequality, destructive versions of manhood, and the oppression of women and girls are still very much with us. Right-wingers and religious bigots of all faiths employ massive resources, intimidation, and at times outright terrorism to turn back the gains women have made. Many of the equality programs are small scale and reach relatively small numbers. And, as Gary notes, there is often a gap between campaigns and actual changes in institutions and laws.

But here’s where I disagree with his polemic: I actually believe it’s worth celebrating the gains societies are making in transforming ideals of manhood and engaging men to support gender equality. Here are but three examples.

• Twenty-five years ago it was rare for men to speak out against men’s violence against women and to actively support changes in policies and laws. Now, because of the impact of women’s organizations plus a growing number of efforts to engage men, there virtually isn’t a country in the world where changes aren’t taking place. For example, lawmakers (still chiefly men) are passing better laws; police forces (also predominantly male) are training officers to implement those laws. Men are more likely to speak out in their places of worship, in the media, or to their friends.

• We have made tremendous gains (led by LGBTQ-rights campaigns and organizations) in challenging homophobia and heterosexism.

• Consider the major change in the role of fathers that is beginning to sweep the world. This development represents a major...
change in gender relations in the family, in turn a major contributor both to gender equality and to redefining manhood.

**Forward Motion**

One might argue that these are not our accomplishments. But few of us ever claimed we’re a men’s movement in the same sense as the women’s rights or anti-racism/civil-rights movements where we can draw a straight line between determined and diverse activism and ensuing social changes. Rather, we as activists, practitioners, educators, and researchers have contributed to shifting a social discourse, pushing for new policies, developing new institutions that have accelerated changes occasioned by the broader trajectory of gender relations.

Furthermore, who is the “we” anyway? “We” include many who have been active or at least outspoken in fighting for LGBTQ rights and all that follows in terms of our discourse on masculinities and gender. “We” include many who have been active in women’s rights organizations and campaigns. “We” now include international NGOs, government departments, and UN agencies devoting considerable resources to engaging men—for example, the brilliant UNFPA-initiated cascading training of police officers in Turkey to uphold laws on women’s rights and violence against women that has reached more than 45,000 officers(!), training that started with a year-long training for a core group of police.

As well, some men-initiated organizations have, indeed, had a large impact. To cite but one example, the White Ribbon Australia Workplace Accreditation Program assists organizations to make a commitment and develop leadership capacity to prevent men’s violence against women and to respond to violence against women in the workplace. It takes 14 months to complete the program and receive accreditation. In its first 18 months, 64 organizations have been accredited or are in the process of being accredited and 200,000 staff, primarily male, have been reached.

**Why Celebrate, and the Challenges Ahead**

The very idea of engaging men and boys, the very notion that men in our majority can be allies with women, the idea that we need to challenge destructive and self-destructive practices among men—and the realization that we can actually do these things—represents a major shift over the past three decades. That so many governments and institutions are grappling with these questions also signals a major shift. That we have international discussions on fatherhood policies, or the role of men in ending men’s violence against women, indicates a substantial transformation is under way.

People mobilize in large numbers and support substantive change not only when there’s a problem and not only when they can imagine a solution. They do so when they feel that change is possible.

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My prescription for the best way to celebrate—which I think Gary would agree with—is to continue to push into the mainstream, to continue to scale up our efforts, to continue to broaden and diversify our partnership base, and to continue to push to embed the changes we envision in policies and institutions.

Why celebrate our accomplishments? Because they are signposts of the even greater societal transformation that lies ahead.

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Feminist activist Phyllis Frank has for decades been a catalyst—mentoring, criticizing and encouraging men who enter the field. Several of the men we interviewed expressed appreciation to Frank for the energy, intelligence and passion with which she has mentored them. She was one of the first feminist activists to embrace the importance and necessity of men’s violence prevention work, and more broadly in working with men as feminist allies. But she is also well aware of the built-in contradictions of men’s ally work. Once, she told us, she took a phone call from a distraught woman, the partner of a man in her batterers’ program. “She was saying to me ‘I need you to fix him, I need you to get him to stop. You gotta do something.’” The woman was crying, Frank recalled, and “my heart was breaking,” but on the spot, Frank drew from her years of experience in talking with women who were in abusive relationships:

And what I said to her, which is the truth as best I know it, is that “I so wish that I could do that, but there is nothing that I can do that will guarantee or even make it most likely that he’s going to stop being abusive to you. Even if he stops hitting you, he will still likely be assaultive or horrible to you.” She screamed at me, literally at the top of her lungs: “I can’t believe it, I can’t believe it. You’re taking away my hope!’” And in that moment I said, “Oh, please, I don’t want to take away your hope. Even hospice tells us not to stop hoping. But it is crucial that you make your plans based on the man you know you have, not on the one you hope he someday will become.”

Frank realized that her spontaneous advice—to “make your plans based on the man you have, not on the one you hope he someday will become”—was an “elegant turn of a word” based on her years of experience in shelters and hotlines, taking “hundreds of calls from women.” Subsequently, she taught this statement to everyone in her program, including a man she was mentoring who later went on to become a “famous” violence preventionist. “[He] worked very closely with me, and actually affirmed what a wonderful statement that was, because I do trainings all the time. And several years later, I got a newsletter, because he’s now famous and I’m not—he’s far more famous than I am—and he’s quoted in the newsletter with that quote.” Frank’s feelings were mixed. It was good to see her idea being widely disseminated. But it also rankled that the man implicitly took credit for the idea. “It was very painful for him not to say, ‘Phyllis Frank once taught me this.’”

Phyllis Frank told this story not because she is someone who demands praise or fame for coming up with a good idea, but because it served as an example of both the promise and the dangers
of men’s growing presence and public stature as anti-violence leaders. Men, because of their privileged social positions as men, are more likely than women to be listened to when they speak out against violence against women. And everyone in the field—including especially the women who have labored so long doing the downstream work with survivors of men’s violence—agrees that it’s crucially important for boys and men to hear the anti-violence message conveyed by these male allies. But men’s growing visibility and status also risks rendering women’s historical roles as activists, institution-builders and mentors less visible, their voices silenced. Frank described this paradox as a “slippery slope of a problem.”

Men are getting involved in greater numbers. Many men are getting involved and making money, and I always worry about capitalizing and making money on things that women have been doing and saying for a long time and not making money, so that’s kind of a negative. Men get more appreciation—listened to better, often credited with what women have said—that happens over and over again. But the truth is, they are saying something incredibly important for men to say. So, you kind of [say], “Alright, alright.”

Phyllis Frank’s refrain—“Alright, alright”—captures the collective sense of the voices we interviewed, that while men’s growing presence in the anti-violence field can be problematic, their work also plays a crucially important role. To put it simply, and as many women stated it, “We need men as allies.”

What does it mean to be an ally? The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition (“a person or group that gives help to another person or group”) tends to imply a symmetry that does not pertain to social movement allies. Sociologist Daniel Myers argues that in social movements there is a built-in asymmetry between beneficiaries (“rank-and-file activists who hail from the population that would expect or wish to benefit from the movement’s activities”) and allies (“movement adherents who are not direct beneficiaries of the movements they support and do not have expectations of such benefits”). Allies “share a political stance” with movement beneficiaries, and “define problems and solutions similarly,” but they “have a different field to negotiate.” As “insiders-outsiders” in the movement, Myers explains, allies “are members of the activist community but not members of the beneficiary population that underlies the collective activist identity and in fact they are, by definition, part of the enemy.”

Whites who ally with people of color to stop racism, heterosexuals who ally with GLBTQ people to oppose homophobia and heteronormativity, and men who ally with women against the various manifestations of patriarchy are aware that as movement “insider-outsiders” they are not working on a level playing field. In particular, such activists are beginning from a position of privilege that, by the very terms of calling themselves “allies,” implies that their actions aim to undermine and end these privileges. So even though the identity “ally” might carry some morally positive weight—one is, after all, working to make the world a more peaceful, just and egalitarian place—it also necessarily includes some morally ambiguous baggage that raises critical questions and scrutiny concerning the depth of an ally’s commitments to social change. Sociologist Matthew Hughey observed, for instance, that white anti-racism activists’ identities are premised on what he calls “stigma allure,” where allies operate from an understanding of “whiteness as racist,” and “manage self-

Men’s growing visibility and status rendering women’s historical roles as activists, institution builders and mentors less visible.

The men we interviewed took seriously the question of what it means to be an accountable ally. A common theme in discussing the issue was the acknowledgement that being an ally is an ongoing process, not the outcome of a single action or public proclamation. Ben Atherton-Zeman said that he learned long ago that being an ally is “a concept and a goal, certainly rather than something I can achieve, like ‘Okay, now I’m accountable.’” Atherton-Zeman was one of two men—Joe Samalin being the other—who said he learned a powerful lesson from an ally statement put out some years ago by the Women of Color Caucus of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

Basically it says, “Your ally badge, as whites, as men, you gotta’ give it back at the end of every day. You give it back, and you earn it the next day.” So it’s not like I have the badge and I’m done. It’s the same with accountability. For me, accountability means that if I have this great idea, the local program and the state coalition don’t like it, I don’t do it. It means that, for most decisions, I run them by someone like a Phyllis Frank or a Suzanne Pharr or a Rose Geary before I actually do it.

For a longtime movement veteran like Atherton-Zeman, the idea that one never fully and finally earns his “ally badge”—that you have to “earn it [again] the next day”—serves as a powerful reminder of what it means to be an accountable ally. …But what does this idea of accountability mean, and how does it play out, when, as is increasingly the case today, “the community” is large-scale organizations like organized sports and the military—still largely male-run hierarchical institutions whose purpose is to train young men to deploy valorized forms of violence? 

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Selma and American Sniper present two different heroes of two dramatically different historical narratives and between two conflicting conceptions of heroism. There is the heroism of Martin Luther King Jr., who challenged the most powerful forces and institutions of his culture, facing death threats and daily harassment, to work tirelessly toward equality and justice, practice peaceful resistance to oppression, and preach love for your neighbor, stranger and even enemy. American Sniper’s Chris Kyle said it was “fun” to kill the “savages” of Iraq, and blindly followed the destructive marching orders of George W. Bush.

As much as these ideas of heroism clash ethically and politically, there is a deeper conflict at work in American culture. It involves America’s inability to advance beyond its BCE notion of masculinity, and progress into a CE world of humanity. Martin Luther King and Chris Kyle not only represent two radically different definitions of heroism, but also two divergent models of manhood. Given the box office success of American Sniper, and the falling feather impact of Selma, it is clear how the majority of Americans view and enforce manhood.

The prevailing and prevalent projection of American manhood is at once a cartoon, simplistic in its emphasis on strength and eschewal of sensitivity, and dangerous in its celebratory zeal for violence. It is not masculine as much as macho, according to the useful distinction of one of America’s finest male novelists, Jim Harrison. Because Harrison often writes about roughneck, working-class characters in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan or the ranches of Montana, many shortsighted critics have called his literature “macho.” Explaining his objection to that label, Harrison said, “I have always thought of the word ‘macho’ in terms of what it means in Mexico—a particularly ugly peacockery, a conspicuous cruelty to women and animals and children, a gratuitous viciousness.”

Well, you can beat on your chest/Hell, any monkey can.
—Bruce Springsteen, “Real Man”

Idolatry of physical strength and bravery, without an ethical compact or moral purpose, naturally morphs into the glorification of violence, and directly contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of social catastrophes and crises, especially those that involve abuse or neglect of the weak and vulnerable.

The American macho problem of social dysfunction and intellectual paralysis is at work on the football field whenever coaches, fans, parents, and even players enforce a code to take concussions like “real men,” and ignore the possibility of early onset dementia. America’s antiquated notion of macho toughness is operational in the aggressive pursuit of sexual ownership in the military, where one third of women are victims of sexual assault, and on college campuses, where one fourth of women experience sexual harassment.

It is also not far in the background of America’s foreign policy, and its enthusiasm for wars when primitive, locker room calls for “kicking ass” replace meaningful discourse on geopolitics and international affairs. Toby Keith’s anthem about “putting a boot in the ass” of terrorists, like President Bush’s flight suit posturing and “bring it on” finger waving, captured the nation’s attention, demonstrating how at the highest levels of governance and in the most avid articulations of politics, America has not yet graduated out of the Bronze Age nor has it left the professional wrestling ring.

Anyone who attempts to navigate the minefield of the macho mentality will face accusations of failing to live up to some bizarre standard of acting as a “real man.” Steve Almond writes that he is deluged, almost daily, by people telling him, through the tough guy forums of anonymous social media and email, that he is not a “real man” because he is critical of the NFL for its complicity in covering up concussions and their consequences.

Antiwar activists and writers often have their “real men” credentials questioned. The recent mockery of John Kerry and James Taylor for a performance of “You’ve Got a Friend” in France reveals that the only acceptable language of international alliance is the terminology...
of violence. Had Kerry vowed to “destroy” or “eliminate” all Islamic terrorists, he would have won favor in the press. Using song as a gesture of political and personal friendship is worthy only of scorn.

The failure to evolve out of stone age masculinity is especially damning because America prides itself on its status as a “Christian nation,” yet Jesus Christ said “he who lives by the sword dies by the sword” and advocated “turning the other cheek” when facing a tormentor. It was this very idea, along with Gandhi’s application of nonviolent protest to politics, that inspired King to lead the civil rights movement according to principles of peace.

King and Gandhi possessed what the novelist and social critic Gore Vidal described as “moral courage.” That standard of courage and measuring of bravery is flawlessly helpful in the world of adult reality, but not as appealing in the world of juvenile fantasy.

In *American Sniper*, one of the most important scenes takes place early in Chris Kyle’s childhood. The boy is sitting at a dinner table with his brother and parents, and his father explains that in the world there are “sheep” (weak people without the capacity for violence), “wolves” (evil people who are violent), and “sheepdogs” (good people who are violent). The earnest father, speaking in an inexplicable tone of anger, tells Chris and his brother that he is raising them to be sheepdogs.

The worldview is deranged in its simplicity. History, ethics and politics are much more complex than the categories of wolves, sheep and sheepdogs will allow. The worldview becomes dangerous when coupled with macho notions of physical strength and infantile ideas of physical courage, because it causes the aspiring sheepdogs to actively look for wolves.

“There is evil here,” an adult Chris Kyle tells a SEAL turned war skeptic in *American Sniper* when justifying the American invasion and occupation of Iraq. There certainly is evil in Iraq, just as there is evil in America and everywhere else. Sending sheepdogs to pick fights with wolves, as the world has seen in Iraq, will only spread misery, enhance cruelty and create chaos. The medieval macho philosophy, dominant in American life, insists that the eradication of evil is possible with guns, tanks and tough guys. It is naive at best, but catastrophic when combined with the categorization of human beings in absolutes. Failing to question, much less protest, the state for its advancement of its own interest overseas, with the trajectory of the missile and bullet, reveals America as a nation of sissies in desperate need of “real men” like King to demonstrate authentic moral bravery.

Martin Luther King Jr. did not classify all human beings into the static groups of “evil” and “good”—“wolves” and “sheep.” He said “there is evil in the best of us, and good in the worst of us,” and explained that all it takes for evil to triumph is for “good men to do nothing.” He resisted the simplistic and self-serving supremacist worldview. According to his friend Harry Belafonte, he did express consternation that he was succeeding in the integration of his people into America, but that he was integrating them into a “burning house.” Regressively relegating manhood to aggression without compassion acts as kerosene in a culture committed to arson.

It is erroneoue to distill the civil rights movement into the struggle of one man. King would have meant nothing without his staff and supporters. Even if he was a genius and a giant, it was the movement that made King. It was not King that made the movement. Similarly, Chris Kyle’s attitudinal aggression toward anything un-American and his fatal, doctrinal loyalty to the interests of Empire fuels the death machinery of militarism, but it does not construct and create it. The war in Iraq was a policy decision of the American government carried out with the enthusiastic endorsement, or at least, tacit approval of the American media.

At the movie theater, however, there exists the dramatization of two distinctly American men, and through an imaginative confrontation with the tragedies and triumphs of their lives, Americans can draw distinctions between two different molds of manhood. One mold makes room for tenderness, love, and sensitivity to the suffering of others, along with a willingness to admit weakness. It is a 21st-century adaptation to the acquiescence of knowledge and the progression of cultural norms more suitable for sophisticated, and more importantly, peaceful living. The other mold makes room only for arrogance, intimidation and the reckless abandonment of humanistic values in favor of the desire to dominate.

Gore Vidal, a gay veteran of World War II who risked his entire career in an act of moral courage by writing the first gay love story in a novel during the height of homophobia in the 1950s, was part of an American vision of manhood that allowed for complexity of thought and emotion. The cinematic characters of Paul Newman’s best roles—strong but sensitive—provide another example, as does the music of Bruce Springsteen, an all-American man whose most masculine song, “Tougher Than the Rest,” equates strength with loyalty and love.

At some point, American culture lost its balance—and its mind—and reverted back into an action movie, video game conception of masculinity. The consequences, far from fictional or digital, are located in the wreckage of women’s lives darkened by sexual assault, children’s futures destroyed by war, and its macho practitioners’ loss of emotional stability and satisfaction.

Martin Luther King Jr.’s life demonstrates the sturdiness and softness necessary for healthy masculinity. Acceptance of such a contradiction, and sublimation of two oppositional ideas into one identity, requires comfort with the nuanced variety of psychology and history. Chris Kyle suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition that caused robotic detachment from his family culminating in nearly killing his son’s pet dog during a child’s birthday party. It is likely that his laconic rejection of regret, remorse, or even reflection on his own role in an unjust war worsened his psychic disorder.

“Do you have any regrets or doubts over anything you did?” a VA psychiatrist asks Chris Kyle in the movie. “No, that’s not me,” he answers back. It isn’t America either. The trauma will only escalate until an increasingly isolated and violent nation can look itself in the mirror with a willingness to see its disfigurations and deformities. King’s life was lived and lost in service to the truth. He understood that recognition of the truth, even when it is ugly, is elemental to the beauty of a hero and the substance of a man. That is the place King still occupies in every moral American’s conscience.

Working with Men to End Violence Against Women

BEYOND THE MANTRAS

By Michael Flood

It is high time to take stock of efforts to involve men in preventing violence against women. In particular, it is time to critically examine a series of assumptions about men’s work in this area that are influential but either are unsupported by evidence or are dangerous.

I have long argued that men have a positive and vital role to play in ending men’s violence against women. But advocacy must be accompanied by critical assessment. I examine three dimensions to involving men in preventing violence against women: relations with feminism (practical and conceptual); understandings of men, gender, and violence; and approaches to engaging men.

RELATIONS WITH FEMINISM

From the beginning of violence prevention work with men, feminists have expressed concern about its practice and politics. To what extent have these concerns been realized?

While there are few examples where violence prevention work with men has directly taken funding away from work with women, there have been other tensions between efforts to engage men and boys and other feminist efforts focused on women and girls themselves.

Some have expressed concern that men might “take over” violence prevention campaigns. Frankly, I’m more concerned that they won’t take up such efforts. Few men support such work, which is primarily done by women. Still, some men in the movement do dominate interactions, claim unearned expertise, or act in other patriarchal ways.

Male advocates may receive greater status, power, and recognition than women doing similar work, and they may rise more quickly into leadership positions. Such scenarios echo the “glass escalator” effect documented among men in other feminized professions.

Around the globe, work with men is often done by women’s and violence-focused organizations, although male-specific organizations are increasing, particularly in North America. And collaborations may not necessarily mean effective partnerships, or that there isn’t changing men’s attitudes. Focusing on attitudes alone neglects the structural and institutional inequalities that are fundamental in shaping men’s violence against women. Changing attitudes does not necessarily change behavior, and the relationship between attitudes and behavior is both complex and two-way.

The second issue is how men are seen and treated. Feminist scholarship takes an intersectional approach, recognizing that gender intersects with other forms of social difference and inequality. Despite this fact, there has been little comparative assessment of the value of approaches tailored to specific populations, although there is evidence that culturally relevant interventions are more effective than “culture-blind” or generic ones. Intersecting forms of social disadvantage also make it hard to engage men in violence prevention.

Disadvantaged men may not have much power and privilege to critically evaluate (and limited capacity to become) agents of social change. In addition, much violence prevention work often neglects gay and queer men and transgender people.

Third, there are some other problematic framings in the field. One is a pervasive distinction between “masculinity” and “men,” allowing a critique of sexism and violence as a problem of “traditional masculinity.” This approach can diminish attention to men’s violent behaviors. Some men make distinctions between “us” and “them,” between “well-meaning men” or “men of conscience” and those “other” men who assault women. This framework focuses only on obvious forms of violence and not on other coercive forms or violence-supportive attitudes and relations. It can neglect men’s privileges and entitlements in a patriarchal society.

There are some weaknesses in the typical understandings in this field; three are worth highlighting. First, violence prevention efforts often have focused on competition for resources or a diluting of feminist efforts.

The growing emphasis on the need to involve men in stopping violence against women is a feminist achievement. But it has weakened the legitimacy of women-only and women-focused programs and services. It may have fueled a mistaken belief that all interventions should include men.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF MEN, GENDER, VIOLENCE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

There are some weaknesses in the typical understandings in this field; three are worth highlighting. First, violence prevention efforts often have focused on
**Approach to Engaging Men**

The third dimension of the field is its approach to engaging men. There are some “mantras,” assumptions that are part of an emerging consensus in men’s violence prevention work, but they are based on shaky evidence, have potentially dangerous effects or, at the very least, should be articulated more carefully.

The first assumption is that our efforts work. Most intervention strategies are not evaluated, and existing evaluations often are methodologically or conceptually poor. Three systematic reviews of published studies among men and boys show that interventions, if well designed, can produce change in the attitudes and behaviors associated with men’s violence against women. But they also show that the body of evidence is weak. For example, in a review of 65 studies, only seven had a strong or moderate research design that demonstrated an impact on perpetrating non-sexual violence, and only one of the well-designed studies demonstrated an impact on sexually violent behavior.

The second assumption is that men will benefit from progress toward nonviolence and gender equality. This is a common element in appeals to men in violence prevention, one I have often made myself. Yet a single-minded emphasis on the benefits of nonviolence and gender equality for males is dangerous. In the first instance, men who use violence against their partners or other women benefit directly from their behavior. More widely, men in general benefit from some men’s violence against women. In limiting women’s autonomy and safety and their access to economic and political power, such violence has the social consequence of reproducing men’s authority over women. Seen from this perspective, there are ways in which men will lose (status, privilege, and power) if progress is achieved in moving more men toward nonviolence and gender equality. Efforts to involve men must acknowledge the costs to them or under-mining patriarchal privileges, the underpinning of men’s violence against women. They should also acknowledge the potential costs of becoming involved in violence prevention itself, given that the men and boys who participate may be ridiculed or harassed for not conforming to masculine norms. At the same time, it would be a mistake to appeal to men purely on altruistic grounds. We should appeal to men’s reconstructed or antipatriarchal interests—the stake that some men already feel in championing freer, safer, more egalitarian lives for women and girls.

A third common assumption is that the best people to engage and work with men are other men. There are two parts to this idea: the sex composition of the group, and the sex of the educator. The actual evidence regarding the merits of single-sex versus mixed-sex groups is, well, mixed. The most effective sex composition of groups may depend on factors including the focus and goals of the teaching sessions and the nature of the teaching methods used.

Yes, employing male educators has particular pedagogical and political advantages. But again, there is little robust research evidence in the violence prevention field demonstrating the effectiveness of matching educators and participants by sex. And various studies have found that many men initially became sensitized to the issue of violence against women by directly listening to women and women’s experience.

Another common practice is the use of “real” men to engage men. In marketing campaigns, for example, there is often a reliance on male sports heroes and popular male entertainers and celebrities. Such men are seen as “bell cows,” able to lead other males into this work because of their conformity to gender norms. Exclusively relying on men who conform to (many) gender codes, though, may also limit social change. Men’s violence against women is sustained in part by rigid gender binaries and the policing of manhood. Violence prevention efforts among boys and men also should affirm and promote men who do not fit dominant codes of masculinity—“girly” men, gay men, “sissy” men, and transgender men. They should break down narrow constructions of manhood and powerful gender binaries. They should “turn up the volume” on the actual gender and sexual diversity in men’s lives.

A fourth common mantra is that the goal is to encourage new, positive masculinities among men. Some campaigns explicitly appeal to “real” men—think of the campaigns that proclaim, “Real men don’t use violence.” Other efforts appeal to stereotypically masculine qualities like strength or courage while simultaneously seeking to redefine them. There is an obvious logic here, an effort to undermine the socially-produced association between violence and masculinity. At the same time, campaigns also

The growing emphasis on the need to involve men in stopping violence against women is a feminist achievement. But it has weakened the legitimacy of women-only and women-focused programs and services.

Dr. Michael Flood is an internationally recognized researcher on men, masculinities, and violence prevention, and an activist and educator, based at the University of Wollongong in Australia. His writings and speeches are available at http://www.xyonline.net/category/authors/michael-flood.
Why Involve Men in Feminism?

By Nikki van der Gaag

I have been a feminist since my early twenties. I have marched against violence against women and in favor of abortion. I have joined campaigns against sexism and discrimination. As a writer, I have also had the privilege of talking to women and girls and sometimes men and boys in many countries about the role that gender plays in their lives.

In that time I have seen many improvements. Girls in many countries are going to school and doing as well as or better than boys and young men. Women have moved into the paid labor force in unprecedented numbers. There is a new generation using social media to challenge sexism and discrimination and violence. And there are hundreds of new laws to protect women’s rights.

At the same time, social and economic inequalities have been growing. Together with increasing religious and cultural conservatism, they threaten to undermine many of the gains women have made. A United Nations review notes that the progress made in the past 20 years toward reducing global poverty is at risk because of a failure to combat widening inequality and strengthen women’s rights.

So how to ensure that we continue to make progress on gender equality? One thing has become increasingly clear to me: because men still make up the majority of those in power, whether in the boardroom or the bedroom, women will not get any further along the road to gender justice unless we involve men too.

For many women from the Global South, this has always been the case. Take Elizabeth Nyamanyaro, one of the brains behind UN Women’s He for She campaign. She grew up in a village where it was the men who made the main decisions. So when it came to thinking about a campaign that would give gender equality the extra push it needed, she said, “I realized that without addressing men, this was going to be a very, very long struggle for us because the people that tended to make the decisions for me in my own village were men.”

This may seem obvious to readers of this magazine, but it is still not the majority view among many feminists, and certainly not among most men. For me, it was a gradual realization that it might be useful to look at gender inequality from a different perspective than the one I had taken for so many years.

There were a few key moments along the way. I have two children, both now young adults, and when they were born my partner and I were determined to bring them up to see that women and men were equal. One day, my son George, then around eight years old, was with me in the supermarket. He stopped next to the fruit section and looked me in the eye as he asked: “Why are you obsessed with women’s rights?”

Then there were the boys who were hanging around outside the circle of girls I was talking to in Pakistan, or the young men trying to look cool as I discussed reproductive health with young women in a clinic in South Africa. And the work I did while editorial director of the Panos Institute on men and HIV in the early 2000s, where I first came across Instituto Promundo in Rio de Janeiro.

In the past few years, working with men and boys has become so much a part of the mainstream that “But what about men and boys?” is often one of the first questions women’s organizations have to address when seeking funding or support. For some, there is a genuine concern that support could tip away from the crucial work being done by women’s organizations toward working with men. There is no question that both need to happen, but in a time of cutbacks, is this possible? Are we going to see more women’s refuges closing (some shelters are presently in jeopardy but not because of work with men) in order to fund men’s counseling with men? I hope not.

In fact, the divide between men’s and women’s organizations is not as clear-cut as it might at first seem. Many organizations, such as Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa, focus on both men and gender equality work, and women’s rights. Equally, many women’s organizations also work with men, for example Mosaic in South Africa and ACEV in Turkey.

While more evidence is needed, small-scale investigations indicate that, for now, funding for men and gender equality seems to be coming not from a gender pot, but mostly from more generic sources—departments of health or education, for example. What is more worrying, I think, is that resources are being directed away from smaller organizations toward much larger ones, which apply an individualistic approach rather than basing their analysis on a social, political or economic understanding of power.

So what approaches can ensure that women and men collaborate rather than see ourselves in competition with each other?

First, working with men and boys involves keeping power dynamics firmly in place. Men need to stand alongside women and to listen to them, not to speak on their behalf. They need to take to heart the old feminist slogan “the personal is political”—which means questioning their power at home, in the community, and in the wider world. At the same time, they must challenge notions of traditional masculinity that not only keep that power in place but force men and boys into rigid ways of thinking and behaving that harm them as much as women.

Second, as feminist women, we need to be more open to involving men in the struggle for social justice, but we also need to protect our own spaces and resources.

Third, there is an urgent need for more evidence on what is most effective in terms of working with men—something similar to the comprehensive analysis by a team at The Lancet on violence against women.

Finally, changes for both men and women seeking gender equality involve moving beyond the binaries. Here we have much to learn from the LGBTQI movement, which has challenged gender stereotypes for many years.

It is time for feminism to actively include men, and for men to embrace feminism. We will achieve gender justice and win the battle against patriarchy much more quickly if we acknowledge our diversity, but also work together. As Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, executive director of UN Women, reminds us: “If you go alone you go fast, but if you go together you go far.” That African proverb is one both women and men would do well to heed in the days ahead.
In 2012, I had an idea to end sexual assault on college campuses. What if students would “party with consent?” I was 20, thought I knew everything, thought I could control how others behaved, and thought sexual assault would be gone in the blink of an eye if people would just implement my brilliant idea.

During my sophomore spring at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, I was named captain of the basketball team and president of a group called Male Athletes Against Violence. At the time, sexual assault was a hotly discussed topic on campus. However, community forums were leaving everyone with more questions than answers and peer-to-peer conversations were leaving people frustrated. It seemed to me we needed another option.

At the time, a campaign called “Party with Sluts” had become very popular among a lot of college students. My idea was to appropriate the neon lettering design on Party with Sluts tank tops to promote a positive message, rather than a derogatory one. With that, Party with Consent was born.

As I came back down to earth and realized how complex a problem ending sexual assault on college campuses really is, I began to understand three distinct ideas in preventing sexual assault and promoting healthy masculinities: the miscommunication fallacy; the true communication error; and the athletics contradiction.

The Miscommunication Fallacy

From the get-go, I knew that talking about sexual assault on college campuses typically makes people nervous. Through that jittery lens, it’s easy to suggest sexual assault happens on campus because of a frothy mix of miscommunication and too much alcohol. Although many in the general public share this notion, research conducted by clinical psychologist Dr. David Lisak of the University of Massachusetts–Boston and broadcast on NPR disproves that assumption.

The miscommunication fallacy is based on the idea that nobody in college wakes up wanting to be a rapist. As painful as thinking about rape may be, such a rationale about why rape happens can be comforting. “The guy in my bio class is such a good guy, he couldn’t be a rapist...there must have been some real communication confusion the night...”

It’s a more concerning thought—and a more urgent one—to have to acknowledge that there are rapists who are repeat offenders. The culture we have created (on campuses and in society as a whole) allows these rapists to describe their crimes as a “communication failure.” Sadly, most people nod in agreement.

If we’re going to make real progress in preventing sexual assaults, we must debunk the popular belief that rape is not a crime but a form of miscommunication. Actually, there are rapists on campuses, and more than 90 percent are men. They could be someone you know. It could even be someone who speaks out against rape.

The Real Communication Error

The real communication error is a result of how my generation has been taught sexual consent. I’m a bit puzzled when people call my work “consent education.” My response is usually, “Actually, students have already been educated on consent,” I begin. “They’ve learned it from movies, music videos, and pornography. I’m working on uneducating them about their false ideas of consent.”

As millennials, we grew up hearing Jonah Hill tell us in Superbad, “You know when girls say…we could be that mistake!” And then we go to college and college administrators are telling us we can’t consent if we’re drunk?! “What?!! That’s how Jonah Hill told me I’d get laid!”

Unraveling false ideas of consent has to begin with media literacy. Many male students typically say, “The line of consent is usually blurry.” It isn’t, actually, but when you have Jonah Hill in one ear telling you having sex with overly intoxicated women is cool, and your dean telling you that it’s not, who do you think we are going to listen to? “We need to make the idea of getting people drunk in order to have sex with them culturally unacceptable, the same way we made it culturally unacceptable to drive while intoxicated,” Dr. Lisak was quoted as saying in The New York Times. Beyond that, we need to make clear to heterosexual men in particular that coercion, manipulation, deceit, and threats in order to have sex with women is not just uncool. It’s a gateway to becoming a rapist.

The Contradiction in Athletics

It’s been my experience that trying to define masculine strength is often ambiguous and, surprisingly, athletics is a field where it’s particularly confusing to explain. For example, consider these two common sports maxims: “What happens on the field stays on the
Field,” and “You can learn some of the most valuable lessons from athletics.” If we heard either adage alone we might nod our head in agreement. Yet, when they’re juxtaposed we can clearly see a contradiction.

At my college, the athletic director’s boss was the dean of faculty and my basketball coach had the same boss as my philosophy professor. The message? That athletics are an educational experience and college athletes take lessons they’ve learned on the field and apply them to their lives after athletics. When I reflect on lessons in leadership, teamwork, and self-discipline, I could not agree more. But isn’t this a contradiction to “what happens on the field stays on the field”?

It’s easy in sports to turn opponents into objects. On one of my basketball teams growing up, we would “bring it in” with all of our hands in a pile and yell “1, 2, 3...DOMINATE.” My teammates and I were often confused about whether the lesson of dominating others was a lesson we were also supposed to take off the court.

In high school, I was talking to a young woman whom I asked to have breakfast with me. She said no. I told one of my basketball teammates what had happened and he coached me, “Ask her again! Nine no’s and one yes is still a yes. You know how Coach says, ‘Take what the defense gives you?’ You gotta do that with girls, too.”

This contradiction has taught men to think lessons of domination and treating other people as objects are not only perfectly fine, but superior strategies that those who play sports can particularly understand.

As these ideas evolved in my mind, so did the idea of Party with Consent. A simple tank top quickly became a symbol for something much more—to enjoy yourself, yes, but not at the expense of anyone else. As one of friends told me, “I thought Party with Consent was just a way to prevent sexual assault, but then I realized it’s much more than that. It’s a lifestyle.”

Not all readers will remember these were the years before the symptoms for identifying post-traumatic stress disorder had been recognized and protocols for treating PTSD had begun to be implemented. Even senior VA professionals bumble along trying to connect with the vets, medicalizing what were psychological issues and often prescribing medication over therapy.

Gilverstein is overwhelmed first at work, and then by his wife’s announcement of an unplanned pregnancy. A tragedy—partly of his own making—happens with one of his patients, triggering a fear that he’ll never be able to understand and adequately respond to combat veterans in his care. Tension escalates at work, and his difficult relationship with his father worsens. Amid the chaos Gilverstein’s anxiety about becoming a father also grows.

Gilverstein’s mettle is tested when his boss “dumps” a patient on him. Lionel Tool is a Vietnam combat vet, alternating between emotional shutting down and percolating anger. He’s easily triggered by memories of the soldiers he served with, as well as the North Vietnamese combatants and civilians he’s killed. His rage and deeply regretted mistakes are similar to those that plague many combat veterans. Tool gradually shares his tragic and terrible stories—as well as his anger at civilians (including Gilverstein)—who didn’t serve and “don’t understand.”

In one counseling session, the veteran rails against “all you guys who sell us missions. We all believed them. We were crazy to believe them. So what’s the mission now, boss?” Yet doctor and patient both get through the tension and learn from each other, ultimately helping one another to heal and grow.

There are powerful lessons not just for these characters, but for readers, too: When Gilverstein stops hypothesizing, prescribing, and second-guessing how to navigate his relationship with Tool, he begins to really listen. Ultimately, he applies this newfound awareness to his relationship with his pregnant wife. He learns to listen to all his patients, to the people he loves, and—most important—to his own heart.

Rob Wilson is former director of the Veterans Education Project, founded in 1982 by Vietnam vets to share their personal stories about war and military service in schools and public venues. VEP works with vets from WWII thru current conflicts, to educate the public about the realities of war. (www.vetsed.org). Wilson can be reached at wdwright@crocker.com.

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**Books**

**Men’s Healing: The Young Doc and the Vietnam Vet**

**Review by Rob Wilson**

**The Stethoscope Cure**

By Sam Osherson

Solyphos Press, 2014

357 pages paperback, $17.95

Can therapists who have never been to war help veterans who have? That’s the central question psychologist-writer Sam Osherson ponders in The Stethoscope Cure, a novel set in the tumultuous 1960s.

Dr. Paul Gilverstein is a young psychiatry resident at a fictional Manhattan VA hospital during the Vietnam War era. The sixties are a character in the book, with physically and emotionally wounded Vietnam veterans arriving at the VA where Gilverstein works in troubled transition from the battlefield to the home front.

A psychology intern at a Boston VA hospital in the Vietnam era, Osherson has worked with veterans throughout his career, most recently at the Fielding Graduate University, where he is a psychology professor. He is the author of a number of nonfiction books, including Finding Our Fathers: The Unfinished Business of Manhood.

The Stethoscope Cure casts the 28-year-old Gilverstein as the central character in a male coming-of-age story where he is trying to figure out how to become a man and a complete human being. As a newly minted psychiatrist, he must find his way not only as a caregiver to veterans, but also as a son, a husband, and a father-to-be.

The story unfolds in 1967 and 1968 when news of mounting Vietnam battlefield casualties and President Lyndon Johnson’s plans to increase U.S. troops dominate the headlines. The antivar and civil rights movements are gaining strength but Dr. Gilverstein has little time to participate in teach-ins and demonstrations, unlike his wife, a social work student at Hunter College. Dr. Gilverstein’s 1960s struggle is connecting with veterans.
Mothersing Sons, Mentoring Men

By Joann Bautti

As I drove my 10-year-old son home from his Little League baseball game, I listened to his excited chatter about his team winning. Aidan has a reputation in our family for being a chatterbox. What I didn’t realize right away was what he was proud of himself for. After the game, when all the boys were scattered about laughing and talking, one of the coaches yelled, “Come on, ladies, huddle up!”

“That’s sexist,” Aidan told the coach. I gripped the steering wheel, feeling a simultaneous mix of pride and fear.

“How did your coach respond?” I asked. “He looked at me and said, ‘You’re right, Aidan.’”

The truth is I wish I hadn’t felt fear when Aidan told me this story. I wish I hadn’t felt the need to watch that particular coach’s behavior towards Aidan for the next few games, concerned he might treat him differently. The good news? The coach took his comment in stride and didn’t react defensively. The bad news: Speaking out against sexist comments and “jokes” is not commonplace. (Indeed, it’s rarely identified as an issue worth talking about, let alone interrupting.) In my conversations with Aidan after such encounters I talk about recognizing the behavior for what it is and figuring out what he can do to promote positive change. He’s learned what to do pretty quickly. With adults I work with, and students at the university where I work, it is a more involved process. And that process has taught me as much, if not more, than what I am teaching students and others.

Growing up in a traditional Italian family, dominant men ruled the roost. I was a feminist before I even knew what the word meant. Gender inequity was blatant in my house. Why did I have to stand at the kitchen sink and wash every dirty dish when my brother never had to help? Why did my parents rarely come to my tennis matches but never missed my brother’s games?

The seed that grew in me fueled my passion for women’s studies, feminism and eventually my profession, coordinating efforts to prevent interpersonal violence in higher education.

Years of listening to survivors of violence—sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking—and to believe them. Police officers trained to interrogate suspects often find it challenging to interview victims with sensitivity—and to believe them. Police officers trained to interrogate suspects often find it challenging to interview victims with sensitivity—and to believe them. Police officers trained to interrogate suspects often find it challenging to interview victims with sensitivity—and to believe them.

I listened in 2010 when antiviolence activist Jackson Katz came to speak on the campus where I work. Katz mentored me to partner with the university’s athletic department, offering suggestions for collaboration. And I listened to how male students responded to him, a former football player, and like them someone who knows what it’s like to live with the man box.

I listened when Byron Hurt, director of Hip-hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes, about misogyny in the rap world, spoke to our athletic department a few years later about the importance of coaches and administrators leading student athletes by their own example. To illustrate how much work needs to be done to undo sexism, he described being in a mixed-race audience at the premiere of 42, the biopic about Jackie Robinson, the first African American to break professional baseball’s color line. Happily, scenes that included racist jokes found no one laughing, while 50 years ago, he noted, the audience would have guffawed and snickered. Sadly, though, when he goes to movies today that include sexist jokes, people laugh out loud. Much work remains to be done.

When one of the newer members of our university’s football team who attended a program I offered for the team said, “This is the best thing we’ve done since we got here,” I felt gratified. That was the summer of 2013, the first time campus anti-violence educators were invited to speak with new football players about preventing interpersonal violence, tying it in to their coach’s 12 Steps to Success efforts, focusing on stereotypes, life goals, and the man box.

Not long ago, our community police department approached me to conduct interpersonal violence first responder training for their officers, acknowledging that the department was struggling with how to respond in a victim-friendly way to survivors. Police officers trained to interrogate suspects often find it challenging to interview victims with sensitivity—and to believe them. Police officers trained to interrogate suspects often find it challenging to interview victims with sensitivity—and to believe them. Police officers trained to interrogate suspects often find it challenging to interview victims with sensitivity—and to believe them.

Our on-campus military partners invited us to conduct a training for the Army ROTC faculty and new ROTC students. The military partnership we have established, as well as the community police department partnership, is unprecedented.

What I have learned beginning nearly two decades ago when my first son was born is that living in the man box can be debilitating and stifling. The toll it takes on men has parallels to the gender inequity and oppression women experience.

On the door of my office is a poster titled “Every Girl, Every Boy.” The text says: “For every girl who takes a step toward her liberation, there is a boy who finds the way to freedom a little easier.” But finding that way is no small task; it requires recognizing the soul-crushing weight of the toxic man box. When I validate the perspective of the men I work with—acknowledge what they bring to the work of undoing sexism—they can more readily validate and acknowledge what I do, what I see. Working with the man box is our best chance of phasing it out of existence altogether. And once we’ve achieved that goal, we will all be free.

Joann Bautti works at an East Coast university where she serves as project director for a Violence Against Women grant to reduce sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. A trainer, educator, activist, advocate, mentor, and program manager, she says her most important work is raising three amazing sons.
For Young Men

Advocates for Youth
Helps young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health
www.advocatesforyouth.org

Amplify Your Voice
A youth-driven community working for social change. www.amplifyyourvoice.org

Boys to Men
Initiation weekends and follow-up mentoring for boys 12-17 to guide them on their journey to manhood
www.boys2men.org

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol
Provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support and rites of passage programming to youth ages 8-22
www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

YCteen Magazine
A magazine written by New York City teens that helps marginalized youth reach their full potential through reading and writing. www.ycteenmag.org

On Masculinity
American Men’s Studies Association
Advancing the critical study of men and masculinities
www.mensstudies.org

ManKind Project
New Warrior training weekends
www.mkp.org

Menstuff: The National Men’s Resource
National clearinghouse of information and resources for men
www.menstuff.org

The Men’s Story Project
Resources for creating public dialogue about masculinities through local storytelling and arts
www.mensstoryproject.org

XY
www.xyonline.net
Profeminist men’s web links (over 500 links): www.xyonline.net/links.shtml

Profeminist men’s politics, frequently asked questions: www.xyonline.net/misc/pfaq.html

For Men of Color
100 Black Men of America, Inc.
Chapters around the U.S. working on youth development and economic empowerment in the African American community
www.100blackmen.org

Concerned Black Men
A national organization providing mentors and programs that fill the void of positive black role models and provide opportunities for academic and career enrichment
www.cbmnational.org

Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community
Working to enhance society’s understanding of and ability to end violence in the African-American community
www.idvaac.org

National Compadres Network
Reinforcing the positive involvement of Latino males in their lives, families, communities, and society
www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com

For Fathers

Dad Man
Consulting, training, speaking about fathers and father figures as a vital family resource
www.thedadman.com

Dads and Daughters
A blog of thoughts and reflections on father-daughter relationships by Joe Kelly
dadsanddaughters.blogspot.com

Fathers with Divorce and Custody Concerns
Looking for a lawyer? Call your state bar association lawyer referral agency. Useful websites include: www.dadsrights.org
www.divorce.com
www.divorcecentral.com
www.collaborativealternatives.com
www.collaboratedivorce.com

Fathers and Family Law: Myths & Facts
Debunking common myths regarding fathering and family law and providing facts directly from the research
http://www.thelizlibrary.org/site-index-frame.html#soul
http://www.thelizlibrary.org/liz/017.htm

National Fatherhood Initiative
Organization improve the well-being of children through the promotion of responsible, engaged fatherhood
www.fatherhood.org

National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute
Addresses the needs of Latino communities by focusing on positive Latino identity while addressing issues faced by Latino fathers, families, and communities
www.nlff.org

Men and Feminism

Guy’s Guide to Feminism
Website companion to a book by Michael Kimmel and Michael Kaufman which illustrates how supporting feminism enriches men’s lives
http://guysguidetofeminism.com/

National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS)
Pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist activist organization supporting positive changes for men
www.nomas.org

Men’s Health

American Journal of Men’s Health
A peer-reviewed quarterly resource for information regarding men’s health and illness
jmh.sagepub.com

Malecare
Volunteer men’s cancer support group and advocacy national nonprofit organization providing resources in multiple languages
malecare.org

Prostate Health Guide
Offers a guide to the prostate and various conditions that can affect men’s health
www.prostatehealthguide.com

World Health Organization
HIV/AIDS
Provides evidence-based, technical support for comprehensive and sustainable responses to HIV/AIDS
www.who.int/hiv/en/

Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

1in6
Provides resources for male sexual abuse survivors and their family members, friends, and partners
1in6.org

Black Sexual Abuse Survivors
A national online support system for African-Americans
www.blacksurvivors.org/home.html

MaleSurvivor
National organization overcoming sexual victimization of boys and men
www.malesurvivor.org

Men Thriving
A peer-resource offered to male survivors by male survivors.
www.menthriving.org/forum/

Overcoming Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

1in4: The Men’s Program
Offers workshops that educate men in women’s recovery and lowers men’s rape myth acceptance and self-reported likelihood of raping
www.oneinfourusa.org/themensprogram.php

A Call to Men
Trainings and conferences on ending violence against women
www.acalltomen.org

EMERGE
Counseling and education to stop domestic violence; comprehensive batterers’ services
www.emergedv.com

Futures Without Violence
Working to end violence against women globally; programs for boys, men and fathers - www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse
Gloucester, Mass. volunteer advocacy group of men’s voices against domestic abuse and sexual assault
www.strong mendontbully.org

Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention
www.canikissyou.com

Men Against Violence
Yahoo email list
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/me

Men Can Stop Rape
Washington, D.C.-based national advocacy and training organization mobilizing male youth to prevent violence against women
www.mencanstoprape.org

Mending the Sacred Hoop
Works to end violence against Native American women and to strengthen the voice and vision of Native peoples
www.mshoop.com
Resources for Changing Men

MenEngage Alliance
An international alliance promoting boys’ and men’s support for gender equality
www.menengage.org

Men’s Initiative for Jane Doe, Inc.
Statewide Massachusetts effort coordinating men’s anti-violence activities www.mijd.org

Men’s Nonviolence Project
Texas Council on Family Violence
http://www.tcfv.org/education/mnp.html

Men’s Resources International
Providing training, coaching, and technical assistance that promotes healthy, compassionate, respectful masculinity to men’s and women’s organizations
www.mensresourcesinternational.org

Men Stopping Violence
Atlanta-based organization working to end violence against women, focusing on stopping battering, and ending rape and incest
www.menstoppingviolence.org

Mentors in Violence Prevention
Gender violence prevention education and training by Jackson Katz
www.mvnational.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Provides a coordinated community response to domestic violence
www.ncadv.org

National Resource Center on Violence Against Women
An online collection of searchable materials and resources on domestic violence, sexual violence, and related issues
vawnet.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
A national information and resource hub relating to all aspects of sexual violence
www.nsvrc.org

PreventConnect
Uses online media to build community among people engaged in efforts to prevent sexual assault and relationship violence
http://preventconnect.org/

Promundo
Brazilian NGO seeking to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children, and youth
www.promundo.org.br/en/

Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)
A national anti-sexual assault organization
www.rainn.org

Sexual Violence Research Initiative
Works to raise awareness of sexual violence and promotes research on sexual violence as a public health issue. http://www.svri.org/about.htm

Stop Porn Culture
A group for those willing to question and fight against pornography and porn culture
stoppornculture/home/

Students Active For Ending Rape
Organization dedicated to fighting sexual violence and rape culture by empowering student-led campaigns to reform college sexual assault policies
www.safercampus.org

V Day
Global movement to end violence against women and girls, including V-men, male activists in the movement
www.vday.org

White Ribbon Campaign
International men’s campaign decrying violence against women
www.whiteribbon.ca

LGBTQIA Resources

Ambiente Joven
An advocacy project and LGBTQ community for Spanish-speaking LGBTQ youth
www.ambientejoven.org

Beyond Masculinity
Collection of essays by queer men on gender and politics
http://beyondmasculinity.com

COLAGE
National movement of people with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer parent working toward social justice through youth empowerment, leadership development, education, and advocacy
www.colage.org

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
Works to combat homophobia and discrimination in television, film, music and all media outlets
www.glaad.org

GBLTQ Domestic Violence Project
Resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer men and women who are survivors of sexual or domestic violence through direct services, education, and advocacy
http://www.glbttqdp.org

Hear My Voice
Educates and engages young people in the LGBTQ community to create safe and healthy relationships, and connect victims of dating abuse to help and legal services.
hearmyvoice.breakthecycle.org

Human Rights Campaign
Largest GLBT political group in the country
www.hrc.org

Interpride
Clearinghouse for information on pride events worldwide
www.interpride.net

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging
Resource center aimed at improving the quality of service and supports offered to LGBT older adults
www.lgbagingcenter.org

Oasis Magazine
A writing community for queer and questioning youth
www.oasisijournals.com/magazine

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Promotes the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ persons and their parents, friends, and families
www.pflag.org

Straight Spouse Network
Provides personal, confidential support and information to heterosexual spouses/partners, current or former, of GLBT individuals
www.straightspouse.org

Survivor Project
A non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the needs of intersex and trans’ survivors of domestic and sexual violence
www.survivproj.org

Transgender Resources
Dedicated to educating those unfamiliar with or curious to learn more about the transgender community
www.glaad.org/transgender

Males Advocating for Change
– Worcester, MA
Center with groups and services supporting men and challenging men’s violence
http://www.malesadvocatingchange.org/

Men’s Resource Center for Change
– Amherst, MA
Pioneering men’s center spearheading creation of healthy men and boys network in western Massachusetts and beyond
www.mrcforchange.org

Men’s Resource Center of Philadelphia
Workshops to help men address anger management, domestic violence, and intimacy issues
http://www.themensresourcecenter.org

Portland Men’s Resource Center
Counseling for men, women, teens, couples and families on domestic violence and anger management, and explorations of gender and sexism.
http://www.portlandmrc.com

Redwood Men’s Center – Santa Rosa, CA
A mythopoetic gathering dedicated to filling the need for men to come together in community healing
redwoodmen.org

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirmative center dedicated to offering a safe environment where men may explore their true natures and improve their health
www.saskatoomenscenter.com

Twin Cities Men’s Center – Minneapolis, MN
Provides resources for men seeking to grow in mind, body, and spirit and advocates for healthy family and community relationships
www.tcmrc.org

Men’s Resource Centers

Austin Men’s Center – Austin, TX
Provides counseling, psychotherapy, and classes helping men with their lives, relationships, health, and careers
austinmenscenter.com

Lake Champlain Men’s Resource Center – Burlington, VT
Center with groups and services challenging men’s violence on both individual and societal levels
www.lcmrc.net

Resources for Changing Men
I’m getting married in three weeks and it scares the shit out of me. There’s the planning and the details, the food, music, photos, parents, flowers, rings, license, liquor. There’s also this haunting memory of how I fucked things up once before, walked down the aisle of Christ Episcopal with my college sweetheart, a cute blonde named Jane, and lit the fuse on a domestic bomb that detonated several years later—kids crying, in-laws accusing, lawyers, arguments, agreements, Jane passed out against our kitchen trash cans that night she went binge drinking because everything hurts so goddamned much.

People ask, How could you get married if you knew you were gay? Truth is, I sped past all the clues. My crush on Ricky in the 4th grade, the boy I cherished in high school, that guy down the hall in college, all those exercise magazines. How, whenever I saw porn, I secretly watched the men. At 14, Mom and Dad confronted me, told me Boys your age explore and it’s a choice. You need to do the right thing or leave the family. In a white flash I chose girls over homelessness and started down a path that ended eighteen years later, with me in a hospital, on suicide watch, the failed work of a doctor I paid to cure me.

Now, I’m here. Again. Heading down the aisle with a guy I met at my 20th high school reunion, a man I’ve lived with for ten years. The co-parent of our nervous Dalmatian. This time, the wedding is non-traditional, barely legal, banned in most states, a bold face Up Yours to The Defense of Marriage Act, not to mention all those hocus-pocus religions out there. But that’s not why I’m doing it. I’m doing it because he asked and because if anybody knows my shit, it’s him— and my ex-wife, who I’ve asked to give me away. If anyone’s earned the right to hand me over, it’s her.

Jeremy Garcon is a poet and fine art photographer originally from Washington, DC. His book Lip Service was released in 2014. Garcon lives in Guadalajara, Mexico. For more information: http://jeremygarcon.com/.
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Voice Male is a superb, groundbreaking publication offering a powerful way to engage men in working towards gender justice and to encourage younger men to learn new ways to become a man. Every individual and institution interested in gender equality and violence prevention should subscribe and spread the word!

—Judy Norsigian, coauthor and executive director, Our Bodies, Ourselves

“Rob Okun’s brave book chronicles a movement of men standing with women in the struggle to end violence against women and reveals an emerging new man culture where men are reclaiming their tears and their hearts.”
—Eve Ensler, playwright of The Vagina Monologues, founder of Vday

“A very worthwhile introduction to the profeminist movement among men. It will reward both casual readers and serious students of the subject.”
—Library Journal

“Readers interested in gender issues will appreciate the strength of the individual articles and the book’s powerful message.”
—Publishers Weekly

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NAMEN

Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality

NAMEN is a binational network of organizations and individuals across Canada and the United States promoting gender justice.

A member of the global MenEngage Alliance—a network of 600 NGOs on every continent—NAMEN is currently inviting new members. Join us!

Learn more at namen.menengage.org

Steering Committee

Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization - BRAVO (Columbus, Ohio)
Futures Without Violence (San Francisco, Calif.)
Gender Violence Institute/Minnesota Men’s Action Network (Clearwater, Minn.)
Jane Doe Inc. (Boston, Mass.)
John Howard Society of York Region (Toronto, Ont.)
Manforward (St. Paul, Minn.)
Men’s Resources International (Pelham, Mass.)
Men Stopping Violence (Decatur, Ga.)
MensWork: A Project of the Center for Women and Families (Louisville, Ky.)
Pueblo of Nambé (Santa Fé, N.M.)
University of Northern Iowa Center for Violence Prevention (Cedar Falls, Iowa)
University of Washington School of Social Work (Tacoma, Wash.)
Voice Male Magazine (Amherst, Mass.)
White Ribbon Canada (Toronto, Ont.)