

working with **boys and men** *for*

gender equality

and **violence prevention**

Working together regionally | South Asia consultation

Dhaka, Bangladesh | 22-24 June, 2009

Meeting Report



**Campaign to work
with boys and men –
a national network in Bangladesh**

Objectives of Consultation

- 1. Deepen our understanding of gender, masculinities and gender-based violence in the South Asian context**
- 2. Discuss an approach and process for working together regionally to engage boys and men in work towards gender equality and prevention of Gender-based Violence (GBV)**
- 3. Reach agreement on next steps, roles and responsibilities for working together regionally**

Participants explored structural influencers in South Asia that affect work towards gender equality and GBV prevention. This was followed by a mapping of the current status of policy, resources, capacity and interventions in South Asia related to working with boys and men.

The mapping set the stage for an exploration of capacities in implementing communications for individual and social change, and advocacy for policy change. The participants then examined regional capacity development structures that could serve the needs of the South Asian community, and potential areas of action for the future.

Key Outcomes from Sessions

Structural Influencers

The consultation began by looking at the larger view of the South Asian context with a discussion on the structural influencers in the region. Most of the structural influencers noted fell under the following categories—conflict and militarization, media, economic marginalization, social justice movements, fundamentalism/nationalism and communalism, and social/cultural norms. A few key points emerged from the discussions:

- These key structural influencers represent realities on the ground in South Asia and frame the context in which we do our work.
- It is difficult to address these structural influencers through local project level work.
- Participants felt strongly that more research is needed to unpack the impact of these structural influencers and to identify ways to address their negative consequences.

► [Click here for the detailed points on the five key structural influencers presented by each group](#)

Mapping of Policies, Capacity, Resources, and Interventions

Participants worked in mixed country groups to map the status, activities, gaps and needs in policies, capacity, resources and interventions, using the provided framework diagrams. The exercise revealed that the majority of the work in the region is clustered in certain areas with gaps in others. There are significant gaps at the policy level and a need for research to provide an evidence base for this including research on the potential impact of policy changes. In terms of capacity there was a strong need noted in the region for specialized skills in: 1) How to network and mobilize communities and reach out to other social justice movements and link research with campaign design, and 2) How to influence governments, policies and programs.

► [Click here for the framework diagrams](#)

► [Click here for the detailed findings reported by each group](#)

Advocacy for Policy Change & Communications for Awareness and Change

Participants explored current perceptions and understanding of advocacy and communications, and discussed whether there was a need for a uniform consensus on how these words would be understood and used. Working descriptions of both words were shared. A key finding was that there was considerable diversity within the room on these two words, as well as multiple frameworks and definitions. A section of participants felt that there was no need to restrict people by trimming down the diversity into a single way of looking at these two words. Another section did feel that some amount of common language would help inter-regional dialogue and also help build a better framework for evaluation of work.

Capacity Development—Developing a Regional Capacity Development Structure

The discussion of what a regional resource for capacity development would look like culminated in the following outcomes:

- There is need for a systematic approach to capacity development in the region.
- A league of coaches in the region should be developed as a means to support a more coordinated and systematic approach to capacity development.
- A preliminary draft list of qualities and criteria for selection of coaches was drawn up.
- Suggestions were provided on how the curriculum could be created, issues to consider and ideas for the content.

▶ [Click here for the selection criteria and curriculum development suggestions presented by groups](#)

Community Portal

Discussions on how actors in the region can communicate and share learning and resources concluded with strong support for the development of a community portal. Feedback indicated that the community portal needs to be interactive and dynamic, with a design similar to social networking sites like Facebook that will allow members to share, discuss and connect. The site should also include a global database of resources with a detailed search tool and sections for news, upcoming events, links to partners, online discussions and debate through blogs and discussion groups, and member, organization and country profiles.

▶ [Click here for the detailed feedback provided on the community portal](#)

Research and Advocacy

The need for more research and tools for advocacy came up as an issue throughout the consultation. The following key issues emerged:

- Mapping of existing research across the region, qualitative and quantitative, is needed so that we start with a clear sense of what is missing and what we already know
- A research repository needs to be developed where available research can be accessed and made available across the region.
- Specific research topics highlighted for priority are:
 - Research on the incidence/prevalence of GBV (with men and women), and examining factors that both inhibit as well as contribute to the use of GBV
 - Research on subordinate, alternative and non-violent masculinities (may build on the Men Who Care study with CHSJ/ICRW)
 - Research on men, masculinities in post-conflict and conflict settings (Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, parts of India), as well as men, masculinities and militarization
 - Research on the socialization of boys and men, particularly socialization into violence
- Any research carried out must include women's rights organizations, academia, practitioners (NGOs), and policymakers - and emphasis must be on research that informs program and practice

Communication and Social Media

Discussions yielded the following:

- A regional communication and media strategy is needed. Need to explore what is already happening and then identify resources (human, monetary).
- The strategy should include: using social media and alternative media, documentary/short films, TV talk shows, theatre, ICT technology, and print and web based media.
- Need to consider how youth will be targeted through communications, what messages will be given and how this group will be accessed.
- Research on the impact of media on behavior in the region is needed to inform strategy and actions.

Next steps for Partners for Prevention

Capacity Development

- Partners for Prevention (P4P) will continue to support capacity development in the region and will be looking for ideas from participants and partners interested in supporting this.

Community Portal

- Based on the feedback provided from participants, P4P will develop a beta (test) version of the community portal in collaboration with the global MenEngage Alliance.
- In the next few months the beta version of the site will be completed and shared with partners in the region for feedback and comments before the site is officially launched.
- A team from P4P and the MenEngage Alliance South Asia team will work to collect resources from partners across the region to fill the community portal database to start. This will also include key global resources.

Social Media

- P4P will plan pilots of a regional social media awareness campaign in Asia and the Pacific, and will keep interested South Asia partners up to date on progress.

Research and Policy

- P4P is working with national partners to take forward research and policy initiatives on men and masculinities in Bangladesh and possibly Pakistan and Bhutan.

ANNEX 1

Detailed Points from Group Work Presentations

Structural Influencers: Group Work Presentations

Militarization and conflict

- South Asia is experiencing a “tsunami of conflict” that includes political, economic, territorial, armed and religious and identity conflict.
- Impact of conflict: an overall sense of insecurity among men, women and children, the use of women as weapons of war, children’s greater acceptance & glorification of conflict, and an increase in exploitation as many are forced to take exploitative jobs to survive.
- Policy Framework: Some policies do exist including UNSCR 1325 and 1820, but there is no implementation.
- Interventions needed: It’s time to say “Men are the part of solution” and engage them by forming men’s groups to create a safe environment for women and children and reintegration and rehabilitation programs for returning soldiers. Women and children need to be included in the peace processes and capacity building is required on 1325 and interfaith leaders mobilized.
- Capacity and Resources: sensitive Media – local and regional, more evidence supporting the impact of the positive role of boys and men, and transitional justice to reduce GBV during conflict.

Media

- Impact of Media: Media is seen as a strong contributor, propagator of violence and patriarchy through the depiction and celebration of each.
- Challenges: There is little evidence base to support both the negative and positive impacts that media has on violence and gender norms and more research is needed in order to effectively influence national and regional policy. Negotiating the delicate balance between the government policies and media freedom is difficult
- Interventions: Monitoring by independent authorities, government policies, instruments and regulatory bodies need to be strengthened, more research needed on the impact of media in the South Asian context. Greater engagement of the media, activists, and civil society organizations including curriculum for media professionals.

Economic Marginalization

- Impact of economic marginalization: The poor lack access to services and shelter is very limited and the outcome of economic marginalization creates a conducive environment for human trafficking.
- Challenges: Data and information on trafficking is very limited and when it exists it is not shared across the region. Some regional data may be available but it is not the whole picture, though UNIFEM is working on developing regional data bank on trafficking. Strong committees, laws, policy frameworks and guidelines exist in many countries, but people are not aware. Many organizations are working on the issues but there is not a comprehensive network for coordination and cooperation nationally and regionally as well as a lack of sharing of expertise and experience by professionals and stakeholders. Governments need to assume leadership in coordination and monitoring.

Nationalism, fundamentalism, communalism

- Impact on increasing GBV in the country/region: The increased fundamentalism in some areas has put women in more vulnerable positions, increasing restrictions on their mobility, access to education and other facilities, and strong opposition by fundamentalist groups on laws on women’s issues, DV, etc. Caste issues impact GBV, for example, Dalit women are subject to all of sorts of serious violence. And, in Sri Lanka tensions between the minority and majority have resulted in increased violence.

- Policy framework: Broader understanding of legislation around the issues of GBV and going beyond the protectionist laws by mainstreaming institutional mechanisms / legislation is needed.
- Interventions: Working with religious groups in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan and the peace movement from different groups of CSOs.

Social and Cultural norms

- Needs: Greater capacities in South Asia, to go beyond understanding the issue to advocacy and lobbying on VAW/GBV we were not very successful. Also lack of innovation among key players.
- Interventions needed on working with boys/men at all levels, particularly from pre-school to university and also with training and capacity development institutions
- Strengthen regional advocacy on GBV and through this strengthen the capacities of national machineries,
- Massive interventions on State judiciary/law & enforcing agencies
- Making the state more accountable in GBV by withdrawing the CEDAW reservation.
- Need systematic interventions addressing patriarchy – root causes of GBV.

Mapping Regional Status in Policy, Capacity, Resources and Interventions: Group Work Presentations

Framework Diagrams:



Capacity mapping

- Different kinds of forums and capacities to reach out to different groups (academicians, media, religious groups, policy makers, men in upper-castes/classes, etc)
- A critical mass of people need to be mobilized to take up campaign on working with boys and men and need specialized skills in how to network and mobilize and reach out to other social justice movements and make link research with campaign design.
- Capacity development on how to influence governments, policies and programs
- Tools to tailor materials, tools, programs, approaches, campaigns to the specific local context for effective adaptation and implementation.
- More research into what happens to men in vulnerable or affected in situations—arm conflict and communal tensions—and increased capacity to address men throughout the life cycle

Policy mapping

- Gaps in International charters/ documents: Women seen as victims, more focus on protectionist approach, disconnect with empowerment issue and human rights were perceived as men's rights prior to CEDAW. Policy makers have their own constructions of masculinity which hinder them to see men as in need of support and protection
- Needs: to harmonize legal frame work internationally and at national level need to introduce gender policies in the universities and promote a stronger cooperation/ coordination between concerned ministries and gender responsive budgeting; interventions should begin at early childhood level; and research required to provide an evidence base for this including research on the benefits of male champions in policy and a cost-benefit analysis on the impact of policy changes.

Resources mapping

- None of the countries have reached critical mass level to in working on boys and men; need greater resources, political commitment and skills; ways of building capacity are still very weak, short duration and on an ad hoc basis and a more coordinated approach is needed.
- Not enough contextual understanding of masculinity to see why men engage in violence or how we can bring more men to fight against violence. The majority of men who don't support violence are yet to be utilized as resources and this needs to change. There is also the need to understand how to address this at the institutional level.
- Resources should also include political commitments of government NGOs, civil society, academia etc.

Interventions mapping:

- The variety of different interventions exist across South Asia were listed but focus primarily on individuals, with a limited focus on rights and empowerment and there is a need to broaden this to include interventions on all three tires and in particular at the institutional level
- Collaboration, coordination, integration and knowledge management needed for an effective implementation of plan of action (district, national, regional)

Building on Existing Networks: Group Work Presentations

How Stable Communities of Practice Evolve:

- SANGAT, SEWA, Mohila Samikhya, SAHR, SAARC, Solution Exchange – existing communities
- Should we need a regional community: Definitely we need to share best practices, learn and get/ provide support from each other.
- Sustainability/continuation is big factor, it should aim initially for short term period. It can however create competition with human & capacity areas. Need to work on one common issue regionally. Form one small action group. Must have a common or personal need or feeling of ownership for it to work. Each of us has to feel we are benefiting and/or can grow from the networking.
- Leadership, good governance and funding are big challenges.
- Example noted: Solution Exchange is strongly moderated and funded but has lack of active government participation, not well known in all South Asian countries.
- Network is the outcome of existing work of organizations. It is not that people come and form the network, it is built based on the tensions or need.
- Reason for network should be sharply focused. A network with a narrow focus has a greater chance being sustainable. Ideas for starting the network: around people's common work and common need to work together on issues.
- Issues/challenges: Limited funding restricts access of more people. Also competition among organizations contributes to it. Inherent conflict also creates challenges. If we have a limited agenda, there is more likely to be less conflict and more success.

Summary of discussion—Network needs:

- Goal
- Leadership
- Focused
- Ownership
- Network Moderator
- Capacity building
- Do we have the capacity to manage communities-- Network moderator is needed.

Channels and Challenges of Communication: Group Work Presentations

Media and Channels of Communication- Current Experiences

- Existing sites have-
 - Lack of regular communication among members
 - Lack of follow up after workshops
- Sites such as South Masculinities.org, yahoo group, etc.
- Email

Content of Regional Communication

- Consultations
- Masculinity
- Violence against girls and women
- Masculinity and sexuality
- Health
- Trafficking

Impact

- Encourages and sensitizes members
- Awareness raising
- Joint work taking place (16 Days Activism, White Ribbon Campaign)
- Sharing of materials
- Stakeholders interest raised (government and non government)
- Curriculum development
- Inclusion of the research in researches
- Stable Framework
- Exposure visits
- E-communication
- Issue based communication
- Formation of Alliance across countries
- Documentation and publication, e-publications
- Regional annual journals (Collection of themes by convenors & sending it to Secretariat)
- Invite writings from regional members

Sustainability and Productivity

- Increase capacity and knowledge to ensure productivity and sustainability
- Link with corporate houses, political parties, occupational groups, etc.
- Channels and challenges

Use of Websites

- Individual profiles in websites
- Database containing titles of books, reports, journals, upcoming events, should be posted
- Regular update of database national and global policies
- Success stories/role model
- Links of other networks and other groups

Envisioning our Web: Detailed Feedback from Participants on Community Portal

- Interactive, colorful design is key with lots of pictures, including the photo of each member and video links with members sharing their work, films, etc.
- Similar to Facebook and other social networking sites, allowing users to interact and have individual profile pages.
- Designed for slower connections as well and takes into consideration electricity issues
- Most content should be open to non-members so anyone can view the content registering.
- Portal interface should also be available in a variety of languages and members can share content in any language.
- Include a section where users can seek advice and ask questions with responses from experts in the field.
- Updated on a regular basis with engaging materials that interest members. Suggestions included: Regional and international success stories and creating an annual or bi-annual Regional journal
- Central database of global resources with detailed search tool.
- Provide info on training opportunities and possibly have interactive online courses on relevant topics.
- Have organization and individual profiles that they can update and post their activities and information on.
- Should include sections for: news, online library, upcoming events, links to partners, online discussions and debate, and member profiles.

League of Coaches Qualities and Criteria for selection — Suggestions Presented by Groups

Qualities:

- Interactive approaches
- Should be able to communicate
- Fire in the belly (passion)
- Friendly
- Sensitivity gender & power
- Minimal perspective
- Qualities and criteria for selection, including skills

Criteria:

- Willingness
- Representation (rational –not just by size of country)
- Mix of men:women
- Personal commitment to the topic
- Proven/working experience on issues of gender and masculinity

Coaching Plan — Suggestions Presented by Groups

How curriculum will be developed:

- Bringing together of academicians, practitioners and activists
- They should consider all relevant materials/resources that are available
- Develop a draft
- Need pretest of draft curriculum in cultures/countries

How capacities will be built:

- Not only a TOT rather an explicit course giving theories, practical skills as well regional perspectives

Regional services expected of the coaches:

- Has to be an available resource in their area
- Should proactively take promotional roles
- Should be reaching out to different/potential organizations (go beyond NGOs)

Annex 2: Agenda (PDF)

Annex 3: List of Participants (PDF)

Presentations

Key Guiding Facilitation slides from Day 1 & 2 (C Y Gopinath)

MenEngage Update Presentation (Gary Barker)

Community Portal Presentation (Elizabeth Starmann & Laxman Belbase)

IMAGES Overview Presentation (Gary Barker)

Partners for Prevention Presentation (James Lang)

Social Media Campaign Presentation (James Lang)