

ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE:

Good Practices and Lessons Learned from Male Advocate Clubs in Da Nang

BACKGROUND

Gender-based violence in Viet Nam

Gender-based violence is a severe violation of human rights, occurring in all regions, countries and cultures.ⁱ The 2010 National Survey on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam showed that 58% of women reported having ever experienced at least one of the three types of violence physical, sexual or emotional.ⁱⁱ A macro estimate of national level domestic violence costs in Viet Nam also concluded that 3.19% of the country's annual gross domestic product was lost due to gender-based violence. This loss of productivity due to domestic violence amounted to nearly 38% of the government health spending in 2011.ⁱⁱⁱ

Engaging men and boys in prevention of gender-based violence in Viet Nam

While gender-based violence also affects men and boys, the violence is most often perpetrated by men, especially against women and girls. Research conducted in Viet Nam by the United Nations (UN) and Partners for Prevention UN Regional Joint Programme found that respondents commonly saw violence as a disciplinary tool to establish and maintain men's authority, most often within the family. While physical violence was generally condemned in society, violence against wives and children was still considered legitimate as long as it occurred in private settings.^{iv}

For these reasons, engaging men and boys has become an important strategy to prevent gender-based violence effectively. The Viet Nam Law on Gender Equality (2006), the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (2007), and the Prime Minister's Decisions guiding their implementation highlight engaging men and boys in three areas: **(1) education on family development and life skills to ensure that men fulfill their responsibility in sharing housework and women's rights in the family; (2) men's behavior change and counseling for perpetrators of violence in rural areas through communication, capacity building, and interventions models for members of the Farmers' Union; and (3) awareness raising and development of skills for people in the community who are at risk of perpetrating violence.**^v

MALE ADVOCATE CLUBS: A SUCCESSFUL, COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL TO ENGAGE MEN IN PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN DA NANG

In 2009, the Da Nang Provincial Communist Party Committee issued Directive 25-CT/TU to raise awareness on gender and gender equality for all government staff and local communities to prevent domestic violence. This was followed in 2011 by Directive 06-CT/TU, issued by the Secretary of Da Nang's Provincial Party to support implementation of National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020, which integrates gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence into annual work

Definitions of gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes: acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering; threats of such acts; coercion; and other deprivations of liberty. While women, men, boys and girls can be victims of gender-based violence, women and girls are the main victims

(UNHCR, 2003)

plans and the socio-economic development strategy at the provincial level. This supportive environment has contributed greatly to the success of violence prevention interventions implemented in Da Nang.

The most recent success are the Male Advocate Clubs, implemented by Women's Union and co-funded by UN Women, UNV and Partners for Prevention aimed at engaging men in gender-based violence prevention in their communities.



UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNV



The design of the Male Advocate Club was based on findings from rigorous studies conducted in Viet Nam and elsewhere in the region by Partners for Prevention and the UN in Viet Nam.^{vi} Key findings confirm that there are many interpretations of what it means “to be a man” in Viet Nam, and such diversity of attitudes and practices around masculinities points toward opportunities to develop more gender equitable, non-violent norms among men.^{vii}

The intervention worked with younger and older men to transform harmful masculinities and prevent violence against women and girls before it occurs. It achieved this by building gender equitable attitudes, raising awareness of violence, developing healthy relationship skills, and empowering men to volunteer in their communities and become male advocates for prevention of violence. The intervention was implemented in two communes in Da Nang over 15 months and with a budget of \$73,000.



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KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MALE ADVOCATE CLUBS

- 24 people participated in an initial five-day training and a three-day refresher training to become facilitators of the male advocate clubs where they practiced using the participatory learning approach to facilitate clubs. Facilitators also participated in eight regular meetings with the project management board to receive additional supervision and support.
- In total, the four clubs held 64 meetings for their combined 93 members.
- Club members organized four community-based events, which attracted 410 participants, using creative methods such as quizzes, crossword puzzles, roleplays, drawing pictures and discussing video clips.
- Club members held 30 communication sessions in 10 residential areas, for 750 participants (roughly equal numbers of men and women) on the topics of: (1) sex, gender and being a man; (2) understanding violence against women and girls; and (3) making healthy sexual choices and being happy.
- The project published manual for facilitators, which was finalized with inputs from club members.
- 2 experience-sharing workshops were held with 122 participants (58 men) from relevant departments at district and commune levels, and one national lessons-sharing workshop.

Both Partners for Prevention and UN Women conducted independent endline studies showing that male advocate clubs have had significant impacts on three levels: the participants, including club members and facilitators, their families and their communities.

- The intervention broadened members’ understanding of violence against women and girls, to recognize its multiple forms. A quantitative endline study found that: 87% of club members now know the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and more than half are now able to identify “controlling income” and “controlling spending” as a form of violence that is also prohibited by the laws.^{viii}
- The intervention improved participants’ ability to recognize patriarchal gender norms in their daily lives and see the value of family and the meaning of being

positive role models to influence children’s attitudes and behaviors. They now have more appreciation for women’s unpaid work within families and adopted a range of positive parenting practices, including demonstrating love and care, using less harsh discipline, and improved communication and conflict resolution.

- Additionally, participants showed behavioral transformation in reported reduction of coercive sex within marriage, as well as increased respect of women in family.
- The intervention made an impact on communities as well. Participants realized their potential to be agents of change as role models in their families and communities, both through their own changed attitudes and behaviours and by actively encouraging others to think about, and try to do, things differently.

"Before I just forced her [to have sex]. Since I was young and inconsiderate, I was 'a bit too much' to my wife. Whenever I return home from drinking bouts, I thought, 'if I want it, my wife has to do it'. Now I have changed. I would ask my wife whether she would like it or not. I realize that her attitude is different. I feel happier".

*Club member, farmer, age 52,
in-depth interview*

"I used to go drinking heavily after work, but now I cut this down. Before, if I got home and dinner was not ready, I got irritated. Now I do housework myself, taking care of the children, doing the laundry. I used to think women's work was confined to the kitchen. Now I realize their true value [valuing women and the work that women do]".

*Club member, farmer, age 60,
in-depth interview*



"I help my mother with daily chores, like cooking. I cheer her up when things get rough. Before, I was indifferent, didn't care, kept things to myself. [Now] I treat my female colleagues at the workplace with more consideration... no teasing, no [outbursts of] short temper."

*Club member, professional, age 28,
in-depth interview*

BEYOND THE MALE ADVOCATE CLUBS: REPLICATING MALE ENGAGEMENT IN PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL IN DA NANG

The achievements of the Male Advocate Clubs suggest the feasibility of replicating the model to other communes and districts.

Who should replicate the model and why?

In Da Nang, the Farmers' Union is well placed to replicate the Male Advocate Clubs due to their large membership in rural areas; many of whom are middle-aged men who can be reached through community-based interventions. This replication would also contribute to implementation of the National Program on Domestic Violence Reduction in Rural Areas 2015-2020, which the Farmers' Union leads the implementation and coordination.

The Da Nang Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) has the power to convene partners from many sectors, including the local People's Committee and its residential committees. To replicate

these clubs would also help DOLISA to more effectively implement both the National Programme on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response 2016-2020, with a Vision to 2030 in Da Nang.

The People's Committees at different levels play key roles in guiding the Male Advocate Club intervention and bring together different stakeholders in implementation and monitoring. If they were to replicate the clubs, this collaboration would allow more effective implementation and greater impact, especially in reaching men in urban areas. This would in turn help People's Committees to implement numerous directives, including: Directive 06-CT/TU (2011), on leadership in implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011 – 2020; on Directive 25-CT/TU (2009), on prevention of domestic violence in Da Nang City; and on the Da Nang Government's Plan 1153/KH-UBND (2017) to implement the National Programme on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response 2016-2020 and Vision 2030 in the city.

How to advocate for and replicate the Male Advocate Club model effectively

The following recommendations are based on lessons learned from the pilot Male Advocate Clubs, and are designed specifically for Da Nang DOLISA and the Farmers' Union at the policy advocacy and project implementation levels.^{ix}

Advocating for the prevention of gender-based violence:

- **Multi-sectoral coordination:** The Provincial People's Committee plays an important role in guiding and supporting DOLISA to coordinate effectively with other stakeholders, such as the Farmers' Union, the Youth Union, the Police and residential committees, to join forces to prevent gender-based violence.
- **Budget allocation to gender-based violence:** DOLISA and the Farmers' Union should advocate for funding from national programmes and the provincial budget under Decision 235/QD-TTG (2015), Decision 1463/QD-TTG (2016) and Directive 06-CT/TU (2011), to support prevention interventions such as the Male Advocate Clubs to sustain results already achieved.
- **Synergies with existing programmes and initiatives:** There are a number of initiatives that promote gender equality and can be linked with the Male Advocate Clubs for greater impact across the community, such as: (1) the "Fathers and Kids" joint model implemented in secondary schools by the Department of Education and Training; (2) the "HeForShe" campaign led by UN Women; (3) the National Thematic Programme on Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response led by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA); and (4) the National Thematic Programme on Domestic Violence Reduction in rural areas led by the Farmers' Union. The Army and Police Forces are also potential partners to implement programmes related to gender equality and violence prevention.

- **Resource mobilization:** DOLISA, the Farmers' Union, the Women's Union, and the Youth Union should collaborate to seek funding from international donors and the private sector. A replicated model to larger-scale and different settings would also be interesting not only to the international organizations, but also to MOLISA and the Farmers' Union or the Women's Union at the national level. Additionally, the model could be modified to implement Male Advocate Clubs in the workplace for DOLISA to mobilize funding from the private sector as part of their corporate social responsibility strategies.

Lessons learned: Implementing a successful Male Advocate Club intervention:

- **Recruitment of participants:** Participants will be more committed when they fully understand the amount of time required; what the intervention involves, including the importance of engaging men and boys in preventing gender-based violence; and the potential benefits.
- **Recruitment of volunteer facilitators:** There are many local men who are already interested in promoting gender equality and voluntarily participating in a violence prevention intervention. DOLISA and the Farmers' Union should work with their local chapters to identify and recruit these male allies, who will likely commit to a one-year programme.
- **Capacity building:** In addition to the two trainings for facilitators at the beginning and middle of the intervention, the Farmers' Union should organize regular meetings with the local facilitators to share good practices, continuously build their capacity and troubleshoot problems. The participatory learning methodology, rigorous coaching, and promoting local ownership are key points to guarantee success of the model.

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- ii General Statistics Office of Vietnam (2010). *Executive summary report. National study on domestic violence against women in Vietnam*.
- iii Duvvury, N., Carney, P. and Minh, N.H. (2012). *Estimating the Costs of Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam*. UN Women.
- iv Dao, D. et al. (2012). *Teach the Wife When She First Arrives: Trajectories and Pathways into Violent and Non-Violent Masculinities in Hue City and Phu Xuyen District, Viet Nam*.
- v Decision 629/QD-TTg dated 29 May 2012 for approval of national strategy on Vietnamese family development to 2020 and vision 2030 (MOSCT is the key actor and facilitator). Decision 235/QD-TTg dated 14 February 2015 for approval of Vietnam Farmers' Union national programme on domestic violence reduction in rural area for period 2015-2020 (Vietnam Farmers' Union is the key actor and facilitator). Decision 1464/QD-TTg dated 22 July 2016 for approval of national programme on gender-based violence prevention and response for period 2016-2020 and vision 2030 (MOLISA is the key actor and facilitator).
- vi Dao, D. et al. (2012). *Teach the Wife When She First Arrives: Trajectories and Pathways into Violent and Non-Violent Masculinities in Hue City and Phu Xuyen District, Viet Nam*. Fulu, E, Warner, X, Miedema, S, Jewkes, R, Roselli, T, & Lang, J (2013). *Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it? Quantitative findings from the United Nations multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV
- vii Dao, D. et al. (2012). *Teach the Wife When She First Arrives: Trajectories and Pathways into Violent and Non-Violent Masculinities in Hue City and Phu Xuyen District, Viet Nam*.
- viii DEPOCEN (2016). *Final Report: End-line survey the project: Community mobilization in prevention of violence against women and girls in Da Nang, Vietnam*. Hanoi: Development and Policies Research Center.
- ix Partners for Prevention (2017). *Lessons Learned Report: Male Advocate Club Project in Da Nang, Viet Nam*.