


## COP WORKSHOP ON MASCULINITIES

with

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Le monde selon les Femmes



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#COPTALKSFGM

## Summary

The webinar on masculinities demonstrates the importance of working on community-specific models of masculinities to promote in order to contribute to the elimination of FGM. Indeed, men are often the primary decision-makers and those to whom masculinities give an advantage. It is therefore essential that their implications be taken into account in order to raise their awareness of the well-being of women and society. Men are therefore valuable allies in the fight against FGM and can be positive role models as they can help change the social and gender norms embedded in communities.

The objective of this training was to exchange on the different representations of what it is to be a man. Today, different models of masculinity circulate in the media, politics, sports, etc. However, there is one dominant model - the one that is most common in the media. However, there is a dominant - so-called "hegemonic" - model that reinforces toxic practices between men and women, but also between men. By dismantling the injunctions of the hegemonic model of masculinity, this training on Masculinities finally allowed for an exchange on other ways of conceiving and living masculinities and to reflect on the place of men as allies in the fight to end FGM.

The different questions to be asked are the following:

- What are masculinities?
- Why is it important to work on masculinities with men from communities affected by FGM?
- How can we integrate masculinities into our different activities and workshops?

# A. General theory on masculinities

## 1.unequal, asymmetrical and gendered division of women

The trainer proposes a grid for analysing the asymmetrical division of tasks:

- Resources, food, time
- Space, speech, land
- Decisions, tasks, roles, tools
- Mental and emotional load
- Violence

The analysis of these inequalities will lead to more power and privilege for men and thus to systemic domination. The male group is thus privileged vis-à-vis the female group.

### 1.1 The 3 roles of a women

- Reproductive: "CARE", i.e. all the tasks and work that will ensure biological reproduction. This includes both domestic tasks and the reproduction of life. This does not give rise to a wage or other form of remuneration.
- Productive: Wage labour and the production of material things.
- Social and community: administrative activities and collective management. This can be valued (recognised activities) or unvalued (activities that are not highly regarded).

## 2. Hegemonic masculinity

It is important to define the notions:

- Gramsci's cultural hegemony: the conquest of power presupposes the conquest of public opinion. The cultural domination of the ruling elite class allows the social order to be maintained. Everywhere in the world today there is cultural hegemony. At the level of male cultural hegemony, there will be a separation between women and men by assigning different tasks and roles. Our goal is to build a new cultural hegemony.
- Hegemonic masculinity: these are the common cultural representations of the male ideal seen as superior to the female. These representations are normative and will therefore establish and constitute standards.

=> This concept is developed by Connell Raewyn who will introduce 3 different masculinities:

- Complicit: men who do not fit the dominant model but benefit from male domination
- Subordinate: men who are considered to be out of gender
- Marginalised: those who are subject to the grip of hegemonic masculinity and are excluded due to certain factors

This analytical grid allows us to analyse masculinity beyond the male/female polarisation. It shows that not all men are equal and do not benefit in the same way. The exclusion of certain men will accentuate sexist behaviour since the hierarchy between men will itself accentuate sexism and machismo.

### 3. The activity of the manly pose: the performance of manhood

The perspective of the manly pose and of what manliness is will change according to norms and territories. If men do not respect them, it means that they are not manly, but on the contrary if they act according to the norms they will gain points with the entourage and will feel more privileged and confident. This masculinity brings privileges and a feeling of protection. The mobilisation of norms of masculinity is more tempting when one has less to value since one will mobilise what is most easily available. However, everyone is aware that everything is performance and that it is a mask of virility to look good in order to build relationships.

=> The objective is to find one's own personality without being influenced by others.

We see various challenges appearing on social networks in order to accentuate virility and make it perform. Through this prism of the networks we can see that masculinity is constantly evolving and starting to reach a wider community. We can cite as an example the Tik-Tok challenges, in cosmetic brands, in perfumes, etc. Every period in history has its invention and crisis of masculinity.

=> Finally, mobilising masculinity and acting as a man is a way of negative empowerment for the collective and the individual.

### 4. Male socialisation: training for virility

Men will unlearn their emotions and create an armour with a shell of emotion. The only emotion will be anger or violence but never sadness because it is a sign of weakness. This is like the process of dehumanisation because they grow up with emotions but throughout their lives they are taught to unlearn emotions, not to talk about them and to contain them.

It is wise to ask whether the masculine association causes men to cut off all emotional competence and thus not really be human anymore.

#### 4.1 Pillar of masculinity

- Supremacist culture: men believe in their privileges and impose relationships. This implies a lack of respect for sexual consent.
- Culture of isolation: emotionally or in the face of failure (which he will find difficult). This will result in domestic violence creating the pressure cooker syndrome.
- Performance and competition culture: hypersexualisation, they demonstrate that they are straight by imposing relationships. This involves unprotected sex and overly long and painful intercourse.
- Risk culture: leads to alcohol and drug use and dangerous driving.

## 5. The cost of manly capital

There is no doubt that women are much more victims of physical and sexual violence than men. However, there is also a cost to men in terms of the pressure to have sex (especially among adolescents). This will shape the idea of sexuality and has resulted in 25% of HIV cases being diagnosed in men under the age of 25. For men, there is also the other side of the coin, i.e. they suffer but also make themselves suffer this violence.

The cost is also for the children because there is trauma in seeing or hearing this violence.

# B. Methodology and good practice

## 1. Emancipatory sociology

This sociology was first put forward by Bourdieu. We become aware of the systemic inequalities and socialisation mechanisms that have influenced us and led us into machismo. Becoming aware can lead to a feeling of revolt, which will either lead to empowerment or on the contrary lead to moments of depression and pessimism. As Gramsci said, one must be realistic about society and at the same time be optimistic in the way one engages in order to achieve the goals of the struggle.

Two examples can be put forward: the individual and collective level, it is important to take them as complementary.

- Individual level: in a testimony, a person said that he was doing the hard work but that deep down, it bothered him because neither he nor his family were happy.

- Collective level: transformation of the family/friend and move to a community commitment

## 2. the evolution and transformation of masculinity

For this evolution to work, it is necessary to move from the toxic practices of masculine culture, where men to assert their masculinity will show it through acts of violence in order to prove that they are superior creating a normalisation and legitimisation of the advantages they have over women, to a transformative masculinity, in which men will then recognise women and children as their equals and will thus be actors of change and social transformation.

### 2.1 Other types of masculinity promoted through different gender equality projects

- Democratic masculinity: there is a political project behind it since democracy in the family means sharing decisions by involving everyone in a non-violent way. Example promoted in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

- Co-responsible masculinity: responsibility has a very masculine connotation in some countries of the world but in the family there is also an equal co-responsibility in domestic tasks (reproductive role of care in the home as well as environmental care). Example promoted in Senegal.

- Feeling-thinking: feeling and thinking by finding our emotions but at the same time remaining in the cerebral.

### 3. The 3 axes of action for working on masculinities

- Decentring: questioning ourselves and knowing how to situate ourselves with our privileges in relation to women. Identify strategies to no longer benefit from privileges to the detriment of women but to use them as a benefit for women.
- Taking responsibility: recognising wrongs and repairing actions if they have been wronged. We also need to take responsibility by getting involved in tasks that take us out of our assigned roles (domestic, organisational, institutional and environmental).
- Joining forces: building solidarity and engaging in a more equal society. Reflecting together on the action strategies that men can put in place to bring about a change in the relationships of domination.

## C. Conclusion

Working with men to end FGM is a process that integrates a certain number of steps, including taking into account masculinities in field activities/workshops.

In sum, we can therefore conclude that men are certainly allies. Indeed, there is a co-responsibility to be established in the fight against FGM: in order to avoid that men are not there to help women as many speeches we hear in the field, but to be complementary.

There is an effect of reversibility of men's action because it is also up to them to play an action role on the ground in order to be able to participate in the various feminist movements present in their society.

The participants in this online training proposed good practices from projects already implemented in Africa, for example, to fight against certain oppressive and toxic masculinities and against FGM:

- In order to stop toxic masculinities and FGM in Mali, a "Men Engage" passport has been set up and is available in schools to introduce children to the culture of peace and non-violence. This passport therefore allows for prevention from a very young age, as it is necessary to act with young people so that they grow up in a society that evolves with them.
- An application called "Men Engage" has also been developed in Mali within the same framework. It therefore sends a strong signal and allows everyone to be reactive and to have a strong power of action on the ground.

-The EKOKI project (Enough in French) in the DRC: "Young women and men against toxic masculinities and gender-based violence in Kinshasa", a project that aims to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in schools (harassment, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, etc.) by including the fight against these forms of violence in its activities. By including in the fight against such violence the complementary strategy of fighting against toxic masculinities aimed at men, Si jeunesse savait (SJS) is committed to continuing to demand that the Congolese state take all necessary measures to ensure that all women and girls are protected. SJS wants to become a channel of communication for the fight against sexual, physical, economic and harassment violence against women and girls. To achieve this, several awareness-raising activities are planned in the 4 communes of the province of Kinshasa, namely: Bandalugwa, Masina, Kimbaseke and Nd'jili.

Through these activities in youth clubs, mass sensitisation in schools, in the community, in training centres and universities, Si Jeunesse Savait's mission is to make the community understand the danger of toxic masculinity and its harmful consequences in promoting gender equality.