

PRACTICAL SHEET – WORKING ON MASCULINITIES IN FIELD ACTIVITIES TO END FGM AND GBV



WORKING ON MASCULINITIES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** Introduction
- 02** What are masculinities?
- 03** The 3 lines of action for working on masculinities
- 04** Working on masculinities with men and young boys from communities affected by female genital mutilation
- 05** Tools, campaigns and approaches to work on masculinities
- 06** Conclusion

1. INTRODUCTION

Here are some reasons why involving men in ending female genital mutilation is very important:

- In many communities, men are the decision makers and their involvement is therefore essential to raise awareness of the negative impact of this practice on the health and well-being of women.
- Men can be valuable allies in the fight against FGM. They can play a supportive role for women and girls who seek to avoid the practice, and can help change the social norms that perpetuate it.
- Men can be positive role models for young boys and men, showing that violence against women because they are women is unacceptable and that women have a right to bodily autonomy.
- Social norms that perpetuate FGM are often deeply rooted in communities. Men can help change these norms by raising awareness among other men and working with women to promote positive alternatives.

Involving men therefore requires prior work with men: that of working on masculinities.



Working on masculinities therefore involves challenging traditional social and gender norms related to masculinity and encouraging men and boys to adopt more healthy and respectful attitudes and behaviors.

Read more [Working on Masculinities \(copfgm.org\)](http://copfgm.org)



Male involvement in ending FGM

2. WHAT ARE MASCULINITIES?

- Masculinities refer to the diversity of masculine behaviours, attitudes and identities that exist in our society.
- Masculinities include traits traditionally associated with masculinity, such as physical strength, competitiveness and aggression, as well as more modern traits such as sensitivity, empathy and the ability to communicate effectively.
- Masculinities are influenced by factors such as culture, education, and can vary considerably from person to person.
- Masculinities are a social construct based on a set of attributes, behaviors and roles attributed to boys/men in a given society at a given time.
- Masculinities refer to the qualities, behaviors and attributes traditionally associated with men and masculinity: These can include physical strength, dominance, emotional stoicism and a focus on achievement and success.
- Masculinities are often defined in contrast to femininity, which is associated with qualities such as tenderness, empathy and emotional expressiveness.
- Masculinities are not an inherent or fixed characteristic of all men, but rather a social and cultural construct that is shaped by a range of factors, including family upbringing, cultural norms and expectations, and societal influences.
- Masculinity can be expressed in various ways and can be subject to change and evolution over time.

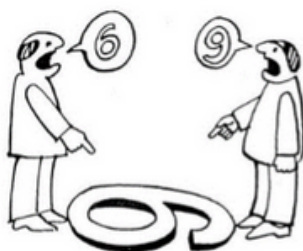


It is important to recognize the diversity of masculinities and to promote positive and inclusive models of masculinity to foster gender equality.

To learn more  **Masculinities: What is it all about? | CoP (copfgm.org)**



3. THE 3 LINES OF ACTION FOR WORKING ON MASCULINITIES



- **De center:** question yourself and know how to situate yourself with your 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.



- **Take responsibility:** recognize your wrongdoings and repair your actions if there has been harm. We must also take responsibility by getting involved in tasks other than our assigned roles (domestic, organizational, institutional and environmental level).



- **Joining forces:** creating bonds of solidarity and committing to a more egalitarian society. Reflect together on the action strategies that men can put in place in order to bring about a change in the context of domination.

To learn more,
read



Report: Workshop on masculinities
(copfgm.org)



4. WORK ON MASCULINITIES WITH MEN AND YOUNG BOYS FROM COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

- To effectively address female genital mutilation, men and boys must become allies, not just in initiatives to end the act, but more generally to rebalance gender power inequalities and be truly transformative.

- Seeing the suffering, consequences and trauma caused by female genital mutilation around them, some men and boys increasingly want to get involved in the struggles for the abandonment of female genital mutilation by raising awareness among others, men and boys, in spaces where they would be sure to be listened to. These spaces would make it possible to question masculinities.



Female genital mutilation is a product of deep-rooted unequal gender norms, issues that women and girls cannot address alone. Again this year, the number of girls and women who will undergo genital mutilation is expected to increase as conflict, climate change, rising poverty and inequality undermine efforts to eliminate this harmful practice and the deep discrimination that surrounds it.

For more details



Why is it important to work on masculinities with men and young boys in communities affected by Female Genital Mutilation?



5. TOOLS/CAMPAIGNS AND APPROACH TO WORK ON MASCULINITIES

A highlight on tools and campaigns that focus on masculinities

- The HeForShe campaign, initiated by UN Women, is a global movement that aims to engage men and boys as advocates for gender equality.
- The MenEngage Alliance is a global alliance in over 30 countries that seeks to engage men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and to promote the health and wellbeing of women, men and children, including ending all forms of gender-based violence (GBV).
- The “Be a Man” (BAM) campaign is an initiative developed by Promundo and Sonke Gender Justice to address rigid and harmful masculinities by promoting alternative, non-violent, and gender-equitable expressions of manhood.
- The White Ribbon Campaign, started in Canada in 1991, is a decentralized campaign focused on engaging men and boys to end violence against women.
- MenEngage Application, currently found on Play store and soon to work with IOS is an interactive platform, with questions, answers and case studies.
- EKOKI: Young women and young men against toxic masculinities and gender-based violence is a project to fight against gender-based violence (bullying at school, sexual violence, violence between intimate partners, etc.) in Kinshasa.



Redefining masculinity is crucial for achieving a gender-transformed society that promotes equality and social justice. Traditional notions of masculinity often reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, perpetuating inequality and limiting individuals' potential for personal growth and fulfillment.

Click here for more

[Tools, materials and campaigns to work on masculinities for a gender transformed society](#)



6. CONCLUSION






Here are some reactions from members of the community of practice on FGM

"It is very important to work on masculinities with men and young boys in communities affected by FGM. we find that at the household level and also in terms of health, women have enormous difficulties. It is very difficult to intervene because of the religious guides and other very influential people.

Thanks to the effect of associations and organizations like Gams Belgique, Grand Mothers project, things are slowly starting to change. We must fight to end FGM"

"The work on "Masculinities" is an important task to ensure social equity for women and for the sustainable development of communities. We take into account masculinities in the course of our activities by involving men in training sessions who often think that partners are only interested in the presence of women and girls"

In summary, here are some reasons why it is important to work on masculinities to put end to FGM:

				
<p>1. To promote gender equality: Traditional masculinity norms are often associated with male dominance, aggression, and superiority, which can lead to gender inequality. By working on masculinities, we can promote models of masculinity that are more egalitarian and encourage greater collaboration between genders.</p>	<p>2. To improve men's mental health: Expectations of traditional masculinity can sometimes prevent men from being themselves. By working on masculinities, men can be encouraged to be more comfortable with their vulnerability.</p>	<p>3. To reduce gender-based violence: Norms of traditional masculinity are often associated with violence. By working on masculinities, we can encourage men to adopt non-violent behaviours and to be real allies and partners in the fight against GBV including FGM.</p>	<p>4. To promote diversity: By working on masculinities, it can be recognized that there is great diversity among men in terms of personality, gender expression, culture, religion and other factors. Encouraging this diversity can promote greater inclusion and understanding between different groups.</p>	<p>5. To create positive male role models for young men: By working on masculinities, we can encourage the creation of "positive" male role models for young men, who can be inspiring and motivating. This can help young men develop a positive masculine identity and feel more confident in their role in society.</p>

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