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**Global Efforts to Engage Men in Preventing Violence Against Women:
An International Survey**

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ABSTRACT

This research note expands on the limited body of knowledge about men's engagement in preventing violence against women. One hundred and sixty-five individuals representing organizations from around the world participated in a brief online survey about their efforts to engage men in violence prevention. This study reveals a large and diverse global community working to engage men in preventing violence against women. The level of involvement is broad, from locally contained organizations to global collaborations. This study is a first step toward building a comparative knowledge base to inform program design and implementation.

Global Efforts to Engage Men in Preventing Violence Against Women: An International Survey

Global institutions and organizations working to prevent violence against women have begun to involve men as key allies in efforts to prevention violence against women. This marks a shift from focusing on men primarily as perpetrators and embodies a hope that men can be effective partners in prevention efforts. The WHO's in-depth study of violence against women (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005) recommends that, "People – particularly men – in positions of authority and influence (e.g. political, religious, and traditional leaders) can play an important role in raising awareness about the problem of violence against women, challenging commonly held misconceptions and norms, and shaping the discussion in ways that promote positive change" (p. 23). The necessity to engage men was also stressed by the U.N. Secretary-General (2006) stating, "There is also a need to engage men more effectively in the work on preventing and eliminating such violence, and to tackle stereotypes and attitudes that perpetuate male violence against women" (p. 2).

Work with men to prevent violence against women is emerging as a robust and identifiable global movement. For example, MenEngage, a Swedish-funded alliance of UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations from around the world works to promote gender equality and prevent the spread of HIV. MenEngage has over 400 non-governmental organizations listed as members. Despite the large number of organizations with some ties or commitment to efforts aimed at or including men in preventing violence against women, little systematic information about this emerging global movement has been published to date. This research note presents findings from a survey designed to expand the limited body of knowledge

about men's engagement in preventing violence against women, by surveying individuals and organizations involved in this work around the globe.

Methods

An online survey was designed, pretested, and administered to individuals associated with organizations around the world that seek to engage men in violence prevention. The purpose was to characterize features of organizations that include engaging men in violence prevention as part or all of their work, in order to identify global trends as well as noteworthy distinctions. Eligible organizations included those engaging men in violence prevention as a focus of some or all of their efforts. This survey represented the first of a multi-stage study that also includes a second, in-depth qualitative interview study of staff from 29 organizations worldwide, many of whom first participated in this online survey. These in-depth interviews are currently being analyzed and will be published at a later date.

Survey Development

The questionnaire developed by the research team consisted of 15 questions (see Appendix A). A global advisory group that included 15 members from seven countries reviewed the survey for content and face validity. The survey instrument was pilot tested by an international group of experts in the violence prevention field.

The research team defined engaging men in violence prevention as "Men taking action to stop violence against women and children before it begins by advocating and creating respectful relationships." Violence against women was defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in

public or in private life” (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993, p. 3).

Respondents were asked to identify their geographic location by region and describe their organization’s practice as local or grassroots, statewide, regional, national, and/or international in scope. Respondents were also asked to describe formal and informal programs (e.g. promoting mentors, leadership development, and parent or fatherhood activities) and level of services (e.g. micro to macro level services) provided by their organization, and to specify if men were actively engaged in providing those services as either volunteers or paid staff. The emphasis of the organization on engaging men in violence prevention was documented by asking if engaging men was the exclusive focus of their work; and, if not, to identify the best classification for their organization (e.g. domestic violence service providers, social service agencies, HIV/AIDS prevention; see Appendix A for a complete list), and to estimate the percentage of organizational resources allocated to engaging men in violence prevention. Finally, respondents were asked to specify the structure of their organization, the number of years their organization had been involved in engaging men in violence prevention, their organization’s primary funding sources, and organizations with which they engaged in collaborative work.

Identification of Organizations

An email invitation was sent to a list of eligible organizations and organizational contacts, including electronic mailing lists relevant to preventing violence against women. The invitation included a request for recipients to forward the email invitation to other agencies, organizations, or individuals that engage men in violence prevention.

Survey Administration and Data Collection

The survey was administered via the Internet. Online administration was chosen because it reduces time and cost while increasing the ability to collect data globally (Andrews, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003; Cha Yeow, 2005). An email invitation to participate with a link to the survey was sent in five waves with reminder emails being sent one week and three weeks after initial contact. The survey was conducted over a two-month period ending in June 2010.

Procedures for protecting human subjects were reviewed and approved by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board. The opening screen of the survey included a statement of the risks and benefits of the survey and only those participants who indicated they had read and agreed to the consent statement were permitted to take the survey.

Results

Sample

A total of 195 respondents provided consent to participate in this research study, 85% (n=165) reported that they participated in efforts to engage men in violence prevention. Those who did not engage men in violence prevention (15%, n=30) were exited out of the remaining survey questions. The analysis below is based on responses from the 165 respondents who participated in the full survey.

Region

Respondents were asked to identify the region in which they conduct their work. North America is overly represented in this sample due to the sampling technique. Email invites were sent to more North American addresses and electronic mailing lists than to other regions. Also, since the invitation and survey were sent only in English, it is likely that non-English speakers would be less likely to respond. Outreach efforts were made to target European, South American, and Asian countries with limited success; however, outreach efforts were more successful in

Africa and Australia. Of the 165 respondents, 53% (n=88) of the responses were from North American countries, 19% (n=32) from Australia, 10% (n=17) from Africa, 4% (n=6) of the responses each from European and South American countries, 1% (n=2) from Asia, and 7% (n=12) did not indicate a region.

Scope of Work

Of the 165 respondents, 64% (n=106) described the scope of their work as local, 29% (n=47) described as state, 27% (n=44) regional, 27% (n=44) national, and 22% (n=36) international. Africa, Europe, and South America had the highest percentage of respondents who identify the scope of their work as international. Australian respondents (3%, n=1) had the lowest percentage of respondents with an international focus. In proportion, North American respondents were also less likely to describe the scope of their work as international.

Focus of Work

Of the 165 respondents, only 20% (n=33) reported that engaging men in violence prevention was the sole focus of their work, while 75% (n=123) did other work in addition to engaging men in violence prevention, and 5% (n=9) did not provide an answer. A majority of the 33 respondents who solely focused on engaging men in violence prevention were from North America (61%, n=20), which is slightly higher than the percentage of North Americans (53%, n=88) in the overall survey. About 12% (n=4) of respondents each from Africa and Australia reported that engaging men in violence prevention was the sole focus of their organization. Between three to six percent of respondents from Asia (n=1), Europe (n=1) and South America (n=2) reported a sole focus on engaging men in violence prevention. Among these 33 respondents, 45% (n=15) had been working to engage men in violence prevention for eight or more years. Of those respondents who reported doing other types of work in addition to engaging

men in violence prevention, a similar percentage (46%; n=56) had been working for eight or more years in their efforts to engage men in violence prevention.

Respondents were asked to identify all categories of their work in addition to male engagement, African (62%, n=8) and North American (51%, n=35) organizations most frequently reported working in sexual violence prevention, while European respondents indicated their organizations focused most often on providing batterer intervention services (83%, n=5). A majority of Australian respondents (58%, n=15) reported a focus on domestic violence service provision. Asian and South American respondents were evenly divided over several categories including sexual violence prevention, domestic violence services, and batterer intervention services. Respondents were then asked to narrow their focus to the one category that best described their work. A total of 123 respondents indicated that their organizations worked in areas beyond a sole focus on engaging men in violence prevention. The categories that best described their additional efforts were domestic violence service provision (17%, n=21), social services (13%, n=16), or sexual violence prevention (8%, n=10). A majority of Australian respondents indicated that social services best described their organization (35%, n=9). Again, Asian and South American respondents were evenly divided over several categories including sexual violence prevention, domestic violence services, and batterer intervention services.

Resources

A majority of the 165 respondents reported that they received primary funding from their governments (58%, n=95) or through private funds (44%, n=73). Of the 33 organizations that solely worked on engaging men in preventing violence against women, 55% (n=18) received primary funding from private sources and 42% (n=14) received primary funding from the government. This pattern was also true for organizations that did other work in addition to male

engagement. Few organizations reported receiving funds from an endowment (4%, n=7). There is a slight variation in funding sources by region with African (60%, n=10) and South American (67%, n=4) respondents receiving private funding, respondents from Australia (69%, n=22), Europe (71%, n=5), North America (65%, n=65), and South America (67%, n=4) receiving primary funding from their governments, and Asian respondents splitting evenly between government (50%, n=1) and private (50%, n=1) funding sources.

Of the 123 organizations that did other work in addition to engaging men in violence prevention about half (52%, n=64) allocated 25% or less of their resources (i.e. time, money, staff) to engaging men in violence prevention. Approximately 19% (n=24) spent between 26-50% of their resources and 22% (n=26) spent more than 51% of their resources on engaging men in violence prevention. Compared to other regions, North American (57%, n=38) and Australian (77%, n=17) organizations had the highest percentages of respondents who reported allocating 25% or less of their resources on male engagement. Sexual violence prevention programs comprised 15% of the 26 organizations that allocated more than 50% of their resources to engaging men in violence prevention. Domestic violence (20%, n=18) and social service agencies (17%, n=15) were the majority of the 88 remaining organizations that allocated less than 50% of their resources to male engagement.

Types of Services Provided

Of the 123 organizations that provided additional services, community education (76%, n=93), workshops (70%, n=87), and direct services (58%, n=71) were the most common types of services provided by organizations in addition to engaging men in violence prevention.

African respondents reported technical assistance (100%, n=17), community education (71%, n=12), and community mobilization (65%, n=11) as among the top types of other services provided. Australians and Europeans listed direct services (66%, n=21; 86%, n=6) as the top service provided beyond male engagement. North American and South American respondents indicated community education (64%, n=56; 66%, n=5) and workshops (59%, n=52; 66%, n=4) as the most common services provided in addition to engaging men in violence prevention. Respondents from Asia were evenly distributed among several different types of services including direct services (66%, n=2) and workshops (66%, n=2).

Programs with Men Actively Involved

All survey respondents (N=165) were asked to identify types of formal and/or informal programs they offered and whether men were actively involved as staff or volunteers. Of the 165 respondents, 71% (n=118) of respondents reported providing prevention education to adults and 83% (n=98) indicated men were involved in this program as paid staff or volunteers. Fifty-eight percent (n=95) of respondents reported providing prevention education to youth and 75% (n=72) indicated men were involved with this program. While prevention and educational programs were most prevalent, every type of program appears to involve men, reporting 75% or higher male involvement. Leadership development had the highest percentage of male involvement (95% or 57 out of the 66 programs), with the lowest male involvement in programs focused on

prevention education with youth (75%, n=72), social marketing (75%, n=48), and prevention education in higher education (75%, n=68).

Organizational Structure

Respondents were asked to identify the structure of their organizations. Of the 165 respondents, 49% (n=81) were stand-alone non-profit organizations. The remaining 51% were characterized as programs within a larger non-profit (15%, n=25), governmental organization (10%, n=17), community coalition (10%, n=17), single individual (5%, n=9), stand alone for-profit (4%, n=7), or program within a larger for-profit (2%, n=3). There is little regional variation in organizational structure. A majority of respondents from each region except Australia and South America were identified as stand alone non-profits: Africa (65%, n=11); Asia (100%, n=3); Australia (41%, n=13); Europe (57%, n=4); North America (57%, n=49); and South America (33%, n=2).

Collaborative Relationships

All 165 respondents were asked to identify the types of organizations with which they had collaborative relationships. Respondents most frequently reported collaboration with women's organizations (76%, n=126) and least often reported collaboration with labor groups (13%, n=21). Respondents from Australia, Europe, and North America reported the lowest percentage of collaborative relationships with the United Nations (6%, n=2; 14%, n=1; 9%, n=8), which is consistent with the low percent of organizations from these countries identifying the scope of their work as international. These three regions did have high percentages of reported collaborative relationships with government, health care, and education organizations. Respondents from Africa (65%, n=11) and South America (50%, n=3) reported high percentages of organizations identifying the scope of their practice as international and also reported higher

percentages of collaborative relationships with United Nations divisions. Asian respondents did not identify as having an international scope but 66% (n=2) reported a collaborative relationship with the United Nations.

Discussion

This survey is an early step toward building a comparative international knowledge base about programs that engage men in violence prevention. The results provide a broad sketch of the violence prevention activities of the 165 organizations around the world that responded to our invitation. Key findings of this survey include:

The large number of organizations responding to the survey demonstrates the existence of a global community working to engage men in violence prevention. Our survey's success in reaching a large number of organizations around the globe adds evidence that there is a substantial amount of work being done to engage men around the world. As we discuss below, there are many reasons to believe that our survey was far from exhaustive and that our findings include only a subset of the organizations doing this kind of work globally. While our initial mailing lists could have included many organizations that do not engage men, only a small percentage (15%, n=30) of initial respondents indicated that their organizations did none of this type of work. This demonstrates that the movement does indeed include organizations that go beyond endorsement of the idea of engaging men and includes many groups doing this work.

There is variety in the geographic scope on which organizations focus, with African, European and South American programs being the most international in scope and Australian programs the most focused at the local level. While Australian organizations have been very innovative in engaging men, they have the lowest percentage of reported international scope (3%) and collaborative relationship with the United Nations (6%). Australia's geographic

isolation may be a factor in their limited international scope and collaboration. The geographic configuration of Africa, Asia, Europe, and South America may also be more conducive to working in a multinational context than other regions represented in this survey.

Organizations in more developed countries reported fewer collaborative relationships with the United Nations but more often worked closely with governmental, health care and educational institutions. The reverse was true of those from the developing world. The commitment of the United Nations to address technical assistance and aid needs of less developed countries may help to explain why fewer respondents from developed regions countries and more from developing regions countries are working in collaboration with the United Nations. The technical assistance and aid needs of less developed regions mostly likely contributed to their drawing on international resources through a collaborative relationship with the United Nations. However, it is interesting that respondents from more developed nations did not often report working in collaboration with the United Nations. These responses may indicate that an international scope and collaborative relationships are much more dyadic and needs-based than the broad based coalition building called for by leaders in the field of engaging men in violence prevention.

Nearly 75% of all respondents reported collaborative relationships with women's organizations. One common thread across regions was the high degree of collaboration with women's organizations. These organizations may be the conduit to creating wider collaborative relationships that engage men in violence prevention across all systems and lead to the multi-organizational collaboration across regions that has been so often advocated in action statements by MenEngage and other flagship organizations. The high degree of reported collaboration is encouraging. However, it should also be noted that self-reported collaboration does not mean

that these organizations are doing an effective job in these partnerships. Further, the presence of some collaboration does not negate the possibility for resource competition, dominance, or dilution of efforts than may continue to occur even when organizations work together.

Only a quarter of respondents reported an exclusive organizational focus on engaging men in violence prevention, with the greatest percentage of such organizations coming from North America. Most organizations were focused on multiple means of intervening across the social ecology to stop domestic and sexual violence, including community education, workshops and direct services. Organizations working in sexual violence prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention were most likely to report allocating more than 51% of their resources to engaging men in violence prevention, whereas organizations that worked in general domestic violence services and child abuse prevention were more likely to report allocating less than 50% of their resources to engaging men in violence prevention.

The organizations that included sexual health programs also reported a high percentage of men actively working in those programs, while prevention education programs with adults and youth reported the lowest rates of male involvement. In providing direct services, the focus of efforts is likely on helping women and children to prevent victimization. In these efforts, men are not actively doing the work nor are the resources allocated to engage men in this work. Whereas, the efforts of sexual violence and HIV/AIDS prevention work is frequently directed at men, so it is not surprising that greater resources are allocated to engaging men in these efforts and that men are more likely to be actively working on these programs.

Just over half of the organizations – both those organizations focused solely on engaging men and those that reported additional foci – had been operating for fewer than eight years. This indicates substantial recent growth in violence prevention efforts. With many organizations

reporting being relatively new to this work, the growth trajectory of the violence prevention field is clear. Survey results indicate that the rapid expansion of the field encompasses the emergence of a diverse set of organizations, encompassing the delivery of interventions across levels of the social ecology and at different points of prevention.

Limitations

The above findings must be viewed in the context of several limitations to the online survey method used in this study. Trust and confidentiality may be compromised if respondents suspect they can be identified or if the researchers suspect that respondents may have assumed false identities (Andrews et al., 2003). However, the low sensitivity of the subject matter in this survey may have reduced the likelihood of such compromises and computer “cookies” were used to reduce the ability of one site or individual to have repeated access to the survey. Another limitation is that the study design requires respondents to have access to the Internet; lack of access altogether, unstable or slow Internet connections may have restricted study participation. To mitigate this limitation, the survey was designed with minimal graphics in order to reduce problems with slow Internet speeds.

The sampling technique and method of survey administration likely affected responses. The email recruitment letter and survey were disseminated in English, which may have reduced responses from non-English speaking countries. While online tools like Google Translator may have given non-English speakers access to this survey, responses were likely limited by this factor. This is an important limitation given the aim of the study to expand the limited body of individuals and organizations involved in this work around the globe. There is almost certainly an association between the use of English language and the geographic distribution of respondents.

Finally, the use of a snowball sample has associated limitations. It is unknown how widely the survey invitation was forwarded and therefore a response rate cannot be calculated. The starting point for the sample was organizations and electronic mailing lists known to the researchers and these network connections may have been stronger in some regions than others.

Despite these limitations, the key findings listed above suggest several policy, research and practice directions.

Policy, Research, and Practice Directions

This study offers preliminary characterization of an important, nascent sector of the violence prevention field. Findings suggest that the extent of the efforts to engage men in prevention, as well as the wide diversity of such efforts, warrants further investigation of the breadth and depth of global efforts to engage men in preventing violence against women. This study is a first step toward building a comparative knowledge base to inform program design and implementation.

To build on the important contribution of this preliminary study and address the identified limitations, future work in this area should facilitate the participation of those without reliable Internet access and without English language proficiency. Research should utilize more in-depth methods as well as longitudinal study designs that are more suitable for situating current efforts to engage men in preventing violence against women. This study has identified the ubiquity of collaboration with other types of organizations, particularly women's organizations; future studies should include organizations that partner with those focused on engaging men, to better understand how to maximize the efficacy of collaborative relationships.

As efforts to prevent violence by engaging men are likely to continue growing and evolving in the coming years, more in-depth and diverse research strategies are needed. Further

research can describe the process, philosophies, and strategies of the work, as well as to suggest best practices and barriers.

Understanding and evaluating the fundamentals of the current work of engaging men in violence prevention is important for policy makers, researchers and workers in the field. Our research team has also completed in-depth interviews with 29 individuals from around the world working as part of organizations focused on engaging men in violence prevention. These interviews addressed a variety of topics including evaluation, engagement strategies, and supporting philosophies. It is our intent to present this information in forms useful to those working to engage men in violence prevention, and to policy makers and funding agents. We hope this next stage of our research will continue to add to the knowledge base describing and supporting the global work of engaging men in violence.

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