

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ENGAGING MEN IN INDASHYIKIRWA PROGRAMME

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**PREVENTION
COLLABORATIVE**
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INDASHYIKIRWA AN IPV PROGRAMME

- Implemented by CARE Rwanda, Rwandan Men's Resource Centre Rwanda Women's Network, funded by DFID-Rwanda
- 7 districts in Eastern, Northern and Western provinces of rural Rwanda from August 2014-2018 (including 14-month inception period)
- Areas chosen because high rates of IPV, strong presence of VSLAs
- Impact evaluation conducted by What Works to Prevent VAWG Programme



COMPONENTS: INDASHYIKIRWA

- **A 21 session participatory curriculum** with male and female couples that had been married or living together for at least 6 months drawn from CARE Rwanda's micro-finance VSLAs to support equitable non-violent relationships

Couples Training

- Support a subset of trained couples to engage in **community activism**
- Establishment of **women's safe spaces** for dedicated support and referral of IPV survivors
- Training and **engagement of Opinion leaders** to support an enabling environment for IPV prevention and responses.

Enabling Environment





OBJECTIVES: INDASHYIKIRWA

- Reduce all types of IPV: Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Economic
- Challenge social norms underlying IPV and gender inequality
- Improve responses to survivors of violence and reduce barriers to help-seeking



MEN'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INDASHYIKIRWA

- Approximately 98% of men attended entire couples curriculum (21 weekly sessions approx. 3 hours per session)
- Approximately same # of men (300) as women volunteered to continue as activists

How do we explain what worked and why?



MOTIVATIONS FOR MEN'S ENGAGEMENT

- Positioned to build healthy relationships rather than as IPV programme
- Known benefits of CARE VSLAs, value of accessing training, not being excluded for being illiterate

“I heard Indashyikirwa works with CARE, which means we will gain a lot from it. When somebody gives you advice you can be able to do what you wouldn't do on your own. I will know how to use my resources and reach development.” (Male partner baseline)
- Couples curriculum extremely popular; had lottery and a few couples were fake
- Motivations could **change**: Some men originally motivated by curriculum stipend but changed after witnessing benefits first-hand

MOTIVATIONS FOR MEN'S ENGAGEMENT

- Appreciated being involved as couples
“Because we are both in the project I think our household will be stronger thanks to what we will learn in Indashyikirwa.” (Male partner baseline)
- Men who transitioned to activists appreciated greater community status & links to leaders
“Instead of saying ‘look how he is drunk’ when I am passing by, they talk to me positively and I feel proud. I couldn’t feel proud of meeting my mother-in-law when I am drunk, but today I greet her and feel comfortable.” (Male partner endline)
- A few men solely motivated by their wives:
“When it first came, I was not taking it seriously but because my wife was encouraging me to come, I listened to her and I came.” (Male partner midline)



CULTURAL CONTEXT TO ENGAGE MEN

- Promotion of development & self-reliance from top levels of government
“We are lucky to live in a country that encourages us to work and be developed. Even by hearing that word ‘Indashyikirwa’ you understand about being self reliant and to be important in society. That is something I understood from this project and that is why I immediately loved it.” (MC05E)
- Curriculum targeted mainly rural, economically deprived population; many self-subsistence farmers and stipend compared to earnings
- Cultural norms of collective engagement and responsibility
- GBV known government priority; decentralised government means strong awareness of government policies and laws at local level
“Government tells them about gender and GBV. It was not new for them because it was the policy of the government, so they appreciate that.” (Field Officer)

MEN'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INDASHYIKIRWA

- Reflecting on how men had been raised to transform attitudes normalising violence/inequality

“If the trainings didn’t take place, I wouldn’t have changed. I would be like my father.” (Male partner midline)
- Reflections on power inequalities rather than solely gender relevant and engaging to men
- Men developed rapport with others through curriculum and supported each other especially with their role as community activists



MEN'S ENGAGEMENT WITH INDASHYIKIRWA

Importance of male activists to engage other men:

“When a man says something, other men feel concerned which is different from when there are only women speaking, which can make men say: “those are the women who came to mislead other women!” when a man gives a testimony of what he does, they understand and they like it better.”

(Female activist endline)



ENGAGEMENT OF MEN AT WOMEN'S SAFE SPACES

- Targeted women, open to men: avoid backlash, support women's access, support male survivors
- Some women struggled to engage male partners & wished to engage men as couples
- Through witnessing benefits, visits by WSFs, male partners more supportive
- Men could dominate WS discussions and difficult to manage for female WSFs
- Safe space started hosting days for women's male partners and other days for women only

" Her husband said 'you are a crazy woman ! What are you going to say about us?' He was worried that she would tell everything related to the relationship and family." (WSA01N)



CHALLENGES ENGAGING MEN

- Could take time for men to not dominate curriculum discussions; changed over time and with participatory facilitation (helpful to have male and female facilitator)
- Changes among men (i.e. reducing alcohol abuse, engaging in domestic work) could lead to them being perceived as bewitched/dominated
- Support from other men & staff, learning skills as activists supported men to respond to backlash, emphasising benefits of non-violence

“So they tell me: “your wife must have bewitched you!” then I told them “my wife didn’t bewitch me. I want my household to be developed otherwise what I was doing before can’t help me reach anything.” (Male partner midline)

CHALLENGES ENGAGING MEN

- Use of formalised spaces for activism (parents evening, VSLAs) dominated by women; difficulties finding & actively engaging men
- Helpful for activists/safe space facilitators to visit men in homes to engage them; some men could be more open in private

*“We have the challenge that men don’t participate as much as women but also women are in groups, everyday of the week. The issue is that they are only women therefore we have to go to other places where we can also teach men to see if they can also change.” (Male activist
endline)*

REFLECTIONS ON WHAT WORKS TO ENGAGE MEN

- Work with couples promising platform to engage men
- Value of recruiting men through spouses
- Benefits based approach to motivate engagement
- Frame power inequalities rather than solely focused on gender inequalities
- Group based approach for men to draw on support of others, esp. to resist backlash they may experience
- Consider economic constraints to men's engagement, esp. if strong norm of men as providers
- Make it easy for men to engage; i.e. home visits
- Adapt efforts to engage men to cultural context



QUESTIONS?

REFLECTIONS?



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