



The Girl Effect: What Do Boys Have to Do with It?

A Briefing Note for an Expert Meeting and Workshop

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Introduction

Increased investment by donors into *The Girl Effect*, defined as “the unique potential of 600 million adolescent girls to end poverty for themselves and the world,” has contributed to new attention and programming for adolescent girls. These investments seek to rectify the consequences of gender-based discrimination and to deploy a new generation of empowered girls and women. But what about the brothers, fathers, friends, and partners of these girls? Without the involvement and commitment of men and boys to girls’ empowerment and gender equality, the impact of the “girl effect” may fall short. Furthermore, boys are also “gendered” – that is, affected and shaped by gender norms – and have an interest in changing rigid, inequitable and harmful gender norms. Acknowledging these circumstances, many researchers and programmers are exploring opportunities to work with girls *and* boys to overcome discrimination and build a more gender-equitable world.

It is important to state from the beginning that there are different schools of thought on the objectives of engaging men and boys. Some advocates argue for engaging men and boys as allies in empowering girls and women, in an “instrumental” approach in which men and boys are mostly a means to an end toward the goal of redressing gender inequalities and women’s and girls’ disadvantages. Another school of thought argues for engaging men and boys along with women and girls in achieving gender equality and overcoming rigid and harmful gender norms and structures, with a clear acknowledgement of the benefits for women and men. This approach has sometimes been called a “gender relational” approach, or alternatively “synchronizing gender strategies.” There is no clear evidence base that affirms which of these approaches is more effective. But it is important to acknowledge that there is not a consensus on these issues, and that there are key ideological and practical differences in these two approaches which should be aired and discussed.

In this paper, we argue for a *gender and developmental perspective* to explore “what boys have to do with the ‘girl effect’.” This approach seeks to combine the lenses of gender and developmental psychology to better understand gendered behavior in adolescents over their life cycle, with a focus on adolescence (generally defined as ages 10 to 19). We believe this perspective will help us develop programs and undertake policy efforts to promote equitable and healthy gender identities and norms with benefits for both girls and boys in a gender relational perspective. In analyzing these concepts, we affirm that “gender,” or the social construction of female and male roles, refers to masculinities *and* femininities, women *and* men, boys *and* girls, the relations between them, and the structural context that reinforces and creates unequal power relations between them (Barker et al. 2010).

To explore the implications of adopting a gender and developmental perspective, the paper first reviews theories explaining the development of adolescent gender identities, drawing from developmental biology, psychology and sociology. It then reviews available program data to identify promising approaches to promote gender equality, and exploring critical programmatic issues, including: identifying points of entry for reaching adolescents, both male and female; tailoring interventions to adolescents at different ages, developmental stages and cultural contexts; deciding when and how to use sex-specific or mixed programming; and evaluating the short and long-term effects of various interventions. Finally, we identify some priorities and unanswered questions for future investments in research and practice. These findings and recommendations will be interrogated and further developed during an expert meeting in October 2010.

Adolescent Development and Gender Socialization

In this section, we review the biological and behavioral research in adolescent development, explore the ways in which this is related to the process of gender socialization, and describe how these intersect to shape adolescent behavior. We focus on the findings that have the most relevance for programmatic interventions that seek to

transform prevailing normative views of gender roles among both male and female adolescents.

Adolescence is a life stage that includes individuals and groups at different points in their physical, social and cognitive development.

While the definitions of adolescence vary significantly across different cultural contexts, a socially recognized period between childhood and adulthood in which individuals are expected to acquire and take on some of the roles and functions of adulthood is a feature of virtually all societies. This life course stage includes individuals and groups at very different points in their development, but for almost all individuals the transition to adulthood is marked by a series of biological, emotional, cognitive and behavioral transformations, each of which carries specific social significance that is intimately connected to socially prescribed gender roles and expectations. Because each of these transformations takes place in different ways for boys and girls, their adolescent experience itself differs in important ways.

Adolescence includes a series of biological changes that are common across cultures and that interact with social expectations.

The social maturation that is part of the adolescent experience is accompanied by a series of biological changes that interact with the social pressures adolescents face. While there is significant variation in the timing of the biological changes, they typically occur in predictable stages. The beginning of adolescence in most cultural settings is marked by the biological changes associated with puberty, which marks the beginning of a sustained period of physical development. The physical growth and reproductive maturation associated with adolescence typically take place between the ages of 10 and 14 for girls and 12 to 16 for boys (Dixon-Mueller 2008). These changes are accompanied by significant hormonal changes that have implications for cognitive development, though changes in this area lag behind those related to physical growth. It is not until girls reach 14-16 years of age and 15-17 for boys that the brain structures and cognitive

processes have matured sufficiently to allow complex abstract thinking and full meta-cognitive functions (Breinbauer and Maddaleno 2005). The last stage of cognitive development is the development of regions of the brain linked to impulse control and mature decision-making, a process only completed in early adulthood. These in turn are linked to abstract thinking and justice-based reasoning, both of which are crucial for young people to be able to question, reflect about and construct their own ideas about gender norms and roles (Breinbauer and Maddaleno 2005; Patton and Viner 2007).

Gender roles are frequently rehearsed, reinforced and internalized during adolescence, but the process does not stop then.

While the biological changes that take place during adolescence have important implications for understanding some aspects of adolescent development, their importance in terms of gender relations stems from the social meanings that are attached to them. Individuals learn and internalize (and also question) social definitions and meanings of masculinity and femininity in a dynamic, bidirectional interaction between the individuals and their families, peer groups and communities (Ricardo et al. 2006). Within this framework, masculinity and femininity are often defined in oppositional terms – norms of masculinity are constructed in relation to and often in contrast to prevailing norms about femininity and vice versa. The internalization of these norms plays a major, though not definitive, role in shaping the expectations for how men and women treat each other in relationships and has important implications for a range of behaviors (2004; Barker 2000; Barker and Ricardo 2005).

As a result, adolescence is also a time when the pressures to conform to hegemonic definitions of both masculinity and femininity are particularly acute. Gender role differentiation often becomes more entrenched, and behaviors and hierarchies of power in relationships are rehearsed and experimented with (Barker et al. 2004; Mensch, Bruce, and Greene 1998) At the same time, because most younger adolescents have not yet formed more lasting or co-habiting relationships with intimate partners, their self-reported behaviors and attitudes in terms of relationships may be transient and short-

term and may not necessarily be indicative of how they will treat or interact with their partners once they form stable relationships (Aguirre and Güell 2002; Barker and Ricardo 2005). For this reason, this period is also one that holds particular promise for interventions designed to encourage more gender-equitable views and behaviors, but we should not assume that interventions during adolescence (and that changes observed in impact evaluations with adolescence) are necessarily indicative of their behavior and attitudes later in life.

Despite tremendous variation, there is considerable commonality in the expectations of men's and women's behaviors across social contexts. Boys/men are expected to financially provide for, protect and dominate women, while girls are taught to support and submit to men.

Gender socialization is influenced by other factors, including race, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status and rural/urban residence. Despite this variability, recent research has found a significant degree of commonality in the expectations of men's and women's behavior across different social contexts (2004; Marston and King 2006; National Research Council and National Institute of Medicine 2005). This research has highlighted the ways in which the biological changes associated with adolescence, particularly those related to sexual maturation, are assigned social meanings that are quite different for boys and girls. While boys are typically not encouraged to discuss or question the biological changes associated with puberty, menarche is often regarded as a key social event for girls that is often accompanied by increased social controls over women and their behavior in the social sphere (Pollack 1998).

Triggered by these biological changes, adolescence often becomes a period of increased sex-specific segregation of boys and girls in many cultures, with boys spending an increasing portion of their time outside of the household, and thereby freeing themselves from parental supervision (which can have both negative and positive outcomes), while girls are more likely to increasingly be centered around the home or close to other female family members (also with both negative and positive

outcomes)(Ricardo, Barker, Pulerwitz, and Rocha 2006). As a result, peer networks often become an important socializing force for boys during adolescence (Moore and Rosenthal 1993; Mosher and Tomkins 1988). While these peer networks may provide some security and a sense of belonging to some boys, the visions of manhood promoted by peer networks can also be homophobic, misogynistic, and supportive of violence as a method for resolving conflicts, just as there are other peer groups that may promote more equitable views of manhood (Barker 2000; Barker and Ricardo 2005). Some research suggests that this may result in younger men holding more inequitable views than their older male peers, partly because they hold idealized (and exaggerated) views of how women should treat them (Aguirre and Güell 2002; Barker and Ricardo 2005). The role of peers is complex, however, and in many cases young men are discouraged from forming close friendships with other boys or to have a single “best friend,” reflecting societal pressures not to appear or be “girlish” or “gay”, a pattern noted in multiple settings globally (2004).

Boys are also almost universally socialized towards an achievement and outward-oriented definition of masculinity that is specifically constructed around their social roles as providers and protectors (Gilmore 1990). This definition of manhood, which is closely tied to paid employment, is perhaps *the* universal expectation for how societies, institutions, individuals and public policies define adult manhood, and it is a pressure that most adolescent boys eventually feel. This pressure can be particularly acute in low income settings and in settings or periods when employment is difficult to secure, such as the current global economic recession. The consequences of economic stress are diverse, and some research has shown that men’s experiences of economic stress and un- and underemployment are associated with higher rates of intimate partner violence, alcohol abuse and other negative behaviors (Barker and Ricardo 2005; Correia and Bannon 2006).

In addition, boys are also often socialized into a version of manhood that emphasizes aggression and competitiveness that sometimes involves a tacit acceptance of violence (Archer 1994). In many settings, masculinity is closely tied to heterosexual behavior, with

sexual experience often formally or informally regarded as a rite of passage into a socially recognized manhood. This fosters a perception of (heterosexual) sex as a means for demonstrating masculine prowess and affirming identity (Ricardo, Barker, Pulerwitz, and Rocha 2006) and contributes to the perception of women and girls as sex objects to be conquered and as devoid of agency and rights. Heterosexual experiences may come to be viewed by peers as markers of masculinity and can confer status among peers, while any same-sex attraction or homosexual experiences may be hidden and scorned by peers (Asencio 1999; Khan, Khan, and Mukerjee 1998; Marsiglio 1988; Nyanzi, Pool, and Kinsman 2001).

In comparison, in many settings girls are expected to remain chaste, naïve and passive regarding sexual matters (Marston and King 2006). Common patterns of socialization mean that talking about sex, discussing condom use and acknowledgement of sexual experience can have negative impacts on a girl's reputation, while boys may talk about or "brag" about sexual conquests and feel pressure to have such experience, but are not likely to talk about sex in terms of intimacy or relationships and to worry about the health consequences of sexual activity. The sexual objectification of women and girls contributes to destructive patterns and behavior, including assumed roles and responsibilities within relationships, inequitable decision-making within relationships, and intimate partner violence. While boys are often socialized to be aggressive and even violent, girls are often taught to be submissive in the face of male domination, including when it takes the form of violence and/or sexual coercion (Archer 1984; Heise and Elias 1995; Wood, Maforah, and Jewkes 1998).

Despite these generalizations, gender socialization is neither automatic nor inevitable; adolescents are active participants in making choices about whether to adopt social norms and in questioning or internalizing them (Rivers and Aggleton 1999; Varga 2003). It is also important to keep in mind that while research shows a similarity in patterns in what are expected "male" and "female" behaviors, there is also evidence of tremendous diversity, with some boys and girls accepting these norms, while others question them and gravitate toward more equitable, flexible and less violent norms and identities, and

some showing a mixture of attitudes – rigid on some and flexible on others. Indeed research suggests that some young people are keenly aware of gender inequalities and injustices, question these injustices and are often angered and outraged by them, and are eager to participate as partners with adults in overcoming these injustices if given the opportunity to do so (Barker and Ricardo 2005).

Understanding how these issues function in adolescence is not merely academic nor theoretical; it should drive how program and policy interventions seek to work with adolescent boys and girls to achieve gender equality.

Recent research has increasingly emphasized the need to better understand how groups of and individual adolescents differ, both in terms of their development stage and the character of their gendered relationships. The lack of clear synchronization between chronological age and social development stage, which is particularly evident when comparing boys and girls, and differences between cultural settings, makes clearly defining specific sub-groups within adolescence challenging. Dixon-Mueller, focusing on the “readiness” of adolescent sexual, marital and reproductive transitions, suggests dividing adolescence into three categories: early adolescence (10-14 or 10-11 and 12-14); middle adolescence (15-17) and late adolescence (18-19) (Dixon-Mueller 2008). Others have focused more on distinguishing the differences between the ‘very young adolescents’ (VYA) and older teens (Chong, Hallman, and Brady 2006;UNAIDS, World Health Organization, and UNFPA 2004).This approach has emphasized that the early adolescent period is where the social and biological foundations are laid for the remainder of adolescence: girls and boys are beginning to be aware of their own sexuality and their roles in society, but are only beginning to gain the cognitive abilities required to contextualize and think critically about these experiences and to question rigid notions of gender (Dixon-Mueller 2008).

Adopting a developmental perspective that takes into account both social and biological stage has a number of implications for program goals and activities.

When working with adolescents, age, developmental stage, gender and culture must all be considered at the outset of a program (a typology illustrating the ways in which these are linked and the implications for programming can be found at the end of this paper). Furthermore, it is important to consider that normative change takes time. As a result, programs should endeavor to work with adolescents over their lifecycle, rather than attempting to identify an “ideal” age or stage. Some of the generalizable implications for a developmental perspective include the following:

- At the individual level:
 - Developmental stage influences the ability of adolescents to process information and should inform the level of complexity that a program attempts to convey.
 - Critical and abstract thinking ability generally increases with age and development. It is a skill that must be practiced and rehearsed and is a key element for young people (and adults) to be able to question rigid gender norms.
- Group level:
 - Programs should be careful not to conflate age with development stage when grouping individual teens together, as age may be a poor proxy for cognitive, emotional or social stage. This is particularly the case when combining boys and girls together, as girls typically pass through development stages at younger ages than boys.
 - At the same time, boys and girls have different needs, even at similar development levels, and program activities should take this into account.
 - Programs should be aware that the nature of gender relations differs with developmental stage, and the appropriateness of combining boys and girls together in program activities is also highly mediated by culture and local context.
- Community level: Transforming gender norms cannot be left entirely up to adolescents. Their lives are shaped by their social contexts, including schools, family, community, and workplaces. While change can and should be promoted

in how young people feel and behave, change must also be promoted in the spaces where boys and girls live their lives.

In the following section, we review some of the programmatic evidence of interventions that attempt to transform gender norms with young people, through a developmental perspective.

Review and Discussion of Programs Seeking to Engage Adolescents in Changing Gender Norms

In the past 10 to 15 years, there has been an increase in efforts to engage men and boys in gender equality and health promotion from a gender perspective. Many programs have developed innovative tools to reach young people in particular, such as cartoon videos, school-based interventions, creative group education processes (and curricula), and use of popular and mass media. As such, there is a growing stock of programs from which to draw preliminary lessons and promising practice.

A 2007 WHO-Promundo review of interventions focused on men and boys in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, gender based violence, fatherhood and HIV/AIDS affirmed that such programs, while short in duration, have been shown to lead to changes in men's and boys' attitudes and behaviors. Of the 57 studies included in the analysis:

- a) 24.5 per cent were assessed as *effective* in leading to attitude or behavior change;
- b) 38.5 per cent were assessed as *promising, meaning they mostly led to attitude changes*; and
- c) 36.8 per cent were assessed as *unclear, meaning there was not enough evidence to affirm changes in attitudes or behaviors, or the evaluation only affirmed changes in knowledge*.

The review affirmed that programs which were 'gender-transformative' – meaning those that seek to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women – were more effective than programs which were merely 'gender-sensitive' (recognizing the specific needs and realities of men) or only 'gender-neutral' (distinguishing little between the needs of men and women). Group education (the majority of which were with younger men and boys), combined with other interventions (community campaigns, or community outreach, or some kind of social service or clinical service) were also generally more effective than single interventions. Nearly half of the interventions included in the review focused on adolescents or young men. Finally, the review also found that evidence of change was restricted to the short-term (usually immediately after an intervention, or at most 9 months later), with few programs being evaluated over a longer timeframe; the scale of such programs has been small and that few of the interventions have been scaled up in an ongoing way.

Taking that review as our starting point, we sought to gather additional insights by identifying programs that have sought to engage boys in promoting gender equality, with the objective of examining specific issues: (1) identifying points of entry for reaching adolescents, both male and female; (2) tailoring interventions to adolescents at different ages, developmental stages and cultural contexts; (3) discussing when and how to use

Program H and "Once upon a Boy"

Program H ("H" for hombres, or man in Spanish, and homens in Portuguese) focuses on helping young men question traditional norms related to manhood. The four components of the program include: sex-specific group education, a lifestyle social marketing campaign, research on barriers to young men's use of clinic services, and an evaluation model for measuring changes in attitudes and social norms. The group education is accompanied by a no-words cartoon video called "Once upon a Boy", which illustrates a young man through various stages of adolescence to young adulthood. The video enables participants in various cultural and linguistic settings to create dialogue and project personal stories into scenes about violence, social pressures, sexual experiences, and having a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Program H has been shown to positively influence attitudes related to gender equity. Some of the areas that have demonstrated improved gender sensitive attitudes include, gender based violence, condom use, partner negotiation skills, and a greater desire to be more involved as fathers. Program H has been adapted by more than 20 countries with diverse populations, cultures and socio-economic levels (*Barker 2003*).



Sample Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzG4re-Ja0I>

sex-specific or mixed programming; and (4) evaluating the short and long-term effects of various interventions.

For the purposes of this background paper, we took on an additional review to look at the major findings from programs that target adolescents with gender-transformative messages. The programs we reviewed had the following characteristics: (1) target adolescents 10-19 years old; (2) target or involve boys, even when girls are primary participants/beneficiaries; address gender (socialized roles, responsibilities and expectations for boys and girls); (3) have lessons have been evaluated or at least documented; (4) when possible, are ongoing.¹ We also highlight several case studies in boxes. The following represent the emerging conclusions from this program review:

- 1. Some programs address gender directly, but most programs tackle gender norms through discussions of other issues such as sexual and reproductive health or violence prevention.** Perhaps the most common intervention is life skills-based curricula that cover topics ranging from health to leadership to decision-making, and gender is often a component or module within the curriculum. While these programs often target adolescents at a range of ages and developmental stages, most do not attempt to intervene at multiple points or cater their gender programming to suit the specific needs of individuals in the programs.
- 2. School-based and community-based programming are the most common points of entry for adolescent programs.** Generally, younger adolescents are easier to target through school-based programs than older adolescents, because younger

¹ In order to identify programs to include in this review, a review of existing adolescent, early adolescent and gender programming literature reviews (Barker, Ricardo, and Nascimento 2007; Guedes 2004) provided a majority of the programs included in the study. To expand the scope with the goal of identifying any relevant programs regardless of whether they had been evaluated, the search was expanded with generic internet search engines, such as Google, and with interviews of key experts in the field. We also interviewed 5 people by email to solicit additional recommendations of key programs. The search was limited to programs published in and after 2000. Some programs included in the review did not have sufficient documentation available but were included because of the potential for learning. 42 programs were included in the review.

adolescents are more likely to be enrolled in school and under greater parental or adult control (Flood 2009). Furthermore, while young men's and boys' school enrolment is higher than girls in some parts of the world, there are some regions – urban Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Western Europe – where adolescent boys are more likely than girls to be out of school after the age of 14 (Bankole et al. 2007; Barker and Ricardo 2005). In addition, some boys prefer community-based activities to life skills group education activities that take place within schools and may “feel” more like school to them (which they view negatively). Programmers should be aware that these two types of entry points are likely to attract adolescents at different stages of their development arc: in-school

interventions will be more likely to capture younger adolescents at earlier stages of their development arc, while community interventions should be targeted towards more mature adolescents.

3. Sports programs are an increasingly popular venue for challenging norms around masculinity and femininity.

Sports programs use existing interests (i.e. soccer/football), group cohesion among teammates, and existing leadership (i.e. coaches, athletes) in combination with a clear point of entry (i.e. the team, advertising) to create safe spaces to address gender issues. Most

of these programs, such as Coaching Boys into Men, work only with boys, though there are number of programs working with girls to challenge gender norms, violence, or sexuality. While all these programs aim to transform gender relations in some way, the specific goals of the interventions often differ depending on whether

Parivartan: Sports Based Gender Programming: Mumbai, India

Modeled in part after the U.S. based Family Violence Prevention Fund's "Coaching Boys Into Men" program, Parivartan enlists coaches and community mentors to serve as role models for mostly boy cricket players ages 10 to 16 in more than 100 schools in Mumbai, India. The program draws in its participants by using the popular sport of cricket to teach a real life lesson: aggressive, violent behavior doesn't make them "real men" – nor does it help win cricket matches. The goal of the program is to encourage both the mentors and the players to adopt different values about what it means to be men by exploring notions about gender roles, masculinity, and relationships in a space where they feel comfortable sharing their perspectives. The program explores the mentors' first hand experience with the challenges of learning a new way to view women, as well as their roles as men. As they try to practice these ideals in their own lives, they must learn how to manage the pressures of strong social messages that say otherwise. Finally, the mentors must figure out how to pass on the lessons of Parivartan to their cricket players (Gaynair 2010).

they work with girls or boys. For example, programs working with boys often rely on providing participants with gender-sensitive role models, while those working with girls seek to challenge norms around suitable gendered behavior simply through participation in non-traditional sports. One common challenge of such programs is the need to engage coaches and the adults involved in such activities to ensure that their gender attitudes and behaviors serve as positive references for the participants and do not reinforce gender divisions and inequalities. An important remaining challenge is to assess whether these programs provide an important entry way to reach boys and girls together (Family Violence Prevention Fund 2010).

4. **Popular and local media can be a powerful platform to counteract the negative gender norms pervasive in society and provide alternative examples.** Media can be used to provoke critical thinking or behavior change around harmful gender norms. Advertising campaigns and social media can reduce stigma and open up dialogue on sensitive subjects (Family Violence Prevention Fund). Within current adolescent programming, media or social marketing is generally used as a tool within a larger program curriculum and is designed to reach a wider audience, including community members or adolescents who are not the direct recipients of the intervention. Media tools can be developed to reach girls and boys at different developmental stages, and can and should involve young people in their design and testing. The potential role of media is expanding in adolescent programs, but aside from a few examples, programs have yet to harness the possibilities of using social media in their programming. Most evaluation suggests that mass media (e.g. “social soaps”) on their own lead to less impact than when combined with opportunities for group reflection and discussion about the themes presented in the media. Soul City in South Africa, Sexto Sentido in Nicaragua and the “Between Us” radio soap opera in Brazil provided opportunities for young people to discuss the stories, and gender messages in the media material (Guedes 2004; Pulerwitz et al. 2006).

5. **Only a limited number of programs explicitly target the parents of adolescents, but a great number incorporate adult mentors into their programs.** It is unclear from the review if the lack of parental involvement programs is due to a gap in programming, limited search criteria, omissions in program reviews, or whether young people and/or parents are reluctant to discuss issues of gender, sexuality and relationships together (or whether parents of adolescents do not have the time or interest to participate

Entre Madres y Amigas, Nicaragua

When *Entre Amigas* was developed, it was assumed that peers would be the most influential voice for developing gender norms in young adolescent girls' lives; however, the baseline study uncovered the critical role of mothers. The limited mobility of girls in Latin America increases the influence mothers play in shaping the societal norms and sexual health of their daughters. The majority of girls within the study were living with their mothers (87.5%), and in over half of the homes in the survey, mothers were the main decision-makers in the home. It was found that regardless of age, girls wanted to approach their mothers to discuss sexuality and pregnancy, but due to fear, blame, or mistrust of their mothers' reactions, were not comfortable enough to speak with their mothers about such sensitive topics. Adding to the reluctance that girls felt, mothers' lack of knowledge, existing prejudices, and life experiences limited their effective involvement. The study concluded that mothers are significantly influential to a girl in terms of societal norms and sexual health, and this led to a change in the program implementation, bringing mothers into the intervention, with the goal of establishing trust between mothers and daughters in order to improve communication and start conversations about sexual and reproductive health (Pena 2006).

in such programs). As highlighted above, adolescence is often a period of increased independence from parents for boys, while the opposite is often true for girls. This suggests that programs involving parents may be more successful if involving boys at earlier development stages, while the converse may be the case for girls. One program that reaches parents directly is *Entre Madres y Amigas*. A number of programs do include mentoring as an aspect of the program, such as Men Can Stop Rape Strength Clubs, or Parivartan, which includes mentors from the community at large. In addition to reaching parents, many program reviews have cited the importance of reaching out to the community to reach adolescents and to achieve sustainability of new social norms. To ensure buy-in from community members, program staff have often framed taboo topics such as sexuality and gender norms in terms of the health and safety of children and community members. Involving the

larger community can help to create a space for adolescents to practice their new knowledge and behaviors.

- 6. Including discussions of gender norms within vocational training or income generation activities remains a seldom-used but potentially important avenue for engaging adolescents of both sexes.** The need to acquire employment, learn skills for employment and earn income may be especially acute for boys who are economically disadvantaged (and is, clearly, important for girls). These programs have the potential to be particularly effective among older adolescents, who are more likely to be out of school and entering the labor force. While there are many vocational training programs in low income settings, this review failed to uncover vocational training programs that integrate a gender component into their curriculum. Vocational training that addresses gender may be a way to remove some of the pressure society places on boys and young men, provide exposure to non-traditional income-generating opportunities for girls, and might be a strategic point of entry for boys and girls that has been underutilized so far. While livelihood, savings clubs and other income generation and vocational training programs have been a cornerstone of empowering young women (and adult women), using such programming as a way to reach adolescent boys with messages about gender is limited thus far. Even harder to find, are programs that do this with both girls and boys.

7. More programs are attempting to reach boys and girls together, though doing so effectively has proven challenging.

Many programs are increasingly reaching the conclusion that the most effective route to challenging gender norms includes involving both boys and girls in their programming, though this is often not done in a fully integrated fashion. Programs often work with both boys and girls separately, but programs that bring the two groups together in a systematic way are rarer. The review found little documentation of when and how program implementers decide to work with boys-only, girls-only and when they bring them together, reflecting considerable uncertainty as to how and when this approach is most applicable. However, there is some evidence that combined sex approaches can be effective in changing gender

norms and behaviors. Integrated spaces provide the opportunity for boys and girls to challenge and discuss gender norms through face-to-face conversations, role-playing or other sharing activities (e.g. Stepping stones, Program H, Choices).

The gender and developmental approach suggests that that the suitability of combined-sex programming will depend both on the content and structure of the program itself and on the development stage of the participants themselves. Some programs have found that initiating conversations about gender norms was easier in

Stepping Stones:

Gender Communication and HIV Training

Stepping Stones, a training package on gender communication and HIV, consists of both sex-specific and mixed-sex programming. First, the program creates safe spaces by grouping people into same sex and similar aged groups. Participants learn to explore HIV, gender and relationship issues with their peers, to help avoid the threat of domination or ridicule from others. At intervals throughout the programs, all the groups are brought together to share lessons they have learned. By taking this phased approach, learned concepts are reinforced and integrated to the larger community, which increases the effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

An evaluation of Stepping Stones in South Africa found that the program had an overall effect on participants' ability to communicate; this included discussions about sex with older populations, improved ability and confidence with discussing their newly formed attitudes and beliefs, as well as improved communication among partners. Stepping Stones was found to have had a profound effect in communication by teaching those involved to express their opinions and feelings clearly, listen to each other and to discuss issues rather than remaining quiet and keeping frustrations and opinions that may differ from prevailing gender norms to themselves (Jewkes and et al. 2007; Salamander Trust 2010).

single-sex groups, which provide young men in particular a safe space within which to comfortably share and openly address various key topics and to be able to question rigid norms about gender and masculinity without being ridiculed by their male (and female) peers (Pulerwitz, Barker, Segundo, and Nascimento 2006). Many programs affirm the need to provide “safe spaces” in which boys and girls separately feel safe to discuss their personal experiences and vulnerabilities, or without feeling like they have “perform” in front of the opposite sex or in front of their same-sex peers (Guedes 2004;Pulerwitz, Barker, Segundo, and Nascimento 2006)The need for these spaces is likely to ebb and flow during adolescence as teens mature physically and gain experience with members of the opposite sex. Again, whether “safe spaces” must be single-sex, or whether safety is more an issue of trained adults creating a sense of comfort and shielding individuals from negative peer pressure, seems to vary by setting.

- 8. Few programs reaching adolescents explicitly mention a developmental perspective, but many implicitly and intuitively do so.** For example, many programs affirm that grouping adolescents into similar age ranges may improve sharing and increases the comfort level to discuss these topics. While the developmental literature underscores the ability of adolescents to process information based on the developmental stage it is not clear that programs currently account for cognitive and emotional development stages within their design (Dixon-Mueller 2008;Varga 2003). Beyond the concept of ability to process information,

Choices

Save the Children’s *Choices* is a pilot project in Nepal with 10 to 14 year old boys and girls, implemented through local NGOs in child clubs with youth facilitators. The approach is based on the assumption that changing the gender-related attitudes and behaviour of pre-adolescent boys will lead to a change in the treatment of girls and women in Nepali society and ultimately to improved health. Topics of gender norms such as power are not approached directly, but through creative, participatory activities that encourage young adolescents to discover and challenge their beliefs and attitudes. The curriculum uses situations that young adolescents can relate to (family dynamics, homework, household chores and sibling relationships) to explore gender constructs around topics such as empathy, what is right and wrong, respect, and dreams. In this way the program incorporates the young adolescent’s cognitive abilities, current situational awareness, and emotional capacities into its programming.

Personal Correspondence with Brad Kerner dated August 19, 2010

younger adolescents typically have different interests and/or different experience with certain topics (e.g. puberty, romantic/sexual relationships). There are, nevertheless, several programs and reviews that address the relevance of topics by age group. For example, an evaluation of Program H found that while it was difficult to recruit older youth (in the 18-20 year old range) due to competing priorities such as jobs and other responsibilities, the older youth that did attend often displayed more involvement and interest in the session topics related to intimate partner or couple relationships, likely because they had more experience with intimate relationships. Some studies cite the negative consequences of combining older and younger youth. For example, in programs that combine older versus younger male adolescents, there are more likely to be problems of intimidation, a reluctance to be honest for fear of ridicule, or the need to impress by the younger participants of the group (Pulerwitz, Barker, Segundo, and Nascimento 2006).

- 9. Most programs reaching adolescent boys and girls have not been evaluated in terms of applying a developmental perspective or following young people over time to determine the long-term effects of gender norms programs.** While an increasing number of programs working to change gender norms among adolescents are being rigorously evaluated, most of these evaluations have focused more on change over a short period of time, with less attempting to assess longer-term effects over the life course. Furthermore, while there is a strong theoretical and programmatic basis for developing interventions using a gender and developmental framework, no interventions have specifically evaluated the merits of this approach. This is in part because programs have not defined themselves as such, and few programs articulate a developmental perspective, even if they apply one, and because of the specific challenges this approach poses in terms of both program implementation and evaluation. In particular, it suggests that programs follow individuals across multiple stages of their adolescent development trajectory and collect data over this full period for evaluation, a commitment few programmers or donors are prepared or able to undertake. Longitudinal or longer cohort studies can yield an improved understanding of how gender norms can change over time and

improve outcomes for girls, boys, women and men; yet, there are very few studies or programs of this type, particularly in the developing country context.

We also do not have evidence whether programs that intervene at a single point in an adolescent's life may be less effective than programs that repeat or build up information throughout the different developmental stages of adolescence. Three examples of programs that do follow adolescents throughout their development are sexuality curriculum "Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education" by Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), the Tuko Pamoja curriculum and the Nigerian-based Conscientizing Male Adolescents (CMA) project (Population Council 2003;SIECUS 2004). SIECUS has developed material that sought to identify the necessary and recommended components of sexuality education by age and developmental stage. They emphasize that repeated, multi-year exposure to the concepts is advised, and with each year they recommended that students should be given new, relevant, and more in-depth information as they mature. The advance in stages is not only based on cognitive ability but on relevance and ability to relate to topics that change with developmental stages. This may be one of the clearest and best examples of a developmental approach applied to sexuality education (SIECUS 2004).

10. The need to better define outcome indicators and to affirm from the beginning what we expect and want from adolescent boys. One of the challenges of programs and policies to engage men and boys is defining what we expect from them and what is possible to achieve and measure in the course of program interventions. This paper highlights the importance of avoiding a "mechanistic" or simplistic behaviorist approach to young people and the importance of understanding context and individual and group differences. That said, programs should and have been able to measure change on some important indicators, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Referring back to the 2007 WHO review previously mentioned, the following are some of the areas in which programs have shown changes with adult and adolescent men:

- *Decreased self-reported use of physical, sexual and psychological violence in intimate relationships;*
- *Increased contraceptive and condom uses;*
- *Increased communication with spouse or partner about child health, contraception and reproductive decision-making;*
- *More equitable involvement in the care of children;*
- *Increased use of health services by men;*
- *Decreased rates of STIs symptoms and STIs;*
- *Increased empathy by men toward their spouses or partners.*

Perhaps the most widely used measure of change among adolescent boys and men in program evaluation is the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale, a psychometrically validated attitude scale that assesses to what degree men and women, including adolescent girls and boys, agree or “buy into” a set of inequitable or equitable affirmations about what it means to be men. These items in turn, have been shown to be highly correlated with a number of self-reported practices or behaviors, including men’s use intimate partner violence, condom use, seeking HIV testing, among others (Pulerwitz and Barker 2008). Implicit in the GEM Scale and other outcome measures such as this is a series of desires of what we, as program planners, expect from more “gender equitable” young men. While there are number of key GEM Scale items that have been shown to be relevant across contexts, programs who use the GEM Scale have been and are encouraged to adapt it to take into account local norms related to gender.

All of these indicators have implicit ideas of what we expect from young men and boys or want from them in terms of gender equality. At the 2009 Global Symposium on Engaging Boys and Men in Gender Equality, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the following was affirmed as our expectations of boys from a gender equality perspective:

- Never commit, condone, or remain silent about men’s *violence against women* or against other men.

- ***Respect and support girls and women*** as equal members of society in all walks of life.
- ***Share equitably and enthusiastically in care-giving***, child rearing and home-making, treating boys/sons and girls/daughters equally.
- Make ***mutual decisions around sexual and reproductive health*** issues as well as other intimate domains.
- Express their ***sexuality free of stereotypes***, coercion or violence in ways that are safe, pleasurable and mutually desired.
- Able to feel proud of themselves ***without necessarily being the sole breadwinner***, without being a father (especially of sons), having many sexual partners, or being aggressive.
- ***Accept and feel comfortable with the “feminine” aspects*** of their personalities and with those of other men.
- Feel comfortable ***expressing emotions*** in positive and non-violent ways.
- Are capable of forming ***emotionally supportive friendships with other men as well as with women.***

This list provides an excellent starting point for programs to assess and define what they expect from boys and young men and what they hope to achieve and measure as a result of their interventions.

Conclusions

Based on this review of the literature and consultation with some key program planners, we can affirm that:

- There is a strong base of program experiences to build on in terms of engaging adolescent boys, and adolescent boys and girls in a relational experience. While not all of these have been subject to rigorous impact evaluation, there is a need for more fine-tuning, scaling up and expanding the reach of existing programs (e.g. intervening over a longer period of time), rather than a need to invent new approaches.

- There is a need to move beyond a perspective that there is a single developmental stage or age to reach boys or girls with specific themes, and instead to work to appreciate that these issues require ongoing work with developmentally and gender-specific messages and approaches.
- Programs reaching young people on gender issues should not assume they have to intervene or work with adolescents over the entire adolescent phase but they should have the larger developmental perspective in mind when they design and evaluate their programming.
- Programs do not clearly enough define their outcomes or desires for young men and could be improved if they had a clearer articulation of what it is they expect from boys and young men (drawing on the issue affirmed at the 2009 Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality).
- The near-universal socialization of boys as economic providers suggests that including gender sensitization activities in established vocational training programs may prove particularly attractive to boys, particularly as employment for youth becomes increasingly scarce. However, to achieve true gender equality, boys and girls should both be included in vocational training, income generation and livelihoods activities that avoid traditional gendered occupations (boys in carpentry and mechanics and girls in sewing and hairdressing, for example). Furthermore, such programs should have the explicit goal of socializing young women and men to be both being co-providers and co-caregivers. In other words, programs should acknowledge and affirm that both girls and boys should arrive at adulthood with the skills necessary to earn a dignified living and should know and appreciate the importance of providing care for others, including children.

These conclusions will be further discussed and debated during an upcoming expert meeting in October 2010.

A typography of the linkages between developmental stages, behaviors and their implications for programs: Boys and girls

Note: All ages and developmental stages are approximate and will differ depending on context.

Adolescent Boys

	Social Development	Sources of Influence	Where to reach them	Implications for programs	Key indicators
Early Adolescence	Increased awareness of social norms around gender; rejection of 'feminine' behaviors or roles; sports and/or competition important; less able to engage in abstract thinking	Parents particularly important; teachers; coaches	Schools, as almost all attend in some capacity; sports programs; other youth programs	School and sports based programming is likely to be more effective at reaching youth; parental buy-in is crucial; programs should focus on normative aspects of gender	Understanding of social construction of gender norms and identities; identifying gender stereotypes; equal valuation of masculine and feminine traits and roles
Middle Adolescence	Increased individual independence; strengthening personal relationship with male peers; initial romantic relationships; sexual initiation and exploration; beginning to exhibit abstract thinking skills	Peers replace parents as main source of influence, particularly male; romantic partners become more important	School, though this may be less effective; sports programs; community centers catering to young males (e.g. video game centers, internet cafes, etc)	Working with peer groups is particularly important; sports or other shared activities may be particularly useful as entry points; increased emphasis on intimate/sexual relationships	Increased desire/ability to challenge gender stereotypes; ability to express sexuality in a manner free of stereotypes; ability to express emotions in positive and non-violent ways; de-objectification of women.

Adolescent boys (continued)

	Social Development	Sources of Influence	Where to reach them	Implications for programs	Key indicators
Late Adolescence	Established romantic relationships; sexually active; increased pressure to be economically independent	Romantic partners become more influential; peers continue to be important, but less so that in middle adolescence and usually smaller peer groups predominate	Workplace becomes more important; community centers catering to older male youth (e.g. bars, sports centers)	Working through employers may be useful entry point; understanding dynamic between romantic partners and peers is important; focus on nature of intimate relationships particularly important	Self esteem not tied as closely to stereotypical male outcomes (number of sexual partners, aggression, fathering children, or being sole breadwinner); increased IPV; self-esteem more oriented towards provider role; more emotionally supportive relationships (both in partnerships and with peers)

Adolescent Girls

	Social Development	Sources of Influence	Where to reach them	Implications for programs	Key indicators
Early Adolescence	Increased awareness of social norms around gender; some 'masculine' behaviors allowed/tolerated; increased awareness of perceptions of others, particularly males; generally limited to concrete thinking skills	Parents; teachers, peers.	Schools; other youth programs	Girls are often most mobile and accessible during this stage; parental buy-in important; school-based programs important	Understanding of social construction of gender norms/identities; identifying gender stereotypes; equal valuation of masculine and feminine traits and roles; information on their bodies and physical changes are important; focus on self-esteem and valuing oneself as girl.
Middle Adolescence	Onset of puberty often signals entry into 'womanhood'; increased social isolation and parental supervision; increased household responsibilities/chores; peers important but competitors; increased emphasis on relationships with males; some sexual exploration/activity, though typically not regarded as socially desirable.	Parents; peers; teachers (depending in school status)	Via families; schools, though in some settings girls are withdrawn from school at a start of puberty; 'acceptable' community gatherings (e.g religious events)	Achieving family buy-in crucial; accessing girls in public spaces is more difficult in some settings; reaching girls in private spaces (i.e. households) is often more effective; discussing sexual matters may be very challenging; providing safe spaces (in the eyes of parents and community) is important as are spaces where they feel free to contest gender norms; preparing girls for relationships is important.	Increased desire/ability to challenge gender stereotypes; ability to express sexuality in a manner free of stereotypes; ability to express own desires and wishes even when contradicting norms; increased self esteem; increased teamwork, particularly with other girls.

Adolescent Girls (continued)

	Social Development	Sources of Influence	Where to reach them	Implications for programs	Key indicators
Late Adolescence	Entry into more established relationships; sexually active; marriage; in many settings, motherhood; increased focus on household activities/chores; in many settings, employment outside of home	Romantic partners; parents; in-laws, if married; peers.	Households, often via other members such as in-laws or husbands; places of employment, especially in urban areas; community women’s groups; children’s groups; health care and other services.	Girls have less time available to them; access often contingent on cooperation from non-parental household members; interventions should focus on improving existing relationships with intimate partners and other family members; increased risk of IPV as intimate relationships become more serious	Increased equality within relationships; improved ability to negotiate successfully with family members; ability to link behaviors to gender norms; ability to independently make household and personal decisions.

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