Mobilising men to build gender justice: Strategies for effective movement-building

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Community-level strategies

• Strategies of community engagement and community mobilisation are crucial, but under-used

• Community-level strategies are vital to prevention, as they:
  • Work at a greater scale than individual- and relationship-level strategies
  • Shift norms, relations, and inequalities
  • Bring efforts closer to the ideal in prevention that initiatives be comprehensive, relevant, and engaging
  • Engage participants in personal and collective change

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Community mobilisation

• Definition: individuals and groups taking action through coalitions, networks, and movements

• Histories of mobilisation:
  • Feminist movements put violence against women on the agenda.
    • Beginning as part of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s
    • Shaping service and policy responses and prevention efforts
  • Activist men’s groups emerged around the same time, on a smaller scale.
    • Australian examples: Men Against Sexual Assault (MASA), Canberra Men’s Gathering, Men Opposing Patriarchy (MOP), Men Against Patriarchy (MAP), Men Against Gender Injustice Collective (MAGIC), etc.
Examples of community mobilisations among men

- Men’s Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW) (India)
- One Man Can campaign (Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa)
- White Ribbon Campaign (1991-)
- International networks: MenEngage (2004-)
  - A global alliance of 700+ non-government organisations, country networks, and UN partners
Case study: Working Together With Men

- Aims to engage men to develop and implement primary prevention strategies in their local communities (Melbourne)
- 50 or so hours, over 18 months

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Impact evaluation

• Objective 1: Engage men
  • Success in recruiting a group of male violence prevention advocates and sustaining their long-term participation (as volunteers).
  • Buy-in and support from the partner organisations

• Objective 2: Increase men’s awareness and understanding of violence against women
  • Self-reported increases in participants’ understandings of and commitment to taking action on violence against women
  • Shifts in men’s own relationships
    • Corroborated by the men’s female partners
  • Some violence-supportive understandings persisted
Impact evaluation cont’d

• Objective 3: Build men’s capacity to implement violence prevention initiatives
  • Men who turned up, and particularly those who stayed involved, already had: involvement in actual prevention efforts, a sense that violence against women is a personally relevant issue, and a sense of skill in prevention
  • These increased over the course of the project.

• Objective 4: Support men in implementing violence prevention initiatives
  • The projects designed by the participants fit well with existing standards for effective practice in violence prevention
Enablers of impact

• Participation
• Education
• Facilitation
• A supportive group
• Expert guidance
• Expert advice
• Resourcing

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Mobilising men

• Provide opportunities and invitations for involvement
  • Identify supportive men and boys
  • Involve men in initial education and small tasks
  • Provide mentoring and invite leadership

• Provide knowledge and skills in action

• Support men in getting organised
  • Technical assistance, resources and sustainability, community meetings
  • Community Action Teams

• Use consciousness-raising and critical reflection

• Adopt gender-equitable processes for decision-making and leadership
Mobilising men *cont’d*

• Build communities of support. To:
  • Provide personal inspiration and nourishment
  • Offer an alternative peer network
  • Lessen stigma
  • Create spaces for personal reflection and collective mobilisation
• Work in partnership with women’s rights and movements
• Link gender justice to other forms of justice

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Let’s mobilise men, to make noise, trouble, and change

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(And see overleaf.)
Resources on engaging men

• Engaging men in violence prevention: A massive collection of resources: https://xyonline.net/content/engaging-men-violence-prevention-walking-tour-some-xys-content


• Men building gender equality: https://xyonline.net/content/men-building-gender-equality-guide-xys-content

• Dr Michael Flood’s publications: http://www.xyonline.net/category/authors/michael-flood

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