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

Meeting Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The unique potential of adolescent girls to contribute to reducing and ending poverty both for themselves and their communities, often referred to as the "Girl Effect," has been increasingly recognized over the last decade. Donors, researchers and programmers have markedly increased investment in and recognition of the importance of adolescent girls' health, well-being and participation in their communities in an attempt to rectify historical imbalances that have privileged men and boys over women and girls. While girls and women around the world are demonstrating the value of these investments, it is also clear that overcoming gender inequality and its consequences is not their responsibility alone. Indeed, all global citizens – women, men, girls and boys – share responsibility for, and stand to benefit from, creating a more equitable world. While there is a broad consensus on the desirability of involving boys and men in efforts to change harmful gender norms and create more equitable environments for girls, there is less agreement as to *how* this is best achieved.

In October 2010, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), with support from the Nike Foundation and in collaboration with Plan International and Save the Children, convened a meeting of researchers, program implementers and donors to explore the question of how to best involve boys in efforts to achieve gender equality. This approach, broadly known as "gender-transformative programming," is defined by the Interagency Working Group on Gender as those programs that "actively strive to examine, question and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power [and] encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community" (Rottach, Schuler, and Hardee 2009).

In preparation for this meeting, ICRW wrote a background paper reviewing programmatic approaches to addressing gender inequality that involve men and boys. This paper argued for the adoption of a "Gender and Developmental Approach" for programming with adolescents (International Center for Research on Women 2010). Over two days, meeting participants reviewed both the Gender and Developmental Approach and other existing models for including men and boys in gender-transformative programming and discussed future directions for both research and programming in this area. These discussions were guided by three key questions:

1. *Can a better understanding of* **how gender relations change over adolescence** *inform efforts to work with both boys and girls to transform their gendered attitudes and behaviors?*

2. *How can programs more effectively* **build partnerships between boys and girls** *towards the goal of achieving the Girl Effect?*

3. **How can existing, evidence-based programs that have been successful in reaching boys and girls be scaled up**, *including connecting them to public policies?*

Among the common themes that emerged from the discussions and presentations were:

- Adolescent girls' needs, aspirations and opportunities are inextricably connected to those of the boys, women and men in their lives. There was a broad affirmation of the need for a "social ecological" and/or "relational" approach that situates individual-level needs, aspirations and opportunities within broader interpersonal, social, institutional and environmental factors.

- Longer-term programming and longitudinal research studies are necessary to determine how durable the changes resulting from programmatic approaches targeting gendered attitudes and behavior are, or how they can be reinforced over time and when best to intervene on specific topics.

- The field of child and adolescent development can be a useful lens for addressing the gendered realities and vulnerabilities of adolescent girls and boys.

A number of overarching programming principles that may guide future efforts emerged during the meeting:

- An understanding of gender dynamics and developmental differences (social, physical, emotional and psychological) should guide decisions about how to work with adolescents (both boys and girls).These decisions must also include the active participation and leadership of young people themselves.
- Interventions should strive to reach adolescents as early in adolescence or pre-adolescence as possible, and must take into account the evolving needs and capacities of young people throughout the adolescent period.
- Interventions should seek to involve as many of the "players" in the lives of adolescents as possible (parents, peers, teachers, broader community) and understand that the relative importance of each player depends on the adolescent's developmental stage.
- Any intervention that aims to reach adolescents directly should also work to influence the environment (including its normative, socio-economic, legal and institutional aspects) in which they live.
- Programmers should be strategic about when to work with boys and girls separately and when to work with them jointly, acknowledging that there is a need for both kinds of approaches, depending on the content of the intervention and the context.
- Programs that engage youth in efforts to change gender norms need to articulate their goals and expected outcomes, and implement appropriate methods to test the effect of these interventions.

The meeting highlighted progress in conceptualizing programs that involve boys and men in efforts to bring about fundamental changes in the gendered nature of relationships. It also pointed to the significant amount of work that is still to be done before these goals are achieved. In particular, there is a need for evidence-based approaches that work across multiple contexts, are flexible enough to meet the needs of adolescents across their development trajectory, and can be implemented on a large scale.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

Over the last decade, donors, researchers and programmers have increasingly recognized the unique potential of adolescent girls to contribute to ending poverty for themselves, their families and their communities. In so doing, they have invested in new approaches to end harmful inequitable gender norms. As experience and evidence have begun to accumulate in the field, more nuanced and holistic approaches are being developed – those that consider how girls develop from childhood to adolescence, how they relate to and are constrained by other people and social institutions, and how healthier and more equitable relationships between male and female adolescents can lead to positive social change as adolescents make the transition to adulthood. This paper summarizes some of the key issues, promising approaches and future directions that were explored during a two-day meeting of experts and advocates.

The potential of working with adolescents to change gender norms

Adolescence, generally defined as the period between the ages of 10 and 19, is typically 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. 2004:147-161; Mensch, Bruce, and Greene 1998, 4). At the same time, because most younger adolescents have not yet formed more lasting or co-habitating 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, adolescence is a stage that holds particular promise for interventions designed to encourage more gender-equitable views and behaviors.

Particular attention has been given to the role that adolescent girls may play in catalyzing social change and the broad impact this may have on their societies. A significant body of programmatic and research experience now documents how working to empower girls has

positive effects for the girls, their families and communities, with these changes potentially having long-term effects on health, economic development and overall well-being (Levine et al. 2008;Temin and Levine 2009). However, adolescent-focused programming that aims to transform gendered norms and behaviors has typically worked with either boys or girls, rarely working with both sexes simultaneously to bring about change (Greene and Levack 2010). There is a movement towards encouraging programming that intentionally works with both sexes in mutually reinforcing ways based on growing consensus of the benefits that result from engaging boys and men as partners to empower girls and women (Greene and Levack 2010). Evidence shows that encouraging men and boys to challenge gender norms has significant benefits to them in terms of health and well-being (Greene and Barker 2010) , partly through reducing engagement in risky behaviors perceived as being "masculine" in nature, and that this in turn has beneficial effects for the women and girls in their lives.

How can boys and men be involved in gender transformative programming?

The persistence of sex-differentiated programming in part reflects different schools of thought on the objectives and goals of engaging men and boys in efforts to empower girls and women. While there is a growing consensus on *why* involving men and boys in this process is beneficial, there is much less agreement on *how* this should happen. Some advocates argue for adopting an "instrumental" approach, in which involving men and boys is mostly a means toward the goal of redressing gender inequalities and women's and girls' disadvantages. With this approach, men and boys may act as partners and/or participants in programs designed to empower girls, but the focus is primarily on improving outcomes for girls. Another approach engages men and boys as full participants, with an explicit acknowledgment of the benefits of greater gender equality for women *and* men. This approach, sometimes described as "gender relational" or "gender synchronization," considers both girls and boys (and women and men) when designing programs that intentionally and mutually reinforce ways that "challenges gender norms, catalyzes the achievement of gender equality and improves health" (Greene and Levack 2010). Assessing the relative merits of each of these approaches is challenging. Relatively few programs focusing on girl's empowerment have been evaluated (see Annex II), and different programming approaches have not been compared to one another.

How can programming better incorporate an understanding of the importance of different developmental stages during adolescence?

The lack of rigorous evaluation is particularly evident for programming aimed at very young adolescents, typically defined as those between ages 10 and 14, who are often overlooked in discussions and research about adolescents. The lack of evidence for effective programming with young adolescents reflects, in part, the complexity of the adolescent life stage, which is marked by a myriad of social and physical changes. Adolescence is defined differently across cultural contexts, but in virtually all societies it is a socially recognized period between childhood and adulthood when individuals are expected to acquire and assume some of the roles and functions of adulthood. 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 experiences differ in important ways.

Towards a relational approach

There is growing consensus among both programmers and researchers that programs are likely to be more successful and/or sustainable if they address the needs of girls in the context of their relationships with other girls, boys, adults and other important figures in their lives rather than focusing solely on the capabilities and assets of individual girls. While the evidence base for this hypothesis is not yet developed, an increasing number of programs are implementing variations of this approach — examples include *Entre Amigas* (see Box 2) and *Entre Nos* (see Annex II) — with some promising results. However, these approaches are unlikely to be successful unless they provide boys and girls "safe" social spaces within which to change gender norms and adopt a more holistic approach to programming that includes parents, religious leaders, teachers and peers. Furthermore, the transitional nature of the adolescent life stage also suggests that trying to identify single points of intervention as "silver bullets" in terms of long-term change in gender attitudes is likely a futile exercise. Rather,

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programmers should focus on intervening effectively throughout adolescence in a way that consciously attempts to tailor their approach to the biological and social changes that characterize the adolescent experience. Finally, while existing programs have enjoyed modest successes in involving boys and men in changing gender attitudes and behaviors among adolescents at an individual level, changes at the social and structural level are required in order for these to deliver change at scale.

"WHAT DO BOYS HAVE TO DO WITH THE GIRL EFFECT" CONSULTATION: KEY QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

> **Box 1: The Power of Relationships: Lessons from *Entre Madres y Amigas, Nicaragua***
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> 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 most critical relationship for young adolescent girls in this context was with their mothers. The program was based on social ecological principles, aiming to work with multiple actors in the lives of young girls. 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.
>
> From Pena, 2006

How can a better understanding of how gender relations change over adolescence inform efforts to work with both boys and girls to transform their gendered attitudes and behaviors?

Recent research has increasingly emphasized the need to better understand how adolescents differ in terms of their developmental stage and the character of their gendered relationships. A recent comprehensive review of programs aiming to improve the health of very young adolescents (between ages 10 and 14) strongly recommended that programmatic content be appropriate for each age and developmental stage, echoing a growing consensus in the field

(Palmer 2010). The gender and developmental approach[1] seeks to address this need by combining the lenses of gender and developmental psychology to better understand gendered behavior in adolescents over their life cycle, with a focus on adolescence. This perspective bases the development of programs and policy efforts to promote equitable and healthy gender identities on a gender relational perspective where normative change has benefits for both girls and boys. This approach views "gender," or the social construction of female and male roles, as referring 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).

The gender and developmental approach draws on the insights of a number of additional conceptual models for including men and boys in programming designed to empower girls with the goal of gender equality, particularly the gender synchronization and ecological approaches (see Box 2). The gender and developmental approach combines these insights with those of

developmental psychology, explicitly acknowledging that the nature and importance of the relationships that underpin both the gender synchronization/relational and ecological approaches depends on stage in the adolescent development process.

More specifically, different types of relationships will matter more or less at specific points in the development process, and these

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Box 2: Contextualizing Gendered Relationships

The gender synchronization or relational approach emphasizes the social relationships between individuals and how these shape the construction of gender and gendered roles (Greene and Levack 2010). Individuals both are influenced by and influence others in their social network in ways that define gender in broadly understood terms and generate normative pressure to conform to these definitions. Changes in gendered behavior by necessity take place within the context of these relationships, most notably in those that are intimate but also in those that are more distant. Within the context of programming with adolescents, this implies identifying key relationships within the lives of adolescents and working strategically to address the gendered nature of the relationship.

The ecological approach to programming emphasizes the need to target and understand the full range of influences in the lives of boys and girls. This approach is explicitly structural in its focus, viewing individuals as part of a larger system of interlocking social inter-relationships. In the context of programming with adolescents, this suggests working with both the key 'players' in their lives, such as parents and peers and those with more distant, yet still influential, relationships, such as religious leaders of teachers.

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will be shaped by the gender socialization process. For example, while working with parents is

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[1] For a full description of the theoretical and research-based underpinnings of the gender and development approach, see (International Center for Research on Women 2010)

clearly important at all stages of adolescence, their importance to boys' behavior may lessen as they pass through adolescence while the opposite may be the case for girls, reflecting the differential nature of their socialization processes. As a result, it is important to clearly identify the different development stages within adolescence, understand how this influences the relationships formed, and develop program approaches that deliberately cater to the specific needs of the adolescent at that stage.

Understanding change over the adolescent life stage

The lack of clear synchronization between chronological age and social development stage, 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 starting 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).

Implications of gender and developmental perspective for programming

Adopting a developmental perspective that takes into account both social and biological stages 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. 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. Finally, these programs should emphasize the relationships between boys and girls and men and women, preferably through programming that works with girls and boys together, to challenge gender norms in a mutually reinforcing

way (Greene and Levack 2010). Some of the broader implications for programming using a developmental perspective include the following:

- 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:
    - Program implementers 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.
    - Program implementers 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.

Programmatic experiences with applying a developmental perspective
While relatively few programs reaching adolescents explicitly adopt a gender and developmental perspective, many implicitly and intuitively do so. For example, many program implementers affirm that grouping adolescents into similar age ranges may improve sharing

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and increase 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, 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 (see Annex II) 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 and 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 the younger participants in the group (Pulerwitz et al. 2006).

How can programs effectively build partnerships between boys and girls towards the goal of achieving the Girl Effect?

An increasing number of programs focusing on adolescents are attempting to reach boys and girls together, although defining and evaluating effectiveness of these programs has been a challenge at this nascent stage (examples of programs attempting this approach include Choices and *Entre Nos*; see Annex II). These programs often begin by working exclusively with girls or women and then include men later, or vice versa (for examples, see Greene and Levack 2010). Donors, researchers and program implementers 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 (Greene and Levack, 2010). Programs that bring boys and girls together in a systematic and comprehensive way are rare and, as result, the relative merits of this approach are unknown, making clear recommendations around programming approaches difficult.

Box 3: *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 on 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.

From Jewkes, Nduna, and Levin 2007; Salamander Trust 2010

Boy-only, girl-only, or mixed programming?

There is relatively little documentation of when and how program implementers decide to work with only boys, only girls and when they bring them together, reflecting considerable uncertainty as to how and when this approach is most applicable. However, there is some experiential evidence that mixed-sex approaches can be effective in changing gender norms and behaviors, particularly when this is done deliberately from the initial stages of interventions. In particular, the availability of integrated spaces that provide the opportunity for boys and girls to challenge and discuss gender norms through face-to-face conversations, role-playing or other sharing activities are important, such as those used in the Stepping Stones and Choices (see Boxes 3 and 4) programs. Adopting this approach does not mean, however, that *all* program activities should take place in a space shared by boys and girls. Program evidence also suggests that the more effective approach is to bring boys and girls together at key points. Many programs have found that initiating conversations about gender norms was easier in single-sex groups, which provide 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 (Guedes 2004; Pulerwitz, Barker, Segundo, and Nascimento 2006).

Also, in order for mixed-sex programming to be successful, care must be taken to ensure that the environment is non-confrontational, protective and supportive of gender-transformative behavior. This may be especially important for girls and women, for whom challenging existing norms carries potentially greater costs, especially when doing so in the presence of boys or men. In some

> **Box 4: Challenging gender norms with boys and girls in Nepal: The example of *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 children's clubs with youth facilitators. The approach is based on the assumption that changing the gender-related attitudes and behavior 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 involving both boys and girls 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. Boys and girls are encouraged to discuss issues while in a mixed-sex setting, thus exposing each group to the others' concerns. In this way the program incorporates the young adolescent's cognitive abilities, current situational awareness, and emotional capacities into its programming. The emphasis on real-life situational experiences with gender inequality and power and how relatively small changes in behavior can alleviate these provides a firm foundation for the discovery of the restriction placed on both boys and girls by inequitable gender norms.
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> *Personal Correspondence with Brad Kerner dated August 19, 2010 and Save the Children. 2009. "CHOICES: A Curriculum for 10 to 14 Year Olds in Nepal. Empowering Boys and Girls to Change Gender Norms." Westport, CT: Save the Children.*

contexts, or for some especially difficult topics, allowing the discussion to begin in single-sex groups is likely to be the more effective option, particularly if this is followed up at a later stage with a mixed-sex discussion of the issues.

Understanding the importance of development stage

The gender and developmental approach suggests that the suitability of combined-sex programming will depend both on the content and structure of the program itself and on the developmental stage of the participants themselves. This latter point is often overlooked, but the ability of adolescents to engage in discussions on complex subjects grows as they mature socially, meaning that the efficacy of mixed groups for specific programmatic topics will vary over the adolescent life stage. For example, the need for safe spaces to discuss specific topics is likely to ebb and flow during adolescence as teens mature and gain experience. Furthermore, adolescence is marked by several important developmental milestones, such as interest in intimate relationships, entry into these relationships and the changing role of peers. While these take place at different ages for boys and girls, using these milestones as points of

common understanding through combining boys and girls at similar developmental stages may prove more effective than using chronological age or other criteria. Understanding this and building this into programming is a key step towards effective relational programming that aims to improve the lives of both boys and girls through improving the quality of the relationships they have both with each other and others in their lives.

Challenges and promise of gender relational programming

As the discussion above suggests, there are a number of challenges to adopting a gender synchronized or relational approach that actively incorporates opportunities for mixed-sex programming. These include:

- Cultural barriers to having boys and girls mix socially, particularly when discussing sensitive topics. This is especially true if an attempt is made to mix boys and girls at similar developmental stages, as the faster maturation of girls implies that this will involve mixing slightly older boys with younger girls.
- Programmatic materials that appeal equally to boys and girls, such as the diaries used in the Gender Equity in Schools (GEMS) program (http://www.icrw.org/publications/my-gems-diary). This also requires considerable effort by program staff to go beyond program development approaches that work with either boys or girls but not both.
- The complexity of gender relational programming, which can be more demanding of implementing staff than programs focusing on one sex or the other. The additional demands include applying a thoughtful approach to considering when and how to incorporate mixed groups (and when not to), very skillful mediation of conversations, and a more complex programmatic structure that is able to cater to the needs of boys and girls throughout the adolescent development trajectory. However, the evidence emerging from programs that have started to implement this type of approach suggests that the additional investment is well worth the effort.

In addition to changing individual attitudes and behavior of both boys and girls, mixed-sex programming conveys a number of powerful messages about gender to the broader community. Working together to confront gender inequality implicitly argues that the world is for *both* girls

and boys, and confirms that girls and boys can discuss issues around gender, sexuality and relationships in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

How can existing, evidence-based programs that have been successful in reaching boys and girls be scaled up, including connecting them to public policies?

Programs that are both gender transformative and incorporate mixed-sex approaches have been, for the most part, smaller-scale efforts focused on changing attitudes at the individual or community levels. There is a clear need for models that can be implemented at a larger scale and explicitly target the large social institutions, such as schools, which often perpetuate gender-inequitable normative structures. While there have been some attempts to do this, notably in programs that implement mass media campaigns combined with group education components (for example, Program H in Brazil ; see Annex II), and in programs that reach a larger number of participants (e.g., Stepping Stones), it remains unclear to what degree the types of interventions used in most programs are applicable at scale. This is especially true if the programs do not work through existing infrastructure, such as the educational or health systems, which are able to reach large populations with intervention packages.

While programming through these institutions is limited by the constraints inherent to them, there are a number of programs that appear to be particularly promising in this regard. Promundo is also currently implementing Program H/M via public schools in Brazil and carrying out an impact evaluation study.

While programming through these institutions is limited, there are a number of programs that appear to be particularly promising in this regard. One example of this is the GEMS program that is being implemented in India by ICRW in collaboration with local municipalities, Instituto Promundo and other NGOs. GEMS uses a school-based approach, providing students and teachers in selected municipal schools with a gender equity curricula focused on encouraging gender equality and reducing gender-based violence. The initial results suggest that this approach has increased gender-equitable attitudes among student while also changing attitudes towards other gendered outcomes such as violence and child marriage (Achyut et al.

2011). While this program has not fully adopted the Gender and Developmental Approach described above, there is clearly the potential to do so within the structure school systems. Instituto Promundo in Brazil (Program H and Program M) and ICRW in India (Yaari Dosti and Sakhi-Saheli) are testing gender equity curricula in formal school systems and for a younger profile of adolescent. Both programs are also carrying out rigorous evaluation studies that will add to the body of evidence around the efficacy of these programming approaches.

The challenges to scaling up gender-transformative programs, particularly of the type advocated for in this paper, are considerable. As discussed above, adopting a Gender and Developmental Approach requires significant investments in terms of planning, staff training and time spent with program participants. Donors and governments have an important role to play in ensuring that the necessary investments are made. Non-governmental donors in particular may catalyze this process through direct funding towards programs that have clear strategies for scale up and are prepared to work within or with existing institutions. The success of private donors in driving the inclusion of gender components in large US government programs and the increased focus of various governments on gender indicators in their aid programs testifies to the potential impact they may have.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS / PRINCIPLES FOR PROGRAMMING AND POLICY

While care must be taken to ensure the programming remains firmly grounded in the realities of cultural context, some general themes emerged during the presentations and discussions:

- *Decisions about how to work with adolescents should be based on an understanding of both gender dynamics and developmental differences.* There was broad agreement that the gender and developmental approach was a useful addition to the adolescent programming debate, particularly in how it helps clarify the diversity of experiences within adolescence. While questions remained about how a truly gender transformative approach might be taken with this model, it was seen as providing some concrete guidance on how and when mixed-sex programming might be conducted.
- *These decisions must also include the active participation and leadership of young people themselves.* A key theme throughout the presentations and discussions was the need to understand the needs and desires of adolescents at specific developmental

stages. Too often, programs are designed from the top down, imposing structures on participants and failing to fully achieve their objectives as a result. A programmer's best source of information on adolescents in any given setting is the adolescents themselves. Decisions on when to incorporate mixed-sex programming and how to more effectively reach program participants should be based in part on a clear assessment of what program participants want.

- *Program implementers should be strategic about when to work with boys and girls separately and when to work with them jointly.* There was general agreement among the meeting participants that involving both boys and girls in programs was desirable; there was less consensus as to how this should be done and to what extent. Program experience clearly suggested that this carries some risk, and requires careful planning in order to be successful. Programmers need to identify appropriate times and topics within which to conduct mixed-sex programming, and be clear of the goals and objectives in doing so.

- *Interventions should strive to reach adolescents throughout their development, rather than targeting one particular age.* Despite the challenges inherent to longitudinal programming, there was widespread agreement that this was a crucial next step, both in terms of programming and evaluation. From a programmatic perspective, supporting adolescents throughout this life stage allows lessons learned at earlier stages to be reinforced and for the introduction of content that is more appropriate to specific development points. From the perspective of evaluation, adopting a longitudinal approach allows for an assessment of the long-term effectiveness of interventions and allows for a clearer examination of how gender attitudes at the individual level evolve and change over adolescence.

- *Interventions should seek to involve as many of the "players" in the lives of adolescents as possible (parents, peers, teachers, broader community) and be aware that the relative importance of each depends on developmental stage.* A persistent theme throughout the meeting was the need to take an ecological approach to programming with adolescents. Participants identified one of the contributions of the Gender and Developmental Approach as being its explicit recognition that a truly ecological

approach must be flexible enough to reflect the way the social environment of adolescence changes over time.

- *Any intervention that aims to reach adolescents directly should also strategically address the environment in which they live – e.g. the normative, legal and policy environment.* A key element of a fully ecological approach that is sometimes missing is the recognition that adolescents are constrained in their ability to confront gender inequality by structural factors. Understanding how these constrain behavior, and having realistic expectations of what boys and girls can achieve on their own, is critical to long-term success.

- *All programs that engage youth in efforts to change gender norms need to be clearer about goals and expected outcomes, and implement appropriate methods to test the effect of these interventions.* Not all programs have the same goals – some may seek to specifically empower girls; others may focus on working with boys and men in order to improve their outcomes while incidentally empowering women and girls; still others prioritize a more gender-equitable world for both women and men, boys and girls. While all these approaches share some broad goals, their specific objectives are different, and this should be reflected both in the stated goals of the programs and in the indicators selected for evaluation purposes. Programmers should clearly identify these goals from the outset, identify robust measures of the outcome(s) of interest, and seek to evaluate programs against those criteria.

REMAINING QUESTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

One of the goals of the meeting was to identify key gaps in our knowledge of the involvement of boys in programs directed to reducing gender-based discrimination against girls. While many interesting programs were presented and discussed during the meeting, relatively few have been evaluated in a way that provides clear guidance on what the most effective approaches may be. With this in mind, the experts were asked to identify areas for further research, which included:

- What approaches to including a range of community members/actors in programming designed to change boy's gender norms have worked? Are there standardized approaches that can be implemented broadly?
- Are there "tipping points'" either in terms of program exposure or the "normalization" of non-conformist gender views, where changes in gender norms at the community level make programming with boys and girls more effective? What are these?
- What are appropriate methods for evaluation of a community-based or fully implemented ecological approach? Most existing impact evaluations have focused only on the attitudes and behaviors of adolescents themselves.

Within these broader research areas, a number of testable hypotheses emerged as being particularly promising:
- Involving boys directly in programming results in higher levels of empowerment for girls than programs focused on girls alone or programs that involve men and boys indirectly.
- Involving boys directly in programming with girls results in greater change in their gender attitudes than when programming is restricted only to boys.
- Programming that focuses on multiple community groups (religious leaders, peers, teachers, parents, etc.) results in higher and more sustained levels of empowerment for girls.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a pressing need to establish clear best practice guidelines for more effectively: a) reaching young people across the adolescent life cycle with gender-transformative programming, and b) involving men and boys in efforts to empower girls and overcome gender inequality. Thanks to the efforts of donors, governments, programmers, researchers, activists and countless individual girls, boys, women and men around the world, there is considerable momentum behind efforts to tackle gender inequality at a scale sufficient enough to bring about broader social change. As this meeting demonstrated clearly, there has been a concerted effort to involve men and boys in this process for some time. However, the field has yet to identify approaches that work effectively across multiple contexts, are well evaluated, and can be implemented on a large scale. This meeting provided an important opportunity for experts in

the field to review and discuss different programmatic and theoretical approaches to these questions and suggest future directions for research and programs. There was broad consensus among meeting participants for adopting a holistic approach to programming with girls that involves all members of society, but crucially men and boys, as they play a key role in shaping and enforcing gender norms. The gender and developmental approach provides an opportunity to bring together the various theoretical and programmatic models currently being used, and may provide a framework for more impactful and effective programming in the future.

Annex I: MEETING SUMMARY

The purpose of this two-day meeting was to explore how to engage boys (and in some cases, adult men) in efforts to advance gender equality. On the first day a large symposium was held, where 95 researchers, programmers and activists provided insight into some of the lessons learned from working with boys and girls in their specific contexts. On the second day a smaller working group (39 key experts representing 25 organizations; see Annex III for full list) met to discuss key questions, challenges and future programming directions in the field.

Several speakers drew on the developmental psychology discipline to provide a theoretical framework for how young people develop in response to their environments. Dr. Gary Barker (ICRW) opened the symposium with an overview of key issues and an introduction to the gender and developmental approach, which combines the lenses of gender and developmental psychology to better understand gendered behavior in adolescents over their life cycle with a focus on adolescence. Dr. Niobe Way (New York University) shared findings from her own research of adolescent boys in New York City, exploring how adolescent boys' deep and intimate friendships with male friends often fall to the wayside as they come of age "in a global culture where we have given the fundamental human need [friendship and relationships] and capacity a sexuality," and these relationships come to be seen as "a girl, a gay, and an immature thing." Dr. Deborah Tolman (Hunter College) also discussed the sexualization of young girls in the media and how it negatively impacts both girls and boys (particularly in terms of homophobia and notions of masculinity).

A number of the day's presentations explored how theories from developmental psychology (discussed in greater detail in the section below) have been applied to adolescent programming – with both boys and girls – in developing country settings. All of the programs worked with young people to change gender norms, although this goal was not always explicit or of primary importance to the program participants. While some programs have been designed explicitly to work directly with young people to challenge and change harmful gender norms, others engage

youth through a focus on sexual and reproductive health, violence prevention, leadership training and youth advocacy. Brief highlights from these presentations are provided in Annex IV.

Annex II: A selective review of programs directed to changing gender attitudes among adolescents

Program	Target Population	Intervention description	Mixed or single sex programming	Point of entry	Evaluation
Change in the Reproductive Behavior of Youth– PRACHAR (Pathfinder)	12 to 14 year olds	Reproductive health communication model to increase girls' age at marriage, delay first birth, and wider spacing between the first and second births in India.	Girls only	Community-based	Process and impact evaluation. Pre- and post-design with representative sample.
Chill Club Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum (Population Services International)	In-school 10-12 year olds	Life skills and reproductive health curriculum aiming to delay sexual debut and promote sexual and reproductive health by addressing gender, reproductive health, preventive behaviors, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and AIDS, abstinence, gender violence, decision-making, and communication skills. Implemented in primary schools using a teacher-led participatory learning approach	Boys and girls	School-based	Pre- and post- design with representative sample.
Choices (Save the Children)	10 to 14 year olds	Participatory learning activities designed to connect targeted emotions with the desired behaviors (based on the theory behind projective techniques) in Nepal. Focus on transforming gender norms and attitudes.	Boys and girls	Community-based	Pending: Modified nonequivalent control group evaluation design using quantitative and qualitative methods. Innovative participatory data collection methods

Program	Target Population	Intervention description	Mixed or single sex programming	Point of entry	Evaluation
Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) Project (ICRW)	Boys and girls aged 12 to 14	This project uses a group education activity-based curriculum encouraging self-reflective, introspective discourse questioning existing stereotypes, improve attitudes toward gender-equitable norms, and reduce gender-based violence and risk behaviors in the school setting as a platform to initiate discussions and challenge harmful gender norms with the overarching objective of promoting gender equity in the Indian school system.	Boys and girls	School-based	Evaluated in Mumbai using a multi-arm quasi-experimental design in 45 municipal schools
ISHRAQ (Save the Children, Population Council and others)	13-15 year old girls	A comprehensive program including girls' literacy, life skills development classes, livelihood courses, and team sports. Involved creation of safe spaces with female mentors for delivery of interventions. Included broader community interventions with boys, parents, community leaders.	Girls only	Community-based	Quasi-experimental with a matched control group, Pre and post-test, girls survey, focus groups, unstructured interviews, and observations.
Program H (PATH/Horizons and Instituto Promundo)	Low-income boys and young men aged 14-25, in school and out of school youth.	Group education intervention and a social marketing campaign aimed at encouraging young men to reflect on how they act as men, respect their partners, avoid using violence and practice safer sex.	Boys/young men only; in subsequent work, young women and men worked together in a community-radio approach	Community-based	Quasi-experimental study comparing the impact of different program combinations. Three groups were followed over time.

Program	Target Population	Intervention description	Mixed or single sex programming	Point of entry	Evaluation
Entre Amigas (Puntos de Encuentro)	10-14 year old girls, parents, teachers, and health personnel	Social ecological approach, targeting interventions at individual, family, community, and society. Involved a multi-faceted approach: a gender-oriented soap opera, weekend activities for girls in safe community locations (such as schools), and activities with parents, teachers and health professionals.	Girls only, though men were brought into programming at key points	Community-based	Impact evaluation, pre and post surveys
SEXTO Sentido (Puntos de Encuentro)	Youth aged 13-24	Reaching youth through a soap opera oriented towards young people's rights, individual and collective empowerment, sexual and reproductive health, leadership, gender, stigma and gender-based violence.	Boys and girls	Media	Evaluated via assessment of show ratings, a longitudinal impact evaluation and focus groups, key informant interviews.
Soccer Schools (Playing for Health)	8-17 year olds	The program, entitled "Football, Health and Gender: A New Approach to Health in Pre-Adolescent Males," utilizes soccer coaches to promote gender-equitable health behaviors and relationships among pre-adolescent boys aged 8-12 in six Latin American countries. After the training, coaches conduct "soccer schools" sessions for consecutive days. The soccer schools are open to local youth and held in public areas of low-income neighborhoods.	Boys only	Sports	Pre- and post-test

Program	Target Population	Intervention description	Mixed or single sex programming	Point of entry	Evaluation
Stepping Stones (multiple implementation organizations and sites – additional information based on implementation by MRC)	Young adults ages 15-26	Uses participatory learning approaches, including critical reflection, role play, and drama. Involves a wide range of topics, focusing on STI and HIV prevention and gender-based power issues.	Young men and women	Community-based	Quasi-experimental cluster randomized control, including interviews and focus group
Tuko Pamoja: Adolescent Reproductive Health and Life Skills Curriculum (PATH and Population Council)	In school 10 to 19 year olds	Focus on in-school youth, with targeted programming for 10 to 14 year olds and 15 to 19 year olds. The curriculum focuses on increasing reproductive health knowledge through participatory group learning activities.	Boys and girls	Curriculum-based	Unevaluated pilot

Annex III: Key Experts

❖ **Amy Babcheck,** Nike Foundation

❖ **Chitra Bhanu**, Nike Foundation

❖ **Gary Barker**, *Director- Gender, Violence and Rights*, International Center for Research on Women

❖ **Laxman Belbase**, Save the Children

❖ **Paul Bloem,** World Health Organization

❖ **Sarah Bouchie**, *Director of the Basic and Girls' Education Unit*, CARE

❖ **Nicole Cheetham**, *Director of the International Division,* Advocates for Youth

❖ **Ariana Childs Graham**, *Coordinator,* Coalition for Adolescent Girls

❖ **Manuel Contreras**, *Gender and Public Health Specialist,* International Center for Research on Women

❖ **John Crownover**, *Civil Society / Social Development Program Advisor*, CARE International NW Balkans

❖ **Madhumita Das**, *Senior Technical Specialist,* International Center for Research on Women

❖ **Adam Day**, Nike Foundation

❖ **Dina Deligioris**, *Knowledge Management Specialist for the Ending Violence against Women Section*, UNIFEM

❖ **Tuval Dinner**, *Youth Programs Manager*, White Ribbon Campaign

❖ **Cody Donahue**, *Coordinator of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Department*, Tostan

❖ **Jeff Edmeades**, *Social Demographer*, International Center for Research on Women

❖ **Mary Ellsberg**, *Vice President of Research and Programs,* International Center for Research on Women

❖ **Gill Gordon**, *Consultant,* Salamander Trust

- ❖ **Sarah Hendriks**, *Global Gender Advisor,* Plan International

- ❖ **Klas Hyllander**, *Secretary-General*, Men for Gender Equality Sweden

- ❖ **Neil Irvin**, *Executive Director,* Men Can Stop Rape

- ❖ **Brad Kerner**, *Adolescent Reproductive Health Sr. Specialist*, Save the Children

- ❖ **Bafana Khumalo**, *Co-Founder,* Sonke Gender Justice

- ❖ **Rebecka Lundgren**, Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health

- ❖ **Mei Melin**, Save the Children Sweden

- ❖ **Daniel Molina**, Plan Honduras

- ❖ **Feroz Moideen**, Family Violence Prevention Fund

- ❖ **Marcos Nascimiento**, *Executive Director,* Promundo

- ❖ **Dean Peacock**, *Co-Founder and Co-Director*, Sonke Gender Justice

- ❖ **Julie Pulerwitz**, *Director of the HIV/AIDS & TB Global Program*, PATH

- ❖ **Margarita Quintanilla**, *Country Program Leader,* PATH Nicaragua

- ❖ **Lori Rolleri**, EngenderHealth

- ❖ **Dr. Ayman Sadek**, *Upper Egypt Programme Manager*, PLAN Egypt

- ❖ **Marni Sommer**, Columbia University

- ❖ **Deborah Tolman**, Hunter College School of Social Work and The Graduate Center, City University of New York

- ❖ **Ann Warner,** *Gender and Policy Specialist,* International Center for Research on Women

- ❖ **Niobe Way,** *Professor of Applied Psychology,* New York University

- ❖ **Seodi White,** *Director of Women and Law South Africa Research Trust, Malawi*

- ❖ **Nikki Van-Der Gaag,** Independent Consultant

Annex IV: Summary of Day One Presentations

Challenging Gender Norms

- Save the Children's *Choices* program in Nepal challenges gender norms among 10-14 year old boys and girls by conducting age-appropriate dialogues and participatory workshops to explore young people's hopes, dreams, and notions of justice and fairness. (Brad Kerner, Save the Children, Nepal)

- *One Man Can* and the *Red Card Campaign* in South Africa use community education and mobilization campaigns to address community norms at a broader community level. (Dean Peacock or Bafana Khumalo, Sonke Gender Justice, South Africa)

- Tostan's signature *Community Empowerment Program* in Senegal seeks to improve the lives of adolescent girls by engaging communities, including men and boys, with gender trainings, social mobilization efforts, and training of local officials- including religious leaders. (Cody Donahue, Tostan, Senegal)

Leadership

- CARE's 20-country *Power to Lead* Initiative focuses on building leadership opportunities for adolescent girls (10-15 years old) within school. Based on earlier phases of the project it has been rolled out to provide all young people with opportunities to act outside of their traditional gender roles, provide safe spaces for boys to deconstruct gender norms and attitudes, and integrate messages that promote gender equitable behaviors. (Sarah Bouchie, CARE USA)

Mass-Media

- *It Starts With You. It Stays With Him* is a web-based campaign that aims to promote positive role models who play a role in reducing violence against women by working with the 8-14 year old boys in their lives. (Tuval Dinner, White Ribbon Campaign, Canada)

- The Swedish video series "Macho Factory" is comprised of approximately 20 videos that explore different themes of masculinity, creating a launching point for

discussion with teachers and peers. Launched in collaboration with the Men for Gender Equality and two women's organizations, the videos targets schools and maximizes its reach through the use of social media and the internet. (Klas Hyllander, Men for Gender Equality, Sweden)

Sexual and Reproductive Health

- The Nicaragua based *Entre Amigas/Amigos*, looks to improve reproductive health outcomes among 10-14 year olds. The program first started working with girls only, but discovered through the process of implementation that it was important to utilize an "ecological approach," and that this approach would require the engagement of boys, as well as parents and others in young people's networks. (Margarita Quintanilla, PATH Nicaragua)
- The participatory HIV prevention program *Stepping Stones*, which aims to improve sexual health by building stronger and more gender equitable relationships, has been replicated in several countries. (Gill Gordon, Salamander Trust, UK)
- CARE and partners' *Young's Men Initiative* utilizes an educational workshop and a media campaign to address young men's use of violence in a post-conflict setting. (John Crownover, CARE Balkans)
- The World Health Organization is working in collaboration with some African countries to explore interventions that address gender norms in the context of widespread male circumcision campaigns. (Paul Bloem, WHO, Geneva)

Violence Prevention

- *Programs M & H* in Brazil are complementary interventions that combined campaigns and groups workshops to address attitudes among both boys and girls about gender based violence and transactional sex. (Marcos Nascimiento, Promundo, Brazil)
- The *Gender Equality Movement in Schools (GEMS)* program, a joint partnership between Committee of Resource Organizations for Literacy (CORO), ICRW and Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS) uses a school-based curriculum to foster

gender equitable attitudes and behaviors to reduce gender-based violence among boys and girls (12-18 years old) in the public schools of Mumbai. (Madhumita Das, ICRW, India)

- The India-based *Parivartan* project, a joint partnership between Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF) and ICRW, "capitalizes on the influential power of cricket coaches to deliver messages about gender equity and respect" through a series of workshops with cricket coaches and an public campaign. (Feroz Moideen, Family Violence Prevention Fund and Madhumita Das, ICRW)
- Through its Interventions for *Engaging Boys in Gender Equality and HTP* program, Plan Egypt has been working to engage young men, parents and religious leaders to challenge gender norms that promote harmful traditional practices (HTPs). (Dr. Ayman Sadek, Plan Egypt)

Youth Participation

Durryle Brooks and Olaide Aiyegbusi, two advocates working with Advocates for Youth, discussed their views of how gender inequality and injustice affects the lives of young people in numerous ways, and how their advocacy engages other young people and influences decision-makers to change these norms. Social networking venues, including Facebook and Twitter, were also highlighted as active ways to engage youth, though one speaker urged that this type of advocacy should be done without losing sight of "real activism." They both highlighted the challenge of providing young people with the necessary tools to be able to address their needs, while not dictating what the change should be.

> "People won't do it [advocate] for you. We need to give young people the tools and skills necessary to show up at the table with adults who take them as seriously as they should.*"*

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