



## ENGAGING MEN AND BOYS

Global evidence suggests that men and women, boys and girls of more equitable societies are, on average, wealthier, healthier, and better educated than in countries where women are most marginalized.<sup>1</sup> Families with more equality have higher household income, better health, and children who are more likely to survive and get an education. Children of parents who model gender equality have more education, better health, and less violence in their adult lives—breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality for future generations.<sup>2</sup>

This is why CARE has put gender equality and women's empowerment at the heart of its programming. As women become more educated, gain more economic skills, achieve better health, and participate more in household and community decision-making, it is not just women whose lives improve. It is also their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons who benefit. Men experience higher household incomes, reduced stress, improved health, and stronger, happier relationships as a result of gender equality.<sup>3</sup>

CARE works with men and boys as partners and allies because their leadership and buy-in is essential to CARE's efforts to decrease gender inequality and fight global poverty.

### *Better for Women*

Working with men and boys to promote women's empowerment leads to significant results for women and girls around the world. CARE's programming shows that working with men and boys leads to fewer cases of violence, better health for women and children, and higher household incomes.

The participation of men and boys in programs that empower women and girls is often the best way to prevent or reduce harmful and sometimes violent backlashes from members of the community who struggle to adjust to the changes they see in their communities.

### *Better for Men*

Believing that they are solely responsible for the family is a major source of stress and unhappiness for men around the world. Research shows that sharing household responsibilities, being involved in child-care, and practicing gender equality at home leads to less stress and better mental and physical health for men and boys. Men face violence and poverty in their own lives as a result of gender discrimination, often witnessing violence between their parents during their formative years and being conditioned to believe that violence is the only solution available to them when they have problems.<sup>4</sup>

Men who are more involved in household duties are more likely to support the women and girls in their lives who seek to complete their education and pursue activities that economically empower the family unit. They are also more likely to value women as important members of the family and community.<sup>5</sup> Working with men and boys to address both men's and women's challenges leads not just to more empowered women, but also to happier, healthier men.

### **What does CARE do?**

**CARE works to address men as allies who experience challenges as a result of inequality and benefit from improved gender relations, not only a target group.**

## Programs

Many of CARE's programs specifically address men's and boys' engagement in women's empowerment and anti-poverty work, across fields such as food and nutrition security, gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and reproductive health. Some of our flagship programs include:

- *The Young Men's Initiative* in the Balkans that works with young men in technical high schools to address issues of violence, gender equality, and reproductive health for boys in post-conflict environments.
- *Abatangamuco* in Burundi that works with men who serve as positive role models and peer educators to advocate against gender-based violence and for women's equality.
- *The Village Savings and Loan Associations* in Rwanda that work with women and men to mobilize more savings and reduce backlash against women's economic independence.
- *The Food Security for the Ultra Poor* program in Bangladesh which engages men and boys in to improve food security with women, children, and families at the household level.

## Research

In addition to directly engaging men and boys in on the ground programs, CARE has been at the forefront of research and implementation on how best to empower men and boys to be leaders in the movement towards gender equality within their families and

communities. Some of our research efforts have included:

- Leading the IMAGES study—a worldwide survey on men's attitudes toward gender equality—in Croatia, Sri Lanka, and Mali.
- Research on men's role in domestic labor and economic empowerment in Rwanda, published in the paper "I can do women's work."

## Leadership

CARE works with a number of local and global coalitions to promote the importance of engaging men and boys in the fight against global poverty. We are active steering committee members of the MenEngage Alliance, which promotes research and program excellence in engaging men and boys.

CARE also created a training module and online resources for learning about engaging men and boys to spread across all of CARE's programming and for work with our partners. This training has been used in more than 25 country offices with more than 70 participants to increase the scope of our programming with men and boys.

For more information on CARE's work, visit our website: <http://www.care.org/work/womens-empowerment/men> or our resources and tools here: <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/Engaging+Men+%26+Boys>

Check out the IMAGES study at: [www.care.org/images](http://www.care.org/images)

## Sources

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2. World Health Organization. Violence and Injury Prevention: 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. Fact 8. <[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/16\\_days/en/index7.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/16_days/en/index7.html)>.
3. "What Fathers Have to Do With It" *Men Engage*. <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/What-Fathers-Have-to-do-with-it.pdf/441603810/What-Fathers-Have-to-do-with-it.pdf>
4. Ibid
5. CARE. Strong women, strong communities: May 2010 <http://www.care.org/downloads/womens-empowerment-report-201005.pdf>



CARE USA  
151 Ellis St, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 681 - 2552  
[www.care.org](http://www.care.org)